

**Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Newbury Town Council
Held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Newbury,
at 7.30 pm on Thursday 22 September 2023.**

Present

Councillors Alistair Bounds, Jo Day, Sam Dibas, Nigel Foot (Town Mayor), Jayne French-Drayton, David Harman, Chris Hood, Roger Hunneman; Ian Jee, Pam Lusby-Taylor; David Marsh; Steve Masters, Vaughan Miller; Andy Moore; Gary Norman; Elizabeth O’Keeffe and Sarah Slack.

Officers in Attendance

Hugh Peacocke – Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Martin Kavanagh, Services Delivery Manager (SDM)

27. Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Councillors Billy Drummond, Vaughan Miller (Joined on Zoom), Meg Thomas and Tony Vickers.

Absent: Councillors Phil Barnett and Vera Barnett.

28. Declarations of interest and dispensations

The CEO told the meeting that Councillors Nigel Foot, David Marsh and 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.

29. Tributes to former Councillor Kim Hodges

The Mayor, Councillor Nigel Foot, told the meeting that former Councillor Kim Hodges had passed away the previous night. Councillor Martha Vickers paid tribute to him for his service on the Council and to the communities of Newbury. The Meeting observed a minutes silence in his memory.

30. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Proposed: Councillor Nigel Foot

Seconded: Councillor Steve Masters

Resolved: 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.

31. Victoria Park Kiosk

The Mayor thanked the officers for arranging a site visit to the kiosk prior to the meeting. He invited the Leader of the Council, Councillor Gary Norman, to outline the issues and options referred to in the report from the CEO and the DSM, which presented 3 options for members to consider and a list of criteria which might be included.

The 3 options put forward for consideration by the meeting were:

- A) Do nothing is not an option in this case, as the Victoria Park lease imposes maintenance obligations on this Council. The kiosk building needs urgent repairs to the roof and interiors, which is the minimum requirement.
- B) Construction of the proposed community café, at a possible cost up to £890,000.
- C) To meet the requirements of Park users at a much lower cost by upgrading/improving the kiosk building already in the Park and the demolition and removal of the old boat store. (Former air raid shelter)

Members expressed their disappointment that while option B) was the preferred option that it was no longer affordable due to rising costs resulting from planning requirements and inflationary pressures. However, there was a strong desire to do more than the minimum required at option A).

Members supported all of the criteria for redevelopment set out in the Officers' report and made some amendments, with the result as follows:

- i. To provide public toilets, including baby changing facilities
- ii. To provide some cover/ shelter from the elements.
- iii. To provide an improved food and drink offering for users of the Park
- iv. To provide an outside drinking water dispenser
- v. To improve the surrounds and seating at the kiosk
- vi. Meeting the Council's repair and maintenance lease obligations
- vii. To improve the appearance of the kiosk
- viii. To demolish the old bomb shelter, which is unsightly and gives rise to anti-social behaviour and vandalism in the Park
- ix. That the proposals should require the minimum planning permission requirements
- x. To provide value for money
- xi. To provide sustainable options (e.g. PV panels on roof, etc.)
- xii. To future proof for possible extension to the current kiosk building.
- xiii. To provide changing rooms to support the amenities in the Park

Officers suggested the budget to be targeted for this project.

Members agreed that if external funding could be found towards option B) above, then this could run in parallel.

Proposed: Councillor Roger Hunneman

Seconded: Councillor Steve Masters

Unanimously Resolved: That officers should be authorised to continue to engage the relevant expertise to prepare the design brief for option C) above and costs, etc. required, as well as setting out the public procurement requirements which the Council would have to follow.

It was discussed that an operator had been identified for the new Community café proposed at option B) and the CEO replied that he would be advised of the outcome of the meeting.

There being no further business, the Town Mayor declared the meeting closed at 8.34 pm.

Town Mayor: _____

Date: _____