

Minutes of a meeting of the Civic Pride, Arts, & Culture Committee held in the Council Chamber on Monday 25 November 2024 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors Phil Barnett, Vera Barnett, Jo Day, Nigel Foot (joined 19:46), David Harman, Chris Hood (joined 19:35) and Gary Norman.

Officers Present: Toby Miles-Mallowan (Chief Executive Officer) Joanna Aylott (Civic Manager) and Amy Xing (Civic Officer).

41. Apologies

Councillors Billy Drummond, Andy Moore and Graham Storey.

42. Declarations of interest and dispensations

The Civic Manager declared that Councillors Phil Barnett and Nigel Foot are also Members of West Berkshire Council, which is declared as a general interest on their behalf and a dispensation is in place to allow them to partake in discussions relating to West Berkshire Council business.

43. Minutes

Proposed: Cllr Phil Barnett

Seconded: Cllr Gary Norman

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting of the Civic Pride, Arts and Culture Committee held on 2 September 2024 were approved, and signed by the Chairperson.

Actions from the previous meeting were fulfilled, with items to be discussed as part of this meeting's agenda.

44. Questions and petitions from members of the public

The Chairperson welcomed Pragna Hay, who asked:

"Can Newbury Town Council consider some form of recognition of the fact that Newbury was the second largest resettlement centre for the Ugandan Asians refugees in 1972, and recognise the amazing volunteers from Newbury who assisted at the resettlement centre?"

The Chairperson answered:

"Yes, we can consider this. We would like to arrange a follow up meeting to discuss ideas surrounding a recognition event."

The Chairperson asked a question in response:

"Do you have any ideas for a recognition event?"

Pragna advised she had given this some thought and would like a place for people to be able to go to and reflect, such as a tree, bench, or memorial. The Civic Manager agreed to arrange a follow up meeting with Pragna and relevant members of the committee to discuss ideas.

(Cllr Chris Hood arrived at 19:35).

45. Members' questions and petitions

Question Received from Cllr Meg Thomas:

"Would it be possible to have a permanent set of equipment available for outside events which showcase our work as a council and local democracy in general? This could comprise: a gazebo, camping style table and about four chairs, flags/bunting, a display board and handouts/leaflets."

The Chairperson answered:

"Yes, we can investigate this. Discussions are ongoing in the Local Democracy Working Group regarding outreach to adults, and this can form part of the discussion. If the LDWG think this is appropriate, it will be put to CPAC at the next meeting."

Question Received from Cllr Sarah Slack:

"Residents have approached me stating that the current 'Welcome to Newbury' sign's do not appear particularly welcoming. The original paint appears to have worn away and they are now in a rusty state. Please would the committee clarify who is responsible for the maintenance of the 'Welcome to Newbury' signs? If it is the responsibility of Newbury Town Council, would the committee explore the feasibility and cost of renovating the current 'Welcome to Newbury' signs and whether or not a local organisation might like to sponsor this work? Please would the committee also consider including the names of Newbury's twin towns and their respective flags on the 'Welcome to Newbury' sign?"

The Chairperson answered:

"Newbury Town Council officers are exploring costs for installing new 'Welcome to Newbury' signs across the Town. There are currently 8 signs, and we are looking to increase this to 10 to ensure all major routes into the town are covered. Greenham Trust have agreed to match fund this project and we are looking to include this in the budget for 2025/26, under the Planning and Highways committee. Civic Pride, Arts & Culture will be involved in the design and were planning to include the names of all Newbury's Twin Towns and their respective flags. CPAC were considering ways to recognise our Twin Towns with possible signage in Victoria Park. There will now be implications for the working group formed by Councillors Billy Drummond, David Harman and Gary Norman, and there is an item discussing this later in the agenda."

46. Report on Remembrance Sunday Event

The Committee received a report from the Civic Manager on the Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service which took place on 10 November. It was agreed that the event was a successful and meaningful occasion.

The Civic Manager noted that a wash-up meeting had taken place on 20 November involving key stakeholders, which confirmed positive feedback and some minor suggestions for next year.

It was noted that in the planning for next year's event, we will consider implications of Martyn's Law, and ensure the event is compliant with legislation.

The Civic Manager gave special thanks to the Newbury Royal British Legion, Amy Xing (Civic Officer), and all those involved in the event.

47. Report on Heritage Open Day

The Committee received a report from the Civic Manager on this year's Heritage Open Day, which took place on 14 September.

The Town Hall opened to the public, inviting visitors to explore key areas like the Council Chamber, Mayor's Parlour, and the Civic Staircase.

The event highlighted Newbury's heritage, with a focus on the theme 'Routes, Networks and Connections'. Drawing from this we were able to promote the Newbury Town Trails and Twin Towns. Members of the Kennet Valley Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers presented an interactive display highlighting the local textile heritage.

Overall, it was a successful event with positive engagement from the public. The Civic Manager thanked all those who volunteered on the day.

Cllr Gary Norman noted he was present throughout the open day as a volunteer and was appreciative of the enthusiasm from members of the public.

(Cllr Nigel Foot arrived at 19:46).

48. Update from Local Democracy Working Group

Cllr Jo Day provided an update on the 'Meet the Town Council' sessions that have happened so far and noted that some upcoming sessions have been postponed due to works on the roof above the Civic Staircase. The Civic Manager explained that once works at the Town Hall are concluded, we will welcome schools back and rearrange visits that were postponed.

We received an excellent response to our invitations, with 9 out of 14 primary schools attending sessions on offer from the 7 to the 22 of October. Over 400 primary school children visited us over this period, and we have interacted with over 200 students from St Barts, Trinity and Park House.

Feedback from the teachers was incredibly positive.

Cllr David Harman and the rest of the Committee thanked and congratulated Cllr Jo Day for her work leading these activities for the local school children.

49. Festive Afternoon Tea

The Civic Manager advised the Committee that the venue, catering and entertainment has been confirmed for this year's Festive Afternoon Tea for the over 75's, taking place on Tuesday 17 December at St Nicolas Church Hall. A press release was issued on the 18 November for the event, inviting residents to contact the Civic Office to book their place to attend, Councillors were encouraged to share this event with anyone they thought may be interested.

The Civic Officer reminded Councillors that we are looking for volunteer support for the event.

50. Update from the VE Day & VJ Day 80th Anniversary Working Group

Cllr Jo Day advised the Committee that we have had the first meeting of this Working Group to discuss general ideas. The group was renamed to reflect VE and VJ day, and we are working in cooperation with other bodies.

The Working Group Terms of Reference were reviewed.

Proposed: Cllr Nigel Foot

Seconded: Cllr David Harman

Resolved: The Terms of Reference for the VE Day & VJ Day 80th Anniversary Working Group were approved.

A budget for 2025-2026 was discussed. The CEO advised that an indicative budget figure of £1,500 was taken from our D-Day commemoration events. The Committee noted that as we have two dates and we will be having events on multiple dates, this budget would need to be increased, also bearing in mind the cost of a brazier. It was noted we would also look to match fund from other organisations.

Proposed: Cllr Gary Norman

Seconded: Cllr Phil Barnett

Resolved: The Committee agreed to recommend a budget of £3,000 for VE Day & VJ Day 80th Anniversary Events.

51. Civic Awards 2025

The Committee briefly reviewed the annual Civic Awards, noting the usual proceedings. A date for the ceremony in 2025 was put forward by the Civic Manager.

Proposed: Cllr Jo Day

Seconded: Cllr Vera Barnett

Resolved: The committee resolved to host the next Civic Awards ceremony on Wednesday 19th March 2025.

52. Civic Pride, Arts and Culture Committee Budget 2025-2026

The Committee reviewed a draft Civic Pride, Arts & Culture budget for 2025-2026.

As per previous discussion, it was agreed to recommend an increase in the VE and VJ Day budget to £3000 in 2025-2026.

Cllr Gary Norman voiced that he would like to support the Newbury Road Club centenary event in 2025. The Committee agreed to recommend £1500 in the 2025-2026 budget.

It was noted that in future years, Remembrance Sunday events will need to be compliant with Martyn's Law, with additional safety provisions. Therefore, the Committee agreed to recommend an increase in the Remembrance Sunday budget to £3500 in 2025-2026.

The CEO noted that 'Welcome to Newbury' signs are currently under budget consideration by the Planning & Highways Committee, and therefore it was not required to include provision for them in the Civic Pride, Arts & Culture budget. This Committee will be involved in the design, as well as the Twin Town Signage we are investigating within the existing Committee Fund.

It was noted that the grant Newbury Town Council donate each year to the Newbury BID for the 'Christmas Light Switch' on does not currently sit under a committee for approval. It was suggested that this grant should be put within the Civic Pride, Arts & Culture budget for 2025-2026, and the agreement be reviewed.

53. Newbury Town Flag Display

Cllr Jo Day noted that the Newbury Town Flag display unveiling took place on 17 October at the Town Hall and was a very pleasant occasion in memory of Rod Thomason. The display is now on the Civic Staircase, for all visitors to see.

54. Flying the Town Flag from the Town Hall

The Committee reviewed the amended Town Council's Flag Flying Policy.

It was requested that a mechanism for approval out of committee (section 7) be subtitled for clarity and made clear that in exceptional circumstances a joint decision can be made without holding a committee meeting.

Proposed: Gary Norman

Seconded: Vera Barnett

Resolved: The Committee approved the Town Council's Flag Flying Policy, with the amendment listed above.

55. Twin Town Signage & Trail

It was noted that the 'Welcome to Newbury' road signs are being explored by the Planning & Highways Committee, but that the Civic Pride, Arts & Culture Committee would be involved with the designs.

At our last meeting, a small working group was formed to look into the possibility of Twin Town signage in Victoria Park, ideas are still being discussed. The group will meet with Planning & Highways to coordinate ideas and will report back.

The Committee agreed that it was still worthwhile exploring Twin Town signage in Victoria Park as it is possible the Twin Towns will be removed from the 'Welcome to Newbury' signs.

56. Service at War Memorial for Afghanistan

It was noted that the Newbury Royal British Legion will be holding a Memorial Service for Service Personnel who served in Afghanistan on Sunday 15th December at 11:00am, at the War Memorial. All Councillors were encouraged to attend this service.

57. Newbury Road Club 100th Anniversary 2025

It was noted that Victoria Park has been booked on Saturday 14th June 2025 for this event.

58. Community United Event

It was noted that Victoria Park has been booked on Saturday 28th June 2025 for this event.

59. Newbury Town Band

It was noted the agreement Newbury Town Council has with Watership Brass, Newbury's Town Band, has been renewed for 2025/2026 at £800, to be reviewed annually.

60. Civic Manager's Reports

The Committee received the list of Mayoral letters sent since the last meeting.

Cllr Jo Day requested to add what each letter is for next to the name, the Civic Manager agreed to action this going forward.

61. Civic Events

The information regarding the Annual Bowls Match, (4 September), Heritage Open Day (14 September) Local Democracy Events (from 7 October), Mayor's Coffee Morning (12 October) Town Flag Display Unveiling (17 October) and Remembrance Sunday Parade & Service (10 November), held since the last meeting of this Committee was received and noted.

Regarding the Bowls Match, Cllr Gary Norman Gary suggested we play socially and mix teams with Cllrs and Bowls Club members to make the occasion more fun. We could still play for a cup with one team. The Civic Manager agreed to request this with the Bowls Club next year.

Information relating to future Civic Events was noted including the Mayor's Festive Afternoon Tea (17 December), Civic Carol Service (22 December) and launching of the 2025 Civic Awards (27 January).

62. Forward Work Programme for Civic Pride, Arts & Leisure Committee meetings 2024/25

The Committee requested to add the following to the Forward Work Programme:

- Update on Welcome to Newbury Signage – July 2025.

There being no further business, the Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 20:32.

Chairperson:

Date: