

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF NEWBURY TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, MARKET PLACE, NEWBURY
ON MONDAY 30 JANUARY 2017 AT 7.30PM.**

PRESENT

Councillors Howard Bairstow; Jeff Beck; Jeanette Clifford; Jo Day; Lynne Doherty; Adrian Edwards; Miles Evans; David Fenn; James Fredrickson; John Gardner; Sarah Greenall; Arthur Johnson; Mike Johnston; Margo Payne; Anthony Pick; Kuldip Singh Kang; Julian Swift-Hook (Town Mayor); Martha Vickers.

In attendance:

Hugh Peacocke, Chief Executive
Gillian Durrant, Responsible Financial Officer

Before the proper business of the meeting, the Town Mayor, on behalf of the Council, presented Long-Service Awards to Granville Taylor, Community Services Manager and Caroline Edmunds and Joanne Lempriere, Community Services Officers, in recognition of each of them having given 10 years' service with the Council.

44. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors David Fish, Andrew Steel, David Goff; Elizabeth O'Keeffe and Tony Stretton.

45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chief Executive Officer declared that Councillors Howard Bairstow, Jeff Beck, Jeanette Clifford, Lynne Doherty, Adrian Edwards, James Fredrickson, Mike Johnston and Anthony Pick 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.

The Chief Executive Officer also declared a dispensation for those Town Councillors who live in the Newbury Town Council area with respect to their discussion relating to the budget and setting the precept for 2017/18.

46. MINUTES

PROPOSED: Councillor Anthony Pick

SECONDED: Councillor Howard Bairstow

RESOLVED: That the minutes of a meeting of Newbury Town Council held on Monday 31 October 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

47. QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Mr Allan Mercado asked the following question:

“Has the Newbury Bid responded to the question asked at the Civic Pride meeting with respect to the lighting along the Canal footpath?”

The Town Mayor made the following response:

On the 21 November 2016 you asked a question to the Civic Pride, Arts and Leisure Committee about Christmas lighting on the canal footpath. This question was asked too late to be considered for the Christmas lights in 2016, but the BID will be asked to consider this for the Christmas lights in 2017 and we will let you know the outcome of this in due course.

Supplementary question

On 25 March 2013 I first asked this question and was informed that as the BID were now responsible for the Christmas Lights and that there is a Newbury Town Council representative on the BID Christmas working group the Newbury Town Council rep would be asked to raise this with the BID. This was nearly four years ago, so it appears that the management of the BID are holding Newbury Town Council in contempt. Why the delay?

The Town Mayor made the following response:

Officers will get back to you with a written answer as soon as possible.

Mr Allan Mercado asked the following question:

“Will the forthcoming Town Meeting be widely publicised by the Town Council throughout the Newbury community this year? In previous years it failed miserably to do so.”

The Town Mayor made the following response:

The agenda and notice of the Annual Town Meeting will be publicised on the Newbury Town Council website, social media and noticeboard and by press release to numerous media outlets. Newbury Town Council has over 2,000 Twitter followers.

Supplementary question:

May I suggest that a light faced 6 point type font advert hidden amongst the announcements in the Newbury Weekly News is insufficient? It would cost peanuts to place a banner across the front of the Town Hall – no money or planning permission is needed – like in Hungerford.

The Town Mayor made the following response:

I agree that this meeting should get the maximum amount of publicity. Your idea of a banner sounds practical and we need to look into what is involved. The CEO and officers will look into this. Thank you for bringing this to our attention.

48. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

None received.

49. TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

The Town Mayor gave his report to the Council, a copy of which is attached to these minutes as Appendix 1.

50. LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader gave his report to the Council, a copy of which is attached to these minutes as Appendix 2.

51. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The Chief Executive Officer presented his report, a copy of which was published with the agenda.

52. COMMITTEES

The Minutes of the following meetings were received:

Planning & Highways	24 October 2016
Planning & Highways	14 November 2016
Civic Pride, Arts & Leisure	21 November 2016
Planning & Highways	05 December 2016
Community Services	12 December 2016
Planning & Highways	04 January 2017
Policy & Resources	16 January 2017

53. 2017/2018 BUDGET AND PRECEPT

The Policy & Resources Committee resolved on 16 January 2017 to adopt a budget for 2017/2018, recommending that the Council sets an overall funding demand of £1,019,435. This was received and noted by the Committee.

PROPOSED: Councillor Anthony Pick

SECONDED: Councillor Howard Bairstow

RESOLVED: To declare that the Precept for the Financial Year 2017/18 be set at £1,019,435.

PROPOSED: Councillor Anthony Pick

SECONDED: Councillor Margo Payne

RESOLVED: That a leaflet explaining to the public how the precept is to be used during 2017/2018 is produced, with that leaflet to be distributed to each household in Newbury, along with an Annual report from the Council and published on the Council's website.

Data from the Leaders memo will be included in the leaflet and distributed to members for comment before it is distributed to the public, subject to time constraints.

54. ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The Council noted that the Annual Town Meeting will take place at 7.00pm on 20 March 2017 in the Council Chamber.

55. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2017/18

PROPOSED: Councillor Anthony Pick

SECONDED: Councillor Jo Day

RESOLVED: That the schedule of meetings shown at Agenda Appendix 4 be adopted

56. SAYERS CLOSE OPEN SPACE SITE SECURITY

PROPOSED: Councillor Anthony Pick

SECONDED: Councillor Sarah Greenall

RESOLVED: To spend £3,461 plus VAT from Section 106 funds to erect a lockable steel barrier gate and steel railings in order to protect the Council's open space land at Sayers Close.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE TOWN MAYOR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.15PM

TOWN MAYOR

**Newbury Town Council
Mayor's Report for Full Council Meeting on 30th January 2017**

Fellow councillors, ladies and gentlemen...

In the three months since the last Full Council meeting on 31st October 2016, my Mayoress and I have attended a total of 33 events on your behalf, including a variety of interesting Christmas engagements.

You will recall that at the October council meeting last year I reported to you that I had represented the town at the funeral of former Mayor of Newbury Chris Hall.

Once again, I have had occasion to perform the same duty, representing Newbury at the funeral of former Mayor Barbara McMahon last week, following her death at the age of 94.

Born in Newbury in 1922, Barbara McMahon lived in Newbury all her life.

She worked as a teacher at Greenham Court School, in my ward of Pyle Hill, a school which is now known as The Willows.

She served as a Newbury district councillor and was elected as mayor in 1983.

Our thoughts are with her family, her two daughters, Louise and Diane, her four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

The funeral was held last Friday January 27, at her parish church, St Francis de Sales, Wash Common.

The Town Council paid its respects to former councillor McMahon by observing a minute's silence at the start of the Policy and Resources committee meeting on 16 January.

On a more cheerful note, I was privileged to be invited to not one Diwali celebration, but two.

The mega Diwali at Newbury racecourse has become a regular annual feature in the town's social calendar, and as guests of honour, along with other members of the local chain gang, my Mayoress and I enjoyed thoroughly entertaining evening.

The highlight of the evening for me was when the chairman of West Berkshire Council, Councillor Quentin Webb, was invited onto the stage for a brief lesson in Indian dancing. Councillor Webb gave a very good account of himself, and was an excellent sport, though I suspect he would be the 1st to admit that Indian dancing is probably not his strong suit. I believe the video is on Facebook somewhere...

The following day was a different type of Diwali celebration – a smaller family event where the stars of the show were definitely the children of all the families taking part. A fabulous afternoon of colourful singing and dancing, at which my Mayoress and I had a front row seat.

The over 80s parcel fund is another annual entry in the town's civic calendar, in my Mayoress and I were pleased to support it on behalf of the town Council. We particularly enjoyed the parcel packing session at the beginning of December – this involved starting with an empty bag and going around a series of tables, each with a different item, putting one of each item in the bag.

What started as an orderly procession around the tables with one bag at a time quickly turned into a competition with various people seeing how many bags they could manage to fill at once and how quickly they could get round the course and get back to the beginning with a new empty bag.

The occasion was fun and festive, punctuated with bacon butties and much laughter. It was great to see so many different groups of youngsters from local schools, Scouts, guides and so on, all keen to help pack Christmas parcels for the older members of our community.

As usual, December mayoral events involved a lot of carols and a lot of mince pies. Fortunately, I am a great fan of mince pies, so I was very happy to fulfil my mince pie eating obligations to the community. I'm afraid my singing voice for the Christmas carols was not so good.

The civic carol service just before Christmas was a very special event, because it was a joint carol service with my chosen charity, West Berkshire Mencap.

Several different scenes from the Nativity story were performed by Mencap clients during the service, which added considerably to everyone's enjoyment of the evening.

The last mayoral event of the calendar year was a visit to West Berkshire community hospital on Christmas morning, to join the Mayor of Thatcham and the patients for a chat and some carol singing.

Having to be in hospital is not a fun thing to do on Christmas day, and although many patients had family members visiting, I'm sure they would all have preferred to have been at home with their families. I'm pleased that we were able to bring a little extra Christmas cheer to their day.

January has been a quiet month for the Mayor of Newbury, but things are getting busy again so I look forward to having more to report to you next time.

Thank you very much, and I am of course happy to answer any questions.

Julian Swift-Hook

Mayor of Newbury

30th January 2017

Draft

Leader's Report to Council 30th January 2017

Mr Mayor, Councillors, ladies and gentlemen, this is my eighth report to Council and I will bring you up to date with developments since our last Full Council back in October.

The Budget

In terms of the budget for 2017/2018 that is on the agenda later I am very pleased to say that if adopted it will result in a zero percent increase for the precept payers of Newbury. The budget was discussed at length during the Policy and Resources Committee meeting on the 16th January. As outlined in my budget memo we have had to face a number of budget pressures but with the savings that have been made we have been able to maintain the services for which we are responsible and the people of Newbury value and indeed take on some new ones.

John Winchcombe Statue

At the last P&R meeting we decided to make a contribution to this project. Jack of Newbury is a key figure in the history of Newbury and a statue is a fitting tribute to him. We were asked to make a small contribution. This is made up of £500 from a cancelled Art Trail Project and £1,300 from Community Infrastructure Levy funds. So there is no additional pressure on the precept. Not only will the project deliver a statue, but there will also be an educational benefit with educational projects in both primary and secondary schools in the town linked to its creation.

Markets

As outlined in my previous report, Market Traders' parking was one of the key issues facing the Council. Well as we are all aware this has now been successfully resolved. West Berkshire District Council have offered parking at Northcroft Lane West as an alternative. These arrangements will be in place from 1 April 2017

The Market is also under new management. We welcome Malcolm & Debbie Smith who have taken over from Steve Brind and we look forward to working with them.

The BID

We voted at last Full Council to support the renewal of the BID. I am pleased that the Business Community in Newbury also gave the BID their backing and we look forward to working with the BID over the next five years.

Victoria Park

All repair works are progressing well and within budget. I would encourage members and the public to visit the park where you can already see how much better it is looking as the works near completion.

Expect big news over the coming months:

- Work will commence on repairs to boundary wall and footpaths, as well as to the footpath on Parkway.
- The Bowls Club will start again next season, from April, with a newly restored bowling green. I thank the club and its members for their work in upgrading Club House for launch.
- New tennis courts will be opened in February.
- The football pitch is looking great and will be ready for the new season in August.

The other projects are also progressing and tenders have been invited for the building of the new café and will soon be invited for the new changing rooms. The appearance of the Park will be further improved when the boat store is demolished. It will be replaced by a container, in the wooded area, closer to the pond.

Newbury in Bloom

We have just launched the 2017 campaign, aiming to build on the successes of last year. We have increased the budget and secured at least £1,000 from the Tesco Bags of Help grants scheme. This year's competition features a new category for Community Projects, whereby any individual or group can work to improve their area or their street or an open space in their area and enter it for an award. The Newbury in Bloom Working Group has agreed to use some of their funds to assist Community Projects and applications for assistance should be forwarded to the Town Hall. I would like to offer my thanks to Councillor Sarah Greenall, Chair, and her very active Working Group.

Newbury Town Design Statement

This description of the architectural character of Newbury and recommendations on future design has been prepared in draft for each area of the town by members of the Planning & Highways Committee, and is subject to a public open day at the Town Hall on 6th February. It updates the earlier edition of 2005. When finalised, it will be submitted to West Berks Council for approval as material consideration for planning purposes.

Town Plan

A Steering Group set up by the Planning & Highways Committee is preparing a Town Plan for Newbury as input to the next West Berks Council Core Strategy for 2019-2036. The work is being divided between Working Groups on the Character of Newbury, Planning, Transport, Business, Commercial, and Retail, Tourism, Culture, Recreation, and Leisure, Education, Health Care, the Environment, Emergency Services, and Places of Worship. As the scope of the Plan is the Newbury Settlement Boundary, members of the Parish Councils of Speen, Shaw-cum-Donnington, and Greenham have joined the Steering Group. The Working Groups include members of the public whose specialised knowledge will be valuable, of whom two are or will be co-opted to the Steering Group. I am grateful for the commitment of members of this Council to this important undertaking.

Thank you, Mr Mayor. I'm happy to take any questions.

David Goff,
Leader