

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF NEWBURY TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, MARKET PLACE, NEWBURY
ON WEDNESDAY 10 MAY 2017 AT 7.30 PM.**

PRESENT

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

In attendance:

Hugh Peacocke, Chief Executive
Joyce Lewis, Civic Manager
Tony Hiller, Corporate Services Officer

Before the proper business of the meeting, the Civic Manager, Joyce Lewis presented the Members with a run through of the upcoming Mayor Making.

57. Apologies for absence

Councillors Mike Johnston; Andrew Steel and Tony Stretton.

58. Declarations of interest and dispensations

No declarations made.

59. Minutes

PROPOSED: Councillor Anthony Pick

SECONDED: Councillor Jeff Beck

RESOLVED: That the minutes of a meeting of Newbury Town Council held on Monday 30 January 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

60. Questions and Petitions from members of the public

There were none.

61. Members’ questions and petitions

There were none.

62. 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.

63. Leader’s report

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

64. Chief Executive Officer's report

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

65. Committees

The Minutes of the following meetings were received:

Planning & Highways	23 January 2017	(already circulated)
Civic Pride, Arts & Leisure	20 February 2017	(already circulated)
Planning & Highways	13 February 2017	(already circulated)
Planning & Highways	6 March 2017	(already circulated)
Community Services	13 March 2017	(already circulated)
Planning & Highways	27 March 2017	(already circulated)
Policy & Resources (Draft)	24 April 2017	(already circulated)

66. Nomination of Mayor Elect and Deputy Mayor Elect for the 2017/2018 municipal year

PROPOSED: Councillor Sarah Greenall
SECONDED: Councillor Adrian Edwards

RESOLVED: That Councillor David Fenn is confirmed as Mayor Elect for the municipal year 2017/2018.

PROPOSED: Councillor Miles Evans
SECONDED: Councillor Jeff Beck

RESOLVED: That Councillor Margo Payne is confirmed as Deputy Mayor Elect for the municipal year 2017/2018.

67. Election of Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council for the 2017/2018 municipal year

PROPOSED: Councillor Sarah Greenall
SECONDED: Councillor Anthony Pick

RESOLVED: That Councillor Adrian Edwards is elected Leader of the Council for the municipal year 2017/2018.

PROPOSED: Councillor Elizabeth O'Keeffe
SECONDED: Councillor Julian Swift-Hook

RESOLVED: That Members and Staff of Newbury Town Council thank Councillor Dave Goff for his time as Leader of the Council.

PROPOSED: Councillor Margo Payne
SECONDED: Councillor David Fish

RESOLVED: That Councillor Miles Evans is elected Deputy Leader of the Council for the municipal year 2017/2018.

68. Committee / Sub-Committee seat allocation for the 2017/2018 municipal year

PROPOSED: Councillor Adrian Edwards

SECONDED: Councillor Miles Evans

RESOLVED: That the number of seats to be allocated to each party on each Committee and Sub-Committee is in line with Standing Orders.

69. Committees / Sub-Committees for 2017/2018 municipal year

PROPOSED: Councillor Adrian Edwards

SECONDED: Councillor Howard Bairstow

RESOLVED: That the composition of the Committees and Sub-Committees, together with named substitutes, shown as attached to the Agenda at Appendix 3.

It was noted that the Leader and Deputy Leader were voted as Chair and Deputy Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee, and that each of the other Committees and the Sub-Committees will formally elect their own Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson at their first meeting.

70. Working Groups for the 2017/2018 municipal year

PROPOSED: Councillor Adrian Edwards

SECONDED: Councillor Miles Evans

RESOLVED: That the membership of all Working Groups shown as attached to the Agenda at Appendix 4 with requested amendments will be ratified at the Annual meeting of the Council on 14 May 2017.

71. Representation on School Governing Bodies for 2017/2018

PROPOSED: Councillor Adrian Edwards

SECONDED: Councillor Miles Evans

RESOLVED: That the Council's proposed representation on School Governing Bodies for 2017/2018 shown as attached to the Agenda at Appendix 5 with requested amendments will be ratified at the Annual meeting of the Council on 14 May 2017.

72. Representation on Outside Bodies for 2017/2018

PROPOSED: Councillor Adrian Edwards

SECONDED: Councillor Miles Evans

RESOLVED: That the Council's representation on outside bodies for 2017/2018 shown as attached to the Agenda at Appendix 6 with requested amendments will be ratified at the Annual meeting of the Council on 14 May 2017.

73. Update on the Repairs and Improvements to Victoria Park

Members received a verbal update from Councillor David Fish regarding the repairs and improvements to Victoria Park.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE TOWN MAYOR DECLARED THE MEETING
CLOSED AT 8.49PM**

TOWN MAYOR

**Newbury Town Council
Mayor's Report for Full Council Meeting on 10th May 2017**

Fellow councillors, ladies and gentlemen...

My previous Mayor's Reports have been relatively brief, so I hope you will indulge me in listening to a slightly longer report tonight, given that this is the last proper Full Council meeting over which I will have the honour to preside as Mayor.

Since my last report to you at the end of January, I have attended 40 events on your behalf, and I have been accompanied by my Mayoress, Tessa Olson, for many of them.

Education and Training

I have attended Newbury College on two occasions in the last three months, and on both occasions I was once again impressed by the range of educational and training opportunities available at our college, to students of all ages.

The first of these events was the opening of the new engineering laboratory, where students are trained how to use state-of-the-art CNC machines for producing complex components to very close tolerances.

And the second was the Annual Apprenticeship Awards, at which the achievements of apprentices from a wide range of disciplines, including engineering, were recognised. The guest speaker was former apprentice David Martin, who is now UKAEA's chief operating officer, working at Culham Science Centre in Abingdon.

The engineering world won many of the awards, but just to prove my point about the wide range of disciplines, the "Best apprentice in a small business" award went to Hannah Benson, who was apprenticed to the Tally Ho pub in Hungerford Newtown, and the "Best workplace mentor" went to Hannah's mentor, Paula Woof, also of the Tally Ho!

Victoria Park

Having presided over this council as Leader during the time when the issues surrounding the damage to Victoria Park were front and centre in our thoughts. I was particularly pleased to be able to formally open the council's fantastic new tennis courts a month ago, marking one of the last stages of the repair and refurbishment of what I have often described as "the jewel in Newbury's crown", Victoria Park.

And with the wonderful new paint scheme for the courts and the surrounding surface, the tennis courts really do look stunning.

There is very little left to do to complete the repairs to the park. The retaining wall adjoining Park Way has been repaired, the railings have been replaced, the paths throughout the park have been repaired, the bowling green has been repaired, and the tennis courts are open.

With only the bowling club green remaining to be formally opened, the work is almost done. Given where we were six years ago, I think this is a momentous achievement by our fantastic Services Team, led by Granville Taylor.

The Arts in Newbury

Musical arts have featured three times in my diary of engagements during the last three months.

My Mayoress and I very much enjoyed Trinity School's performance of "Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour DreamCoat" at the end of March, and a couple of weeks later we enjoyed the Newbury Musical Theatre presentation of "My Fair Lady". Who needs to go to the West End when we have such great performances here in Newbury?

My third musical engagement was just last week when it was my great pleasure to attend the opening concert of the wonderful international Newbury Spring Festival, the biggest music festival of its type in the country, outside the Edinburgh Festival and the BBC Proms.

The Spring Festival is in its 39th year this year, and it is something of which little old Newbury should be immensely proud.

We also attended the Open Studios Insight exhibition last month – the last that will be held in the present New Greenham Arts Centre which is scheduled for demolition later this year.

A new purpose-built arts centre will be constructed to replace it, but the new centre will probably not be open in time for next year's Open Studios exhibition.

My Mayoress and I also attended the 10th birthday party of Newbury Crafters where there were lots of handmade items on display, and a wonderful birthday cake.

Health and wellbeing

A number of the events that my Mayoress and I have attended during the last three months are to do with health and well-being.

Chiropractic Centres

It seems that chiropractic centres in Newbury are like London buses – no new ones for ages, and then two new ones open in a month. I opened the new premises of the Newbury Chiropractic Centre at the beginning of February, and just two weeks later I opened the Spriggs Chiropractic Centre.

Dementia

On a more serious note, dementia is a devastating condition which affects all too many people, particularly, but not exclusively, older people. It is now apparently the leading cause of death in England and Wales.

Two of the events that I have attended in the last three months have been about helping people with dementia, the first of which was the opening of a Memories Café at the Winchcombe Place care home in February. Many of the residents at the care home are dementia sufferers, and the memory boxes that the residents were able to open contained lots of memorabilia from several decades ago to stimulate social interactions around shared memories.

A month later, I took part in the Virtual Dementia Tour, designed to enable people who do not have dementia to experience something of what it is like to be a sufferer.

I can't tell you too much about it because next week is Dementia Awareness Week and I wouldn't want to spoil it for anyone who has the opportunity to experience this Virtual Tour for themselves. Suffice to say that the degree of sensory disruption was quite disturbing, and the opportunity to talk with the trainer afterwards was very valuable in helping me to make sense of the experience. If anyone has the opportunity to take this virtual dementia tour, I would strongly recommend it.

Suicide Prevention

And most recently, my Mayoress and I attended the inaugural meeting of a new suicide prevention action group here in the council chamber last week.

It was an incredibly valuable meeting, with all participants saying at the end of it how useful it had been.

Great credit to Chief Executive of the Volunteer Centre, Garry Poulson, for organising this meeting and for bringing together so many apparently diverse organisations, all of whom were able to make a valuable contribution.

I think this was a brilliant start to a very worthwhile community project, and I do hope that this Action Group continues and grows.

And finally under the health and well-being heading, last week was Deafness Awareness Week, and it was marked by children from Mary Hare School singing loudly in Northbrook Street, collecting for their cause. It was a pleasure to be part of this amazingly colourful event.

Sport

On a lighter note, another theme running through my mayoral events over the last three months was a sporting one.

I've already mentioned the opening of the tennis courts in Victoria Park, but other sporting engagements included attending the annual West Berks Indoor Bowls Club Crowe Clark Whitehill competition, and getting up ridiculously early one Saturday to help start a leg of the Devizes to Westminster canoe race from Northcroft.

And of course, there was the Soroptimists annual pancake races in February – although I'm not sure that qualifies as a sporting event as such!

Non-political nominations for non-political Mayoral posts

Those of you who attended the last Policy and Resources Committee meeting will recall that I raised the issue of the nomination of Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

In all the 20-odd years that I have served as a councillor on this Council, it has been custom and practice for the role of Mayor and Deputy Mayor to be non-political.

Indeed, this is enshrined in our current Standing Orders which specify that the Town Mayor is the civic head of the council, not the political head.

This principle is further supported by the protocol and role description for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor which was adopted by this Council on 30 November 2015 and which states that "the position is non-political" and "the Mayor's role is as the ceremonial head of the town".

Yet even though the role of Mayor and Deputy Mayor are both clearly considered to be non-political, and have been for as long as I can remember, the process by which the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are nominated is unfortunately still apparently based in political considerations, even after 20 years.

I was told two weeks ago that the nomination process being followed this year is in line with an old Standing Order dating back to March 2006, namely to nominate the Mayor and Deputy Mayor Elect based on the relative size of political groups.

However, I think it's worth pointing out that this Standing Order had very little support at the time, being passed with just six councillors voting in favour. Half of the 17 councillors present at the time abstained. It was subsequently deleted in December 2008 with what I recall was the unanimous support of all 21 councillors present on that occasion.

So that suggests to me that 10 years ago, Council did not think that such a political consideration was appropriate when nominating councillors to non-political posts.

I find myself wondering what's changed.

It is without question an honour and a privilege to be Mayor of Newbury, one which I have fully appreciated and thoroughly enjoyed over the past 12 months. And having fulfilled the role for the last year, I am aware now, more than ever, how important Newbury's Mayor is to the citizens of our wonderful town.

My firm view, therefore, formed with the benefit of 20 years' experience as a councillor on this Council, and having been Deputy Leader, Leader, Deputy Mayor, and now Mayor, is that going forward, nominations for this honour should be made based first and foremost on the length of time for which nominees have dedicated themselves to the service of the town council.

I hope and trust that this will be addressed as soon as possible in the new civic year with a view to adopting it as council policy, so that the citizens of our town can have confidence that the first citizen is so appointed based only on his or her record of service to the town.

Principle, not personal

Finally on this issue, I would like to make it clear once again that my issue here is purely one of principle.

It is in no way a reflection of my views of the prospective nominee for Deputy Mayor Elect as an individual, a councillor who I have come to hold in particularly high esteem in the short time that it has been my pleasure to know her.

And in anticipation of the outcome of items later on tonight's agenda, I would also like confirm that I will be fully supporting both the Mayor Elect and the Deputy Mayor Elect at Mayor Making on Sunday.

Thank you

Thank you very much once again, councillors, for your support during my mayoral year, both here in the council chamber and at the many events that we have all attended. I am of course happy to answer any questions.

Cllr Julian Swift-Hook

Mayor of Newbury

10th May 2017

Leader's Report to Council 10 May 2017

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

Annual Town Meeting

The Annual Town Meeting and Civic Awards took place on 20th March. The Town Meeting is an opportunity for the public to find out what the Council has been up to over the past year as well as a chance to ask questions of the Committee chairmen. The Civic Awards are an important opportunity to recognise the many unsung heroes in our Town whose voluntary efforts are much valued but may otherwise go unnoticed by the wider community.

The winner of the Newbury Town Civic Award was Katy Hawthorne, a tireless fundraiser for good causes and Diane Batten was highly commended for her work with vulnerable young people. The Young Persons' Civic Award was won by Natasha Williams who gives up much of her time for the benefit of other children.

Community Clean

This has now become an annual event and took place on Saturday 25th March. Councillors and residents of all age groups joined forces to collect litter from five locations around Newbury. The event was kindly sponsored by MacDonalDs and forty bags were filled with discarded rubbish – an amazing result and my thanks go to all who turned out to make our town a tidier place.

Poppy Planting

As part of the Lions Club centenary celebrations, Newbury Lions sponsored the purchase of poppy seeds to be planted as part of the First World War Centenary commemorations. Planting took place in a total of nine locations in Newbury during the end of March and early April. Locations included open spaces, schools, cemeteries and a War memorial and an allotment. We are grateful to the Newbury Lions for this sponsorship.

Wharf Toilets

Over 22nd and 23rd May Works will be taking place at the Wharf toilets to install paddle gates. The toilets will remain open during this time. Once the paddle gates have been installed, there will be a 20p charge to use the facility, 5p, 10p, 20p and 50p pieces will be accepted but no change will be given. The 20p charge will go towards the maintenance and cleaning of the toilets ensuring that the toilets are serviced and maintained to acceptable standards.

Christmas lights

Discussions with the BID are still ongoing. We have budgeted £12,000 as the Town Council's contribution for 2017-18. The BID are seeking £18,000 from us. As I outlined in my Budget Memo back in January, the Council faces a number of financial challenges and we have little flexibility as we are required to set a balanced budget. We are funded predominantly by the precept-payers of Newbury and need to be mindful of any financial demands we place upon them and we have to cut our cloth accordingly. I hope we can come to a mutually acceptable solution.

Unauthorised travellers at Hutton Close

During the night of 27th/28th April, we had travellers and 12 caravans & vehicles turn up on our land at Hutton Close. The police were promptly informed the following morning and we asked them to leave the land forthwith. The situation was monitored, at least twice daily, by the police. The travellers had initially told that they would be leaving on the 1st May. The police advised that they could not immediately issue a Section 61 notice as they were not causing a nuisance or criminal damage. Subsequently the departure date became the 4th May. On the 3rd May, the police served a Section 61 notice on them and requested that the Travellers depart by 4.30 pm that day.

For the future protection of our land we will be arranging for a very robust steel gate to be fabricated to make it difficult to break through. We are also reviewing the security of our other lands and all reasonable measures will be taken to prevent unauthorised vehicular access onto them.

Finally I would like to record my thanks to all officers and members for their support over the past two years. Much has been achieved but there is much more to be done!

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