Minutes of a meeting of the Civic Pride, Arts, & Culture Committee held in the Council Chamber on Monday 14 September 2026 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors Phil Barnett, Vera Barnett, Jo Day (Chair), Billy Drummond, Nigel Foot, David Harman, Chris Hood, Roger Hunneman (sub), Andy Moore and Graham Storey.

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

13. Apologies

Councillor Gary Norman (substitute Roger Hunneman).

14. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

The following non-pecuniary interests were declared in respect of business on the agenda:
- Councillor Jo Day declared that she was a Committee Member of Art on the Park.
- Councillors David Harman and Phil Barnett declared that they were members of the Newbury Twin Town Association.

General Dispensations
Councillors Phil Barnett, Billy Drummond and Nigel Foot declared that they are also Members of West Berkshire Council. A general dispensation is in place permitting them to participate in discussions and vote on matters relating to the business of West Berkshire Council which would otherwise give rise to a registrable interest.

15. Minutes

Proposed: Andy Moore
Seconded: Billy Drummond
Resolved: The minutes of the meeting of the Civic Pride, Arts & Culture Committee held on 29 June 2026 were approved as a true and accurate record.

16. Questions and Petitions from Members of the Public

There were none.

17. Members' Questions and Petitions

There were none.

18. Update from Local Democracy Working Group

Members received an update from Councillor Jo Day on the activities of the Local Democracy Working Group.

It was noted that all local schools had been invited to participate in the "Meet the Town Council" sessions at the Town Hall from 5 to 16 October. The morning of 5 October would be used for Councillor briefing and training, with a session schedule to be circulated. Councillors were encouraged to participate where possible.

Members also received positive feedback from recent engagement with Trinity School. Councillor Jo Day shared a student's letter highlighting the importance of involving young people and listening to their views.

Members discussed the availability of a central source of information for young people. Councillor Nigel Foot advised that West Berkshire Council had re-established its Youth

Council. It was agreed that Councillor Jo Day would, with the student's permission, forward the student's message to Councillor Nigel Foot.

19. Art on the Park

Councillor Jo Day provided an update on the 2026 Art on the Park event, held on Sunday 30 August. Despite the weather, the event provided a positive networking opportunity for emerging artists. The organisers intend to hold the event again in August 2027 and are also exploring the possibility of an outdoor painting day.

Councillor Jo Day invited Members to consider representing Newbury Town Council on the committee, either in her place or as a back-up, to provide a link between the group and the Council. The next meeting will be held on 19 January 2027, for any Members interested in joining.

20. NTC 30th Anniversary Working Group

The first meeting of the Working Group is scheduled to take place on 1 October 2026. An update on the Group's work will be provided at the next meeting.

21. Flag Flying Requests

Proposed: Cllr David Harman
Seconded: Cllr Graham Storey
Resolved: Request approved to fly the UN flag on Friday 23 October 2026.

The Committee reviewed the Council's current designated flag-flying days and considered proposed amendments to the Flag Flying Policy.

Proposed: Cllr David Harman
Seconded: Cllr Phil Barnett
Resolved: An amended Flag Flying Policy be brought to the next meeting for approval.

22. Grant Funding Requests

The Committee considered the application for Event Grant funding from Kairali UK West Berkshire in support of Symphony 2026.

Proposed: Cllr Nigel Foot
Seconded: Cllr Andy Moore
Resolved: To award £500 towards the event, noting that the Event Grant Fund is intended to support one-off events. Any future application for a subsequent event would therefore be considered separately, and funding would not be guaranteed.

23. Future Strategic Options for Newbury Town Hall

Proposed: Cllr Graham Storey
Seconded: Cllr Vera Barnett
Resolved: The Terms of Reference for the Newbury Town Hall Future Strategic Options Working Group were approved.

It was noted that the first meeting of the Working Group would be scheduled accordingly. The Committee noted the commercial valuation of Newbury Town Hall, obtained to inform consideration of future strategic options.

24. 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.

25. Civic Events

Information regarding the 100 Days of Victoria Park Community Café (4 September), Mayor's Charity Coffee Morning (5 September) and Annual Bowls Match (9 September) was received, noting that the Bowls Match had been cancelled.

The programme of civic events until the next meeting was noted, including the Heritage Open Day (19 September), unveiling of the new interpretation panel for the First Battle of Newbury (20 September), Local Democracy School Visits (5–16 October), Remembrance Sunday (8 November) and Civic Carol Service (20 December). The Mayor's Festive Afternoon Tea was also noted with a date to be confirmed.

As part of discussion on future events, it was noted that the 50th anniversary of the twinning with Eeklo would be marked by an event on 30 May 2027.

26. Forward Work Programme 2026/27

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

It was noted that a verbal update on the strategic options for the Town Hall would be provided at the next meeting.

It was also agreed that the Chair of Art on the Park be invited to attend a future meeting to provide an update, to be scheduled for September 2027.

There being no further business, the Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 20:25pm.

Chairperson: **Date:**