

**Minutes of a meeting of the Civic Pride, Arts, & Culture Committee held in the
Council Chamber on Monday 29 June 2026 at 7.30pm**

Present: Councillors Billy Drummond, Nigel Foot, David Harman, Chris Hood, Andy Moore, Sarah Slack (sub), Graham Storey and Meg Thomas (sub).

Officer Present: Joanna Aylott (Civic Services Manager) and Amy Xing (Civic Officer).

1. Apologies

Councillors Jo Day (substitute Sarah Slack) and Gary Norman (substitute Meg Thomas).

2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

It was noted that Councillors Nigel Foot and Billy Drummond are also Members of West Berkshire Council. This is recorded as a standing general interest, and a dispensation is in place permitting them to participate in discussions relating to West Berkshire Council business.

3. Minutes

Proposed: Cllr David Harman

Seconded: Cllr Nigel Foot

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting of the Civic Pride, Arts & Culture Committee held on 16 February 2026 were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. Questions and Petitions from Members of the Public

There were none.

5. Members' Questions and Petitions

There were none.

6. Update from Local Democracy Working Group

The Committee received an update on recent activities undertaken by the Local Democracy Working Group. Members noted that invitations would shortly be issued to schools within the parish to participate in the "Meet the Town Council" sessions in October. The Working Group has also engaged in a range of community outreach activities, including attendance at youth group sessions at the Waterside Centre. Councillors were encouraged to respond positively to invitations to participate in Working Group activities as they are circulated.

Proposed: Cllr Andy Moore

Seconded: Cllr Graham Storey

Resolved: The Local Democracy Working Group Terms of Reference were approved.

7. NTC 30th Anniversary Working Group

Proposed: Cllr Meg Thomas

Seconded: Cllr Nigel Foot

Resolved: The Terms of Reference for the NTC 30th Anniversary Working Group were approved. Councillors Jo Day and Billy Drummond were appointed to the Working Group. The Terms of Reference will be circulated to all Councillors to invite expressions of interest from any additional members wishing to join.

8. Flag Flying Requests

Proposed: Cllr David Harman

Seconded: Cllr Sarah Slack

Resolved: Request approved to fly the Inclusive Progressive Pride Flag on 11th July 2026.

Proposed: Cllr Meg Thomas

Seconded: Cllr Graham Storey

Resolved: Request approved to fly the Transgender Pride Flag on 20th November 2026.

9. Future Strategic Options for Newbury Town Hall

The Committee considered the report outlining three potential strategic options for the future of Newbury Town Hall (1 - Vision and Conservation, 2 - Business as Usual and 3 - Divestment and Relocation). Members discussed the options and whether a preferred approach could be identified at this stage.

Members noted that additional information would be required before an informed decision could be made. It was suggested that a Working Group be established to undertake further investigation, with a focus on Options 1 and 2. Members also requested that a commercial valuation of the Town Hall be obtained to provide a clearer understanding of Option 3 and enable a fully informed comparison.

Proposed: Cllr Graham Storey

Seconded: Cllr Andy Moore

Resolved: That a Working Group be established to investigate Options 1 (Vision and Conservation) and 2 (Business as Usual) further. A commercial valuation of Newbury Town Hall be obtained to inform future consideration of Option 3 (Divestment and Relocation) by the Committee.

Councillors Meg Thomas, Graham Storey and Sarah Slack agreed to join the Working Group. It was further agreed that consideration be given to inviting members of the local community with relevant expertise to participate.

10. Civic Services Manager's Reports

The Committee noted the following report: Raising the Profile of the Council in the Community. Letters sent by the Mayor's Office were noted to be highly valued by recipients. Thanks were extended to the Civic Officer for their efforts in this regard.

11. Civic Events

Information regarding the Civic Awards (20 March) Mayor Making (10 May), Mayor's Charity Coffee Morning (30 May and 5 September), Bowls Match (9 September), Heritage Open Day (19 September) and Local Democracy Week (5-16 October) was received.

12. Forward Work Programme 2026/27

Members reviewed and noted items for inclusion in the Forward Work Programme for 2026/27.

-Consideration of the commercial valuation of Newbury Town Hall in relation to Strategic Option 3 (Divestment and Relocation).

-Receipt of the Terms of Reference for a Working Group for future plans for the Town Hall.

There being no further business, the Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 20:11pm.

Chairperson:

Date: