

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF NEWBURY ANNUAL TOWN MEETING  
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, MARKET PLACE, NEWBURY  
ON MONDAY 17 MARCH 2025 AT 6.45 PM.**

**OFFICERS PRESENT**

Toby Miles-Mallowan, Chief Executive Officer

**1. WELCOME BY THE TOWN MAYOR – COUNCILLOR NIGEL FOOT.**

The Mayor of Newbury Welcomed all in attendance to the meeting.

**2. MINUTES**

**PROPOSED:** Councillor Vaughan Miller

**SECONDED:** Councillor Billy Drummond

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of a meeting of Newbury Annual Town Meeting held on Monday 18th March 2024, be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Town Mayor.

**3. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE MAYOR.**

The Mayor of Newbury gave a report on events and engagement of the year so far this was received and noted by councillors and electors of Newbury. (Appendix 1)

Cllr O’Keefe gave her thanks to the Mayor for their to date.

**4. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL.**

The Leader gave a report (appendix 2).

Cllr Miller Commended the Leader for their leadership over the previous year.

**5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

2 questions were received by members of the public. See Appendix 3 for questions and responses.

**6. CLOSING REMARKS BY THE TOWN MAYOR**

The mayor thanked the Members of the public for their attendance at the Annual Town Meeting. He also thanked all the fellow Councillors for their work and attendance at tonight’s meeting.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE TOWN MAYOR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED  
AT 19.16 PM**

**TOWN MAYOR: \_\_\_\_\_**

**DATE: \_\_\_\_\_**

## **Appendix 1: Mayors Report**

### **Mayor's Report to Council 21 October 24**

Since my report to the June meeting, I have attended a further 59 events (to 12 October) where the Mayor has been requested and I have been delighted to go; at a large proportion of those I have been accompanied by the Lady Mayoress. There has been a huge variety, but some categories can be identified.

#### **Concerts**

Rotary put on the Mayor's Concert at the Corn Exchange; the MC was a former Mayor and there was an eclectic mix of acts including that by another former Mayor. The same MC was at Ace Space to celebrate VCWB's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and the Symphony Orchestra performed with a nautical theme in St Bart's Hub which included a world premier by 16-year-old Charlotte Robertson.

#### **Sports**

Yoga at the Bandstand with the realisation that I should have started this activity well before being 70! Boules in Market Place organised by Rotary for good local causes, with a very flukey opening throw; two months later leading the NTC team to their annual thrashing by Newbury Bowls Club followed by a pleasant social. We were no better at cricket; the NTC team made an early exit from the competition well hosted by Falkland Cricket Club and organised Community United on a beautiful September day.

#### **Openings and Unveilings**

Three openings in a single morning in central Newbury: Tracey James Hearing in Wharf Street; Homestart Babybank in new premises in Broadway House and Gail's Café just across from the Town Hall. We joined Newbury Methodist Church to celebrate the opening of the reworked garden with possibly the world's largest Methodist Cross at its centre. At Theale Green School, I unveiled a purple plaque celebrating the inspiring story of former pupil Laura Baylis (from a family with Newbury connections). At Bills the blue plaque marking the former Plaza couldn't be "veiled" but was "opened"; many thanks to the Heritage WG and local historians. More recently, the paparazzi were in town as I was surprised to reveal that Paddington had taken up residence on a bench in Northbrook Street.

#### **Presentations**

The autumn season brought requests to present the work of NTC and the Mayor: to a Men's breakfast hosted by Thatcham churches; at dinner with the Rotary Club and to a morning assembly at St Gabriel's School. We are currently in the midst of our Local Democracy offering with primary classes crocodiling in; many thanks to Jo Day and all those taking part.

#### **Arts**

To a non-artist, the end of term art exhibitions at Trinity School and Newbury College revealed wonderful variety and imagination, and that clearly carries on in later life as was evident at Art-on-

the-Park in August. It was good to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Arts Society Newbury, followed up by tea and conversation with its chair and a fascinating lecture on Banksy.

### **Horticulture**

The immense amount of hard work that goes into gardens and planting across our community was marked with the Newbury in Bloom awards; judging and organising that is an equal labour, but clearly done with love: congratulations to the Growing Newbury Green Group. After squeezing apples in the Market Place, we went to Wash Common allotments to celebrate harvest and receive gifts for the Foodbank.

### **More formally**

What an honour to wear the Mayor's chain at the funeral of Jeff Beck (a former wearer) and celebration of his life of service. I also wrote to the family of Val Bull (former Mayor) who died in July but requested no funeral. We marked the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Twinning with Braunfels with a pleasant ceremony in the chamber. A few days ago, the beginning of the Judicial Year was marked by a service in Reading Minster attended by Mayors from across the county among many others led by the High Sheriff.

### **Mayor's Charity**

We have held two coffee mornings and a bingo night with West Berks Foodbank, and plans are in hand for Carols in the Dolphin, a Burn's Night Barn Dance and a reprise of last year's gig featuring similar bands. The support of the civic team for these events has been excellent, and so far, they have ensured that I have arrived at the right time and place with briefing on all occasions.

### **Deputy Mayor**

David has attended AGMs for the Patient Information Point (at the Community Hospital) for Citizen's Advice (who will be with us at this meeting). He awarded prizes at Sports Personality of the Year for Trinity School and celebrated Matildos Lithuanian School's first year at Horris Hill School. He represented Newbury as the USAF marked its 77<sup>th</sup> anniversary at RAF Fairford, and most recently has been to the Mosque Open Day at the West Berkshire Muslim Centre's base at Riverside.

### **Mayor's Report to Council 27 January 2025**

The period from my last report in October to now (17 January) always promised to be the busiest, and so it proved with a further of 76 events which I was delighted to attend. This is too many to report individually, but here are some themes.

#### **Schools**

Very ably organised by Jo Aylott and Jo Day, primary school visits to the Town Hall continued with the Mayor in full rig spinning some yarns in his parlour! I was pleased to attend assembly at St Nic's Junior school (40 years of memories and personal connections) and present School Council badges to two pupils from each year. Just recently the i-College extended an invitation to its Year 11 prize-giving; a brief event full of support and celebration.

#### **Bears**

Following the Paddington moment (last report), there were Marmalade Cocktails at the opening of the new Coat & Bear hotel/restaurant in Bartholomew Street and subsequently a short spell in

the Pudsey Bear suit in aid of the BBC Children in Need appeal run by Rotary. My animal of the year!

### **Remembrance**

As former mayors suggested, taking the salute at the Remembrance Sunday ceremony was a big moment half-way through my year. We gathered again on Armistice Day around the War Memorial, and in the previous week had been at RAF Welford with the USAF. The US theme continued at the Greenham Control Tower on 12 Dec – the 80th anniversary of two tragic USAF accidents. On 15 Dec we marked the 10th anniversary of the end British combat operations in Afghanistan also at the War Memorial. Newbury Pride showed a film to mark Transgender Day of Remembrance. We celebrated UN Day on 25 Oct and marked UN Solidarity with Palestine on 29 Nov.

### **Art & Performance**

Students from 16 local schools and colleges had work on display at the Base Gallery earlier this month. The Spring Festival invited us to Sunday with Sondheim to showcase an item coming in this year's programme. Kingsclere Performing Arts College (an associate of Newbury College) put on a high quality show in Basingstoke, and the Wantage Band played live the accompaniment to The Snowman film. It was a privilege to have front-row seats to see Mathilde Milwidsky play the Mendelssohn violin concerto at NSO's autumn concert.

### **Pre-Christmas**

It almost felt that the festive season began with the Michaelmas Fair at which the Mayor's Cadets were pressed into service on the scariest rides. A month later it definitely had, with the Christmas lights to be switched on after a tour of the many market stalls: a huge crowd in the Market Place and beyond. Thereabouts was the start of NWN's Parcels campaign.

### **Christmas**

Newbury and area celebrate Christmas in fine style with the Mayor and Mayoress invited to all sorts. Santa's Fun Run by Rotary was wet rather than snowy, and those heading for the Advent Calendar windows (we did four) had to brave the storms. There were four quite different carol events by the Salvation Army, Newbury Choral, Reading Gospel Choir (promoted by the Refugee Support Group in the Minster) and concluding with the party of us who joined the vast congregation at St Nic's after our very pleasant reception. We met a number of the same people who were at both the Festive Tea and the Fair Close lunch on the following day. On the day itself we called at Fire, Ambulance and Police Stations before meeting patients and joining the service at WBCH; then on to the Community Lunch at St George's Hall. New Year's Eve found us ringing out the old year and then ringing in the new with cheerful campanologists in St Nic's Tower.

### **Deputy**

In October, the Deputy Mayor attended a delightful performance from the Three Rivers Community Choir at Kennet School. They delivered an engaging, broad range of traditional choral and contemporary pieces, there were excellent performances from the Kennet School Choir. He also attended the Samaritans AGM at St. Bart's.

The Hungerford Mayor's Christmas Carol Service was at St. Lawrence's Church on 15 December and in January he was at the First Give charity event hosted by Trinity School. First Give acts as catalyst to engage young people's interest in local social good causes. Nine teams of Trinity School pupils gave presentations on their chosen charities, and the Deputy Mayor joined the judging panel to select the winner from a very strong field. First Give donated £1000 to the winner's charity: Dingley's Promise which provides life changing support to under-5s with special educational needs and their families.

### **Reflection**

Thanks, as ever, to our great civic team who have worked hard to produce events worthy of Newbury Town Council. Lots of enjoyment for the Mayor, but at every meeting, I am conscious that I am with people who voluntarily, or in their work, are actively making a difference to our community, providing opportunities for our young people, those less fortunate and those at their pastimes. It's humbling

## **Appendix 2: Leaders Report**

Over the past year Newbury Town Council has maintained the town's six allotments, fifteen play areas, the market and two cemeteries. Supported by our Civic Team, the Town Mayor has attended just under two hundred community events, raising the profile of the town, and plans a similar programme over 2025/26. The Council continues to financially support, amongst others, West Berkshire Citizens Advice, Community United and Berkshire Youth, alongside a grants programme to community charities and organisations in partnership with The Good Exchange.

Despite significant staff changes this year, including the appointment of a new CEO, a new Civic Pride Manager and officers, and a general restructuring, we have continued to operate smoothly. This is a testament to the dedication and hard work of both new and existing staff. Now that we have the right people in the right roles, we are well-positioned to move forward into the new financial year.

The funding for the Victoria Park café will be carried over into next year's budget, using contributions from developers (CIL) and earmarked reserves. Our officers have worked diligently this year, providing West Berkshire Council with all the necessary information and analysis to secure planning permission. However, we have recently been informed that WBC has delayed the planning process by two months, which is disappointing. Nevertheless, we are still aiming to open the café in the coming financial year.

The café will be a major feature of the park, offering an indoor seating area for 28 people, additional covered outdoor seating, and accessible public and disabled toilets. The new building will also include solar panels and other sustainable features.

In addition, we are planning to develop 9-side football in Victoria Park, continue our programme of play area upgrades, work in partnership with town partners to deliver commemorative events for VE day, enter Thames and Chiltern in Bloom for the first time since 2019, and run the ever-popular Family Fun Day.

The Council, financially, continues to be challenged with the growing cost of delivering essential local government services, affected this year particularly by the increased cost of Utilities, National Insurance contributions and, related to government wage increases, increased costs of our contractors and suppliers. A necessary staffing increase next year also incurs cost; this will improve the delivery of our projects, and strengthen the council's operations, by enhancing service resilience, succession planning, maintenance schedules and community engagement. To prepare for future financial demands, we have increased our annual maintenance fund in response to new responsibilities. The Council regards this as a prudent and necessary step to ensure the ongoing financial health of the Council. Indeed, the ongoing issues with the Town Hall roof has put the wisdom of this approach into sharp relief.

Despite the challenges, we remain committed to maintaining Newbury as a town its residents can take pride in, with a focus on responsible financial management and service excellence.

Councillor Gary Norman,  
Leader of Newbury Town Council.

### Appendix 3:

#### **Question 1: Further to my previous email, I request that the Town Council to lobby the NALC regarding the enactment of Sections 3 & 42 of the 2010 Flood & Water Management Act**

Newbury Town Council (NTC) acknowledges the importance of robust flood risk management and sustainable drainage in mitigating the impacts of development and climate change. However, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) does not have legislative authority to influence the enactment of Sections 3 and 42 of the 2010 Flood and Water Management Act. The implementation of these provisions remains a matter for the UK Government and relevant regulatory bodies, such as the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Environment Agency.

#### Current Status of Sections 3 & 42 of the Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010

- Section 3 – National Flood Risk Management Strategies
  - This section outlines the requirement for a national flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy, led by the Environment Agency, with local flood risk management strategies developed by Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) (in this case, West Berkshire Council).
  - The national strategy is already in effect, with the latest version published by DEFRA and the Environment Agency in 2020.
  - Local flood risk management strategies are the responsibility of LLFAs, who must assess risks and implement measures in coordination with district and town councils.
- Section 42 – Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Adoption
  - This section was designed to make Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) a mandatory requirement for new developments, ensuring better management of surface water and reducing flood risks.
  - While Section 42 has not yet been fully enacted, the Government announced in January 2023 that it intends to implement Schedule 3 of the FWMA, which would introduce a framework for SuDS approval and adoption by local authorities.
  - DEFRA is currently working on the framework, with full implementation expected in 2024–2025.
  - In the meantime, SuDS are encouraged through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which requires major developments to include sustainable drainage unless it is demonstrated as inappropriate.

#### Newbury Town Council's Position & Actions Taken

1. Local Plan Engagement:
  - NTC has already made representations to the Local Plan Review conducted by West Berkshire Council, advocating for stronger flood resilience measures, including the mandatory adoption of SuDS in all new developments.
  - We have highlighted concerns regarding local flood risks and the need for effective drainage infrastructure in planning decisions.
2. Collaboration with West Berkshire Council (LLFA):
  - NTC continues to work with West Berkshire Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority to ensure local flood risk strategies align with national policy.
  - We monitor developments to ensure compliance with existing SuDS guidance and encourage enforcement where necessary.
3. National Policy Monitoring:
  - NTC is closely monitoring DEFRA's implementation of Schedule 3 of the FWMA and will consider making further representations when the Government publishes the full framework.
  - We will seek to ensure that any new drainage approval system supports local flood prevention efforts.



**Question 2: For Newbury Town Council to press WBC to seriously consider & plan an outline route for a north – east – south bypass, in order to eliminate future gridlock if nothing is planned. The danger is that piecemeal development on any possible route will obstruct a coordinated approach to future traffic management. Any developments to incorporate such a defined route & be coordinated with the proposed bridge at Thatcham Rail Station. The Southern link to be north of the R. Enborne, & to the south of all the Sandleford developments, thus removing the concerns regarding Warren Road.**

NTC recognises the long-term risks of traffic congestion and the need for strategic infrastructure planning to prevent future gridlock. In response to this, NTC has already made submissions to West Berkshire Council's (WBC) "Call for Land" consultation, advocating for the development of additional road infrastructure to alleviate pressure on key pinch points.

Furthermore, NTC supports the application of Grampian Planning Conditions, which would allow WBC to pause or phase developments until appropriate infrastructure—such as new roads and transport links—is in place to support cumulative development impacts. This would help ensure that large-scale housing and commercial developments are delivered in a coordinated manner, with sufficient road capacity to prevent further congestion.

We will continue to engage with WBC on this issue and seek opportunities to influence planning policies to promote a well-connected and sustainable transport network for Newbury and the surrounding areas.

As of March 2025, West Berkshire Council (WBC) has not publicly disclosed specific plans or proposals for developing a north-east-south bypass around Newbury. The latest available strategic document, the Draft Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) Strategy 2024–2039, does not mention such a bypass.

The LTP4 outlines WBC's transportation strategy, focusing on sustainable transport modes, traffic management, and infrastructure improvements. However, it does not include plans for a new bypass to the north-east-south of Newbury.

Given the absence of current plans for a north-east-south bypass, it is advisable for stakeholders to engage with WBC through public consultations and council meetings to express support for such infrastructure. This engagement can help inform future transport strategies and ensure that community needs are considered in long-term planning.