

30th March 2026

To: Cllrs: Vera Barnett, Nigel Foot, Chris Hood, Roger Hunneman, Ian Jee, David Marsh, Vaughan Miller, Sarah Slack, Meg Thomas and Martha Vickers.

Substitutes: All remaining Council Members.

Dear Councillor(s)

You are required to attend a meeting of the **Community Services Committee** to be held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Market Place, Newbury RG14 5AA, on **Monday 30th March 2026 at 7.30pm**. This meeting is open to the Press and Public and will be streamed and recorded via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85175310941?pwd=jVNbaY8JRZEK2NR3hnINyIwkgEwOBb.1>

Meeting ID: 851 7531 0941 Passcode: 973004

Yours sincerely,



Toby Miles-Mallowan
Chief Executive Officer

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

CEO

2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Chair

To receive: any declarations of interest relating to business to be conducted in this meeting and confirmation of any relevant dispensations.

3. Approval of previous Meeting Minutes (Appendix 1)

Chair

To approve: the minutes of the Community Services Committee Meeting held on Monday 22 January 2026

4. Questions and Petitions from Members of the Public

Chair

Questions must be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer by 2.00 pm on Friday 27 March 2026.

5. Members' Questions and Petitions

Chair

Town Hall, Market Place, Newbury, RG14 5AA

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 @NewburyTC  NewburyTC

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all be proud of

Questions to be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer by 2.00 pm on Friday 27 March 2026.

6. Cafe update

CEO

To **receive** update from VPPSC and CEO

7. Hutton Close Consultation (Appendix 2)

CEO

To **receive recommendation from Green Space Committee**

To **review** and **resolve** decision on Football goal posts in Hutton Close

8. Park Run Update (Appendix 3)

CEO

To **receive** an update from CEO on Park Run

9. Memorial Compliance Report (Appendix 4)

CEO

To **receive** and **review** paper on non compliant memorials at Shaw Cemetery.

To **agree** and **approve** an option as outlined in the Officers report.

10. Playgrounds (Appendix 5)

CEO

To **resolve** Digby Road playground decision.

To **recommend** a strategy for Play Parks to Policy and Resources Committee.

To **recommend** a budget to replace play equipment that is at end of life.

11. Allotment Working Group

Chair

To **agree** councillor membership of the working group

To **agree** officer support and **recommend** that the allotment stewards meeting identify non-councillor membership

12. Market Working Group (Appendix 6)

Chair

To **receive** the minutes of the market working group from 22 January 2026

13. Forward Work Programme – (Appendix 7)

Chair

**The next meeting date is Monday 13th July 26 in the Council Chamber of Newbury
Town Hall starting at 7:30 pm**

*If you would like a paper copy or large print copy of this agenda, please request this
from the Reception Desk at Newbury Town Hall.*

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING
ON MONDAY 15th DECEMBER 2025 AT 7.30PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL,
MARKET PLACE, NEWBURY, RG14 5AA.**

PRESENT

Councillors: Phil Barnett (sub), Vera Barnett, Nigel Foot, Chris Hood, Ian Jee, David Marsh, Vaughan Miller (Chair), Meg Thomas and Martha Vickers.

IN ATTENDANCE

Martin Kavanagh, SDM

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Cllrs Roger Hunneman and Sarah Slack

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

The Services Delivery Manager declared that Councillors Phil Barnett, Nigel Foot, David Marsh & 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.

3. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

PROPOSED: Cllr Foot

SECONDED: Cllr Hood

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on Monday 15th September 2025 are approved and signed by the Chairperson.

4. OFFICERS REPORT

Cllrs **received** and **noted** the Service Delivery Managers Report.

5. QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

One member of the public introduced a representation regarding Allotments which was delivered in the opening of Agenda Item 14 (Allotment business).

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

Cllr Meg Thomas raised the question of an additional dog poo bin, on the bridleway in Wash Common. The Service Delivery Manager advised the costs of such provision, and that there was no budget funding available, and the proposed site is not NTC land

7. NTC KPIs FY 25/26 REPORT (Appendix 2)

Members resolved one change to the Community Services KPI items as follows:

RESOLVED: Amend the “contractors quotes for unscheduled works from one week to one month”

PROPOSED: Cllr Miller

SECONDED: Cllr Foot

8. ANNUAL BUDGET, QUARTERLY MONITORING, SUMMARY REPORT

Members **received** a verbal summary report of expenditure year to date.

Detailed report to follow by end Jan 26 from SDM

9. SERVICES REVENUES PROPOSAL FY 26/27 & ALLOTMENTS FY 27/28 (Appendices 3 & 4)

RESOLVED: To approve the planned increases as per the Appendices attached.

PROPOSED: Cllr Miller

SECONDED: Cllr Vickers

RESOLVED: To invite members of the allotment community to express their interest in joining the new Allotments Working Group, with an initial task of reviewing the current budget process as just undertaken and report to this committee at the next meeting.

PROPOSED: Cllr Miller

SECONDED: Cllr Foot

RESOLVED: On the question of extending the allotment rent concessions to a wider audience such as schools and charities, the members decided. So not to extend. However, suggest these communities’ requests be considered by the Grant Sub Committee or Climate Emergency Subcommittee as appropriate.

PROPOSED: Cllr Miller

SECONDED: Cllr Foot

10. VICTORIA PARK PROJECTS SUB-COMMITTEE, REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chair provided a summary update on the Victoria Park projects. Notably the Cafe project is on plan and progressing well. Supported by the current project plan on display at the meeting.

Park Run however has been paused while alternative solutions for the current winter

circuit can be found and then considered by both Victoria Park Sub – Committee and this Committee.

11. HUTTON CLOSE DRAFT PROPOSAL (Appendix 5)

RESOLVED: The Green Spaces Working Group have been granted devolved responsibility and powers to deliver the project as prescribed in the scope of papers presented today. This committee would keep an oversight brief however and therefore require regular reports / updates of progress.

PROPOSED: Cllr Jee

SECONDED: Cllr Thomas

12. MARKET WORKING GROUP (APPENDIX 6)

NOTED: working group minutes of the 7th of August 2025 meeting and...

RESOLVED:

The SDM write on behalf of NTC

To request that WBC consider our request for free parking for the trading hours 10 – 12 noon only of Charter Market only on the Thursday only for a trial period of three months then review the outcomes of the trial with NTC.

Further that WBC consider our request for free bus travel again for the trading hours 10 – 12 noon of Charter Market only on the Thursday and only for a trial period of three months then review the outcomes of the trial with NTC.

PROPOSED: Cllr Miller

SECONDED: Cllr Marsh

13. ALLOTMENTS STEWARDS MEETING MINUTES (Appendix 7)

NOTED: that the stewards meeting minutes also resonated with Agenda Item 14 (Appendix 8)

REPRESENTATION: A member of the public addressed the meeting with information relating to Allotments costs and water usage/costs specifically. The Chair suggested the topics could be addressed at the new Allotment Working Group and thanked the member of the public for their representation.

The content of this representation will be carried forward and considered in Agenda item 14.

14. ALLOTMENTS WATER USE, PROPOSED RULE CHANGE (Appendix 8)

NOTED: that both water usage and cost increases have contributed to a significant increase in the resultant costs this year.

RESOLVED: In principle the members agree that the situation needs managing, in line within the ideas being proposed, however they wish to have the final sign off on any communications on this matter with our allotment holders. Deadline is looming - Jan 26
Chair and SDM to resolve

15. GREEN SPACES WORKING GROUP (Appendix 9)

NOTED: Minutes of 20th Nov. 25
Corrections required however...

Present: remove Susan Millington & Tony Hammond and add David Marsh

Apologies: remove David Marsh

NOTED: Minutes 23 Oct 25

RESOLVED: Agenda Item 2b & 2c
To Support the proposal to continue to fund NIB & T & CIB for the FY 26/27 Budget

PROPOSED: Cllr Jee

SECONDED: Cllr Barnett V

16. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME (Appendix 10)

NOTED: the recent changes to the programme.

17. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting is to be held in the Council Chamber, Newbury Town Hall, Market Place, Newbury on Monday 30th March 2026 starting at 7.30pm.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 21.25 hrs.

If you would like a paper copy or large print copy of this document, please request this from the Reception Desk at Newbury Town Hall.

Report to Community Services Committee Meeting**Monday 30 March 2026****To discuss Outcome of the Hutton Close Consultation and recommendations from Green Spaces Working Group needing Approval from CS Committee**

To **consider** and **resolve** whether to give approval for recommendations made by the Green Spaces Working Group which did not meet the 75% positive threshold set out by The CS Committee.

To **Consider** and **Resolve** options relating to specific options regarding the Multi games ends and if not to be progressed whether the remaining funds should be reserved for funding towards a pathway when additional funds can be found.

Background

Newbury Town Council received £20000 from developers when leasing part of the Hutton Close site which committee agreed should be reinvested in the site to improve current facilities.

Initial consultation was undertaken with many outcomes unaffordable within the set out Ear Marked Reserve. 2 outcomes that had strong support was to improve the play facilities on the site and to make biodiversity and environmental improvements on the site.

A further consultation has now been undertaken focusing on play facilities and environmental improvement to the site see appendix B below showing the outcomes.

The options paper below Appendix A states the options proposed to the public.

Note to councillors that we received 4 separate emails to the consultation requesting a pathway to be installed onsite to assist in the winter with dog walking and with one specific blind user who used it to exercise her assistance dog not an option on the consultation paper due to cost.

Recommendation and resolutions proposed to this Committee:

To approve the following-

To approve recommendation from Green Spaces Working Group to approve expenditure and commencement of Seating area with trellis, Insect hotel and nature Trail which were overall positive in outcome alongside the natural play unit approved via meeting the positive threshold. With £6000 assigned from the original budget to undertake these elements.

To resolve-

Due to the greatest cost assigned to the multi-use goal ends it was felt best by the Green Spaces Working Group to not make a recommendation in regards to the goal ends as they had only received a slight positive response. They wished to propose the options to committee to resolve as follows-

- To install both multi use goal ends with a budget cost of £14000 to be taken from the original budget to undertake the installations.
- To install one multi use goal end with a budget cost of £7500 to be taken from original budget to undertake the installation.
- Renovate or replace the current goal posts and mark out pitch as a 9 a side pitch on the site at a cost of £2500 with an ongoing cost to mark the pitch out on the site.
- Leave the current provision as it is and remove the goal posts once past there useful life.

To resolve-

Whether any funding remaining is held within the Ear Marked Reserve for a footpath on the site. Whilst grant funding is found to support the installation with initial quoting ranging between £25000 and £35000 for the site dependant on material used. Or whether it is left for any other developments on the site.

HUTTON CLOSE - HAVE YOUR SAY!

Newbury Town Council owns and maintains the open space at Hutton Close, comprising an area of around 2.6 acres. The land has remained largely an open space for a number of years and used mainly for dog walking. There are 2 small goalposts at the centre which are occasionally used by local young children.

From 2018 to 2021 David Wilson Homes used a section of the open space for a temporary construction compound whilst building the adjoining housing at Hutton Close. Any new facilities will be paid for using funds provided by David Wilson Homes in connection to this and would therefore be no extra burden on the Council Taxpayers in Newbury. The delivery of the project is subject to funding and may therefore have to be phased.

Newbury Town Council are looking at plans to enhance the area, which could include planting a communal herb garden, building a pond or series of small ponds and installing a small goalmouth area for children

We would like your opinion on the use of the open space going forward and how it could be improved. We are inviting local residents to make comments on the provisional plans, which can be found on our website: www.newbury.gov.uk.

If you have any additional ideas or observations on the proposals, please contact the Parks and Open Spaces Supervisor, James Heasman at james.heasman@newbury.gov.uk or write to the Town Hall, Market Place, Newbury, RG14 5AA.

The project will be discussed at the next Green Spaces Working Group on **TBC**; therefore, any comments will need to be received by **TBC** to be included.

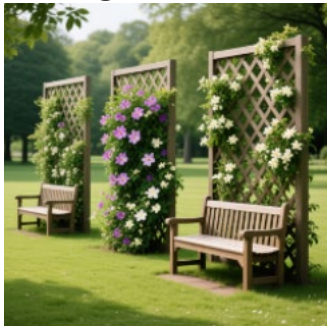
HUTTON CLOSE PROPOSAL

Small multi use goal mouths for exercise



Two multi use goal mouths to replace the current ones. They would provide '5-a-side' goals which have backstops to stop run off and fixed cricket wickets that can be used for 'quick cricket'. The dimensions of the proposed goalmouths are 5.9m x 1.1m x 0.7m and they will be placed 30m apart.

Seating area with trellises for climbing plants



As there is currently no seating in Hutton Close our plan is create a seating area that looks nice and provides a space for pollinators. Two benches will be placed near trellis a trellis design with good sightlines to the goal mouths so parents can watch their children play. This will also ensure there is good visibility from the park entrance and the local buildings. The trellises will be planted with Summer and Winter Jasmine, Summer and Winter Clematis and Honeysuckle.

Community Herb Garden



This would be a community led project which would encourage locals to look after and use herbs in a raised bed. As there is not an easy access point at the moment from the development into Hutton Close, the raised bed would be built next to the fence behind the orchard so residents can pick the herbs by leaning over. The aim would be to have the

following: chives, coriander, dill, mint, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, thyme, chamomile and marigolds.

Insect Hotel



This is a simple and effective way of boosting the biodiversity in the ecosystem. They provide refuge for solitary bees, ladybirds and other bugs which then in turn support pollination and control pests. This would be an amazing resource in an environment so close to the Robin Hood Roundabout. It will also create a learning resource for children in the area who can come and look at the bugs and see if any bees have moved in.

Wildlife Trail



Another benefit to children could be a wildlife trail. This will consist of a series of plinths around the open space near to trees, plants or areas that animals might live, textured metal plaques on them which can be used to make rubbings. If all the rubbings are made and brought to the town council, children can collect a Mayors Bear.

Natural Play Frame



A climbing area made from oak trees around Newbury that required felling after becoming unstable. This would be a great asset to the area by helping children: get exercise, encourage imaginative play, promote social play, connect with nature and provide natural stimuli which are particularly important to children with SEND.

Ponds

Option 1 - Above Ground Barrel Pond



A series of covered ponds, located in the shadier areas of Hutton Close. Ponds are an amazing resource in boosting biodiversity in urban areas, supporting two thirds of all freshwater species. They are also used by mammals as watering holes. Plants could include water lilies, hornwort, aquatic mareetail and marsh marigold. Covered ponds are a great way of encouraging wildlife into the area whilst providing a safe educational space for children.

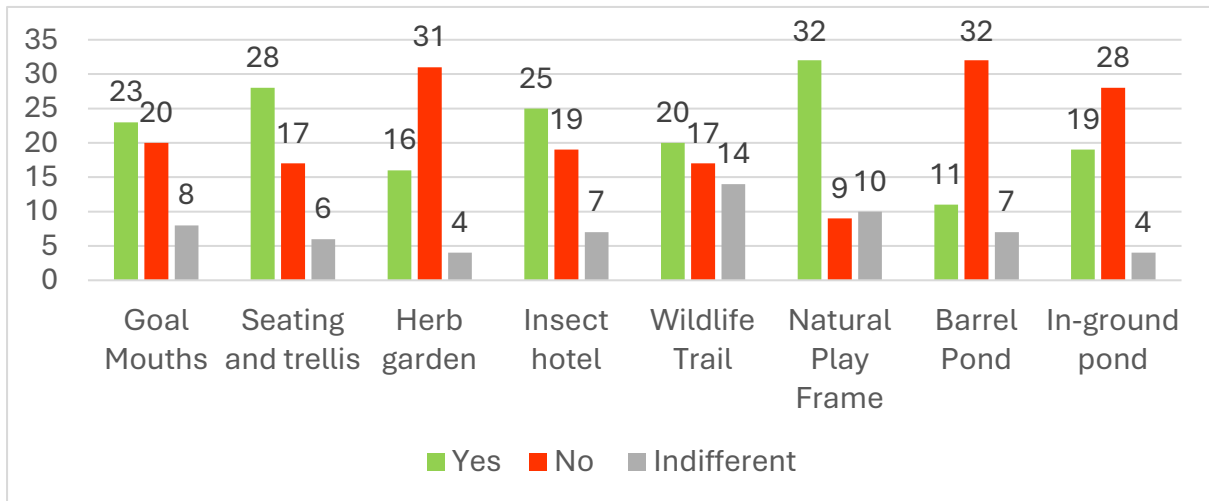
Option 2 - In-Ground Pond with security fence

A small pond which is rainwater fed and has shallow edges to provide habitats for marginal species. There will be a waist high fence surrounding it for safety or a pond cover. It will be a minimum surface area of 4m² and a depth of 20-60cm. These provide good conditions for wildlife to flourish. This would be a good learning resource for families and schools who would be invited to use it as part of learning activities.

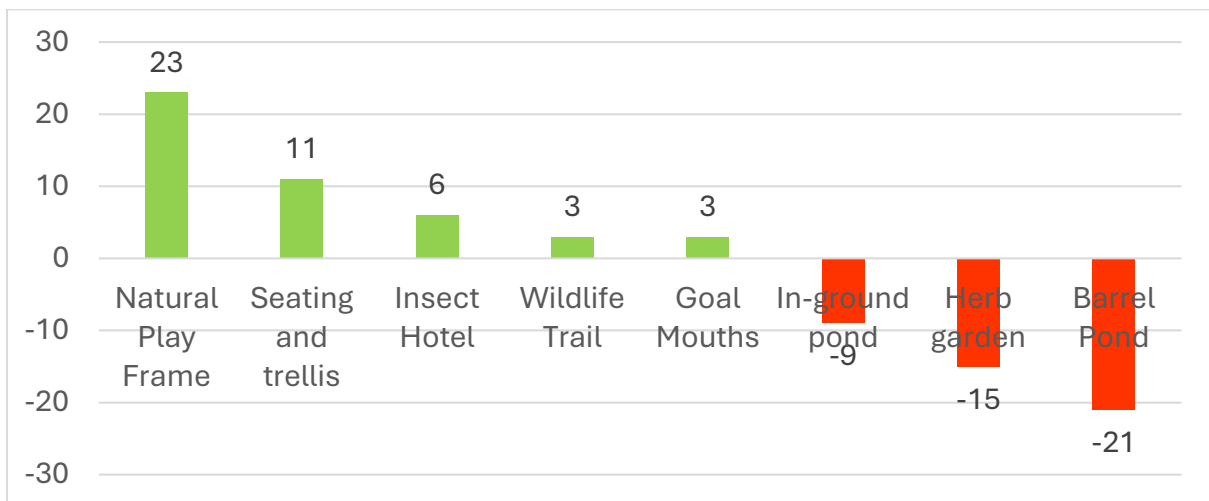


Appendix B

Results



Net score



Community Services Committee Report

Report Author: Chief Executive Officer

Committee: Community Services Committee

Date: 30 March 2026

1. Purpose of Report

To provide members with the background to Parkrun in Victoria Park and to seek approval for its resumption in April 2026.

2. Background

Members will be aware from previous Committee reports that Victoria Park has hosted a weekly Parkrun event, which has been well attended and provides significant health and wellbeing benefits to the local community.

However, the event was **temporarily postponed** due to concerns regarding the condition of the park, in particular:

- damage to grassed areas caused by a combination of **adverse weather conditions**
- the **volume of participants** using consistent routes
- resulting wear and deterioration of the turf

This raised concerns around the sustainability of the event in its previous format and the long-term condition of Victoria Park.

3. Current Position

Officers have worked closely with Parkrun organisers to review and amend the route, with the aim of:

- reducing pressure on heavily used areas of the park
- improving the resilience of the route
- ensuring the event can operate without causing undue damage to the grassed surfaces

As a result of this collaborative approach, a revised route has been agreed which is considered more sustainable.

4. Future Considerations

In addition to the revised route, the Council is exploring opportunities to secure **external grant funding** to support longer-term improvements within the park. These may include:

- enhancements to paths or running surfaces
- infrastructure improvements to better accommodate high levels of use
- measures to protect grassed areas from excessive wear

These interventions would support continued use of the park for organised running events while minimising impact on the park environment.

5. Proposal

It is proposed that the Victoria Park Parkrun resumes from **April 2026**, based on:

- the implementation of the revised route
- ongoing monitoring of the park's condition
- continued liaison with event organisers

6. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- **Note** the update regarding the temporary suspension of Parkrun and the reasons for this.
- **Approve** the resumption of the Victoria Park Parkrun from April 2026.
- **Support** ongoing work to secure external funding for improvements to support sustainable use of the park.

Public Report to Community Services Committee

Monday 30 March 2026

Agenda Item 04: Shaw Cemetery – Memorial Compliance Strategy

Purpose of the Report

To seek Committee approval for a clear, compassionate, and legally robust strategy to address unauthorised memorial items and structures at Shaw Cemetery.

The strategy aims to:

- Address health and safety risks
- Restore consistency with the Council's adopted memorial rules
- Minimise distress to grave owners and families
- Reduce long-term financial and legal risk to the Council
- Prevent the creation of a further legacy issue

Background and Context

Shaw Cemetery is managed as a lawn cemetery, with clear rules governing the type and extent of memorials permitted. These rules restrict graves to a single approved upright headstone and prohibit kerbs, borders, gravel, fencing, planting, and permanent structures.

Over the years enforcement of these rules has been inconsistent. As a result, a significant number of memorials now contain unauthorised items and structures. An example image is below:



This has led to:

- Health and safety risks, including trip hazards and uneven ground
- Restricted access to neighbouring graves, including for elderly and disabled visitors
- Increased difficulty in maintaining the cemetery
- Growing inconsistency between older and newer burial sections

Scale of non-compliance

Officers have identified approximately 700 memorials that are non-compliant with current cemetery regulations. Of which:

- 260 are assessed as presenting an immediate health and safety risk
- 440 are unauthorised but not considered to pose an immediate risk

Legal and Policy Framework

The Council's powers and responsibilities are set out in:

- Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 (Articles 14, 16, 18 and Schedule 3)
- NAMM Code of Practice
- BRAMM Blue Book
- Newbury Town Council Rules and Regulations for Shaw Cemetery

Under this framework, the Council:

- Has a duty to ensure public safety within the cemetery
- May remove unauthorised items
- May take action where memorials are unsafe or pose a risk
- May recover costs in certain circumstances
- Is not responsible for the maintenance of memorials or unauthorised structures

Failure to act exposes the Council to ongoing health and safety, reputational, and financial risks.

Sensitivity and Impact on Families

Officers recognise that memorials are deeply personal. Officers also recognise that historic inconsistencies in enforcement contributed to the current situation and that families may have installed items in good faith.

For these reasons, any approach should be compassionate, transparent, consistently applied and with a clear focus on safety.

Options Considered

Option 1 – Take no action and amend policy to reflect current conditions.

This option would increase long-term liability, weaken enforceability, create access and safety issues, and shift maintenance responsibility onto the Council.

Option 2 – Amend policy to allow limited additional structures.

This would require policy change, create ongoing management complexity, and risk creating a future legacy issue when structures degrade or ownership lapses.

Option 3 – Immediate enforcement requiring full compliance within a fixed timescale.

This option would require all non-compliant graves to be brought into compliance within a uniform timeframe, with limited scope for engagement or discretion. While this option would deliver the fastest route to compliance, it is considered inconsistent with best practice for cemetery management and the Council's commitment to fairness and compassion.

Option 4 – Return the cemetery to compliance with existing rules using a phased approach.

This option aligns with current policy, legal powers, and long-term sustainability while allowing sensitivity in implementation.

Recommended Strategy

Officers recommend Option 4, implemented through a phased compliance strategy as outlined below.

Phase 1 – Internal agreement

- Confirm Committee support for enforcement of existing rules
- Ensure all staff and contractors have a consistent message
- List and categorise non-compliant memorials

Phase 2 – Cemetery-wide communication

General communication explaining:

- Safety and access concerns
- The Council's legal duties
- That no immediate action is required at this stage

Phase 3 – Individual engagement

- Write to affected grave owners using compassionate, non-statutory correspondence
- Acknowledge sensitivity and historic inconsistencies
- Invite dialogue and discussion
- Offer reasonable timeframes for compliance

- Address items presenting immediate health and safety risks as a priority

Phase 4 – Formal enforcement (last resort)

Use statutory and regulatory powers only where:

- Grave owners cannot be contacted after reasonable efforts
- Engagement and voluntary compliance have failed
- Immediate or ongoing safety risks remain unresolved

Where the Council removes unauthorised items as part of enforcement action:

- Items will be handled respectfully and documented
- Items will be stored securely for a defined period, allowing owners or families the opportunity to reclaim them
- Clear records will be kept of items removed, storage location and retention period

All enforcement action would be proportionate, documented, and legally compliant, with due regard to sensitivity, safety and accountability.

Resource and Financial Implications

The proposed approach will result in an increased short-term officer workload while the Council undertakes a structured programme of inspection, communication and, where necessary, enforcement in relation to non-compliant memorials.

Officer time and administrative workload

Officer input will be required across the following activities:

- Identification and verification of non-compliant memorials through site inspections
- Research to identify registered grave owners or next of kin
- Drafting, issuing and recording correspondence, including initial advisory letters and follow-up communications
- Responding to enquiries, representations and requests for clarification from grave owners
- Updating burial registers, plans and internal records
- Liaison with the grounds maintenance contractors and, if required, legal advisers

This equates to a substantial short-term resource commitment (500+ hours, based on an estimated 40–45 minutes per case for identification, research and initial contact) with further ongoing demands arising from monitoring, follow-up actions and data management. Due to the need to deliver this work alongside existing operational responsibilities, it is anticipated that a minimum of 12 months will be required to identify and contact all affected grave owners.

Grounds maintenance and operational costs

There may be short-term operational costs associated with addressing higher-risk non-compliance, particularly where immediate action is required in the interests of public safety. This may include making safe or removing unstable or hazardous items where grave owners are unable or unwilling to do so within a reasonable timeframe.

Longer-term financial and operational benefits

While there will be short-term resource and cost implications, these are expected to be offset over time by:

- A reduced ongoing maintenance burden as memorials are brought into compliance
- Lower risk of injury or damage, reducing potential liability and insurance exposure
- Improved clarity and enforceability of cemetery regulations, reducing future non-compliance
- A safer and more consistent cemetery environment for visitors, staff and contractors

Equality and Accessibility Considerations

The strategy improves access and usability across the cemetery by restoring clear lawned areas and reducing obstructions. This will particularly benefit disabled visitors, including those who use wheelchairs or mobility aids, as well as older people, parents and carers with pushchairs, and visitors who may have visual impairments or reduced mobility.

Consistent enforcement of the cemetery regulations also promotes fairness and equality between grave owners across different burial sections.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to **RESOLVE**:

To endorse enforcement of the existing Shaw Cemetery memorial rules, reaffirming the lawn cemetery principle, and to approve the phased, safety-led compliance strategy set out in this report.

This strategy enables the Council to meet its legal duties, protect public safety, and address a sensitive issue in a fair manner, while avoiding the creation of a further legacy problem for future administrations.

Play Park Report

1. Purpose

To provide Members with an overview of the condition and lifecycle of Newbury Town Council's play park assets, highlight the associated financial pressures, and to seek direction on future funding and service provision.

2. Background

A Play Park Schedule of Condition and Residual Life Expectancy report has been prepared, setting out:

- The current condition of all play assets
- Expected remaining lifespan
- Estimated costs for renewal and replacement over a 20 year period

This work provides, a comprehensive forward view of the Council's play provision liabilities.

3. Key Issues

3.1. Ongoing Maintenance Pressures

The Council has a continuing duty to ensure that all play parks are safe, compliant and operational. As assets age, the cost and frequency of reactive maintenance is increasing.

A notable example is the Mega Tower in Victoria Park, which has incurred approximately £15,000 in repairs during the 2025/26 financial year and is expected to require full replacement within the next 2 years.

In addition, the cost of routine replacement parts has increased significantly, including:

- Basket swing wear inserts: increase of approximately 21%
- Protective caps: previously free, now approximately 80p per unit.
- EPDM gym handles: increase of approximately 127%
- Polysafe swing seats: increase of approximately 33%

These increases are placing additional pressure on revenue budgets.

3.2. Asset Condition and Replacement Requirements

The schedule identifies that several play areas are now at, or beyond, their expected lifespan and require full replacement at a rate planned for over the next 10 years

- £1,670,490 over the next 10 years
- £3,243,392 over the next 20 years

To manage this sustainably, the Council would need to consider setting aside approximately:

- £167,000 per annum (10 years funding model), or
- £162,000 per annum (20 year funding model)

This level of provision would:

- Enable planned replacement cycles
- Reduce reliance on reactive repairs
- Avoid unplanned closures or emergency funding decisions

5. External Funding

Members should note that:

- External grant funding for play parks is extremely limited
- Funding opportunities are highly competitive
- Match funding is often required

While opportunities will continue to be explored, external funding alone will not meet the scale of required investment.

6. Budget Context

Whilst the budget for the forthcoming year has been approved, there is a clear need to ensure that future budgets make adequate provision for play park renewal and replacement in line with the programme identified.

7. Next Steps

Members are invited to consider and provide direction on the following:

1. Annual EMR Contribution

The level of annual contribution to reserves required to sustainably fund play park replacement.

2. Service Provision Options

Identification of any sites that may need to be permanently closed should the Council determine that funding is not available to maintain all current provision

3. Prioritisation of Investment

Agreement on priority site for replacement, including:

- Digby Road Play Park
- Victoria Park Mega Tower (planned replacement within 2 years)

8. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

1. **Note** the contents of the Play Park Condition and Lifecycle Report.
2. **Consider** the level of annual funding required to support long term asset replacement.
3. **Provide guidance** on future capital investment in play parks.
4. **Recommend** an appropriate funding approach to Policy and Resources Committee and Full Council.



MARKET WORKING GROUP
Thursday 22 January 2026 3:30pm
Elsie Kimber Room, Town Hall
Market Place, Newbury

MINUTES

IN ATTENDANCE:

Cllrs Vaughan Miller, Martha Vickers, David Marsh
Debbie Smith, Market Manager
Gareth Dowding, WBC Traffic & Road Safety
Caroline Edmunds – Community Services Officer
Liam Sheppard – Newbury BID

Apologies from Cllr Gary Norman

1. MINUTES FROM LAST MINUTES 6 NOVEMBER 2025 & MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting of the Market Working Group meeting held on 22 November 2025 were approved.

Update regarding request for 2 hours free parking on a Thursday from 10am – 12 noon as a trial initiative.

The Community Services Committee Meeting of 15 December 2025 it was resolved to request from WBC to consider a three-month trial of free parking in the town centre for up to two hours, specifically between 10am and 12 noon on Thursday only. In addition, it was agreed that NTC would request that WBC consider a three-month trial of free bus travel into town, again restricted to Thursdays between 10am and 12 noon to support access to the Charter Market.

This request has been sent to Cllr Stuart Gourley, Executive Portfolio Holder: Environment and Highways at WBC.

A response was received today, 22 January 2026 to confirm that this would be looked into with Officers at WBC and we will receive an update in time for the next Community Services Committee Meeting on 30 March 2026.

2. TRADER FEEDBACK RESULTS – NEWBURY CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH ON EVENT

The members of the group reviewed the feedback from our Market Manager and traders.

The move to Northbrook Street for the Christmas Lights Switch on event went ahead as planned. 25 traders in total attended on the day.

Initial reaction after the event was as follows:

On the day, 25 stalls attended, with six late cancellations, including both regular fruit and vegetable traders. Overall, traders were satisfied with their allocated pitches. The two fresh butchers reported poor trading; however, other traders were generally content, with several reporting strong sales from lunchtime onwards. No issues were reported during the morning set-up.

During pack-down, security support was required to manage trader vehicle access via the McDonald's bollards. Three security staff attended and performed well, although additional staffing would have improved efficiency and safety due to the need to escort vehicles in groups. The 3 security staff had to walk the length of Northbrook Street, back and forth 25 times.

Overall, the relocation and delivery of the market were considered satisfactory. Should the Council wish to repeat this arrangement next year, the Market Management Team confirmed they would be willing to manage the relocation again, incorporating lessons learned and feedback from traders and security staff, including provision for more security staff to help escort the vehicles out at the end of the trading day.

After the event, regular traders were asked to complete a feedback form. 11 responses were received. Overall traders were satisfied with the relocation, some reporting better footfall and higher takings than usual. Most were agreeable to a relocation for this year's event, if requested.

Particular feedback included:

Plants stall – located at Mansion House Street as usual – noted that they music was too loud as they were directly next to the funfair.

A request that all food stalls were placed together in the future.

Regular customers could not access Northbrook Street by vehicle as they usually would to pick up heavier items, and this resulted in trade being significantly less for these traders.

After discussion of the feedback at the meeting, it was requested that signage be placed in the Market Place to inform customers that the Market had relocated for the day.

Liam suggested that, for future events, this information could be incorporated into signage placed around the town to promote the Christmas Lights Switch-On event.

Liam reported that no complaints had been received from businesses in Northbrook Street regarding Market stalls being positioned outside their premises, which was appreciated by the BID team. The Market Managers, Debbie and Malcolm, were thanked and commended for their organisation of the Market on the day.

Liam suggested that representatives from the group be invited to participate in the planning of this year's event going forward. He will notify Caroline once the meeting dates are confirmed.

It was agreed that the 2025 Christmas Lights Switch-On event was the most collaborative and successful to date, particularly in terms of partnership working with the Market, Newbury Town Council and the BID team.

3. UPDATE FROM MARKET MANAGER

It was noted that trade was very slow in the six weeks following the Christmas Lights Switch-On event, with an improvement observed during the final two weeks leading up to Christmas. Stalls trading in essential items were reported to be performing the strongest.

On the day of the meeting, there were seven stalls present, with two regular traders absent. A total of 17 stalls were recorded on the previous Saturday.

Several charities have booked stalls for the coming months, and a number of applications have been received from new traders. It is anticipated that trade will improve as the weather becomes more favourable. January and February are traditionally quieter months for an outdoor market, and the Market Managers reported that they are overall satisfied with current performance.

4. AOB

With regard to the Kennet Centre redevelopment, it was noted that consideration should be given to the impact of the demolition and construction works on surrounding businesses, and the Market in particular.

Councillors who are also members of the Planning and Highways Committee confirmed that they will monitor planning information relating to the Kennet Centre redevelopment, including any potential impacts on the Market, and will request a copy of the Construction Method Plan to review the proposed demolition and construction arrangements.

MEETING CLOSED AT 16:40PM

Suggested next meeting: Thursday 30 April at 3:30pm EK Room