

**Minutes of a meeting of the Civic Pride, Arts, & Culture Committee held in the Council Chamber on Monday 16 February 2026 at 7.30pm**

**Present:** Councillors Phil Barnett, Vera Barnett, Jo Day, Billy Drummond, David Harman, Ian Jee (sub), Andy Moore, Gary Norman and Graham Storey.

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

**57. Apologies**

Councillors Nigel Foot (substitute Ian Jee), and Chris Hood.

**58. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

It was noted that Councillors Phil Barnett 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.

It was further noted that Councillors Vera Barnett, Phil Barnett and David Harman are members of the Newbury Twin Town Association.

**59. Minutes**

**Proposed:** Cllr Billy Drummond

**Seconded:** Cllr Gary Norman

**Resolved:** The minutes of the meeting of the Civic Pride, Arts & Culture Committee held on 1 December 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.

**60. Questions and Petitions from Members of the Public**

There were none.

**61. Members' Questions and Petitions**

There were none.

**62. Discretionary Events Grant Funding Applications**

Members considered a grant funding application from Watership Brass, with additional information from the applicant.

**Proposed:** Cllr Billy Drummond

**Seconded:** Cllr Gary Norman

**Resolved:** That a grant of £500 be awarded to Watership Brass towards the event.

Members considered the implications of the cancellation of a previously funded event.

**Proposed:** Cllr Gary Norman

**Seconded:** Cllr Andy Moore

**Resolved:** That the grant be returned, as it was awarded for a specific event. Should the event be held in 2027, the Council will hold the funding for that year, and no further application will be required.

It was further resolved that, should a similar situation arise in future, the Council would request the return of funds but may agree to ring-fence the amount for the rescheduled event, subject to an agreed timeframe.

**63. Update from Local Democracy Working Group**

Cllr Jo Day updated the Committee on recent actions from the Local Democracy Working Group, including the launch of the refreshed 'Meet your Town Councillor' duties on Saturdays, and visits from local youth groups. Cllrs Ian Jee, Billy Drummond and Gary Norman offered to support with the upcoming visit from Wash Common Scouts.

**64. Twin Towns Visual Recognition in Town**

Members noted that no budget allocation had been made for 2026/27 and agreed to defer the project pending funding. Cllr Billy Drummond will explore funding opportunities with the Greenham Trust, and Officers will investigate potential sponsorship from local sign makers.

**65. Local Visitor Economy Partnership Update**

The Committee received a verbal update from Cllr Andy Moore on progress from the group. The next meeting is due to take place on 25<sup>th</sup> February, which Cllr Moore will attend.

**66. UK Town of Culture Competition 2028**

Members noted the report on the UK Town of Culture Competition and were supportive of NTC's involvement in the application.

**67. Pride Bench in Victoria Park**

The Committee considered a request from Newbury Pride to adopt an existing bench in Victoria Park.

**Proposed:** Cllr Gary Norman

**Seconded:** Cllr Graham Storey

**Resolved:** That approval be granted for Newbury Pride to adopt the existing bench outlined in Victoria Park, subject to Officer approval of the design and maintenance arrangements.

**68. 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.

**69. Civic Events**

Information regarding the Mayor's Festive Afternoon Tea (12 December 2025), Civic Carol Service (21 December 2025), Civic Awards (20 March 2026) and Mayor Making (10 May 2026) was received.

Members queried whether appropriate regalia could be worn by Councillors standing in for the Mayor. The Civic Officer agreed to investigate whether the Deputy Mayor's pendant may be worn by other Councillors when deputising.

**70. Forward Work Programme 2026/27**

Members reviewed and noted items for inclusion in the Forward Work Programme for 2026/27. It was agreed that a report on the Town Hall renovation plans be submitted to the Committee in June 2026.

**There being no further business, the Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 20:21pm.**

**Chairperson:**

**Date:**