

15th October 2024

To: Councillors Phil Barnett, Vera Barnett, Alistair Bounds, Jo Day, Sam Dibas, Billy Drummond, Nigel Foot, David Harman, Chris Hood, Roger Hunneman, Ian Jee, Pam Lusby-Taylor, David Marsh, Stephen Masters, Vaughan Miller, Andy Moore (Town Mayor), Gary Norman, Elizabeth O’Keeffe, Sarah Slack, Graham Storey, Meg Thomas, Martha Vickers and Tony Vickers.

From 7pm: Remembrance Sunday - To receive a briefing on the arrangements for the Remembrance Day events on Sunday 10th November 2024

Dear Councillor,

You are summoned to attend a meeting of **Newbury Town Council** to be held in **The Council Chamber, Town Hall, Newbury** at **7.30 pm Monday 21st October 2024**.

The meeting is open to the press and public and will be streamed via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86359970391?pwd=MooNyGe7aUut15b8ttkUNZrOcgBkaq.1>

Meeting ID: 863 5997 0391 Passcode: 919082

Yours sincerely,

Toby Miles-Mallowan
Chief Executive Officer

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for absence**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
To receive any declarations of interest relating to business to be conducted in this meeting and confirmation of any relevant dispensations.
- 3. Minutes (Appendix 1)**
Town Mayor
To approve the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 24 June 2024
- 4. Citizens Advice**
To receive a report from Citizens Advice on the operation of services in line with the Grant Award.
To ask questions of Citizens Advice services.
- 5. Volunteer Centre West Berks (Appendix 2)**
To receive report from Volunteer Centre West Berks

- 6. Questions and Petitions from Members of the Public**
Town Mayor/ Chief Executive Officer
(Questions, in writing, must be with the CEO by 2.00 pm on Friday 18th October 2024)
- 7. Members' Questions and Petitions**
Town Mayor/ Chief Executive Officer
(Questions, in writing, must be with the CEO by 2.00 pm on Friday 18th October 2024)
- 8. Town Mayor's Report (Appendix 3)**
Councillor Andy Moore, Town Mayor
To receive a report from the Town Mayor, Councillor Andy Moore.
- 9. Leader's Report**
Councillor Gary Norman, Leader of the Council
To receive a verbal report from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Gary Norman.
- 10. Chief Executive Officer's Report (Appendix 4)**
Chief Executive Officer
To receive a report from the Chief Executive Officer
- 11. Committees**
Committee Chairpersons
To receive the minutes of meetings of the Town Council's Committees (previously circulated):

 - Civic Pride, Arts & Culture Committee: 1st July 24 & 2nd Sept 24 (draft)
 - Planning & Highways Committee: 15th July 24, 12th Aug 24, 9th Sept & 8th Oct 24 (draft)
 - Community Services Committee: 22nd July 24 & 16th Sept 24 (draft)
 - Policy & Resources Committee: 29th July 24 & 14th October 24 (draft)
- 12. Local Democracy Working Group**
To receive a verbal update on LDW from the Chair of the Local Democracy Working Group
- 13. Victoria Park Cafe Update (Appendix 5)**
To receive a report from the Services Delivery Manager
To approve recommendation from the Services Delivery Manager's report to amend the brief to include a bin storage in the Air Raid Shelter.
- 14. Financial Regulations (Appendix 6)**
To approve and **adopt** the updated Financial Regulations, recommended to Council by the Policy and Resources Committee.
- 15. Internal Audit report for the financial year ended 31 March 2024 (Appendix 7)**
To receive the first report from the Internal Auditor for 2024/25, to note actions taken and recommendations from the Policy and Resources Committee.

- 16. External Audit Report for the financial year ended 31st March 2024 (appendix 8)**
To receive the external audit certificate, with considerations from the Policy and Resources Committee.
To note the Notice of Conclusion of Audit, year ended 31st March 2024, published in accordance with agreed timelines.
- 17. Standing Orders (Appendix 9)**
To approve and **adopt** the updated Financial Regulations, recommended to Council by the Policy and Resources Committee.
- 18. Budget and Strategy Review Process 2025/26 (Appendix 10)**
To note the Budget and Strategy Review Process 2025/26, approved by the Policy and Resources Committee.
- 19. Newbury Town Band**
To approve Civic Pride, Arts and Culture recommendation to increase the annual retainer of the Newbury Town Band from £650 to £700 for 2025/26
- 20. Request to Fly Flags from Town Hall (Appendix 11)**
To approve Request to fly the UN flag from the Town Hall on 24 and 25 October 24 for World UN Day
To approve request from Newbury Pride to fly the Transgender Pride Flag between 13th November 24 until 21st November 24.
To approve request to fly the Palestinian flag on 29th November 2024
- 21. Forward Work Programme for Full Council meetings 2024/25 (Appendix 12)**
To note and agree any other items that Members resolve to add to the Forward Work Programme.
- 22. Exclusion of the Press and Public**
To move: That under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential financial business to be transacted.
- 23. Staffing Matters (Appendix 13 & 14)**
To receive the minutes from the Staff Sub-Committee meeting of 28/09/2024
To note the update to the staff structure and agree next steps
- 24. Energy Supplies Budgets (Appendix 15)**
To consider the estimated costs against the energy supplies budgets and the blended contract offered by the Council's electricity supplier.
- 25. Chief Executive Officer**
To approve Staffing Sub Committee recommendation confirming the appointment of the Chief Executive Officer after a successful probation period.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF NEWBURY TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, MARKET PLACE, NEWBURY
ON WEDNESDAY 24th JUNE 2024 AT 7.30 PM.

PRESENT

Councillors Phil Barnett, Vera Barnett, Alistair Bounds, Jo Day, Nigel Foot, Roger Hunneman, Chris Hood, Ian Jee, Andy Moore (Mayor), Elizabeth O’Keeffe, Pam Lusby Taylor, Meg Thomas, Graham Storey.

OFFICERS PRESENT

Toby Miles-Mallowan, Chief Executive Officer

99. APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

Councillor Sam Dibas, Billy Drummond, David Harman, David Marsh, Steve Masters, Gary Norman, Martha Vickers, and Tony Vickers.

100. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chief Executive Officer declared that Councillors Phil Barnett, 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.

101. MINUTES

CEO **declared** that there is 2 amendments to the minutes in the agenda, namely that Councillors Jo Day and Ian Jee were both present at the council meeting on 8 May 2024.

CEO stated that on 9 May 2024 Councillor David Marsh withdrew the nomination of Councillor Steve Masters as Deputy Mayor for 2024/25.

PROPOSED: Councillor Thomas

SECONDED: Councillor Day

RESOLVED: That the minutes of a meeting of Newbury Town Council held on Monday 8th May 2024, be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Town Mayor.

102. QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions or petitions received from members of the public.

103. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

There were no questions or petitions from members of the Council.

104. TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

The Town Mayor gave his first report to council. the Mayor thanked Councillor Day and the Town Council for coordinating the D-day celebrations. The Town Mayor commended the Mayor's attendant Gary Paulson for his support.

Councillor Miller also commended Councillor Day for her work on the D-day celebrations.

105. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The Chief Executive Officer's report was received and noted by the Council.

Questions were received:

Councillor Vickers asked whether there was wheelchair access to the Bandstand the Chief Executive responded that he would enquire and confirm wheelchair access to the Band Stand as a priority.

Councillor Foot commented that a member of the public wished to thank the Council with their efforts to clean the war memorial for the D-day celebrations. Councillor O'Keeffe further thanked Councillors Day and Jee for helping to clean the war memorial and organising the flower tribute.

Councillor Hunneman enquired as to whether a Clock would be installed in the council chamber. The Chief Executive confirmed that they would be installing a new clock.

106. DEPUTY LEADERS REPORT

The Council received the Deputy Leaders report, the Deputy Leader highlighted the success of the fundraising to support the D-day celebrations confirming that fundraising covered the cost for delivering the celebrations.

107. COMMITTEES

The Minutes of the following meetings were received and noted:

Planning & Highways Committee	20 th May and 17 June 24 (draft)
Policy & Resources Committee (Draft)	10 th June 2024 (draft)

108. Proposal for Victoria Park Redevelopment

Presentations were made by Councillor Miller from the Community Services Committee and Councillor Hunneman from the Victoria Park Working Group Council Approved the plans by 'Michael Pagliaroli Architects Ltd option 2 Revision A

109. MAYORS BENEVOLENT FUND

Council approved changes presented to the charitable objectives and governing document of the Mayor of Newbury's Benevolent Fund to solely focus on raising funds for a charity chosen by the Mayor during their year in office.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE TOWN MAYOR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8:09PM

TOWN MAYOR: _____

DATE: _____



Volunteer Centre

West Berkshire

Charitable Incorporated Organisation Number 1156302



ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2023/24

WWW.VOLUNTEERWESTBERKS.ORG.UK





We are proud
**TO SUPPORT
THE VOLUNTEER
CENTRE**

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DIRECTOR'S OVERVIEW

I write this overview as the newly appointed CEO, following the retirement of the previous Director Garry Poulson at the end of March, and reflect on what was a very busy and productive year with a strong team of staff, trustees and volunteers. At this point, I think I must express the gratitude we have for all the hard work and dedication that Garry has put in during his 25 and a half years' service to VCWB. He will be sorely missed.

Our Community Transport Services have seen growth in terms of new vehicles and equipment and new volunteer drivers, but also more importantly, increasing demand for their services, from new members and individual car journeys to new Handybus trips.

Our annual V365 recruitment fayre once again proved to be successful, with over 544 potential volunteers connecting with the 50 different charities at the event. We continue to see interest in volunteering from the public of West Berkshire.

Our Ukraine Liaison Support Project sadly came to an end in March after 18 months but during that time great impact was made in supporting Ukrainians who were being hosted in West Berkshire. Over 750 referrals and 340 families and individuals were supported as a result of this project, connecting them to each other as well as to local community activities and charity support as they settled into a new way of life here in West Berkshire.

During the year we have continued to champion suicide prevention awareness and have delivered regular training and run a well attended action group, as well as upskilled our outreach worker to deliver workshops for people working with Children and Young People which we will develop in the months ahead.

Our strength as a Council for Voluntary Service has grown as we continue to bring together the Voluntary Sector with Statutory Partners in the various forums. The Cost of Living and Poverty Forum has seen great opportunities for collaboration between the voluntary sector members, West Berkshire Council and Greenham Trust.

We delivered a successful series of Meet the Funder Events which was a collaborative initiative sought to create relationships between the funders and charities. The event brought together 11 local and national funders with 50 West Berkshire charities.

This year has seen us work in partnership with the NHS via Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) and Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust to support engagement and consultation on health-related issues with the sector and their users. We hope that this will continue as our relationship develops.

We must express thanks to our board of trustees for their support and governance over the year and welcome our new trustees, Lesley Wyman and Rob Cao, who join us this year.

Acknowledgement must also be given to our funders, The National Lottery Community Fund, Greenham Trust, West Berkshire Council, BOB ICB, Newbury Town Council and Thatcham Town Council, who generously support our work.

As we enter our 50th year, we look forward to celebrating our history with our staff, volunteers, trustees and supporters and are excited about the future opportunities ahead.



Rachel Peters
CEO, Volunteer Centre West Berkshire
Rachel@vcwb.org.uk



V365-50



Meet the Funder Day in November



V365-50



Garry's departure at the end of March

GOVERNANCE, TRUSTEES AND STAFF

FOR the Volunteer Centre West Berkshire the past year has been significant for being one of anniversaries and milestones. Notably, throughout 2024 the charity is celebrating its 50th anniversary serving the communities of Newbury, Thatcham and West Berkshire. It is a remarkable achievement for an organisation that started on a very small scale but which has grown to be the significant and respected community charity it is today – providing both direct services to members of the public, and more widely offering valued and experienced support to the voluntary sector locally.

In the Spring of this year many friends and colleagues gathered at Broadway House to offer every good wish to Director Garry Poulson on his retirement from the charity after a remarkable 25 years' dedicated service. From April VCWB introduced and welcomed Rachel Peters as its first Chief Executive Officer, a new role involving overall responsibility for the charity and a particular emphasis on partnerships and engagement within the voluntary sector whether it be through bespoke support for individual organisations, the facilitation of training, or the development of particular cooperations and partnerships.

The VCWB Trustees place on record their sincere appreciation and thanks to all who support the charity in so many ways – the dedicated office team of staff and volunteers, the project leaders, and everyone who gives of their time freely to support their local community as VCWB volunteers.

VCWB is served by a dedicated Board of Trustees which meets quarterly. All board members are volunteers, either within the VCWB itself or in the wider community. An active organisation such as the VCWB, encountering the challenges it does, requires and receives the practical support and deliberations of its Trustees throughout the year, far more than can be achieved by meeting formally four times a year. It is our pleasure to be part of such an organisation. The board recently received sad news of the death of one of its longest serving Trustees Jeff Beck. A wise counsellor and trusted friend of VCWB, Jeff will be much missed by all who knew him. The board has offered its sincere condolences to his family and many friends.

As my five year term as Chair of the VCWB Board of Trustees draws to a close I offer everyone involved with the charity every good wish for the future.



Brien Beharrell
Chair of Trustees,
Volunteer Centre West Berkshire



PATRON

David Jones

VICE PRESIDENTS

Mary Baker, Tim Barton, Sue Campbell, Sue Cox, Liz Fenton, Patsy Giles, Gill Hall, Kath Harding, Katy Hawthorne, Jonathan Hopson, Kate Kenna, Ian Langley, Mary Marsh, Angela Neale, Catriona Ottner, Andy Parsons, Brian Phillips

AUDITORS

James Cowper Kreston

VOLUNTEER CENTRE WEST BERKSHIRE

CIO 1156302
Broadway House
4-8 The Broadway,
Newbury.
RG14 1BA
info@vcwb.org.uk
Tel: 01635 49004
Office hours:
9am to 5pm Monday to Friday

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Chair
Brien Beharrell
Vice Chair
Malcolm Poynter
Treasurer
Chris Armitage
Ian Nicol
Cllr Jeff Beck (RIP)
Ellis Banfield
Gary Walsh
Margo Payne (Retired)
Lesley Wyman
Rob Cao
Minute Secretary
Sara Hanson

STAFF

Director
Garry Poulson
Partnerships and Engagement
Rachel Peters
Training and Events officer
Pankaja Samant
Volunteer Recruitment officer
Chris Read
Funding Advice officer
Sara Hanson
Suicide Prevention Training
Sue Bennett
Accounts officer
Jacqui Letsome
Handybus Coordinator
Ross Wilson
ShopMobility
Angie Nother
Vicky Preston
Lindsay Malyon

info@vcwb.org.uk
01635 49004

FINANCES AND FUNDERS

The Charity wouldn't be able to continue providing the services it does for the residents and VCSE sector in West Berkshire without the continued generosity and financial donations of our partners and supporters.

A special thanks must go to our Honorary Treasurer, Chris Armitage who has served the charity for 17 years. His ongoing commitment to ensuring our found financial status are to be commended.

The Charity made an unrestricted surplus for the year of £15,232 against a prior year deficit of £27,536. This means that the Charity's unrestricted reserves to fund future running and overhead costs increased by £15,232 (decreased by £27,536 in 2023). The Charity received restricted funds of £87,717 during the year. £105,528 of restricted funds was expended during the year and £2,652 was transferred to unrestricted funds leaving a restricted funds balance of £27,574 as at 31 March 2024.

The final management accounts showed a surplus of £17,884 for the year compared with the published accounts total deficit of £2,579, the difference of £20,463 being net movements in Restricted Funds. The restricted funds movement is primarily the net movement of funds specifically identified for Voluntary Sector Support and Befriend and Activate projects. The result still compares favourably with the budget to 31st March 2023 of a deficit of £35,455.

The Volunteer Centre receives financial and in kind support from many sources. We are grateful and give thanks to:



The Volunteer Centre is proud of our strategic alliance with Greenham Trust and our training alliance with Connecting Communities in Berkshire. Our officers meet regularly to discuss and understand the issues and stresses within the sector and work in partnership to provide appropriate support and solutions to VCSE organisations.

We are also grateful to private donors and sponsors of our work.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

This year, we have given **403** individuals advice and information on volunteering (366 of these enquiries were made online/via phone and 37 in person).

Enquiries came from individuals in **44** different West Berkshire parishes.

There are currently **333** active volunteer opportunities on our database.

Flexiteering

Our flexiteer service provides a way for volunteers to offer their skills without making a regular, ongoing commitment. Flexiteers receive details of short-term and one-off volunteering opportunities as and when they arise. This year, four new volunteers joined the flexiteer mailing list; the total number of registered flexiteers is **46**.

Feedback from organisations

“By the way, I’m not sure if anyone ever told you: the volunteer who came through your system for us - a man from Kintbury has been an amazing volunteer, one of our best. So a huge thank you for that :)”

Charlie Barr, Hungerford Youth and Community Centre

“I said I would let you know about the volunteer you forwarded to us. Well a great success. So thank you for sending me his details. Keep up the good work.”

Pam Hart, Greenham Common Control Tower

“I am pleased to confirm we appointed a new treasurer at our Management Committee Meeting this week. Many thanks to you and your team for passing on his details to us in the first place. We have also taken on one of our former volunteer drivers this week and are processing a new driver who was referred to us by your Centre following the January Recruitment fair so many thanks for that too!”

Norman Casson, Thatcham Volunteer Bureau

“Thanks for all your help with the recruitment, especially the V365-50 event. 12 people gave us their names on the day. 7 of these have now offered to volunteer for the Newbury and Thatcham Repair Cafe. We are delighted, and this exceeded our expectations. I’d also like to add that the atmosphere of the event was excellent and our volunteers ‘manning’ the table also learnt a lot about other volunteer groups in West Berkshire.”

Newbury and Thatcham Repair Café

Quotes from volunteers

“I was totally new to volunteering. I met with Chris and with his help first of all learned what volunteering was all about. He carefully matched my skills with possible options for my consideration. I chose ABC to Read and love it! A success I would say!”

Fiona Miller

“I’ve used West Berks volunteer website to find contacts for charities I’ve been interested in volunteering for. I’ve also contacted Chris by email for support in contacting charities. Chris has been very helpful, efficient and timely with responses and this has helped to move things along.”

Shirley Moneanu

“I contacted Volunteer Centre West Berkshire following my retirement from full time employment in 2023, as I wanted to find a fulfilling and interesting voluntary role. I was pleasantly surprised at the range of opportunities available and Chris helped me find a role which matched my requirements and skills. I am now thoroughly enjoying my retirement whilst still feeling like a useful member of society, and have met many new people with similar interests.”

Lesley Hawker

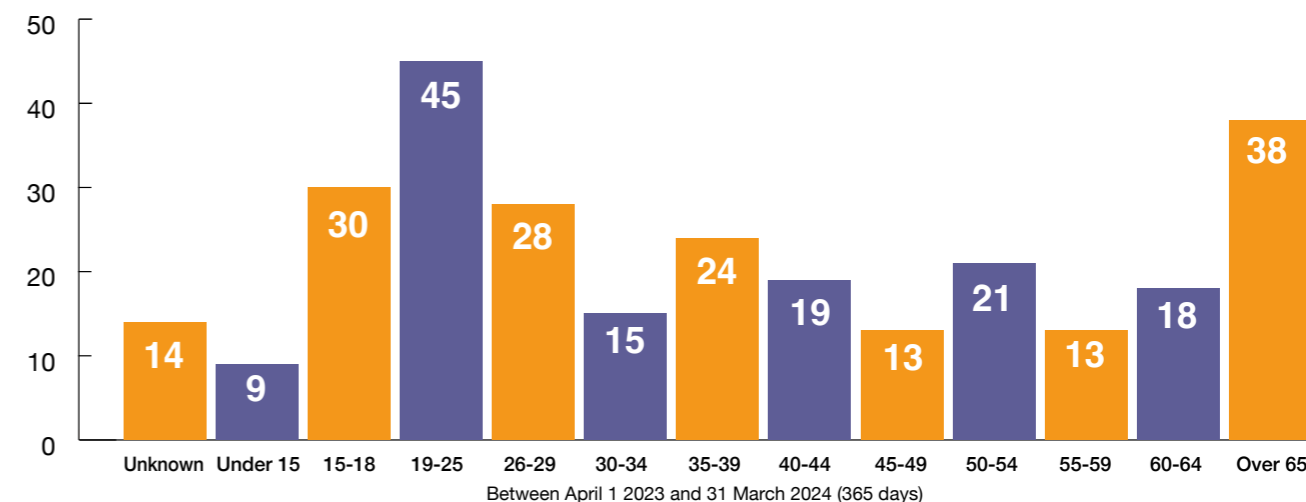
“I retired at the end of April 2023 after a fortunate and enjoyable career in the IT Industry and I was keen to consider volunteering opportunities. I came across Volunteer Centre West Berkshire and was surprised at the breadth and depth of volunteering opportunities available. I called Chris Read, their Recruitment Officer, and he invited me in to discuss which charities might be the best match. We considered over 40 charities and settled on three. After various interviews I pursued all three options in the areas of Citizens Advice, offender mentoring and Pets as Therapy. I would fully recommend tapping into Volunteer Centre West Berkshire to leverage their knowledge of the volunteering opportunities.”

Andrew Forsyth

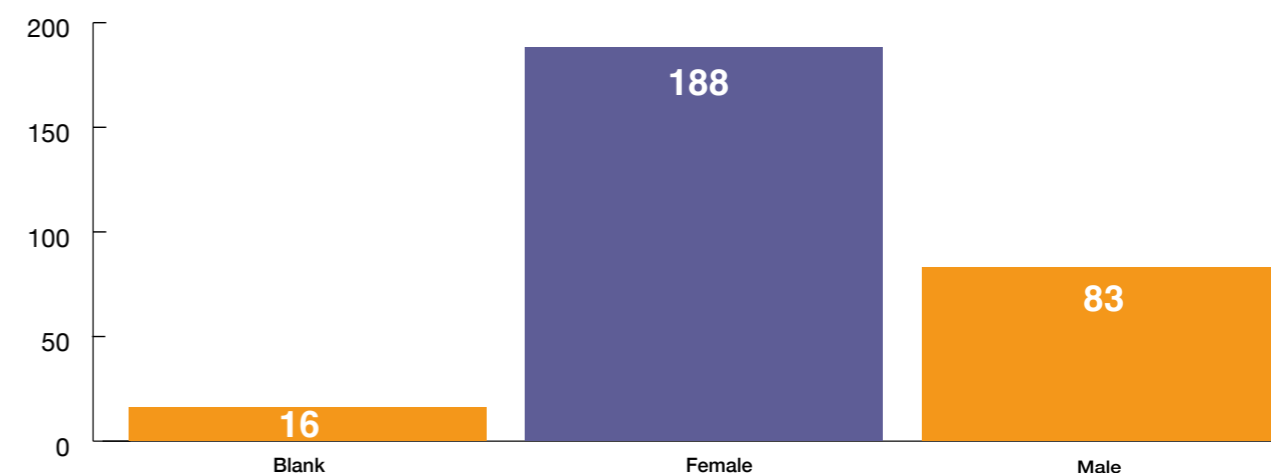
 **Chris Read,**
Volunteer Recruitment Officer
vbase@vcwb.org.uk



This graph demonstrates the age range of new volunteers coming into the sector



This graph demonstrates the gender of volunteers coming into the sector. Not all online applicants state gender at the initial point of application.



Volunteer Karen Robbins who volunteers in the office and at our events.

At V365-50 engaging with stall holders and members of the public.

V365-50 JANUARY 2024

This year saw our 50th anniversary Volunteer Recruitment event at The Corn Exchange Newbury. It was a very successful event and we received lots of positive feedback from charities and attendees.

55 organisations took part in our V365-50 event, and we had a total 310 visitors who attended our event on 13th January. According to the charities' feedback, they spoke with 544 potential volunteers.

20,465 total people reached via our social media pages during V365-50 2024 event.

Feedback from organisations and visitors included:

"Very well organised event, helpful staff, good environment: friendly and calm"

"Brilliant session. Well run. Always a pleasure even on a Saturday"

"Thank you! Another great event. If I haven't been able to help with the Nature for health project. I have been able to point people in the direction of other volunteering options available at WBS e.g. Libraries".

"lots of ideas, organisations I wouldn't have known about, very professional set up welcoming and friendly and massive selection of causes and help"



V365 we had 310 visitors on the day, they came from across West Berkshire and further afield

VISITORS BY AREA

Postcode	Town/Village	no. of attendees
SP11/10	Andover	2
BS36	Bristol	1
RG31	Calcot/Theale	2
RG17	Hungerford/Kintbury/Lambourn	13
RG20	Kingsclere / Highclere	26
SN8	Marlborough	3
RG14	Newbury	155
RG18	North Thatcham	39
RG30	Reading	1
RG19	South Thatcham	26
SO20	Stockbridge	2
SN25	Swindon	2
RG26	Tadley	4
RG7	Woolhampton	7
Total		283

We also undertook a survey on how people had heard about the event: Here are the results

EVENT PUBLICITY

All over / various	4
Been before	5
Brochure / Booklet	6
Corn Exchange	10
Email	10
Friends / Family	35
Newbury Weekly News	44
Social Media - facebook / instagram	90
Through Charity	40
VCWB	18
Walk in	4
Website	10
Word of Mouth	7
Total	283



V365—50 was opened by Cllr Jeremy Cottam, Chairman of West Berkshire Council alongside Cllr Lee Dillon, Leader of the Council.

Photos courtesy of Phil Cannings, NWN

THE NEWBURY COMMUNITY CAR SCHEME

This valuable service, now in its 50th year, takes older or less mobile Newbury residents to essential appointments of all kinds but primarily to medical and health appointments both within West Berkshire and further afield.

The service relies on the dedication of its volunteer drivers and we currently have 45 volunteer drivers registered, 35 of whom have taken on journeys for us this year. Special mention must go to Sue Campbell who undertook 124 journeys during the year.

As well as the dedicated volunteer car drivers that provide our service, a team of office volunteers ensure that the phones are answered and the requests are dealt with.

Thanks also to Jeff Goodenough who as a volunteer makes adjustments and improvements to the car scheme database that he created, which helps us work more efficiently and gives us a better picture of who are clients are, what their needs are and how our service is performing.



DESTINATIONS 23 – 24

Newbury	858
Thatcham	169
Hungerford	18
Reading	283
Oxford	33
Basingstoke	70
North Hants excl. B'stoke	7
Swindon	1
London	1
Other	58
Total	1498

Previous Year 21 – 22

Newbury	773½
Thatcham	180
Reading	247½
Oxford	29
Basingstoke	99
Swindon	2
London	1
Other	66
Total	1398

JOURNEY TYPE 23 – 24

Hospital/Clinic	934½
Surgery	253
Dentist	63
Optician	15
Day centre	19
Club	34
Shopping	1
Relative/Friend	5½
Care Home	107
Other	66
Total	1498

Previous Year 21 – 22

Hospital/Clinic	920
Surgery	227
Dentist	59
Optician	10
Day centre	25½
Club	9
Shopping	7
Relative/Friend	5½
Other	132
Total	1398

NEWBURY AND THATCHAM HANDYBUS

Another year of increases as we have set up a new regular route this year as well as seen an increase in Saturday Special trips, Lunch Clubs and individual organisation trips out.

The new Chairman Car arrived in September and continues to be well used in the community.

We have done 4 recruitment events this year to not only help to recruit more drivers but to showcase our services and generate more interest in the use of the service to ensure the buses are not sat idling but are getting people in Newbury and Thatcham out and about.

We currently have 24 active drivers as 2 had to resign due to their age, including Trevor Lisseman who has not only been a driver but has supported in the office.



Ross Wilson,
Handybus Coordinator
handybus@vcwb.org.uk or by telephone 01635 37111
9am to 1pm Monday to Friday

2023/24 statistics
(2022/23 figures in brackets)

Total miles
15930 (15064)

NEWBURY

Trips
845 (591)
up 43%

Passenger trips
1983 (1746)
up 13.6%

Volunteer hours
990.5 (825.5)
up 20%

THATCHAM

Trips
418 (369)
up 13.3%

Passenger trips
1608 (1789)
down 10.1%

Volunteer hours
650.4 (693)
down 2.8%

CHAIRMAN'S CAR

Trips
356 (267)
up 33.3%

Volunteer hours
388.5 (162)
up 139.8%

NEWBURY SHOPMOBILITY

ShopMobility continues to support those who need assistance in getting out and about in Newbury and West Berkshire, whether a resident or visitor. We have a range of mobility equipment for hire, including manual wheelchairs, powerchairs, and mobility scooters to assist people to get around, whether they have a disability or short term condition that impacts on mobility. ShopMobility also offers a variety of small disabled aids to purchase from the shop.

The contributions were increased slightly this year to £4.00 for a day's hire of a scooter or powered wheelchair.

Longer term loans are available at £30 for a week's loan of a scooter or power chair or £15 for a manual wheelchair.

27 completed feedback questionnaires have rated us as excellent. Comments below; to the following questions.

Q 1. How would you rate your overall experience?

ANSWERS:	8	9	10
	1	5	13

Q 2. How satisfied are you with our overall service?

ANSWERS:	8	9	10
	1	5	13

Q 3. Would you recommend this service to others?

ANSWERS:	No, never	Maybe	Yes definitely
	0	0	27

Q 4. Would you use the service again?

ANSWERS:	No, never	Maybe	Yes definitely
	0	0	27

Q 5. How could we improve our booking process.

ANSWERS: Has always been a good service. Works as it is. Happy with how the company operates. Just stay as you are its very good. No Problems. Can't think of anything.

Q 6. Where did you hear about Shopmobility Service.

ANSWERS: Online. Asked about. Years ago Motability. Ian in the market. My daughter found it online. Visited the car park. Seen someone on a scooter and asked.

Q 7. Any additional comments and or suggestions

ANSWERS: Wonderful service + very helpful staff. More signage in Northbrook street. Wonderful Service. Some scooters are showing signs of age may need replacing.



The service receives the generous support of West Berkshire Council



Shopmobility is open Monday to Saturday 10am to 3pm.

Contact them on 01635 523854
or email Newburyshopmobility@vcwb.org.uk

Total Daily
512 (579)
Total Hire
1875 (3804)
Total Days
1875 (4383)
New members
113 (131)
Renewals
31 (39)
Visitors
29 (34)

The 113 new enrolling members in the year are from:

- Aldershot 2
- Andover 1
- Ball Hill 1
- Basingstoke 2
- Boxford 1
- Carterton 2
- Chieveley 3
- Cold Ash 1
- Compton 1
- Crux Easton 1
- East Ilsley 2
- Ecchinswell 2
- Fairford 1
- Great Shefford 2
- Hermitage 3
- Hungerford 4
- Inkpen 2
- Lambourn 2
- Letcombe Regis 1
- Newbury 46
- Pangbourne 1
- Reading 2
- Silchester 1
- Thatcham 20
- Tilehurst 2
- Wantage 2
- Winterbourne 2
- Witney 1
- Woolton Hill 2

WITHOUT OUR VOLUNTEERS NONE OF THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE, SO A BIG THANK YOU TO...

CAR DRIVERS

The service that we have operated since 1974 would simply not be possible without the volunteer drivers who give up their time. We thank them for the endless time and patience and care that they provide to our service users

Mary Baker, Steve Bartlett, Caroline Billington, Matthew Briggs, Sue Campbell, Simon Carter, Bob Chapman, David Cussans, Andrew Edge, Mervyn Else, Peter Fergusson, John Fleming, Duncan Gibb, Jeff Goodenough, Graeme Hindhaugh, John Holdaway, Graham Hunt, Ian Langley, Trevor Lisseman, Angus Macdonald, Graeme MacDonald, Jenny McCartney, Robert Meyer, Hazel Owen, Neil Pegg, Annie Potter, Keith Richards, Clive Self, Gary Shambrook, Chris Strang, Malcolm Thomas, Gary Walsh, Bob Whiting, Richard Baker, Jane Belmont, Marian Smitheman.



HANDYBUS DRIVERS

Newbury and Thatcham Handybus has been operating since 1986 and as with our car scheme we would not operate without these dedicated drivers. We thank them too for their care, time and patience.

Adrian Aylward-Brown, Caroline Billington, Neil Cave, David Coppock, Philip Eaton, Peter Eeles, Richard Foster, Graeme Hindhaugh, Ollie Hinton, Diane Loveridge, Roderick McGregor, Annie Potter, Sheena Ronan, Gary Shambrook, Susan Wynniatt.

Trevor Lisseman has retired as a Handybus driver due to age, but still drives the Chairman Car occasionally.



OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

A dedicated team of volunteers who support behind the scenes in a variety of ways that are vital to the services we provide. Including manning the phones, talking to clients, coordinating driving jobs, counting the money, supporting with the technology and following up on enquiries

Lizzie Fenton, Ros Littlejohn, Katy Hawthorne, Gill Brown, Karen Eeles, Catriona Ottner, Jean Fleming, Sarah Summerbell, Julia Jones, Gill Smith, Jeff Goodenough, Karen Robbins, Julian Greaves and Andy Parsons who retired this year.

Special thanks to Bob Day for attending our events as a volunteer photographer. Many of his images are in this report.



SHOPMOBILITY VOLUNTEERS

A pair of volunteers who support the team at ShopMobility with customer service and office administration. Pat Lisseman and Angela Neale.



WEST BERKSHIRE SUICIDE PREVENTION ACTION

This year the work of our Outreach Support Worker has continued, focusing on engagement with various local businesses, shops, bars, and sports venues and promoting the importance of Suicide Prevention First Aid and signposting to local resources and sources of help.

These are the organisations that have been visiting during the year.

SPORTS CLUBS

11 have been contacted and further connections made at the Sport Voice Forums. Newbury Canoe Club booked a whole Saturday session for 12 of their members, and it is hoped to repeat this in the future. Newbury Rugby Club have been contacted and will discuss at future at a future meeting, but are confident training will be booked. A local Sports Therapist and representative of Hungerford and Thatcham Rugby Clubs is very keen to have training delivered at some point in the future.

WINE BARS/PUBS

10 visited and always agree to take information and share as able. We are very keen to be able to have "QR" stickers to allow permanent access to information, for example inside of toilet doors, at bars etc

CAFÉ/COFFEE SHOPS

15 have been visited, and more planned as new premises have been opened in differing venues. The coffee shop at East Garston were particularly interested in organising some future training either in their premises or at a local hall.

SURGERIES

Attendance at a Social Prescriber's meeting allowed connections with 5 surgeries. Furthermore a local G.P attended a session and we were asked to then deliver

a whole session to Kintbury/Woolton Hill to many of their members of staff

HAIRDRESSERS/BARBERS

5 premises visited, with information shared

SHOPS/CHARITY SHOPS

17 shops/coffee shops visited and information left. Notably visiting craft shop in Parkway and conversation about what we do led to good advice to visit Max's coffee shop in the Kennet Centre. This is on our agenda to achieve as Max has created a very community orientated "safe place" for all to visit.

VCSE

Foodbank, Greenham Control Tower, Newbury Pride, Pangbourne Rotary Club, Men's Shed Fairclose, Run Together runners, as a runner herself, Sue has shared information with many at events she attends locally.

MISCELLANEOUS

Care Home, Newbury College, West Berks Council, Europarts, SUP Buddies, The Beauty Box Pangbourne, Swift Logistics, Vegan Tattoos, Care Agency, Fire Station Theale, Learning2gether (local Nurse Education), Charlie's Nails nr Hermitage, Basingstoke College, Dog Groomers, Taxi Firm, Bus Drivers.

Suicide First Aid Courses delivered

Sue has been upskilled this year so that she can deliver Suicide Prevention First Aid for those working with Children and Young People in addition to the Adult Suicide Prevention First Aid workshops.

10 Adult Courses have been delivered and 95 individuals have been trained from charities and voluntary organisations as well as businesses and Health professionals in West Berkshire, including Newbury Soup Kitchen, Loose Ends, Two Saints and Racing welfare, alongside sport organisations, estate agents, care homes and counsellors.

We are so proud of Sue's continued contribution to this valuable role. Many talk anecdotally of the impact of the courses they attend. People are given a renewed confidence to help someone who is giving signs they are in distress. In fact, she has heard of 3 occasions where the skills taught have been used. Being kind and taking the time to care ultimately helps someone move from that place of danger to a place of safety, life is so precious, and as Molly Russell's father said so eloquently after the loss of his precious daughter –

"However dark it seems, there is always hope".



This is an excellent course to go on and totally worth a few hours of your time.....the advice and tools given are so worth it.

Quote from one attendee.



Sue Bennett
Suicide Prevention Outreach Worker
Sue works 8 hours a week and can be contacted by email on wbspag@vcwb.org.uk

WBSPAG
westberkshiresuicideprevention.org

UKRAINE FAMILY LIAISON

Working closely with the Welfare Officers at the West Berkshire Council Response Hub as well as other stakeholders, we have advised, guided and supported families and individuals across the county. We feel confident that we have fulfilled all of the requirements needed and feel very fortunate to have Fee as a well-known figure within this community.

Across West Berkshire, Fee has built valuable relationships with over 50 relevant charities and organisations, strategically planning a viable referral process so she could monitor and feedback data and fast track any problems or achievements.

She had weekly meetings with the two Welfare officers from the Homes for Ukraine Response Hub. Our work was split into supporting single adults and parents and children, with permission from Guests and Hosts, the Welfare officers connect them with me. From April 2023 to March 2024 Fee worked with 272 families or individuals. Each referral can have subsequent enquiries so in total 562 referrals in the last year.

TYPES OF REFERRALS

Areas of need	Approx. figure	Charity & organisations across West Berkshire
Babies, toddlers and children activities 0 – 17 year old	127	Basketball, music, singing, art, photography, dance, Scouts, tennis, sailing, English lessons, chess, pony riding, bike riding, Homestart, Cowshed, Educafe - Parent Village, Toddler groups. Watermill. CAB. NHS Healthy start voucher
Adult English classes	133	Berkshire school of English. Educafe. Chatty Corner, Vicci, Burley College, The Step programme with the British Council
Work advice	103	Adviza, recruitment companies. Job adverts. Smart Works, Springboard, ENIC UK. DBS information. The Refugee Council. Government website, DWP, Job centre. Voluntary work. World Jewish Relief. Berkshire Opportunities, The Princes Trust
Benefit advice	62	Meeting with CAB on Universal credit, managing a journal. Child Benefit. Pension. DWP. Centre of Sustainable Energy.
Education, higher education	85	Met and advised parents with 'in-year' school admission information and online form filling
Mental health support	48	Sport in Mind, Time2Talk, Talking Therapies, Bear Us in Mind, Barnardos, Tellmi, Emotional Health Academy, Bear Us in Mind, NHS GP
Disability	2	NHS links, Adult Social Care, Educafe, Chatty Corner, VCWB, Careers and Participation team
Facebook posts	87	Charity offers, updates and news relevant to the West Berks Ukraine Support Group



This project has now ended.

All enquiries about ongoing Ukrainian Support should be sent to ukraine@westberks.gov.uk



To summarise, this job could not have been done without the support from all of the wonderful charities and CIC organisations across West Berkshire, without their help these people wouldn't be as settled here.

In the last 18 months we have worked flexibly in the approach to the demands and obstacles managing nearly 350 cases, 272 in the last year. Fee created an effective referral system to the monitor milestones, written and delivered monthly and quarterly reports, and built some really strong connections with partners.

Many people are now settled having found new homes, school places, English lessons, recreational activities, wellbeing support and importantly jobs.

A young boy was helped to join Newbury Swimming club, he is now winning county competitions and cups, his parent is doing well learning English, and seeking employment, it's lovely to see them happier and grow in confidence. 6 of the employee workshop attendees have found steady work. 2 signed up to the Skills Bootcamp course and have since found work professionally. One referral is more settled after attending Sport in Mind sessions. We have five recent referrals all attending Educafe Chatty Corner each week, their English speaking is improving by the day and they're making new friends and connections.

Overall we feel that this role has helped to deliver a successful community project.

AREAS REACHED

Areas of West Berkshire	Number of adults/families
Aldermaston	3
Beedon	2
Compton	3
Enborne	1
Newbury	226
Pangbourne	40
Stockcross	3
Streatley	13
Thatcham	12
Theale	10
Tilehurst	2

FUNDRAISING AND FUNDING ADVICE

Fundraising is key to the successful delivery of our services and it was through Sara's hard work and effort that the following funds were raised this year through The Good Exchange.

2023-24 Suicide Prevention Outreach Worker £6,612 was raised which was 93% of what was needed (£7036). £50 came from a **private donation**, £5000 from **Greenham Trust** and £1,500 from **Miss Lawrence Trust**

V365 Volunteer Recruitment Fayre, £500 was donated by **Greenham Trust Youth Distribution Committee**.

All funding requires evaluation and good evaluation takes time to pull together. Thankfully another great job done with successful outcomes for us.

Following the evaluation of the first year of funding for our CVS Function Project – Voluntary Support for Voluntary Action, **Greenham Trust** extended their annual funding of £12,000 to 2025.

After our first year evaluation September 2022 to August 2023 of our Post Covid Challenge project funded by the **Big Lottery Community Fund** we were awarded a **cost of living uplift of £15,092** a year for the next four years to cover the increase in staff costs.

FUNDING ADVICE

During the year we receive requests from charities and groups for advice and guidance on their financial needs, typically around fundraising or bid writing. In practice this means doing some research about the organisation ahead of the meeting, using the meeting to discuss their needs and then offering guidance and advice that helps them to meet their needs as well as a follow up help and check in afterwards. One to one advice sessions with follow up help were given to:

- 8 Bells
- Speen Café
- Purley Park Residential Homes
- The Art of Giving CIC
- Stratfield and Mortimer Parish Council
- Interakt
- ABC to Read
- Project Salama
- Guide Dogs
- ASD Family Help

FORUMS

The Children and Young People's Voice met 4 times during the year. Rosemary Lilley was elected independent chair in May 2023. There were speakers on two occasions, one from West Berkshire Council on "My Family Plan" and the other on writing bids for funding from Berkshire Community Foundation. Attendance has returned to pre Covid levels.

The Suicide Prevention Action Group met three times during the year. There was regular reporting from the Suicide Prevention Outreach Worker and a presentation was given on the TellMi App which is a digital mental health service for young people across West Berkshire for peer support and access to professional support, if judged needed. Work is still underway to create a West Berkshire branch of SOBS (Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide).



Wow you are amazing, that is a lot of information and I love it, thank you so much for all the emails and your time today, very generous and kind spirited of you. I will be back in touch, hopefully with a bid for you to look at with your wise eyes. Cheers,

Safe Pastures SEND Family Support

I just wanted to say a huge thanks for your help checking through the bids for us. Your comments were helpful, direct, and easy to follow to amend what we had. (I did not consider your emails brusque at all). Really grateful that you found the time to do this for us and apologies that you worked late to help us with this. We adjusted both bids and submitted them last week, so now we keep our fingers crossed! I used some of your feedback to look through your eyes when rechecking our Children in Need one too.

ASD Family Help



Sara Hanson
Voluntary Sector Support Officer

Sara retires in May 2024 and we want to say thank you for her steadfast commitment to supporting funding for not just VCWB but the wider VCSE Sector.

PARTNERSHIPS AND ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

This year we have continued to develop partnerships through the 6 forums that bring together the Voluntary Sector to ensure their collective voice is heard. These include the West Berkshire Voluntary Sector Voice, the Voluntary Sector Arts Voice, the Voluntary Sector Sports Voice, Community Transport Operators Voice, the Children and Young People Voice, the SEND Providers' Voice. In addition we support the Poverty and Cost of Living Hub Forum, in collaboration with West Berkshire Council and Greenham Trust. We have facilitated 25 meetings this year and have a total of 231 individuals members in these forums, which is an increase of 45.28% on last year.

We have also started a new Chairs Forum which brings together the chairs of our forums to discuss trends that are affecting all the forums. All of the forums have evolved to bring in statutory partners in a more structured way to encourage good two way communication between our local stakeholders from public services, health and education and our VCSE sector members.

We have continued to strengthen our work with our partners in health and the local authority, in particular with Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board and West Berkshire Councils Public Health Team. We have done this by being engaged with the Health and Wellbeing Board and Steering Group, Health and Wellbeing Locality Integration Board, Ageing Well Task Group and Bucks, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West VCSE Health Alliance events and activities.

In addition, we have worked on consultation and engagement projects around Mental Health Pathways and the new Primary Care Strategy. The mental health pathways project required the facilitation of consultation with members of the public and the VCSE sector organisations working in Mental Health over a few months and the culmination of all the data and feedback in a comprehensive report which has been shared with colleagues and stakeholders from the sector and health. The Primary Care Strategy Engagement project required a one off consultation with a disadvantaged group and in this instance we worked with Two Saints to engage with a group of people experiencing homelessness to understand their experiences of accessing GPs, pharmacies, dentists and opticians and what could be improved.

We have welcomed 11 local and national funders either in person or online to talk about their funds and more specifically meet with local VCSE sector organisations to discuss specific projects and answer questions. Our Meet the Funder Events saw 50 VCSE organisations in West Berkshire attend and have the chance to engage and connect with these funders, start to build relationships and get answers to some of their simple questions to make their fundraising efforts easier.



Rachel Peters,
Partnership and Engagement Manager
rachel@vcwb.org.uk



SEND Providers Voice Members at Mencap



Mental Health pathways consultation workshop in Hungerford

PROJECTS AND TRAINING OFFICER

As a CVS, providing a weekly bulletin to the sector is important so they can keep on top of the relevant sector news and promote their own events and opportunities and find out about training and funding opportunities.

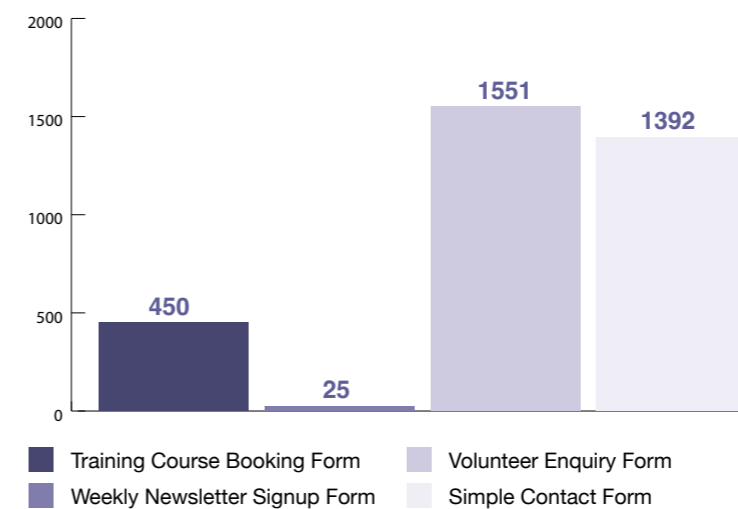
Digital Activity

Newsletter: 51 newsletters circulated to 845 subscribers, from 1st April 2023 to 31 March 2024, an increase of 31 since the previous report. The click rates average is 40.7%.

A wide range of organisations submit training information, charity news, survey and job vacancies for inclusion in the newsletter. During the period of this report 103 training courses and 67 Job opportunity were featured in the weekly newsletters and some multiple times, from a diverse range of organisations, including 23 courses/workshop delivered by VCWB and 248 people attended the courses.

At present there are no analytical tools attached to the website to see how many people view the site, but during the period of the report we have the total number of entries for each WPForm.

This is how our forms performed on the site.



I wanted to email you personally to thank you for all the support you've shown to Berkshire Youth, Waterside Centre and me personally.

Julie MacLean, (Berkshire Youth)

Thank you very much for your email and for your great support. We highly appreciate including our event in your newsletter.

Younger People with Dementia

I heard you do a great weekly newsletter. Please can you add me on?

B Austin

SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT



FACEBOOK

1,698 up 19

VISITS

7.2K

REACH

50.2K

POST REACH

7.2K



X (TWITTER)

2,282 up 5



INSTAGRAM

359

ACCOUNTS REACHED

244

ACCOUNTS ENGAGED

31



LINKEDIN

151 up 65

PAGE VIEW

359

UNIQUE VISITORS

164

POST IMPRESSIONS

1.4K

TRAINING THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

This is a key function of the Voluntary Sector Support we offer as it helps to enhance the skills and capacity of those working within it, ensures compliance with legal and regulatory standards, supports the sustainability and growth of organisations, boosts volunteer engagement and retention, improves service delivery and impact, builds a supportive community network, leverages funding and resources, and enhances the reputation and trust of the sector.

This year we delivered 18 workshops on various subjects, training a total of 214 individuals from the VCSE sector in West Berkshire.

18 workshops
214 individuals

WORKSHOPS

Training Course /Workshops	Number of Courses/Workshop	Delegates
Suicide Prevention First-Aid Training	10	95
Money Matters Workshop	2	22
Evaluation: How to find out if your project worked and why?	1	12
Exploring Gambling Harms	1	8
Theory of Change Course	1	18
Free Essential First-Aid Skills Workshop	2	33
First-Aid Course	1	16
Introduction to leadership Workshop	1	12
Total	18	214



Free Essential First-Aid Skills Workshop delivered by Sue Stovall



Suicide Prevention First Aid delivered by Sue Bennett



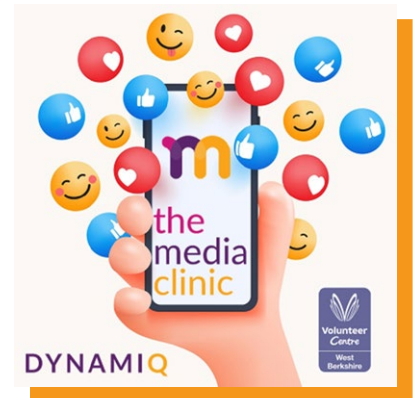
To register for our bulletin scan the QR code



Book training by scanning this QR



Content for our bulletin can be emailed to bulletin@vcwb.org.uk



Welcome to VCWB's Meet the Funder's Day

Understanding the importance of meeting funders and building relationships to secure future grants for the West Berkshire VCSE Sector. Supported by West Berkshire Greenham Trust.



Volunteer Centre
West Berkshire

Charitable Incorporated Organisation Number 1156302

www.volunteerwestberks.org.uk



Mayor's Report to Council 21 October 24

Since my report to the June meeting, I have attended a further 59 events (to 12 October) where the Mayor has been requested and I have been delighted to go; at a large proportion of those I have been accompanied by the Lady Mayoress. There has been a huge variety, but some categories can be identified.

Concerts

Rotary put on the Mayor's Concert at the Corn Exchange; the MC was a former Mayor and there was an eclectic mix of acts including that by another former Mayor. The same MC was at Ace Space to celebrate VCWB's 50th anniversary, and the Symphony Orchestra performed with a nautical theme in St Bart's Hub which included a world premier by 16-year-old Charlotte Robertson.

Sports

Yoga at the Bandstand with the realisation that I should have started this activity well before being 70! Boules in Market Place organised by Rotary for good local causes, with a very flukey opening throw; two months later leading the NTC team to their annual thrashing by Newbury Bowls Club followed by a pleasant social. We were no better at cricket; the NTC team made an early exit from the competition well hosted by Falkland Cricket Club and organised Community United on a beautiful September day.

Openings and Unveilings

Three openings in a single morning in central Newbury: Tracey James Hearing in Wharf Street; Homestart Babybank in new premises in Broadway House and Gail's Café just across from the Town Hall. We joined Newbury Methodist Church to celebrate the opening of the reworked garden with possibly the world's largest Methodist Cross at its centre. At Theale Green School, I unveiled a purple plaque celebrating the inspiring story of former pupil Laura Baylis (from a family with Newbury connections). At Bills the blue plaque marking the former Plaza couldn't be "veiled" but was "opened"; many thanks to the Heritage WG and local historians. More recently, the paparazzi were in town as I was surprised to reveal that Paddington had taken up residence on a bench in Northbrook Street.

Presentations

The autumn season brought requests to present the work of NTC and the Mayor: to a Men's breakfast hosted by Thatcham churches; at dinner with the Rotary Club and to a morning assembly at St Gabriel's School. We are currently in the midst of our Local Democracy offering with primary classes crocodiling in; many thanks to Jo Day and all those taking part.

Arts

To a non-artist, the end of term art exhibitions at Trinity School and Newbury College revealed wonderful variety and imagination, and that clearly carries on in later life as was evident at

Art-on-the-Park in August. It was good to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Arts Society Newbury, followed up by tea and conversation with its chair and a fascinating lecture on Banksy.

Horticulture

The immense amount of hard work that goes into gardens and planting across our community was marked with the Newbury in Bloom awards; judging and organising that is an equal labour, but clearly done with love: congratulations to the Growing Newbury Green Group. After squeezing apples in the Market Place, we went to Wash Common allotments to celebrate harvest and receive gifts for the Foodbank.

More formally

What an honour to wear the Mayor's chain at the funeral of Jeff Beck (a former wearer) and celebration of his life of service. I also wrote to the family of Val Bull (former Mayor) who died in July but requested no funeral. We marked the 60th anniversary of Twinning with Braunfels with a pleasant ceremony in the chamber. A few days ago, the beginning of the Judicial Year was marked by a service in Reading Minster attended by Mayors from across the county among many others led by the High Sheriff.

Mayor's Charity

We have held two coffee mornings and a bingo night with West Berks Foodbank, and plans are in hand for Carols in the Dolphin, a Burn's Night Barn Dance and a reprise of last year's gig featuring similar bands. The support of the civic team for these events has been excellent, and so far, they have ensured that I have arrived at the right time and place with briefing on all occasions.

Deputy Mayor

David has attended AGMs for the Patient Information Point (at the Community Hospital) for Citizen's Advice (who will be with us at this meeting). He awarded prizes at Sports Personality of the Year for Trinity School and celebrated Matildos Lithuanian School's first year at Horris Hill School. He represented Newbury as the USAF marked its 77th anniversary at RAF Fairford, and most recently has been to the Mosque Open Day at the West Berkshire Muslim Centre's base at Riverside.

Meeting of Newbury Town Council, Monday 21 October 2024.

Agenda Item: Chief Executive Officer's Report.

A) Staffing:

- 1) **Committee Clerk:** Kym Heasman has been successfully appointed as the new NTC Committee Clerk, she will take responsibility in ensuring that all Committee/Council Meetings are run smoothly and that the Council complies with their legal duties.
- 2) **Town Hall Officer:** It has been agreed that the Town Hall Officer go on a 3-month sabbatical from 16 October. The Town Hall functions will be supported through existing staffing in the short term.
- 3) **Staff Structure:** the Management Team has developed a staff structure based on the feedback from staff and this has been presented to the Staffing Sub Committee and Policy and Working Group and is a later agenda item.
- 4) **Office Location:** as part of staff structure review, NTC is planning on moving the location of the office from its current location to Suite One in the Town Hall. This will enable staff to work more closely and centrally.
- 5) **Training:** Staff have had their H&S training reviewed and updated

B) Town Hall: NTC is currently working on a Strategy for the Town Hall, this is to ensure there are clear aims and objectives for the Town Hall. This will develop a clear focus on either revenue generation or social value. The strategy will also detail a schedule of works for the Town Hall for response and cyclical repairs to ensure that the Town Hall is maintained to a high standard. The strategy will also outline how the building will be managed (whether there is a need for a working group etc).

C) Victoria Park Kiosk: we have progressed to pre-planning application stage, discussions with West Berks Council have been productive and there is work to do to revise our plans to meet EPC standards.

D) NTC Policies: we are continuing to update our policies and procedures.

E) Town Council events:

- a. Remembrance Day Parade is scheduled for 10 November 2024, we are expecting a large turnout for this event.
- b. Annual Bowls Match: this was my first competitive bowls match, ever. I had some excellent coaching from the Leader of the Council. Unfortunately, my shoulder had not fully recovered from previous injury and I was not able to translate the advice into a good performance!
- c. Local Democracy: has been a great success, with more schools than ever signing up.

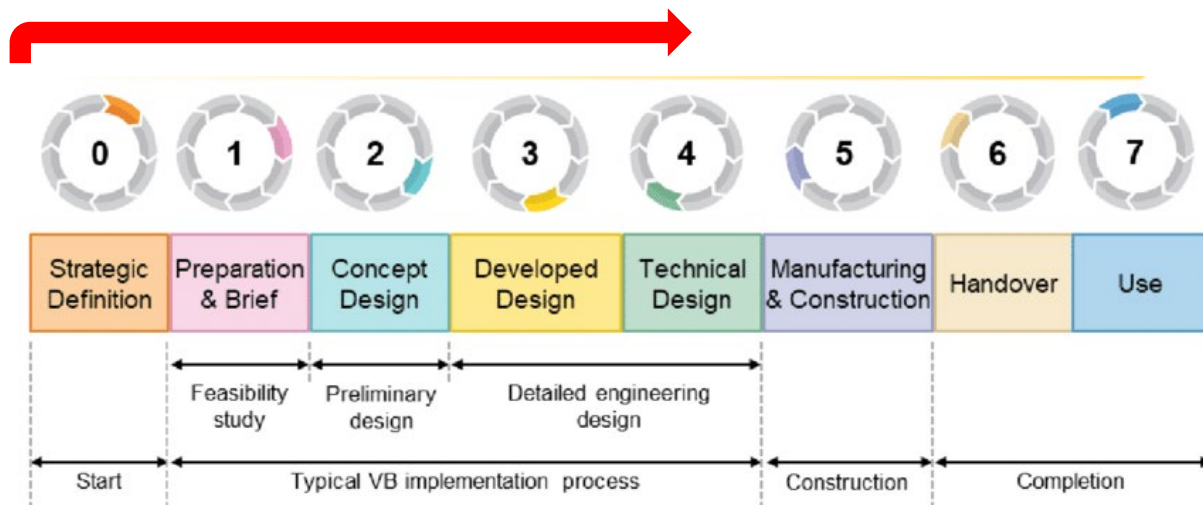
Victoria Park Café Work Plan – Update of 16.10.24

The Work Plan (RIBA model), consists of eight stages, numbered 0 to 7. Each stage represents a phase in the project lifecycle and is designed to ensure that all aspects of the project are considered and addressed.

1. **RIBA Stage 0: Strategic Definition** – In this stage, the project’s objectives, constraints, and requirements are defined. Stakeholders are identified, and their needs and expectations are considered.
2. **RIBA Stage 1: Preparation and Brief** – The project brief is developed, outlining the client’s requirements, project scope, and key performance indicators. A feasibility study may be conducted to assess the project’s viability.
3. **RIBA Stage 2: Concept Design** – Initial design concepts are developed, and the preferred design solution is chosen. This stage includes preliminary cost estimates and risk assessments.
4. **RIBA Stage 3: Spatial Coordination** – The chosen design concept is developed into a coordinated architectural, structural, and services design. This stage includes the preparation of planning applications, building regulations submissions, and detailed cost estimates.
5. **RIBA Stage 4: Technical Design** – Technical details are finalised, including specifications, schedules, and drawings. The design is coordinated with other disciplines, and any necessary adjustments are made.
6. **RIBA Stage 5: Construction** – The project is constructed according to the technical design, with regular site inspections and progress reports to ensure quality and compliance with the design.
7. **RIBA Stage 6: Handover and Closeout** – The project is handed over to the client after construction. Any defects or issues are rectified, and final documentation is provided.
8. **RIBA Stage 7: In Use** – The performance of the completed project is monitored and evaluated. Feedback is collected to inform future projects and improve the design process.

Victoria Park Café Work Plan – Update of 16.10.24

Update of 10.10.24 progress - we are here...



RIBA Stage 0: Strategic Definition - Completed

RIBA Stage 1: Preparation and Brief – Completed

RIBA Stage 2: Concept Design – Completed

RIBA Stage 3: Spatial Coordination – Planning Applications Outstanding (see Stage 4) and one Building Regulation ref: EPC/Insulation specification.

RIBA Stage 4: Technical Design - We are here!

- WIP multi discipline schedules in place subject to clarifications needed for electrical supplies, CCTV, type of existing foundations to kiosk and waste management solution. Advice being sought from planning representatives regarding use of the west end of the air raid shelter conversion to house a Grundon style bin waste enclosure. As this is a change from the original brief (demolish the air raid shelter) this will need to be approved by committee/full council) Once formally agreed the formal planning application will be submitted. Final minor amends to the interior design incorporated for the new café operator, these are worktops and small utility cupboard.

Other planned works started are...

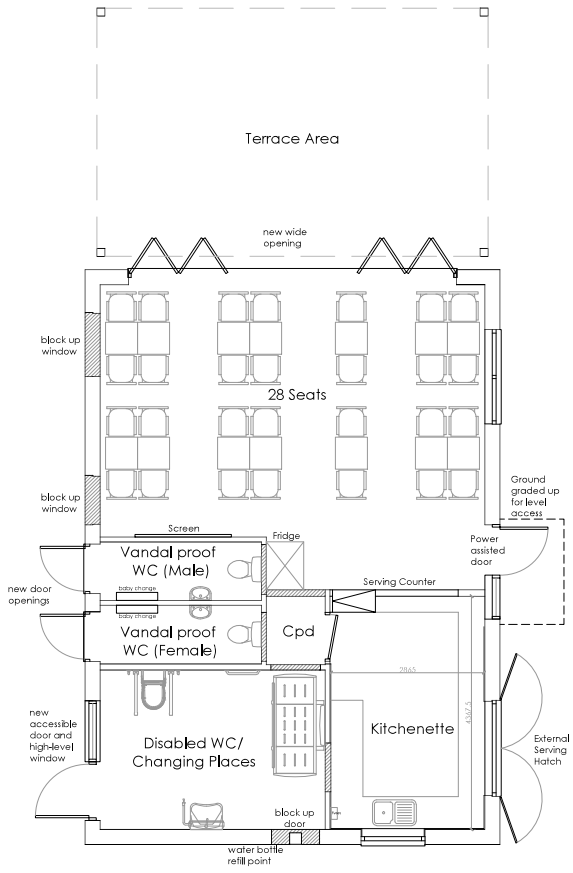
Tender documents, planning validation, bat survey, review if EA rain garden is still a requirement and electrical (supply side) investigations. Review CCTV provision for the café and park, note this may form part of the wider Newbury Town Centre CCTV review.

Please refer to bar chart and revised layout plans.

Victoria Park Café Work Plan – Update of 16.10.24

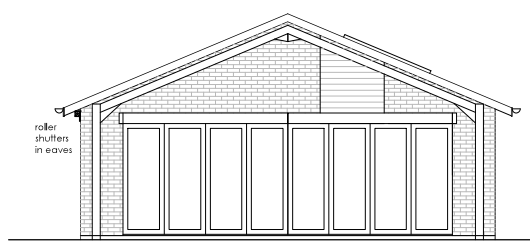
These can be broadly categorised into the following stages:

- Professional team appointments
- Brief development with the client
- Concept design creation
- Design coordination
- Preparation and application for planning consent
- Construction information development
- Tender preparation
- Acquisition of pre-construction consents
- Building contract awarding
- Building construction
- Construction inspection
- Building handover

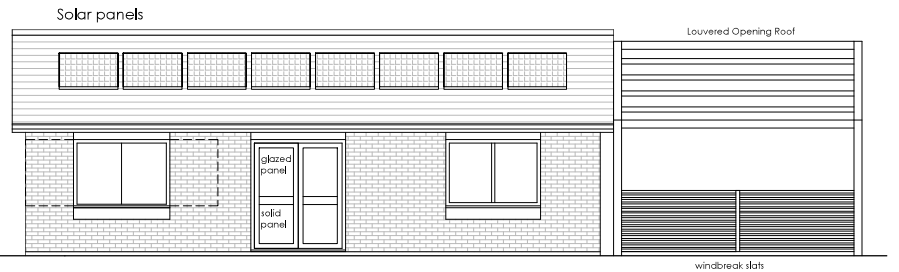


Ground Floor Plan
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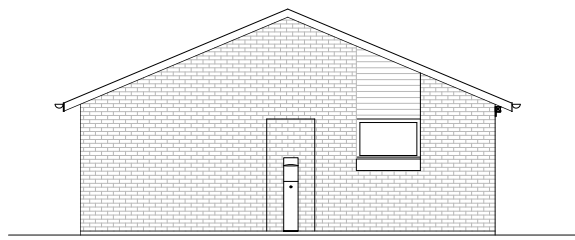
Option 2 - Rev B



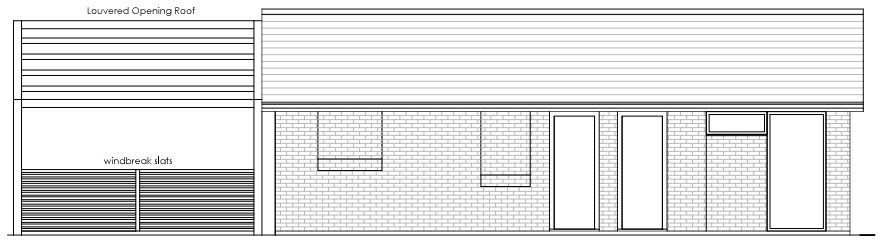
Side Elevation (East)
Scale: 1:50



Front Elevation (South)
Scale: 1:50



Side Elevation (West)
Scale: 1:50



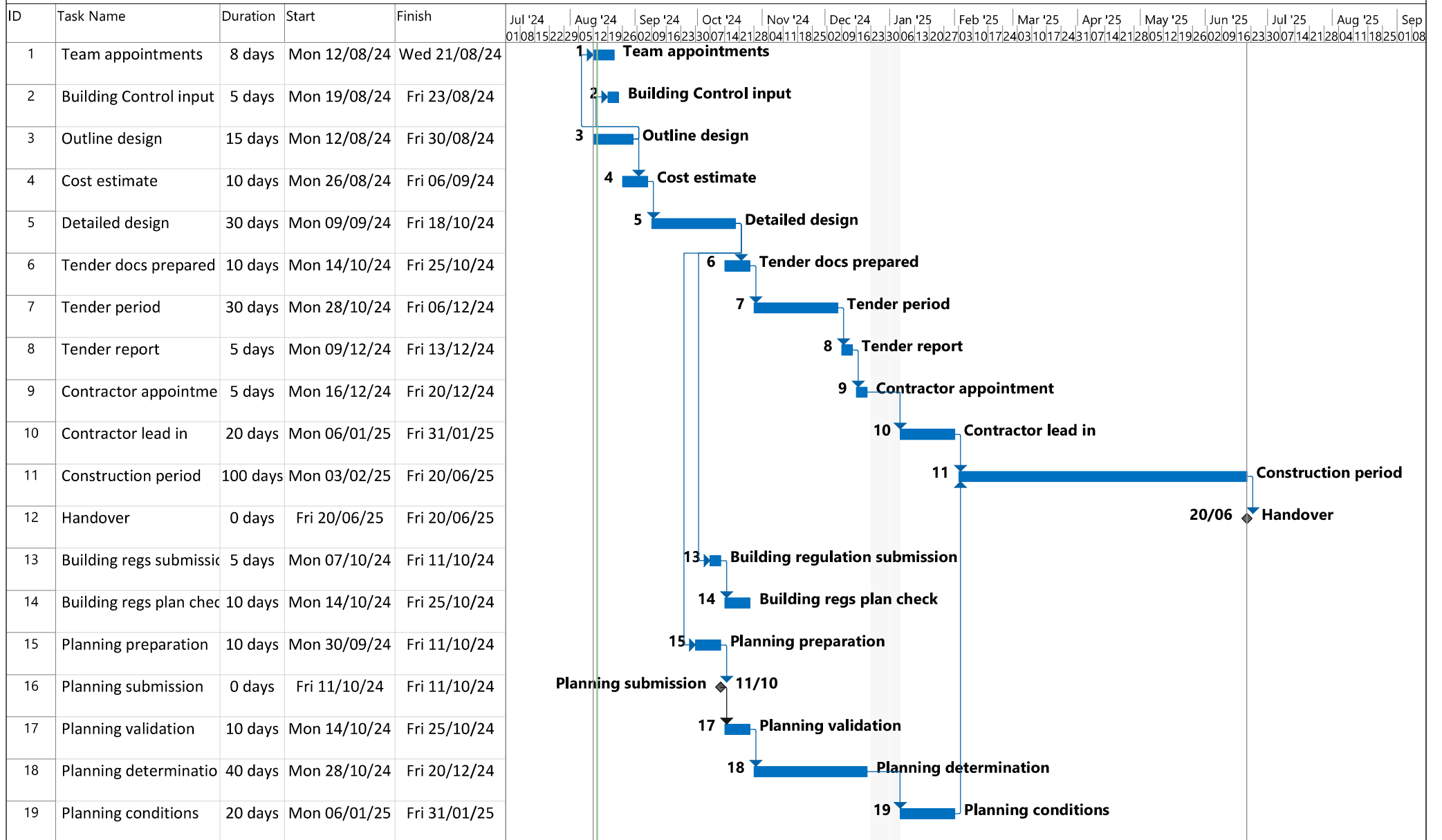
Rear Elevation (North)
Scale: 1:50

R	21/08/24	Layout Updated	TM
A	28/05/24	Int. Layout/Ext. Concepts Updated	TM
Rev.	Date	Description	Drawn
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VICTORIA PARK CAFE REPURPOSING

NEWBURY TOWN COUNCIL

TARGET TIME LINE





Financial Regulations

Date Issued: July 2024	Date Reviewed: July 2024
Effective Date:	Review Date

These Financial Regulations were adopted by the Council at its meeting held on [enter date].

NEWBURY TOWN COUNCIL – FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

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1 General

- 1.1. These Financial Regulations govern the financial management of the Council and shall only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council. They are one of the Council's governing documents and shall be observed in conjunction with the Council's Standing Orders.
- 1.2. Councillors are expected to follow these regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow these regulations brings the office of Councillor into disrepute.
- 1.3. Wilful breach of these regulations by an employee may result in disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.4. In these Financial Regulations:
 - 'Accounts and Audit Regulations' means the regulations issued under Sections 32, 43(2) and 46 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and then in force, unless otherwise specified.
 - "Approve" refers to an online action, allowing an electronic transaction to take place.
 - "Authorise" refers to a decision by the Council, or a committee or an officer, to allow something to happen.
 - 'Proper practices' means those set out in *The Practitioners' Guide*
 - *Practitioners' Guide* refers to the guide issued by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) and published by NALC in England or Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales – A Practitioners Guide jointly published by One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks in Wales.
 - 'Must' and **bold text** refer to a statutory obligation the Council cannot change.
 - 'Shall' refers to a non-statutory instruction by the Council to its members and staff.
- 1.5. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office, appointed by the Council. The RFO:
 - acts under the policy direction of the Council;
 - administers the Council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
 - determines on behalf of the Council its accounting records and control systems;
 - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;

- ensures the accounting records are kept up to date;
- seeks economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of Council resources; and
- produces financial management information as required by the Council.

1.6. The Council must not delegate any decision regarding:

- **setting the final budget or the precept (Council tax requirement);**
- **the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of its internal controls**
- **approving accounting statements;**
- **approving an annual governance statement;**
- **borrowing;**
- **declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and**
- **addressing recommendations from the internal or external auditors**

1.7. In addition:

1.7.1. the Policy & Resources Committee, on behalf of the Council shall determine and regularly review the bank mandate for all Council bank accounts

1.7.2. the Policy & Resources Committee, with the Grants Sub-committee shall authorise all grants on behalf of the Council.

2 Risk management and internal control

2.1. The Council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.

2.2. The CEO, with the RFO, shall prepare, for discussion with the Audit Working Group and approval by the Policy & Resources Committee, a risk management policy covering all activities of the Council. This policy and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the Policy & Resources Committee at least annually.

2.3. When considering any new activity, the Lead Manager, with the CEO, shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the Policy & Resources Committee.

2.4. At least once a year, the Council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control, before approving the Annual Governance Statement.

2.5. **The accounting control systems determined by the RFO must include measures to:**

- **ensure that risk is appropriately managed**
- **ensure the prompt, accurate recording of financial transactions**
- **that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money**
- **prevent and detect inaccuracy or fraud, and**
- **allow the reconstitution of any lost records**
- **identify the duties of officers dealing with transactions, and**
- **ensure division of responsibilities.**

2.6. On a monthly basis, and at each financial year end, a member of the Audit Working Group other than the Chair of Council, the Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee, or a bank signatory shall, on a rotational basis, verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign and date the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of this. This activity, including any exceptions, shall be reported to the Policy & Resources Committee, which shall approve the bank reconciliations on a quarterly basis and at year-end.

2.7. Regular back-up copies shall be made of the records on any Council computer and stored either online or in a separate location from the computer. The Council shall put measures in place to ensure that the ability to access any Council computer is not lost if an employee leaves or is incapacitated for any reason.

3 Accounts and audit

3.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

3.2. **The accounting records determined by the RFO must be sufficient to explain the Council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonably accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:**

- **day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the Council and the matters to which they relate;**
- **a record of the assets and liabilities of the Council;**

- 3.3. The accounting records shall be designed to facilitate the efficient preparation of the accounting statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.
- 3.4. The RFO shall complete and certify the annual Accounting Statements of the Council contained in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with proper practices, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Having certified the Accounting Statements, the RFO shall submit them (with any related documents) to the Policy & Resources Committee, for recommendation to Full Council for approval, within the timescales required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.5. **The Council must ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and internal control system in accordance with proper practices.**
- 3.6. **Any officer or member of the Council must make available such documents and records as the internal or external auditor consider necessary for the purpose of the audit** and shall, as directed by the Council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the Council considers necessary.
- 3.7. The internal auditor shall be appointed by the Policy & Resources Committee and shall carry out their work to evaluate the effectiveness of the Council's risk management, control and governance processes in accordance with proper practices specified in the Practitioners' Guide.
- 3.8. The Policy & Resources Committee shall ensure that the internal auditor:
 - 3.8.1. is competent and independent of the financial operations of the Council;
 - 3.8.2. reports to Council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one written report during each financial year;
 - 3.8.3. can demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
 - 3.8.4. has no involvement in the management or control of the Council
- 3.9. Internal or external auditors shall not under any circumstances:
 - 3.9.1. perform any operational duties for the Council;
 - 3.9.2. initiate or approve accounting transactions;

- 3.9.3. provide financial, legal or other advice including in relation to any future transactions; or
- 3.9.4. direct the activities of any Council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 3.10. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms ‘independent’ and ‘independence’ shall have the same meaning as described in The Practitioners Guide.
- 3.11. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors’ rights in relation to the accounts, including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and documents required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.12. The RFO and CEO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all Councillors via the Policy & Resources and full Council meetings respectively, any report from the internal or external auditors.
- 3.13. Further to receipt of the internal and external auditor’s reports, the RFO shall, if considered helpful, make arrangements to discuss matters raised with the Audit Working Group, prior to taking recommendations to the Policy & Resources Committee.

4 Budget and precept

- 4.1. **Before setting a precept, the Council must calculate its Council tax requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.**
- 4.2. The RFO shall write to members, beginning October, inviting suggestions for the budget in line with the Strategy, for consideration by the Committees. To be received by the end of October, the RFO to include in the draft budget.
- 4.3. The RFO shall meet with Officers in October to discuss the demands on the budget for ‘lights-on’, asset management and capital expenditure for planned projects. The RFO to include in the draft budget.
- 4.4. Budgets for salaries and wages, including employer contributions and the salary reallocation hours by cost centre, shall be reviewed by the Staff Sub-Committee at least annually; in October/beginning November, further to the annual appraisals. The schedule agreed by committee shall inform the budget for the following financial year. The RFO shall inform committees of the

- implications of any salary commitments and associated officer allocated hours, before they consider their draft their budgets.
- 4.5. No later than middle November each year, the RFO shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all income and expenditure for the following financial year, along with a forecast for the following four financial years, taking account of the lifespan of assets and cost implications of repair or replacement.
 - 4.6. Unspent budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year. Unspent funds for partially completed projects shall only be carried forward (by placing them in an earmarked reserve) with the formal approval of the full Council.
 - 4.7. Each committee shall review its draft budget and submit any proposed amendments for Council consideration to the RFO, no later than the end of November each year.
 - 4.8. The Strategy Working Group shall consider committee proposals beginning December and make recommendations. The RFO to incorporate in the draft budget.
 - 4.9. The RFO by end December shall update the draft budget, with the recommendations of the Strategy Working Group, to include a four-year forecast, and any recommendations for the use or accumulation of reserves, for consideration by the Policy & Resources Committee in January.
 - 4.10. The Council shall consider annual budget proposals in relation to the Council's four-year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments, including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding, and update the forecast accordingly.
 - 4.11. Having considered the proposed budget and four-year forecast, the Council shall determine its Council tax requirement by setting a budget. The Council shall set a precept for this amount no later than the end of January for the ensuing financial year.
 - 4.12. **Any member with Council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.**
 - 4.13. The RFO shall **issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of February**, or the date requested by the billing authority, whichever is

- earliest, and supply each member and officer with a copy of the agreed annual budget.
- 4.14. The agreed budget provides a basis for monitoring progress during the year by comparing actual spending and income against what was planned.
- 4.15. Any addition to, or withdrawal from, any earmarked reserve during the financial year, other than expenditure for the purpose agreed, shall be approved by the Policy & Resources Committee. This to support the management of the budget and the material direction of the Council's Strategy.
- 4.16. The RFO shall coordinate the annual budget & precept information leaflet to residents.
- 4.17. The sum total of the general reserves shall always be a minimum of three months' annual net revenue expenditure. Ear-marked Reserves, set aside to support specific areas of Council work, shall not be taken into consideration when calculating the General Reserves. The Council's general reserves shall be held with a financial institution other than the Council's day to day bankers with understood minimum risk. They shall not be committed or used to cover any expenditure unless an emergency and all other financial avenues have been explored.

5 Procurement

- 5.1. **Members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.** Any officer procuring goods, services or works shall ensure, as far as practicable, that the best available terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from several suppliers.
- 5.2. Where an officer is aware they have or may have a personal or prejudicial interest with a current or potential supplier, they must declare it to their line manager and the CEO at the earliest opportunity. Appropriate arrangements shall be agreed to ensure these interests do not affect procurement decisions. A register shall be kept to record the interests and steps taken.
- 5.3. Every contract shall comply with the Council's Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations and no exceptions shall be made, except in an emergency.
- 5.4. **For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value exceeds the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.**

- 5.5. Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the Council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 5.7) obtain prices as follows:
- 5.5.1. Where the value is between £100 and £999 excluding VAT, the Lead Officer shall strive to obtain 3 estimates, which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers, unless a specialist or single source supply is necessary. For smaller purchases, the Lead Officer shall seek to achieve value for money.
- 5.5.2. For contracts between £1,000 and £25,000 excluding VAT the Lead Officer shall obtain 3 written quotations detailing priced descriptions of the proposed supply unless a specialist or single source support is necessary. If it is not possible to obtain 3 quotes, approval may be given by the RFO.
- 5.5.3. **For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the Council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation¹ regarding the advertising of contract opportunities and the publication of notices about the award of contracts.**
- 5.5.3.1. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with the Council's procurement policy.
- 5.5.4. **For contracts estimated to be over the following thresholds, the Council must comply with the procurement procedures as specified within the Public Contracts Regulations 2015**
- 5.5.4.1. **Public Works Contracts: £5,372,609 including VAT**
- 5.5.4.2. **Public Service Contracts: £ 214,904 including VAT**
- 5.5.4.3. **Public Supply Contracts: £ 214,904 including VAT**
- 5.6. **Contracts must not be split into smaller lots to avoid compliance with these rules.**
- 5.7. Quotations and Estimates received, together with the evidence of those sought, are to be filed centrally for audit and follow-up purposes.
- 5.8. The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:
- 5.8.1. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes;

¹ The Regulations require Councils to use the Contracts Finder website if they advertise contract opportunities and also to publicise the award of contracts over £30,000 including VAT, regardless of whether they were advertised.

- 5.8.2. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment;
 - 5.8.3. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract;
 - 5.8.4. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.
- 5.9. When applications are made to waive this financial regulation to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason shall be set out in a recommendation to the relevant committee. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.
- 5.10. The Council, its committees or delegated officers, as appropriate, shall not be obliged to accept the lowest of any tender, quote or estimate, but must have a valid reason for not doing so.
- 5.11. The Council supports and commits to consider social value in its procurement procedures. Preference will be given to local suppliers, preferably independent, provided value for money, quality, time efficient goods and services are offered.
- 5.12. The Council may contract with preferred suppliers. These opportunities shall be advertised in consideration of the legislation, depending on value.
- 5.12.1. A contract shall usually be agreed for two years, with the opportunity to extend for one further year.
 - 5.12.2. The agreement of an hourly rate, day rate or job rate must be a condition of contract, which may be increased by CPI as from 1st April; the year to be specified dependent on start date.
 - 5.12.3. A break clause must be agreed in consideration of both the Council and the contractor.
- 5.13. The Council may open business trade accounts to support the purchase of routine everyday items e.g. materials, tools and stationery.
- 5.13.1. Any trade card account opened by the Council shall be restricted to named officers, recommended by the manager and agreed by the CEO in discussion with the RFO. Any balance shall be paid in full each month.
- 5.14. **Authorisation of Expenditure – Revenue expenditure agreed by Council at its annual budget meeting, usually January, or by the Policy & Resources committee within the financial year.**

5.14.1. Other than in an emergency, expenditure shall only be authorised by the 'Lead Officer' with responsibility for the budget line (nominal code), under delegated authority, subject to:

5.14.1.1. The level of their spending authority.

- Expenditure above a Lead Officer's spending authority must additionally be agreed by their line manager and/or the CEO and RFO, with the appropriate spending authority. Delegated spending authority levels are as follows:
 - Officers authorised by their manager – spending authority up to £500 (ex VAT) as agreed on an individual basis.
 - Line manager to recommend, CEO, in discussion with RFO, to agree.
 - A manager of the Council – spending authority up to £1,500 (ex VAT)
 - The CEO and RFO together – spending authority up to £25,000 (ex VAT)
 - The RFO to confirm sufficiency of funds.
 - The CEO to confirm the expenditure is within the Council Strategy.
 - Full Council for expenditure over £25,000 (ex VAT).
 - The usual process is via the appropriate (lead) committee and the Policy & Resources committee, who require an overview of the financial situation. In exceptional circumstances, once a project is established and funding agreed, full Council may resolve that the lead committee shall make their recommendation direct. If this is agreed, the financial overview must be made available to the Policy & Resources Committee for their quarterly meeting.

5.14.1.2. There being sufficient remaining in the budget line (nominal code) for all planned expenditure over the remainder of the financial year.

5.14.1.3. That the spend does not cause the budget for the nominal code to be exceeded.

- If funds within a nominal code are insufficient, at the request of the Lead Officer, the RFO may vire funds from another nominal code,

subject to the agreement of the Lead Officer for both nominal codes, their managers, the CEO and RFO.

5.14.1.4. Where **capital** expenditure has been approved by Council for general improvements / projects e.g. play areas, the expenditure is in line with the committee's recorded priorities, previously resolved by the appropriate committee and recorded in the minutes.

5.15. Requested expenditure that has arisen **since** the agreement of the budget by Council, for which there is no allocated budget, must be approved by the Policy & Resources Committee.

5.15.1. Any such agreement of the Policy & Resources committee must be in consideration of from where the funding is to be vired. Such authorisation must be supported by a minute.

5.16. No individual member, or informal group of members shall issue an official order unless instructed to do so in advance by a resolution of the Council, or make any contract on behalf of the Council

5.17. No expenditure shall be authorised that shall exceed the budget for that type of expenditure other than by resolution of the Council, or by the Policy & Resources Committee, except in an emergency.

5.18. The RFO shall provide the Policy & Resources committee with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each budget line (nominal code), comparing actual expenditure to that expected for the time of year. These statements are to be prepared at least at the end of each financial quarter and show explanations of material variances, both over and under, for both income and expenditure. For this purpose, "material" shall be over or under £1,000 or 15%.

5.19. No committee, individual councillor or officer, shall request, encourage or pressurise any officer of the Council to spend, where there are no pre-agreed funds.

5.20. In cases of serious risk to the delivery of Council services or to public safety on Council premises, the CEO may authorise expenditure of up to £25,000 excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The CEO shall report such action to the Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee as soon as possible and to Policy & Resources Committee as soon as practicable thereafter.

- 5.21. No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into, or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.
- 5.22. A Purchase Order shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared for which a Standing Order or Direct Debit is required, or where expenditure falls within one of the categories for which an Officer's debit card may be used. See section 12 entitled "Payments requiring a payment card".
- 5.23. Whilst recognising that most deliveries are left on the doorstep, with the driver often taking a photograph, when asked to sign that the goods have been received, officers shall sign "unchecked" alongside their signature. This shall usually be on an electronic handheld device. On the rare occasion this is on carbonated slip, a copy to be kept until the goods have been checked and the delivery confirmed correct.
- 5.24. Copies of orders shall be retained until checked against the delivery note by the appropriate officer and confirmed correct.
- 5.25. Any ordering system can be misused and access to them shall be controlled by the RFO.

6 Grants

- 6.1. A budget for grants is agreed at the annual budget meeting, usually January. Grants shall be released during the financial year, as follows, in accordance with the Council's policy statement:
- 6.1.1. Grants to mitigate against the Climate Emergency:
- 6.1.1.1. These shall be considered by the Climate Emergency Working Group and referred to the Grants Sub-Committee for agreement.
- 6.1.2. Grants for Specific Organisations and Purposes:
- 6.1.2.1. These shall be named and included as part of the annual budget with an indicative budget and released by the Policy & Resources committee throughout the year.
- 6.1.3. Small Grants to individual organisations.
- 6.1.3.1. These shall be allocated by the Grants Sub-Committee, to organisations with a project listed with "The Good Exchange".

- 6.2. The Grants Sub-Committee shall resolve grants up to £10,000 and shall make recommendation to the Policy & Resources committee for grants over £10,000. The Policy & Resources committee shall resolve grants up to £25,000. Any grant over £25,000 must only be agreed by full Council.
- 6.3. A copy of the Grants Policy and eligibility criteria shall be available on the website.
- 6.4. Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the Council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when grants are discussed and voted on in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.
- 6.5. Once authorised, grants shall be paid by BACS within the next supplier payments run.
- 6.6. Any collections organised by the Council for charitable purposes, are to be authorised and managed by the appropriate committee.

7 Payment of salaries and allowances

- 7.1. **As an employer, the Council must make arrangements to comply with the statutory requirements of PAYE legislation.**
- 7.2. **Councillors' allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.**
- 7.3. Salary rates shall be agreed by the Council, or the Staff Sub-Committee, dependent on post, in consideration of National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services agreed salary framework. The Staff Sub-Committee shall review these annually, further to the annual appraisals and publication of the annual Local Government Services Pay Agreement.
- 7.4. No changes shall be made to any employee's gross pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Council or Staff Sub-Committee.
- 7.5. Agreed overtime payments, mileage and any other agreed staff expenses shall, on a monthly basis, be authorised by the officer's line manager, coordinated for payroll by the Senior Accounts Officer (or the RFO) and checked by the RFO (or the CEO), thus ensuring no break in the payment of salaries through sickness or annual leave.
- 7.6. Payment of salaries by BACS shall be made, after deduction of tax, national insurance, pension contributions and any similar statutory or discretionary deductions, on the dates stipulated in employment contracts.

- 7.7. Deductions from salary shall be paid to the relevant bodies within the required timescales, provided that each payment is reported, as set out in these regulations above.
- 7.8. Each payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a payroll control account or other separate confidential record, with the total of such payments each calendar month reported in the cashbook.
- 7.9. Any termination payments shall be supported by a report to the Council, setting out a clear business case. Termination payments shall only be authorised by the full Council.
- 7.10. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of employment) shall be summarised to avoid disclosing any personal information.
- 7.11. Engaging interim staff, whether employed, contracted or agency, shall be agreed by the CEO or appropriate manager, under delegated authority, subject to the completion of a business case (prepared prior to the engagement for committee) and providing sufficiency within the budget line for the time period likely required.
- 7.11.1. If contracted, further to confirmation from the RFO regarding funding sufficiency, a purchase order, with the agreed budget line, shall be completed
- 7.11.2. If employed, confirmation in writing from the RFO regarding funding sufficiency, with the agreed budget line, is required.
- 7.11.3. If funds within a nominal code are insufficient, with the agreement of the CEO, the RFO shall via funds from another nominal code, subject to the agreement of the Manager for both nominal codes, the CEO and RFO.
- 7.11.4. If any of the above parties has concerns, the Business Case must be taken to the Policy & Resources committee for consideration.
- 7.11.5. If no concerns, the CEO shall advise the chair of the Staff Sub-committee at the earliest opportunity and provide the RFO with a copy of the Business Case for the information of the Policy & Resources committee at their next meeting.

8 Banking Arrangements

- 8.1. The Council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and authorised by the Policy & Resources Committee. The

RFO is the Council's Service Administrator. The bank mandate shall include member and officer signatories as agreed by Council. The arrangements shall be reviewed annually for security and efficiency.

- 8.2. The Council must have safe and efficient arrangements for making payments, to safeguard against the possibility of fraud or error.
- 8.3. The Council shall endeavour to use electronic payments for all transactions. The Council has no petty-cash facility for payments. Cheques shall be used if the only payment method available. The Policy & Resources Committee shall review these arrangements annually.
- 8.4. The annual review of these Financial Regulations is to be considered as a resolution of Council for the continuance of electronic banking, e.g. BACS, CHAPS, direct debits, standing orders and faster payments.

9 Banking Security

- 9.1. No employee or member shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the Council or its banking, to anyone not authorised in writing by the Council or a duly delegated committee.
- 9.2. Members and officers shall ensure that any computer used for the Council's financial business has adequate security, with anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software installed and regularly updated.
- 9.3. Remembered password facilities shall not be used on any computer used for Council banking.
- 9.4. Account details for suppliers shall only be changed upon written notification by the supplier verified by the Senior Accounts Officer and the RFO. This is a potential area for fraud and the individuals involved shall ensure that any change is genuine. Data held must be checked with suppliers a minimum of every two years.

10 Payments to Suppliers – Invoices requiring payment

- 10.1. All invoices for payment shall be:
 - 10.1.1. matched to the Purchase Order (Senior Accounts Officer)
 - 10.1.2. examined for arithmetical accuracy (Senior Accounts Officer and Lead Officer)
 - 10.1.2.1. Invoices shall be accepted up to 15% over their quotation or estimate, with the agreement of the Lead Officer.
 - 10.1.3. checked to ensure logged to the appropriate expenditure heading (Senior Accounts Officer & RFO)

- 10.1.4. added to a schedule of payments requiring authorisation (Senior Accounts Officer)
- 10.1.5. verified to confirm that the work, goods or services were received, checked and represent expenditure previously authorised by the Council (Lead Officer & Manager)
- 10.1.6. approved by the appropriate manager, and if over £1,500, reviewed by the RFO and authorised by the CEO. Then,
- 10.1.7. The invoices and purchase orders are to be forwarded by the Senior Accounts Officer to the Chair and Vice-Chair of Council and of the following committees: Policy & Resources, Community Services, Civic Pride Arts & Culture and Planning & Highways; requesting the authorisation in writing by two members for the release of the online payments.
- 10.1.8. Evidence shall be retained showing which members authorised the online payment.
- 10.2. All invoices for payment require dual online authorisation, or dual cheque signing. Even where a purchase has been authorised, the payment must also be authorised, and only authorised payments shall be approved or signed to allow the funds to leave the Council's bank.**
- 10.3. Prior to setting up or authorising any payment, responsible officers, usually the Senior Accounts Officer and RFO, shall ensure sufficiency of funds within the current account to cover authorised payments. The RFO, or the Senior Accounts Officer in their absence shall transfer funds from the Instant Access Account as required, allowing approximately £20,000 to cover direct debits and debit card payments.
- 10.4. The Council's usual practice shall be to arrange two payment runs per month for the supplier payments, which shall be paid by BACS. Faster payments or CHAPS may be made by exception, at the discretion of the RFO (see 10.7 & 10.8).
- 10.5. The Council shall make a payment by cheque only as a last resort. However, if the only method of payment available, in addition to 10.1.1 to 10.1.17, the following regulations apply.
- 10.5.1. Cheques or orders for payment in accordance with a resolution or delegated decision shall be signed by two signatories.

- 10.5.2. A signatory having a family or business relationship with the beneficiary of a payment shall not, under any circumstances, be a signatory to that payment.
- 10.5.3. To indicate agreement of the details on the cheque with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall also initial the cheque counterfoil and invoice.
- 10.6. The Policy & Resources committee shall, at each quarterly meeting, receive and ratify the list of supplier payments paid against the invoice over the preceding three months, which shall then be appended to the minutes.
- 10.7. Any payment necessary to comply with contractual terms, to enable late invoices to be paid prior to year-end, or to avoid a charge under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, shall, provided there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, be paid by faster payments. The invoices and purchase orders are to be forwarded by the Senior Accounts Officer to the Chair and Vice-Chair of Council and of the following committees in the usual way: Policy & Resources, Community Services, Civic Pride Arts & Culture and Planning & Highways; requesting the authorisation in writing by two members for the release of the online payments. A list of faster payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the Policy & Resources committee.
- 10.8. By exception, if member agreement is not feasible due to the timescale, an invoice may be paid by faster payments at the RFO's discretion, or in the RFO's absence, the CEO. The RFO and/or CEO must satisfy themselves as to the reasons for the exception, and that there are sufficient funds within the budget.

11 Payments to Suppliers – Requiring payment by direct debit or standing order

- 11.1. For each financial year the RFO shall draw up a schedule of regular payments paid by either direct debit or standing order, to include agreed start and finish dates, that are due in relation to a continuing contract or obligation (such rent, rates, utilities, regular maintenance contracts and similar items). The Policy & Resources Committee shall ratify these payments as part of the budget planning process.
- 11.2. New or extended contracts shall be agreed by a manager, under delegated authority, providing sufficiency within the budget line for the remainder of the financial year, and within the new financial year, subject to the budget having already been agreed.
- 11.2.1. If funds within a nominal code are insufficient, at the request of the Manager, the RFO shall via funds from another nominal code, subject

to the agreement of the Lead Officer for both nominal codes, the CEO and RFO.

- 11.3. In cases of serious risk to the delivery of Council services or to public safety on Council premises, the CEO shall authorise a contract requiring direct debit or standing order arrangements, up to a total annual spend of £25,000 excluding VAT, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The CEO shall report such action to the Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee as soon as possible and to Policy & Resources Committee as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 11.4. Regular and variable direct debits and standing orders shall be checked for reasonableness as part of the reconciliation process, by the Senior Accounts Officer, who shall report any concerns to the RFO. The RFO, further to investigation, shall advise the Policy & Resources Committee of any concerns.
- 11.5. A member of the Audit Working Group shall confirm the direct debit and standing order payments against the bank statement as part of the reconciliation process.

12 Purchases requiring a payment card

- 12.1. For the majority of purchases, officers with delegated authority to spend must issue a Purchase Order. To support the day to day running of the Council, where a purchase order is not feasible, expenditure falls within one of the following categories, there is sufficient in the budget and the lead officer for the budget line is in agreement, an officer may use their debit card:
- 12.1.1. Tools and materials for the purpose of day-to-day repairs and maintenance.
 - 12.1.2. Personal protective equipment and clothing.
 - 12.1.3. Office and staff expenses.
 - 12.1.4. Subscriptions
 - 12.1.5. Other expenditure with the agreement of the CEO and RFO
- 12.2. The release of any debit card to any individual officer requires:
- 12.2.1. A recommendation from the line manager
 - 12.2.2. Agreement from the CEO further to discussion with the RFO
 - 12.2.3. A resolution by the Policy & Resources Committee
 - 12.2.4. A bank mandate signed by the Chair of the Policy & Resources committee.

- 12.3. With the resolution of the Policy & Resources Committee and signed bank mandate, the RFO shall process the application.
- 12.4. Delegated spending authority levels for a single transaction are as follows:
- 12.4.1. Any officer of the Council – spending authority between £100 and £500 (ex VAT) as recommended by their line manager and agreed by the CEO in consideration of need.
- 12.4.2. Any senior manager of the Council – spending authority up to £1,000 (ex VAT)
- 12.4.3. The CEO and RFO – spending authority up to £1,500 (ex VAT).
- 12.5. It is anticipated that the need for a debit card payment, rather than purchase order and invoice, over £500 is rare. If required, the manager shall e-mail the details to the CEO and RFO. The RFO shall record the reason to support future reviews.
- 12.6. Council debit cards are not to be used for items that in consideration of Council policy, are to be claimed as personal expenses, e.g. eye tests.
- 12.7. Personal credit or debit cards shall not be used under any circumstances for the purchase of goods and services for the Council.
- 12.8. Any purchase on behalf of the Council by a member, shall be by exception, where it is not practical for an officer to make the purchase. E.g. Flowers for agreed arrangements. Such agreement requires the authorisation of the Policy & Resources Committee.
- 12.9. Any corporate credit card opened by the Council shall be specifically restricted to use by the CEO and RFO and any balance shall be paid in full each month.

13 Contracts with stage payments e.g. payments under contracts for building or other construction works

- 13.1. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the Services Delivery Manager and RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments, which shall be made within the time specified in the contract based on signed certificates from the architect or other consultant engaged to supervise the works.
- 13.2. Any variation of, addition to or omission from a contract must be authorised by Services Delivery Manager / CEO to the contractor in writing, with the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the contract sum by 5% or more, or likely to exceed the budget available.

14 VAT

- 14.1. The RFO shall ensure that VAT is correctly recorded in the Council's accounting software and that any VAT Return required is submitted from the software by the due date.

15 Loans and investments

- 15.1. Any application for Government approval to borrow money and subsequent arrangements for a loan must be authorised by the full Council and recorded in the minutes. All borrowing shall be in the name of the Council, after obtaining any necessary approval.
- 15.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase, Leasing of tangible assets or loans to be repaid within the financial year) must be authorised by the full Council, following a written report on the value for money of the proposed transaction.
- 15.3. The Council shall consider the requirement for an Investment Strategy and Policy in accordance with "Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments", which must be written in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.
- 15.4. All investment of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.
- 15.5. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 15.6. The opening and closing and transfer of funds to fixed term interest accounts in the same bank or branch, to support the Council's investment strategy, shall be made by the RFO after consulting the CEO. The Policy & Resources committee is to be briefed at their next ordinary meeting. Two signatories to the bank are required.

16 Income

- 16.1. The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 16.2. The Policy & Resources Committee shall approve all fees and charges for work undertaken, services provided, or goods sold at least annually as part of the budget-setting process, following a review and recommendation of the

- respective committees. The RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all amounts due to the Council, supported by the Lead Officer for the budget area and the Senior Finance Officer.
- 16.3. All payees are to be asked to settle invoices by electronic banking, such as BACS, CHAPS, faster payment, direct debit, standing order or card machine. Cheques shall also be accepted but are discouraged if an alternative payment method available.
- 16.4. The Council shall not maintain any form of cash float.
- 16.5. If there is no other payment method available to the payee e.g. the occasional allotment resident, cash may be accepted, but only alongside an invoice, and a receipt from the receipt book must be given, with the carbon copy kept. The Officer in receipt of the cash is to report the occurrence, and reason, to their line manager and the Senior Accounts Officer, as soon as reasonably possible. Cash must be paid into the Council bank account via the post office. This is a position of last resort.
- 16.6. All late payments shall be followed up by the Senior Accounts Officer in conjunction with the Lead Officer, and late payments over 3 months reported to the Policy & Resources Committee.
- 16.7. Sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the Policy & Resources Committee by the RFO and shall be written off for accounting purposes after exploring all possible avenues. The Committee's approval shall be shown in the accounting records.
- 16.8. The Council may, with the agreement of the Policy & Resources Committee, contract agents to manage its assets and/or collect any associated income. The means of income collection and fees shall be agreed on an individual basis.

17 Stores and equipment

- 17.1 The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
- 17.2 Goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 17.3 Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 17.4 The Lead Officer shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores, at least annually.

18. Assets, properties and estates

18.1 The CEO shall make arrangements for the safe custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the Council.

18.2 The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date, with a record of all properties held by the Council, their location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held, in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.

18.3 The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

18.4 No interest in land shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a written report shall be provided to Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate where required by law).

18.5 When undertaking land or asset management, disposal or installation, any agreements required from West Berkshire Council and/or the Oxford Diocese shall be obtained prior to the activity being undertaken. Procedures required by both organisations in an emergency shall be included within the risk assessments and followed.

18.6 No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the relevant committee or Lead Officer and appropriate manager by delegated authority, together with any other consents required by law, except where the estimated value of any one item does not exceed £500. In each case a written business case shall be provided to the Lead and Policy & Resources committees at their next meetings, with a copy provided to the RFO to enable the adjustment of the asset register.

19. Insurance

19.1 The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered, reviewing these annually before the renewal date in conjunction with the Council's review of risk management.

19.2 The CEO shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.

19.3 The RFO shall be notified of any loss, liability, damage or event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to the Policy & Resources Committee at the next available meeting. The RFO shall negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers in consultation with the CEO.

19.4 Appropriate members and employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined annually by the Council, or duly delegated committee.

20. Charities

20.1 Where the Council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body and there is no Memorandum of Understanding in place, the CEO and RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The CEO and RFO shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

20.2 Any income that is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Subject to a Memorandum of Understanding instructing otherwise, instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the Council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) shall be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any Council meeting.

20.3 Where a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and a charitable trust is in place the agreements contained within must be followed.

21. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

21.1 The Council shall review these Financial Regulations annually. The CEO and RFO shall monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and advise the Council of any need to amend these Financial Regulations.

21.2 The Council may, by resolution duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of Council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations, provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been presented to all members. Suspension does not disapply any legislation or permit the Council to act unlawfully.

21.3 The Council may temporarily amend these Financial Regulations by a duly notified resolution, to cope with periods of absence, local government reorganisation, national restrictions or other exceptional circumstances.



Newbury Town Council

Internal Audit Report 2024-25 (First interim)

Susan Cook

*For and on behalf of
Auditing Solutions Ltd*

Background

Statute requires all town and parish councils to arrange for an independent Internal Audit (IA) examination of their accounting records and systems of internal control and for the conclusions to be reported each year in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

This report sets out the work undertaken in relation to the 2024-25 financial year, during our interim review of the Council's records for the year, which was undertaken on site on 25th September 2024. We wish to thank the CEO and his staff for assisting the process, providing all necessary documentation in either hard copy or electronic format to facilitate commencement of our review for the year.

Internal Audit Approach

In commencing our review for the year, we have again had regard to the materiality of transactions and their susceptibility to potential mis-recording or misrepresentation in the year-end Statement of Accounts / AGAR. Our programme of cover is designed to afford assurance that the Council's financial systems remain robust and operate in a manner to ensure effective probity of transactions and to afford a reasonable probability of identifying any material errors or possible abuse of the Council's own and the national statutory regulatory framework. The programme is also designed to facilitate our completion of the 'Internal Audit Report' in the Council's AGAR, which requires independent assurance over a series of internal control objectives.

This report will be updated following our next review on 19th December 2024.

Overall Conclusions

We are pleased to advise that, based on the work undertaken to date, officers continue to maintain adequate and effective internal control arrangements with only one issue identified requiring attention. Details are set out in the following detailed report with any resultant recommendations further summarised in the appended Action Plan.

During our remaining visits we will review precept determination and budget control, Income control systems, Asset register information and continue our reviews of expenditure controls, bank reconciliations, management of risk and corporate governance. We ask that the report be presented to members and a formal response be provided in advance of our next visit / review to those recommendations indicating the actions taken and / or in hand at that time.

Review of Accounting Arrangements & Bank Reconciliations

The Council maintains its accounting systems using the RBS Rialtas Omega software, there are two bank accounts in place, the current account and instant access account for which cashbooks are maintained in the Omega accounts. Surplus funds are also on deposit with CCLA in the Public Sector Deposit Fund (PSDF) and various short term deposit accounts.

Our objective here is to ensure that the accounting records are being maintained accurately and currently and that no anomalous entries appear in cashbooks or financial ledgers. Consequently, we have to date: -

- Verified the accurate carry forward of the 2023-24 closing balances in Omega to the current year opening Trial Balance;
- Ensured that an appropriate Cost and Nominal Account coding structure remains in place;
- Reviewed a sample months transactions (August 2024) on the Current account cashbook and Instant Access account cashbook agreeing detail to supporting bank statements;
- Verified the year to date PSDF transactions and Term Deposit Interest receipts by reference to the underlying advice notices of interest earned; and
- Checked and agreed the software based bank reconciliations as at 31st August 2024 to ensure that there are no long-standing, uncleared items or other anomalous entries arising.

Conclusions

We are pleased to note that bank reconciliations continue to be signed off by a checking Councillor.

Interest received monthly on the PSDF account is not entered in the accounting month received but is included in the following month accounts as the statement is not received until after the close of the monthly accounts.

We will undertake further work at future reviews checking a further two months' transactions on the accounts for both the current account and instant access account. We will also continue to check that the interest received on the PSDF account is entered to the ledger, along with the interest received on the short-term deposits and that the balance recorded on the trial balance agrees to the supporting statements of deposit. At our final review we will also ensure the accurate disclosure of the combined year-end cash and bank balances in the AGAR at Section 2, Box 8.

Review of Corporate Governance

Our objective here is to ensure that the Council has robust corporate governance arrangements in place; that Council and Committee meetings are conducted in accordance with the adopted Standing Orders (SOs) and that, as far as we are reasonably able to ascertain as we do not attend meetings, no actions of a potentially unlawful nature have been or are being considered for implementation.

We have commenced our examination of the minutes of Full Council and its extant Committee meetings (with the exception of Planning & Highways) for the year to date.

We have noted previously that the Council's extant SOs and Financial Regulations (FRs) are subject to periodic review and re-adoption, we will look to see these are reviewed and re-adopted during the course as part of our ongoing examination of the councils' minutes.

We note that the 2023-24 AGAR has just been signed off by the external auditors with the following comment.

'The smaller authority has confirmed that it has not complied with the governance Assertion in Section 1, Box 9, and it has provided the appointed auditor with an adequate explanation for non-compliance and details of the actions necessary to address weaknesses identified. This response is consistent with the internal auditor's response to internal control objection 'O'.

Conclusions

Whilst we have commenced our review of the minutes of the Council and its' committees, we note that there are some minutes missing from the website, we will check at our next visit that these are included. We will also check that the relevant documentation has been prepared for submission to the Charity Commission.

We are pleased to note the Council has provided the proper opportunity for the exercise of public rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

Review of Expenditure and VAT

Our aim here is to ensure that: -

- Council resources are released in accordance with the Council's approved procedures and budgets;
- Payments are supported by appropriate records, either in the form of an original trade invoice or other appropriate form of document confirming the payment as due and/or an acknowledgement of receipt, where no other form of invoice is available;
- An official order has been raised for the acquisition of goods or service delivery, where one would be anticipated;
- All discounts due on goods and services supplied are identified and appropriate action taken to secure the discount;
- The correct expense codes have been applied to invoices when processed; and
- VAT has been appropriately identified and coded to the control account for periodic recovery.

We have commenced our review of procedures and physical payments in this area noting that, invoices are no longer physically signed by staff, but instead an email trail of approval is in place for all invoices, along with a register of invoice queries.

We have selected a sample of payments processed in the year to August 2024 to ensure compliance with the above criteria including all those payments individually in excess of £3,500, together with a more random selection of every 40th cashbook transaction (irrespective of value). Our test sample includes 30 payments totalling £272,000 and equating to 51% by value of all non-pay expenditure for the year to date.

We note that VAT returns continue to be submitted electronically on a regular quarterly basis and have verified that the final 2023-24 quarter's reclaim has been repaid by HMRC and the first quarterly reclaim for 2024-25 submitted, with the totals agreeing to the relevant Omega nominal control account.

Conclusions and recommendation

Whilst the Council has good controls in place for the payment of invoices, there is one area where the full process is not complied with, which is the procedure for direct payments. Approval is provided by senior leadership members but is not always advised to Councillors for approval and two instances of this was found as part of our review.

R1. The payment procedure for direct payments should be tightened up to ensure councillor approval is given in all cases.

Assessment and Management of Risk

Our aim here is to ensure that the Council has put in place appropriate arrangements to identify all potential areas of risk of both a financial and health and safety nature, whilst also ensuring that appropriate arrangements exist to monitor and manage those risks identified in order to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition.

We have noted previously that the Council has a formal Risk Management Strategy in place supplemented by a detailed Strategic Risk Register which is reviewed and re-adopted by the Policy and Resources Committee we will check that the annual review is undertaken as part of our ongoing programme of work.

The Council's insurance cover is provided by Zurich: we have examined the insurance schedule running from 1st September 2024 noting that the Council's premises, street furniture and other equipment are appropriately insured together with Public and Employer's Liability set at £12 million and £10 million respectively, Fidelity Guarantee cover at £2 million and "Business Interruption - Loss of Revenue" cover in place at £396,795 all of which we consider appropriate for the Council's present requirements.

Conclusion

No issues arise in this area currently to warrant formal comment or recommendation. We will undertake further work at our future visits.

Precept Determination and Budgetary Control

We aim in this review area to ensure that the Council has appropriate procedures in place to determine its future financial requirements leading to the adoption of an approved budget and

formal determination of the annual precept; that effective arrangements are in place to monitor budgetary performance throughout the financial year and that the Council has identified and retains appropriate reserve funds to meet future spending plans.

This review took place in advance of the Council's formal deliberation and determination of the budgetary and precept requirements for 2025-26: consequently, we shall revisit this area as part of our third review visit.

We are pleased to record that members continue to be provided with sound, periodic and comprehensive management accounting information to provide an appropriate means for monitoring budgetary performance during the current year.

We have reviewed the latest available Omega budget report (to 31st August 2024) and have seen no areas of significant variance from the anticipated levels at this stage of the financial year.

Conclusion

We shall undertake further work in this area at future visits, including ensuring the 2025-26 budget and precept are formally approved and adopted, examining the year-end budget outturn and considering the ongoing appropriateness of retained reserves to meet the Council's ongoing revenue spending plans and development aspirations.

Review of Staff Salaries

In examining the Council's payroll function, we aim to confirm that extant legislation is being appropriately observed as regards adherence to the Employee Rights Act 1998 and the requirements of HMRC legislation as regards the deduction and payment over of income tax and NI contributions, together with meeting the requirements of the local government pension scheme as amended periodically with regard to employee percentage contribution bandings.

We have again examined the operative payroll procedures and consider them sound with payroll production outsourced to DCK Accounting using bespoke IRIS payroll software. The national pay award effective from 1st April 2024 has not yet been agreed.

We have, consequently, acquired detail of salaries paid to staff in post in August 2024; their salary points on the national spinal scale and their basic weekly hours where not employed full time: we have also examined the months' payslips, undertaking the following specific work: -

- We have agreed the salary rate paid to each employee in August for each employee to the approved salary scales;
- We have verified the accuracy of tax and NI deductions in that month based on the gross salaries payable to each employee by reference to the relevant HMRC tables; and
- Finally, we have checked to ensure that the correct LG Pension Scheme percentage deductions rates have been applied.

Conclusion

We are pleased to report that no issues have arisen in this review area warranting comment or recommendation.

Investments and Loans

Our objectives here are to ensure that the Council is “investing” surplus funds, be they held temporarily or on a longer term basis in appropriate banking and investment institutions; that an appropriate investment policy is in place; that the Council is obtaining the best rate of return on any such investments made and that interest earned is brought to account correctly and appropriately in the accounting records.

We also aim to ensure that any loan repayments due to or payable by the Council are transacted in accordance with appropriate loan agreements.

The Council invested £250,000 in the CCLA PSDF which we have previously verified to their third-party advice note and we note that an additional £250,000 was deposited in August 2023: we note from subsequent statements that dividends are duly received monthly and added to the capital investment sum in the Omega control account. We have duly, as indicated in the first section of this report, checked the accurate recording of the year-to-date dividends received and will complete further checks at our future visits.

The Council also currently has £750,000 in three short term deposit accounts, which we have confirmed as part of our review of accounting arrangements and bank reconciliations.

Conclusions

No issues arise in this area currently to warrant formal comment or recommendation. We shall undertake further work at our year-end review, including ensuring accurate disclosure of the year-end balances in the AGAR Section 2, Boxes 8 & 10 respectively.

Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response
Review of Accounting Arrangements & Bank Reconciliations		
R1	The payment procedure for direct payments should be tightened up to ensure councillor approval is given in all cases.	

AGAR – Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate – 2023/24

The following should be read with sight of:

- The ‘Notice of Conclusion of Audit, year ended 31st March 2024’ and
- ‘Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate – 2023/24’

Both have been published on the Newbury Town Council website and on the noticeboard immediately outside the Town Hall.

You will note the External Auditor’s Report includes the following statements:

“On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met”

“Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

The smaller authority has confirmed that it has not complied with the governance Assertion in Section 1, Box 9, and it has provided the appointed auditor with an adequate explanation for non-compliance and details of the actions necessary to address weaknesses identified. This response is consistent with the internal auditor’s response to internal control objection ‘O’”

For your assurance, Internal Control ‘O’ for the Internal Auditor and Assertion ‘9’ for the Council are about the financial reporting of the Trust fund account for which the Council is Sole Trustee. There are two key responsibilities:

- 1) **To ensure that when the Council’s accounts are reported to the External Auditor, via the AGAR, that they do not include the Trust fund accounts.**

This was completed correctly.

- 2) **To report the Trust’s End of Year figures to the Charity Commission by 31st January of the following year.**

Regrettably, due to an administrative hitch between the previous CEO and myself on the transfer of this work, the 2022/23 figures were submitted late, again my apologies to Council for this. You may remember my raising this when I submitted the 2023/24 AGAR papers to Council and the External Auditor for consideration, though by this time all had been confirmed by the Charity Commission as up to date.

In respect to the 2023/24 Trust fund accounts, the End of Year figures are already submitted to the Charity Commission, with confirmed receipt, ahead of their Jan 31st 2025 deadline.

Standing Orders

The Standing Orders have been reviewed using the NALC Model Standing Orders, as recommended by the Internal Auditor.

Resolutions within the Council's current Standing Orders that are specific to Newbury Town Council have been transferred across into the reviewed Standing Orders, that follow.

These Standing Orders are recommended to Council by the Audit Working Group.

One matter that has arisen since the Audit Working Group meeting, is the matter of whether the public and members can speak on any matter in a meeting, or only on items on the agenda. The NALC Model Standing Orders recommend that members of the public may only speak within the public session at a meeting, on matters that are on the agenda. Whereas the current Standing Orders state that members of the public may speak on any matter. The same applies to Members.

The reason NALC suggest the public session within a meeting is restricted to agenda items, is specifically to enable the Council to hear public questions and comments on agenda items prior to its own discussion and vote. Arguably, if a member of the public has a question or comment on a general matter, they may write to the Council and/or speak with a Councillor at a Saturday Morning Surgery.

Discussing this with the CEO, we felt it would be helpful to bring this to the attention of the P&R Committee, for its consideration.

Within the Standing Orders that follow, you will find the NALC recommendation within 3.10 and the NTC current practice within 7.2.5 and 7.2.6. We will amend this to the Committee's recommendation prior to the Standing Orders being forwarded to Full Council.

3.10 Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.

7.2.5. Members of the public who live or work in Newbury shall have the right to ask questions on any matter concerning the business of the Council or the Committee for 20 minutes of any meeting at the discretion of the Chair of that meeting. Questions relating to personal business are not appropriate and should be dealt with by the Council's officers. Questions not answered within that period will receive a written reply. In such cases, the Chair of the meeting will invite the member of the public, if present at the meeting, to ask the question, as submitted.

7.2.6 Members may ask the Chair or the Chief Executive or the Committee Clerk any questions concerning the business of the Council or the Committee.

Budget and Strategy Review Process, 2024 – 25

No.	Date 24/25	Budget and Strategy Review Process, 2024 – 25 (updated 23/09/24)	Who	By
1	03/10	RFO & Man Team – Review 6-mthly figures, noting 15% over/under budget.	RFO	07/10
2	03/10	RFO invites all Officers to write to CEO & RFO, re: project ideas to support 2024/28 Strategy – to be received by 14/10	RFO	05/10
3	03/10	RFO writes to all Officers re: salary allocation estimates per work area (salary reallocation) to be returned by 14/10	RFO	05/10
4	26/09	RFO invites Officers with a budget lead (nominal codes) to 1:1 meetings between 16th & 25th October , to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) review 2024/25 budget – using 6-mth figures for next 6-mths. b) discuss required / requested budget – for 2025/26 + 3 years c) discuss budget requirements for projects beyond, in line with 2024/28 strategy d) clarify salary allocation estimates, as required. 	RFO	27/09
5	21/10	Full Council – To resolve the CEO writes to members requesting ideas for 2025/26 budget, related to 2024/28 Strategy – for Committee consideration. To be received by CEO (cc. RFO) by 01/11 – on 15/10 agenda.	CEO	23/10
6	28/10	RFO to start 1 st draft of 2025/26 budget (<i>required for 06/11</i>)	RFO / CEO	05/11
7	06/11	RFO meets with CEO re: 1 st draft of budget	RFO/CEO	06/11
8	07/11	RFO & Management Team - discuss 1 st draft of budget, including any issues arising from member/officer proposals. Managers note for committees.	RFO & Man Team	07/11
9	08/11	RFO makes any agreed amendments from Management Team	RFO	08/11
10	08/11	RFO sends first draft of budget to Leader - Chair P&R / Strategy WG	RFO	13/11
11	13/11	Leader's Briefing, to include 1 st draft of budget	RFO / CEO	13/11
12	13/11	Strategy WG – Review 2024/28 Strategy (CEO) and 1st draft of budget (RFO) & make recommendations for committee considerations.	CEO / RFO	15/11
13	14/11	Forward recommendations from Strat WG to Lead Officers for Committees	RFO	18/11
14	25/11	CPA & C Committee – Discuss Budget/ Strategy items – on agenda 19/11	Civic Manager	25/11
15	27/11	RFO & Civic Manager meet for CPA&C Committee feedback.	RFO / CM	27/11
16	27/11	Staff Sub-Committee – Discuss Salaries Budget – on agenda 21/11	CEO	24/11
17	28/11	RFO & CEO meet for Staff Sub-Committee feedback	RFO / CEO	28/11
18	02/12	P&H Committee – Discuss Budget/ Strategy items at P & H meeting- on agenda 26/11	CEO / Com Clerk	02/12

19	04/12	RFO & CEO/Committee Clerk meet for P&H Committee feedback.	RFO / CEO/ Com Clerk	04/12
20	09/12	Community Services Committee – Discuss Budget/ Strategy items – on agenda 03/12	SDM	09/12
21	10/12	RFO & SDM meet for Community Services Committee feedback.	RFO / SDM	10/12
22	11/12	RFO finalises 2 nd draft of budget (<i>needed 12/12</i>)	RFO	11/12
23	12/12	RFO & CEO review 2 nd draft of budget & committee proposals for the Strategy Working Group	RFO/CEO	12/12
24	12/12	RFO forwards 2 nd draft of budget & committee proposals to Strategy WG	RFO	16/12
25	16/12	RFO writes to neil.cosham@westberks.gov.uk requesting update re: tax base 2025/26		18/12
26	16/12	Strategy Working Group – Consider 2 nd draft budget, inc. committee proposals in preparation for Member consultations	RFO / CEO	18/12
27	17/12	RFO applies recommendations from Strategy Working Group and sends 3 rd draft budget to all members for information	RFO	18/12
28	18/12-09/01	<i>Member Consultations: Group Meetings – Lib Dems – 19/12, 07/01, 09/01. Greens - TBC</i>	Members	09/01
29	10/01	Strategy Working Group – feedback from Members and make recommendations to P&R for final budget.	RFO / CEO	13/01
30	14/01	RFO finalise final draft of the 2025/26 budget to include recommendations from the Strategy Working Group.		
31	20/01	P & R Committee – Recommendations re Strategy Review 2024/28 (CEO) and budget 2025/26 (RFO) to Full Council – on 14 th Jan agenda for 20 th	RFO / CEO	20/01
32	27/01	Full Council – Approves review of Strategy 2024/28 and Budget 2025/26 – on agenda 21 st Jan agenda for 27 th	CEO / RFO	27/01
33	28/01	RFO notifies West Berks of 2024/25 Precept	RFO	28/01
34	31/01	RFO forwards final budget to members and officers	RFO	31/01



Flag Flying Request Form

This form to request the flying of a flag from Newbury Town Hall's flagpole on the balcony of the Town Hall.

This form must be completed and submitted to mayor@newbury.gov.uk or by post no later than 3 weeks before the date of the flag flying date.

Once the form has been submitted, the Councillors will discuss the item at their next available meeting and will be added to the agenda. We endeavour to notify you which meeting this may be, though this may not always be possible.

Please note that this form will be used as an accompanying Appendix item to be discussed at Town Council meetings.

The flag you have requested to fly will be flown for one day. Requests for flying for longer can be considered with express permission from the Civic Pride, Arts and Culture Committee.

Once a decision has been made, we will contact you to confirm the outcome and further arrangements as required.

The Council reserves the right to refuse request for flag flying requests on the grounds that:

- The Union Flag will be flying on the same day.
- The request falls outside the government guidelines.
- The flag flying would be disruptive to the Council.
- The flag flying would affect community cohesion or relations.

Please give as much information as possible about your plans as this will support your request. Failure to provide such sufficient information may result in your request being denied.

Section 1: About You	
Name	Andrea Brookes
Address	30 Winston Way, Thatcham, RG19 3TY
Email	andrea@newburypride.org.uk
Telephone	07767755444
Organisation	Newbury Pride & Proud To Be Trans In West Berkshire

Section 2: About Your Flag Flying	
What nationality, community or group is being celebrated?	Transgender community

What flag do you wish to fly?	Transgender Pride Flag	
What date would you like to fly this flag?	20 th November 2024 and if possible from 13 th November to 19 th November	
Do you already have a flag to provide?	Yes	No
Please confirm that you would be able to provide the flag the day before the date you wish to fly the flag. This is to ensure our staff can safely prepare the flag in advance of it being raised.	The council may already be in possession of this flag, if not I can provide one to be flown	
This form is completed on the basis that the flag will be flown for 1 day.		

Section 3: Additional Information		
Will you require any rooms inside the Town Hall?	Yes	No
If 'yes' a room booking form will be required to be completed. We cannot guarantee that we will be able to meet your request if the room has already been booked by another party.		
Do you plan to host a flag raising ceremony on our Town Hall Steps? If so, please outline full details regarding speeches, VIP guests and dignitaries in attendance, programme timings, speeches etc.	Yes	No
Please provide any further information that you may feel is relevant for Council consideration to support your application.	The period of 13 th to 19 th November is the international week of transgender awareness. 20 th November is Transgender Day of Remembrance and this is the day we would prefer the flag is flown if it can only be flown for one day.	

Name: Andrea Brookes

Date: 23/9/24

Please return this form to mayor@newbury.gov.uk

Newbury Town Council, Newbury Town Hall, Market Place, Newbury, RG14 2FG

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Please note that this form will be used as an accompanying Appendix item to be discussed at Town Council meetings.

The flag you have requested to fly will be flown for one day. Requests for flying for longer can be considered with express permission from the Civic Pride, Arts and Culture Committee.

Once a decision has been made, we will contact you to confirm the outcome and further arrangements as required.

The Council reserves the right to refuse request for flag flying requests on the grounds that:

- The Union Flag will be flying on the same day.
- The request falls outside the government guidelines.
- The flag flying would be disruptive to the Council.
- The flag flying would affect community cohesion or relations.

Please give as much information as possible about your plans as this will support your request. Failure to provide such sufficient information may result in your request being denied.

Section 1: About You	
Name	██████████
Address	██
Email	████████████████████
Telephone	██████████
Organisation	Private individual

Section 2: About Your Flag Flying	
What nationality, community or group is being celebrated?	Palestine
What flag do you wish to fly?	Pealestinian
What date would you like to fly this flag?	31 st October

Do you already have a flag to provide?	Yes	No
Please confirm that you would be able to provide the flag the day before the date you wish to fly the flag. This is to ensure our staff can safely prepare the flag in advance of it being raised.	Yes	
This form is completed on the basis that the flag will be flown for 1 day.		

Section 3: Additional Information		
Will you require any rooms inside the Town Hall?		No
If 'yes' a room booking form will be required to be completed. We cannot guarantee that we will be able to meet your request if the room has already been booked by another party.		
Do you plan to host a flag raising ceremony on our Town Hall Steps? If so, please outline full details regarding speeches, VIP guests and dignitaries in attendance, programme timings, speeches etc.		No
Please provide any further information that you may feel is relevant for Council consideration to support your application.		

Name: [REDACTED]

Date: 7th October 2024

Please return this form to mayor@newbury.gov.uk

Newbury Town Council, Newbury Town Hall, Market Place, Newbury, RG14 2FG

Mayor of Newbury's Attendance Protocol & Engagement Form

In order that the correct arrangements may be made for the attendance of the Mayor of Newbury at events, it would be appreciated if the following questionnaire could be completed and returned to the Civic Office no later than **10 working days** prior to the event.

Please note that **this form isn't confirmation of a booking**. Following your submission of this form, the Mayor's Office will be in touch to advise if acceptance of your invitation is possible and if the Mayor or Deputy Mayor are able to attend following an assessment of risks involved.

Event Details

<i>Details returned by:</i>	
Name	
Email Address	
Telephone Number	
Postal Address	

<i>Event Details</i>	
Name of Event	UN DAY
Organisation	UNA NEWBURY
Venue	T. HALL ENTRANCE
Date of Event	FRIDAY 25 OCTOBER
Time Event will start and end	12.00
Time Mayor is expected to arrive	TWO PRIOR
Time Mayor is expected to leave	12.30 +
Name of person meeting Mayor and the location to report to on arrival	MYSELF OR NOMINATED MEMBER
Name of person presiding	✓ - - / with MAYOR
Name and positions of other dignitaries attending	
Dress Code: Black tie/lounge suit etc.	YES
Will the Mayor be required to make a speech, say a few words or propose a toast? If YES, please provide further details.	WELCOME TO THE EVENT INTRODUCE PROGRAMME (Send week before)
Any further information which may be of assistance.	BANNER @ Entrance FLAG TO BE BROUGHT IN (w/ changed)

Civic Protocol

The Mayor of Newbury is the first citizen of the Town of Newbury and civic protocol and respect for the position must be recognised:

- If available, a car parking space should be reserved for the use of the Mayor's car.
- Someone must be available to meet the Mayor on arrival and escort him wherever he needs to go during the whole visit to your event.
- It is important to note that if The Mayor is wearing the Chain of Office, his Attendant will also be present at the function and will act as a guest alongside the Mayor who must be accommodated for.
- Speeches – If the Mayor of Newbury is required to speak at your event, advance warning must be given and a brief on what is expected to be included must be provided.
- Addressing – When referring to the Mayor, or introducing the Mayor formally, it is usual to say, "The Mayor of Newbury," Or "Mr Mayor". The Mayoress should be described as "Lady Mayoress,". In some instances, when wearing the Chain of Office, the Mayor's Attendant will be accompanying him; in conversation it is usual to say, "The Mayor of Newbury's Attendant,".
- It should be remembered that the position of Mayor is non-political and should always be respected as such, please do not cause embarrassment at functions by approaching the Mayor to discuss political topics.
- If further guidance is required, please contact the Civic Office, via the details below, who will be happy to provide assistance.

Please Sign and Date to confirm that these details are correct, and you have understood civic protocol (e-signature will be accepted):

Sign**Date**13/9/2024

The Civic Office will be in touch to confirm if the Mayor's acceptance of your invitation is possible shortly after returning this form and confident satisfactory safety measures are in place for the Mayor's attendance.

Newbury Town Council

Work Programme for Full Council Meetings for the Municipal Year 2024/25.

Standing Items on each (ordinary meeting) agenda:

1. Apologies
2. Declarations and Dispensations
3. Approval of Minutes of previous meeting
4. Questions/ Petitions from members of the Public
5. Questions/ Petitions from Members of the Council
6. Town Mayor’s Report
7. The Leader’s Report
8. The Chief Executive Officer’s Report
9. Minutes from Committees

Other items of Business

Meeting Date	Item
24 June	End of Year Statutory Accounts To receive the Annual Return, Approve each section of the Annual Governance Statement and adopt the accounts and the Mayor to sign them, To note the date for the exercise of electors’ rights
	Review terms of refence and memberships of any working groups that the council wishes to appoint
	To receive any reports from School Link Councillors
	To receive any reports from the Council’s representation on outside bodies
	To review the Council’s Standing orders, if required
21 October	Citizens Advice presentation
	Local Democracy Working Group: a verbal update on LDW from the Chair of the Local Democracy Working Group
	Budget for 2025/26 Councillors are invited to make the Leader of the Council and the RFO aware of any particular projects that may need to be undertaken in 2025/26, so that they may be considered for inclusion in the draft budget and / or service plans and / or project list.
	Climate Emergency grant
	Commence Review of Town Council Strategy
Cricket Club/ Loose Ends	
20 January	Berkshire Youth Presentation
	Review of Town Council Strategy
	2024/25 Precept
	Schedule of meetings for the municipal year 2025/26
	Financial Regs Presentations from outside organisations.
7 May	Nomination of Mayor Elect and Deputy Mayor
	Election of Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council
	To nominate the membership of each Committee / Sub-Committee for the 2025/2026 municipal year.
	Saturday surgeries- review and schedule for 25/26
	Reports from Outside Bodies reps and School Link Councillors