

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
NEWBURY TOWN COUNCIL, MARKET PLACE, NEWBURY ON
Monday 20 October 2025 AT 7:30 PM.**

PRESENT

Councillors Phil Barnett, Vera Barnett, Jo Day, Sam Dibas, Billy Drummond, Nigel Foot, David Harman (Town Mayor, Chair), Ian Jee, Pam Lusby-Taylor, David Marsh, Steve Masters, Andy Moore, Graham Storey, Meg Thomas.

In Attendance

Toby Miles-Mallowan, Chief Executive Officer

58. APOLOGIES

Councillors Billy Drummond, Roger Hunneman, Vaughan Miller, Elizabeth O’Keeffe and Sarah Slack.

59. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chief Executive Officer declared that Councillors, Phil Barnett, Nigel Foot and David Marsh who 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.

60. COUNCIL MINUTES

Proposed: Councillor Vera Barnett

Seconded: Councillor Sam Dibas

Resolved: The minutes of Monday 29th September 2025 were resolved as an accurate record.

61. QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There was one question from a member of the public, see appendix 1 for full details of the question and response.

62. MEMBERS QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

There was one motion **received** from Councillor Sam Dibas:

‘This council affirms its support for and solidarity with Cllr Steve Masters, following his recent arrest along with hundreds of other peaceful protesters for speaking out against what a United Nations commission has confirmed as genocide in Gaza.’

Newbury Town Council recognises the right of all individuals, including councillors, to hold and express their personal views. However, as a Parish Council, Newbury Town Council is a statutory body whose powers and functions are defined by law.

Under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, parish and town councils may only act within their statutory powers—that is, on matters which directly relate to the parish or to the Council’s lawful functions. Matters of national or international affairs or foreign policy, such as conflicts or humanitarian issues abroad, fall outside the Council’s remit and competence.

Furthermore, parish and town councils are required to remain politically neutral corporate bodies. The Local Government Act 1986 (Sections 2 and 3) prohibits local authorities from publishing or promoting material which appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party or position.

In addition, under the Localism Act 2011 (Section 27) and the Newbury Town Council Members' Code of Conduct, councillors must distinguish between their personal views and those expressed in their capacity as members of the Council. While councillors are free to express their own opinions as private individuals, they must not do so in a way that implies the Council itself has adopted a position on matters beyond its lawful jurisdiction.

Accordingly, while this Council respects the individual rights of Cllr Masters and others to engage in peaceful protest or express personal opinions, Newbury Town Council cannot lawfully comment on or support this motion.

The Council will therefore record that this matter lies outside the scope of its statutory powers and cannot be considered as official Council business.

There were two questions **received** from members

From Councillor Sam Dibas:

'When are we going to assess the impact of pedestrianization on the town centre business economy? This trial does not seem to have any oversight, corrections or modifications. Can we get WBC to share the plans and details?'

Thank you for your question regarding the review of the pedestrianisation trial and its impact on the town centre economy.

The impact assessment is currently underway. West Berkshire Council (WBC) and Newbury Business Improvement District have commissioned a specialist organisation, Beauclair, to carry out a detailed analysis of town centre performance using Visa and Mastercard spend data. Beauclair are recognised experts in this field and have recently delivered similar reports for York and Shrewsbury (two areas that have also had pedestrianisation), assessing both footfall and seasonal trading trends. These reports are available online for reference.

The Beauclair report will form part of the six-month review of the pedestrianisation trial, which will be presented at the next Talk About Town scheduled on 12 November. Should that date change, all Members will be notified.

While the pedestrianisation trial itself is being led and managed by West Berkshire Council as the Highway Authority, Newbury Town Council continues to engage constructively and share local feedback through its committees and liaison meetings. We will ensure that details of the WBC evaluation and the supporting data are circulated to Councillors once they become publicly available.

All Members are welcome to attend the November meeting, where the findings will be discussed in detail.

Question received from Councillor Phil Barnett:

*‘The involvement of councillors at various civic functions in the town has played an important role for councillors since the inception of the Town Council back in 1997
Therefore, why was the mayor the only councillor invited to the Trafalgar day parade last Sunday?’*

Thank you for your query regarding councillor attendance at the Trafalgar Day Parade last Sunday.

This event was organised by the Newbury Sea Cadets, who requested the use of the Town Hall as a convenient location for their VIP guests due to its proximity to the Market Place and parade route. It is important to note that this was not a Newbury Town Council event, although the Council has supported the parade through the Civic Pride, Arts & Culture (CPAC) Committee, which recognises the Sea Cadets’ long-standing contribution to civic and community life in Newbury.

At a planning meeting with the organisers, the civic services manager specifically recommended that all Town Councillors be invited to attend in recognition of the historic and civic significance of the occasion. However, the invitation and guest list were managed directly by the Sea Cadets, and the Council did not have control over that process.

In advance of the event, the Civic Services Manager also circulated an email on behalf of the organisers to all Councillors, inviting expressions of interest and availability to attend. Unfortunately, no responses were received from Members offering to participate on the day.

While the Mayor attended in an official civic capacity, the Council continues to value the wider involvement of all Members at community and ceremonial events wherever possible. We will ensure that for future occasions of this nature, organisers are again encouraged to include invitations to all Councillors where appropriate.

63. TOWN MAYOR’S REPORT

The report from the Town Mayor was **received**.

Period 2, 16 June to 12 October, 68 engagements, with much support gratefully received from Deputy, Cllr Slack.

A wider variety of events as listed in report, a few highlights:

- i. Care Homes / Hospitals, dementia care
- ii. Youth, schools, colleges
- iii. Arts
- iv. Ceremonial, representing Newbury

Care Homes / Hospitals, Dementia Care

22 July Deputy Mayor attended West Berkshire Community Hospital’s Therapy Garden. A ‘thankyou’ event to celebrate the volunteers at West Berkshire Community Hospital.

30 July, Camelia Club Opening at Fair close Centre, Deputy Mayor attended, a local resource for people living with dementia.

18 August, Willows Edge Care Home, opening the sensory garden....thank you to the work from Berkshire Youth and Waterside Centre Volunteers.

Youth, Schools, Colleges

1 July, Deputy Mayor attended University College Newbury's Expo event, bringing together employers, students and apprentices in the wonderfully engaging event.

2 August, Berkshire Youth's 4th anniversary of their involvement at the Waterside Centre, showcasing what they have on offer for the community. The Mayor and Lady Mayoress enjoyed the canoe ride!

7 July Air Cadets Open Day, and annual event highlighting their achievements over the last year, awards presentation.

27 Sept, Berkshire Youth's Greenham Community Centre Open Day, highlighting their work in the community, with the recently opened facility in the heart of East Fields Ward. Thank you for ongoing engagement with the Greenham Community Centre from Cllrs, and in particular, P and V, Barnett, and Drummond, and O' Keeffe.

Arts

26 June, Are We There Yet? A theatrical performance from refugees, a strong display of courage and desire for a sense of safety and belonging – thank you to Cllrs Masters and Slack for bringing this to my attention.

24 August, Art on Park – local artists, hosted at Victoria Park.

Ceremonial, representing Newbury

28 June Royal Engineers Freedom Parade, Lord Lieutenant of Royal Berkshire, Parade through Northbrook Street and Market Place.

10 October, High Sherrif of Royal Berkshire's Judicial Service at Reading Minster.

12 October, Trafalgar Parade, Sea Cadet Corps. Newbury and District SCC hosted, His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Royal Berkshire in attendance to receive the salute.

64. LEADERS REPORT

The Leader of the Council's report was **received**.

65. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

CEO's report was **received**. Councillors wished to praise the efforts of Cllr Day and others over the success of the Local Democracy Week. Councillor Marsh and all Cllrs also wished to thank Officers and Cllr Jee for their leadership and efforts with Thames and Chilterns in Bloom.

66. COMMITTEES

Council **received** the minutes from Community Services, Planning and Highways and Civic Pride, Arts and Culture Committees.

67. **Mid-Year Review of NTC Performance against the Newbury Town Council Strategy 2024-2028.**
Council **received** the mid-year performance review.
68. **INTERNAL AUDIT Q1 REPORT**
Internal audit report was **received**.
69. **INTERNAL AUDIT Q1 - RECOMMENDATIONS, ACTIONS & TIMETABLE**
Council **considered** the actions and timeline, as recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee on ... and Management Team
Proposed: Cllr Steve Masters
Seconded: Cllr Ian Jee
Resolved to **approve** the actions and timeline as recommended by the policy and resources committee.
70. **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR)**
Council **noted** the annual governance certificate, together with the notice of conclusion of Audit for the year ended 31st March 2025, published on the Council notice boards and website on 30th September 2025.
Proposed: Cllr Steve Masters
Seconded: Cllr Andy Moore
Council **considered** and **approved** the recommendation of the P&R Committee from the matters arising.
71. **FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**
Proposed: Cllr Gary Norman
Seconded: Cllr Steve Masters
Resolved to **approve** the financial regulations as recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee.
Proposed: Cllr David Harman
Seconded: Cllr Steve Masters
Resolved to **adopt** the financial regulations as recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee.
72. **EAR MARKED RESERVES _ COUNCIL/CIL ADJUSTMENTS**
The Council/CIL funding adjustments for the EMRs as approved and recommended by the P&R Committee were **noted**.
Proposed: Cllr Nigel Foot
Seconded: Cllr Meg Thomas
Council **ratified** the Council/CIL funding adjustments for the EMRs as approved and recommended by the P&R Committee.
73. **CONFIDENTIAL AND PRIVILEGE MATTERS AS RESOLVED AT COUNCIL MEETINGS**
Proposed: Cllr Gary Norman
Seconded: Cllr Steve Masters
Approved recommendations from Policy and Resources Committee.
74. **BUDGET 2026/27**
Council **noted** the budget review timeline for 2026/27.
75. **PRIORITY PROJECTS FOR 2026/27**

Councillors will **recommend** to Council at the 26th January 2026 meeting their priority projects for 2026/27.

76. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS 2025/26

The forward work programme for 2025/26 was **noted**

**THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRPERSON DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 20.42
HRS**

Signature: _____ Date: _____

A member of the public asked: I now request the RBL, Military and Clergy are no longer involved with the Remembrance Sunday and Armistices Day (11th November - war memorial) Commemorations in Newbury.

Response:

Thank you for your request regarding the involvement of the Royal British Legion, military, and clergy in Newbury's Remembrance events.

History and Purpose

Armistice Day began in 1919 to mark the end of WWI and to honour those who gave their lives. Remembrance has always been closely linked with the military, since it is their sacrifice being commemorated, and with religious elements, as many found spiritual comfort in prayers and hymns. The national Cenotaph itself was originally designed as a secular monument, and over time many ceremonies have developed both religious and non-religious aspects.

Faith and Society Today

The UK remains constitutionally a Christian country, though faith demographics are shifting. In the 2021 Census, 46.2% identified as Christian, 37.2% as having no religion, and the remainder with other faiths. It is important, therefore, to ensure remembrance is inclusive of all traditions.

Participation

While the armed forces and clergy remain part of the ceremony, the parade also involves many non-military organisations such as Scouts and Guides. These youth groups make up a large proportion of participants and are encouraged to learn about the importance of remembrance.

Future Consideration

We understand your concerns and recognise the need to balance tradition, inclusivity, and community expectations. It is too late to make changes for this year's commemorations, but your request and recommendations will be taken seriously and considered as part of next year's planning process.