

**Minutes of a meeting of the Civic Pride, Arts, & Culture Committee held in the
Council Chamber on Monday 17 February 2025 at 7.30pm**

Present: Councillors Phil Barnett (19:40), Vera Barnett, Jo Day, Billy Drummond, David Harman, Chris Hood (19:34), Ian Jee (sub), Gary Norman and Graham Storey

Officers Present

Joanna Aylott (Civic Manager)

Amy Xing (Civic Officer)

63. Apologies

Councillors Andy Moore and Nigel Foot (substitute Ian Jee).

64. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

It was declared that Councillors Phil Barnett and Billy Drummond 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.

65. Minutes

Proposed: Vera Barnett

Seconded: Gary Norman

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting of the Civic Pride, Arts and Culture Committee held on 25 November 2024 were approved.

Actions from the previous meeting were all fulfilled or ongoing, with items to be discussed as part of this meeting's agenda.

66. Questions and Petitions from Members of the Public

There were none.

67. Members' Questions and Petitions

There were none.

68. Royal Engineers Association Freedom Parade

The Chairperson introduced representatives from the Royal Engineers Association (REA).

The Corps of Royal Engineers, through its unit 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic), holds the Freedom of the Town due to its long association with Newbury.

In 2025 the Regiment will be celebrating the 200th anniversary of the formation of its three Regular sub-unit squadrons, 13 Geographic Squadron, 14 Geographic Squadron and 16 Geographic Support Squadron, and wish to celebrate the occasion with a Freedom Parade through the town.

The REA representatives gave an update on their plans for the Parade on 28 June 2025. If not approved as a Freedom Parade by The Corps of Royal Engineers Headquarters, it will be a Celebration Parade coinciding with Armed Forces Day.

The format and route of the parade will be similar to that on Remembrance Sunday. The planning is being supported by NTC, and includes police security, road closures, first aid, sound provision and hospitality, including NTC funding towards these elements. NTC is coordinating with the Market to explore whether the market can coincide with the parade, subject to security concerns. Other organisations involved are the Newbury Royal British Legion, Thames Valley Police and Safety Advisory Group.

The Committee expressed their excitement and support for the Parade and thanked the REA for their efforts in organising this event.

69. Update from the VE Day & VJ Day 80th Anniversary Working Group

The Civic Manager gave an update on plans formed by the Working Group for these important dates, It was noted that events have been planned for Thursday 8 and Saturday 10 May in Victoria Park to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

Cllr Jo Day noted that the Working Group is working in collaboration with local partners such as the Royal British Legion, Newbury BID and the Corn Exchange during the planning.

70. Update from Local Democracy Working Group

Cllr Jo Day updated the Committee on actions from the Working Group and noted that their current focus is on engaging adults and youth groups. Cllr Jo Day shared some ideas from the last meeting on how Saturday Surgeries might be improved, including changing the name, making Cllrs more visible, and having guidelines on how to carry out the duty. The committee agreed ideas were moving in the right direction and encouraged the Working Group to continue to explore this.

It was agreed that Working Group will put forward some proposals and a checklist for Saturday Surgery to be reviewed by the Committee at the next meeting.

Cllr Gary Norman updated the Committee on progress with Berkshire Youth and noted positive steps were being made regarding youth engagement.

71. Civic Awards

The Civic Manager provided an update on the status of this year's Civic Awards, noting the key dates for the end of the nomination period, judging panel and the awards ceremony. It was noted that invitations had been issued for the awards evening, and Cllrs were encouraged to RSVP.

72. Mayor Making

The Civic Manager provided an update on the status of this year's Mayor Making planning. It was noted that the event will take place at the Corn Exchange and St Nicolas Church again this year, and the Civic Office will work closely with the incoming Mayor to accommodate their preferences for the day.

73. Flying the Town Flag from the Town Hall

It was noted that the flag flying policy and application form approved by this Committee at the last meeting is now published on the Newbury Town Council website.

74. Newbury Twin Town Association

The Committee reviewed a report from the Newbury Twin Town Association on their activities of the past year, and their forthcoming activities.

Cllr Phil Barnett noted that he had attended the recent AGM, where exciting opportunities for upcoming trips were discussed.

The report stated that the Newbury Twin Town Association are happy to learn that this Committee is exploring Twin Town signage or a trail in Victoria Park and hoped this would be in place for the next reunion in July 2027. The working group is to keep this in mind.

75. Civic Manager's Reports

The Civic Manager presented reports on the Mayor's Festive Afternoon Tea and Raising the Profile of the Council in the Community.

76. Civic Events

Information regarding the Mayor's Festive Afternoon Tea (17 December), Civic Carol Service (22 December) and launch of the 2025 Civic Awards (27 January) was received and noted.

Information relating to future Civic Events was noted including the Civic Awards Ceremony (19 March), the Mayor's Fundraising Gig (21 March), Mayor's Coffee Morning for West Berks Foodbank (12 April), VE Day 80 Events (8 & 10 May), Mayor Making (11 May) and the Royal Engineers Association Parade (28 June).

Newbury Road Club are still planning their event in Victoria Park on Saturday 14 June. Cllr Gary Norman will be the main link between the Road Club and NTC regarding this event.

Community United have cancelled their event on Saturday 28 June in Victoria Park.

77. Forward Work Programme for Civic Pride, Arts & Culture Committee Meetings 2024/25

Items on the forward work programme were noted. No other items were added.

There being no further business, the Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 8:28pm.

Chairperson:

Date: