

15 November 2024

To: All Members of Newbury Town Council Staff Sub-Committee

Dear Councillor,

You are summoned to attend a meeting of **Newbury Town Council Staff Sub Committee** to be held on **Wednesday 20 November 2024 at 4 pm** in the Elsie Kimber Room, Town Hall, Market Place, Newbury The meeting is open to the press and public.

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)**
3.1 To approve the minutes of a meeting of the Staff Sub-Committee held on 25 September 2024 (Appendix 1.1)
- 4. Questions and Petitions from Members of the Public**
Town Mayor/ Chief Executive Officer
- 5. Members' Questions and Petitions**
Town Mayor/ Chief Executive Officer

All questions for this meeting must be submitted to the Council's CEO by 2.00 pm on Monday 18 November 2024.

- 6. Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2024/2025**
To **approve** the recommendations from the Local Government Services for the Pay agreement for 2024/25.
- 7. Appraisal Process**
To **review** proposal from CEO to move the date of the annual Staff Appraisal Process from November to February.
To **adopt** proposal from CEO to move the date of the annual Staff Appraisal to February

8. Incremental Pay Award

To **adopt** the National Joint Council for Local Government Services National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service ('green book') guidance and provide incremental pay awards for staff.

9. 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.

10. Merit Award for 2024/25

To **agree** the merit award for staff for 2024/25

To **agree** to proposition for staff consultation to **end** the process of Merit Awards.

11. Staff Consultation

To **Review** scope for Staff Consultations to commence in 2025/26.

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF NEWBURY TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, MARKET PLACE, NEWBURY
ON WEDNESDAY 8th MAY 2024 AT 7.30 PM.**

PRESENT

Councillors Phil Barnett, Vera Barnett, Alistair Bounds, Sam Dibas, Billy Drummond, Nigel Foot (Town Mayor), David Harman, Roger Hunneman, Chris Hood, David Marsh, Steve Masters, Andy Moore, Gary Norman, Elizabeth O’Keeffe, Pam Lusby Taylor, Meg Thomas, Graham Storey, Martha Vickers, and Tony Vickers.

OFFICERS PRESENT

Toby Miles-Mallowan, Chief Executive Officer
Liz Manship, Finance & Corporate Services Manager

79. APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

Councillor Vaughan Miller

80. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Corporate Services Officer declared that Councillors Phil Barnett, Billy Drummond, Nigel Foot, David Marsh, Tony Vickers & Martha Vickers 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.

81. MINUTES

PROPOSED: Councillor Billy Drummond

SECONDED: Councillor Andy Moore

RESOLVED: That the minutes of a meeting of Newbury Town Council held on Monday 18th March 2024, be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Town Mayor.

82. QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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

83. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

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

84. TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

The Town Mayor's final quarterly report and a review of the full year were received and noted by the Council.

85. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The Chief Executive Officer's report was received and noted by the Council. Councillor O'Keeffe thanked the Chief Executive and noted that he has identified important issues to work on.

Councillor Foot welcomed Councillor Storey to the Council.

86. COMMITTEES

The Minutes of the following meetings were received and noted:

Planning & Highways Committee	25 th March 2024
Planning & Highways Committee	22 nd April 2024
Policy & Resources Committee (Draft)	29 th April 2024
Community Services Committee (Draft)	April 2024

Councillor Norman noted that many of the items from the Policy and Resources Committee (draft) are on the agenda today.

87. NOMINATION OF MAYOR ELECT AND DEPUTY MAYOR ELECT FOR THE 2024/25 MUNICIPAL YEAR

PROPOSED: Councillor Elizabeth O'Keeffe

SECONDED: Councillor Ian Jee

RESOLVED: That Cllr Moore be nominated as Mayor Elect

Nominations for Deputy Mayor were put forward:

Councillor David Harman

PROPOSED: Councillor Gary Norman

SECONDED: Councillor Jo Day

Councillor Steve Masters

PROPOSED: Councillor David Marsh

SECONDED: Councillor Graham Storey

RESOLVED: Cllr David Harman and Cllr Steve Masters to be put forward for election to position of Deputy Mayor Elect for the 2024/2025 municipal year.

88. THE MAYOR'S CHARITY

PROPOSED: Councillor Andy Moore

SECONDED: Councillor David Harman

RESOLVED: That the Mayor's Charity for 2024/25 is West Berkshire Food Bank

89. ELECTION OF LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE 2024/25 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Leader: Councillor Gary Norman

PROPOSED: Councillor Andy Moore

SECONDED: Councillor Meg Thomas

Deputy Leader: Councillor Jo Day

PROPOSED: Councillor Pam Lusby-Taylor

SECONDED: Councillor Alistair Bounds

RESOLVED: Cllr Gary Norman be elected as Leader and Cllr Jo Day as Deputy Leader for the 2024/25 municipal year.

90. COMMITTEES / SUB-COMMITTEES FOR THE 2024/25 MUNICIPAL YEAR

PROPOSED: Councillor Gary Norman

SECONDED: Councillor Tony Vickers

RESOLVED: The following committee and sub-committee structure was resolved see appendix

PROPOSED: Gary Norman

SECONDED: Tony Vickers

RESOLVED: Members are appointed to serve on each of the Council's Committees and Sub-committees for the 2024/25 municipal year, shown in appendix

91. COUNCILLOR SURGERY

PROPOSED: Nigel Foot

SECONDED: Gary Norman

RESOLVED: The Councillor Surgery Rota for the 2024/25 municipal year was agreed as per appendix 2 of the agenda.

92. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

Council noted its approval of the recommendations from the Policy & Resources committee, from the final internal audit report for the financial year 2023/24 from Auditing Solutions Ltd.

Council received the Internal Audit report for the purposes of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/24

93. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) – ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2023/24

Councillor Norman noted that these were reviewed in detail at the Policy and Resources Committee meeting and noted/agreed recommendations.

PROPOSED: Councillor Nigel Foot

SECONDED: Councillor Ian Jee

RESOLVED: That the Chairman and clerk sign the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

94. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) – ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 2023/24

PROPOSED: Councillor Nigel Foot

SECONDED: Councillor Gary Norman

RESOLVED: That the Chairman and Responsible Finance Officer sign the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

95. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) – PAPERS FOR EXTERNAL AUDIT

PROPOSED: Councillor Nigel Foot

SECONDED: Councillor Billy Drummond

RESOLVED: That the following papers are approved for External Audit:

- Year-end Reconciliation
- Reconciliation between Box 7 & 8
- Explanation of Variances – Total Other Receipts
- Confirmation of Dates for the Exercise of Public Rights.

96. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS

PROPOSED: Councillor Steve Masters

SECONDED: Councillor Martha Vickers

RESOLVED: The Council noted the Forward Work Programme, with no additions.

97. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

PROPOSED: Councillor Steve Masters

SECONDED: Councillor David Harman

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.

Councillors Tony Vickers and Billy Drummond left the council meeting.

98. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) – PAPERS FOR EXTERNAL AUDIT

Councillor Storey asked what the staffing variance was against the overall staffing budget. RFO stated that this information is contained within the budget sheets that have previously been circulated.

PROPOSED: Councillor Nigel Foot

SECONDED: Councillor Sam Dibas

RESOLVED: That the following paper is approved for External Audit:

- Explanation of Variances – Staff Costs

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE TOWN MAYOR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8:33PM

TOWN MAYOR: _____

DATE: _____

**Meeting of Newbury Town Council, Monday 24 June 2024.
Agenda Item 7: Chief Executive Officer's Report.**

A) Staff Matters:

1) Recruitment

- **Civic Manager:** Elisa Mullen has agreed to extend her notice period to enable a hand over with the incoming Civic Manager.
- **Civic Officer**
- **Community Services Officer**

2) Staff away day

- Good session was had, reviewed current structure of the council. Officers worked on drafting a new council structure. A number of proposals were made and these are being drawn up and will be reviewed again with staff.

B) Policies and Procedures for Newbury Town Council: A programme of reviewing current policies and procedures is underway. All Council policies once updated will be submitted to Policy and Resources Committee for sign off.

C) Family Fun Day: Held on 19 May 2024 in Victoria Park. This was very successful with a big turn out from the public. The local scout group supplied catering for the event and they raised £6069.38 a combination of sales on the day and match funding!

D) D-Day Celebrations: Held on 6th June 2024 the war memorial was cleaned specially for the event and a private flower and remembrance was held there on the day. The main celebrations were held up at Greenham Common Control Tower. Newbury Town Council's contribution was organising the free bus transport from the Town to the Common. Newbury Town Council also organised volunteers to support the event. On the day there were over 500 people in attendance at the Control Tower.

PUBLIC REPORT to Full Council
8th May 2024

Agenda Item

BACKGROUND

The Mayor of Newbury's Benevolent Fund has been in existence since the 1920's but has been registered as a small charity with the Charities Commission since 1998.

The aims of the charity are:-

- To help those in financial need within the Newbury Town boundary. This is done through the Christmas Gift Appeal where applicants request support from the charity and are provided gifts of vouchers to support their living needs.
- To fund an event for the over 75s in the town to bring the community together. This was previously the Mayor's Drive and Tea Party, but is now the Festive Afternoon Tea.
- And to aid local support groups/charities. This is upon consultation with the Mayor during their year.

The most recent change to the charity is the Mayor's Drive and Tea Party which was previously organised by the local community and sponsored by the Mayor's Benevolent Fund. This event finished in 2019 and has not been held since then as the organisers are no longer able to commit to make it viable to run again following its long hiatus. The Mayor' Festive Afternoon Tea now runs in place of this, funded by the Mayor's Benevolent Fund.

Following the changes in delivering the tea party event, it has also brought to light further concerns about our ability to deliver the charity aims in the future moving forward as well as questions whether if the Mayor's Benevolent Fund is able to continue to serve the community in the ways in which it used to.

ISSUES ARISING

DEPLETING FUNDS

The main outgoings of the Mayor's Benevolent Fund go towards the Tea Party and also the Christmas Gift Appeal.

In its current model, since 2015 (apart from 2 years) the charity has made a loss, but is being supported by the charity's sinking fund. While the Mayor's Benevolent Fund has made a loss and has been in the red for the past few years, the Mayor's chosen charities have made significantly more profit, specifically the past few years which has been a fair few thousand pounds more than the Mayor's Benevolent Fund Charity. **(Annex 1)**

Recent years have also proven difficult for both local businesses and public to help us raise funds (as is the case with many charities nationwide who are calling for donations), this makes operating the charity much more difficult when considering how much we are able to offer those in financial hardship.

RESOURCE

As things currently stand, the Civic Manager provides the sole administrative support for the Mayor's Benevolent Fund. The Civic Manager works closely with the Mayor during their elective year to raise funds for both the Mayors Benevolent Fund Charity as well as their local chosen charity they wish to support during their mayoral year.

This is proving a lot of resource and time required from the Civic Office and, according to the feedback from our Staff Structure Report in 2022, is not a common activity for Civic Officers to be engaging in. Instead, other Councils around the country support mayoral fundraising by solely focusing on a local charity as nominated by the Mayor during their year. It is only larger Borough and City Councils who offer similar models to the Mayor's Benevolent Fund Charity in supporting local people in financial hardship directly as they have the staff infrastructure and expertise to offer this service.

Most of the Mayor's Benevolent Fund Charity fundraising come from coffee mornings, which inevitably come at a cost for the Council- staff, lighting, etc. In some cases the costs to the Council might exceed the money raised at the coffee morning. There are also other events such as, but not limited to, quiz nights and raffles which contribute to the fundraising total but once again call on Town Council staff resource. The Festive Afternoon Tea's staff and volunteer resource also comes at a cost to Newbury Town Council.

LOCAL IMPACT

Roughly £1000 is raised and distributed to applicants in financial need on an annual basis as part of the Christmas Gift Appeal in December. There has been steady increase in the number of applicants requesting from the Appeal in recent years mainly because of covid and the cost-of-living crisis. It is worth noting that we do receive repeat applicants year on year and can be questioned if the fund gets abused.

Even though our strategy for awarding funds has changed in recent to prioritise those who referred to us from GP surgeries and local organisations, it is disputed if the donations we give have much impact on those who receive them. Recipients receive Tesco vouchers which can range from £20 to £100 depending on their personal financial circumstances, family size and if they are a referral. The only way in which this can change is if more money is raised for the charity, however this brings us back to the issue regarding how the charity is resourced and its depleting funds.

At the heart of the issue, not being able to offer the Mayors Benevolent Fund Charity the full attention required to grow the fundraising for the specific aims of the charity.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

In its current format, the charity model is not a sustainable one to continue with moving forward. The gap between the issues present and the solution to these is too big for the Town Council resource to manage, and the Mayor's Benevolent Fund cannot continue to make advantage of the ever decreasing sinking fund year on year.

There is conflict about if there is a need for the Mayor's Benevolent Fund charity to continue operating moving forward and whether the activity of raising funds solely for the Mayor's

Benevolent Fund should cease. However, if it is appropriate for this do be done now during a cost-of-living crisis is something that would need to be considered.

As an alternative, instead the Mayor could primarily focus on raising funds for a chosen charity and working directly with them throughout their year to run events and distribute funds to their nominated charity during their mayoral year. This is something that many other Mayors and Councils around the country currently do effectively, raising awareness and much needed funds for local causes within the town boundary which are of general interest to the Mayor.

To do this, the Mayor's Benevolent Fund charity would need to do a full reassessment of its aims and change its constitution to no longer run the Christmas Gift Appeal, and the way in which the Charity Account is used, with a recommendation to change the name of the 'Mayor's Benevolent Fund' charity to something more appropriate such as 'Mayor's Chosen Charity Fund' or 'Mayor's Charitable Trust' which will better reflect its new purpose.

If this was to be considered, the Council would also have to look at an alternative means to fund the Mayor's Festive Tea. The most likely possibility for this is for the Mayor's Festive Tea to become a completely Town Council run event with budget allocated in 2025/26.

In conclusion, the Mayor's Benevolent Fund's future objectives is in serious need of consideration. The service resource that the charity requires is currently much greater than the impact the charity has on the local community based on its current activities, with recommendation to solely focus on raising funds for a single charity as decided by the Mayor upon taking office.

CONSULTATION

The Civic Manager has sought advice from many local councils upon a National level. They have provided best practice for appropriate use of the Charity Bank Account in regard to complying with Charity Law to distribute funds raised to a nominated charity at the end of every Mayoral year.

It is much more common for local charities to support one local charity than to do the work of what we were doing for the Mayor's Benevolent Fund. It is only larger Borough and City Councils who offer similar models to the Mayor's Benevolent Fund Charity in supporting local people in financial hardship directly as they have the staff infrastructure and expertise to offer appropriate support to those in need.

Newbury & Thatcham Welfare Trust and Thatcham Parochial Charities are available to provide people who are in medical and financial need with grants to help pay for a variety of items, services or facilities in the local area who require support. For example; carpet fittings, appliances etc. They do not accept applications to repay debt cover council tax, rent or mortgage payments.

Citizens Advice have also said that they would be willing to provide us with a list of organisations that help people out at Christmas time with vouchers and grant for various amenities such as food, fuel, toys etc which they would be happy for us to share in a letter to anybody who may pop into the Town Hall in November expecting to complete an application for the Fund.

FINANCIAL

To clarify, the Mayor's Benevolent Fund Charity account is a separate bank account with Lloyds Bank, held away from any of the budgets held by Newbury Town Council.

Upon consultation with other local authorities, it is recommended that this account is used to continue fundraising activities, providing a sinking fund and to make purchases in advance of events in preparation of funds raised to come into the account. This would remain in compliance with Charity Law as long as the charitable objectives and charity name are changed to reflect the new aims. At the end of the Mayor's year in office, the funds raised would then be distributed to their chosen charity.

Regarding the Festive Afternoon Tea, it would be recommended that this take place solely as a Town Council event with a specific budget allocation for 2025/26 Budget. It is recommended that this be £1000.

The Mayor's Benevolent Fund currently does have enough funds to support the delivery of a Festive Afternoon Tea in 2024, however not that for the Christmas Gift Appeal.

CONCLUSION

If the decision below is accepted, the following will come into effect upon recommendation to Full Council.

- To solely focus on raising funds of the Mayor's chosen charity at the start of their term.
- The Mayor's Benevolent Fund charity changes its name to reflect these new charitable objectives, as outlined in the new draft Governing Document (**Annex 2**)
- To cease operation of the Mayor's Christmas Gift Appeal
- The Festive Afternoon Tea Party to become funded by Newbury Town Council as of 2025.

This report was originally presented to Civic Pride, Arts & Culture Committee on 19th February 2024, with a resolution for it to be considered by Full Council with the appropriate Annexes.

DECISION REQUIRED:

To recommend a change in 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.

Elisa Mullen – Civic Manager

31 01 2023

