

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Amenities Committee of New Milton Town Council held on Monday 03 March 2025 at 6.30pm at the Town Hall, Ashley Road, New Milton.**

Present:

Chairman:           p G R Blunden (Chairman)       p M Craze (Vice Chair)

Councillors:       p D Hawkins                               R Murrow

                          p J Baker                                   A D O’Sullivan

                          p D Rice-Mundy                       p V Schooling

                          p K Trehorn

In attendance:

Councillors: R A Reid

Officers:       G Flexman - Town Clerk  
                  M Jeffries - Estates and Facilities Manager  
                  S Welch – Administration Officer

The Chairman welcomed Councillors, Officers, three Members of the public and one Member of the press to the meeting.

Three members of the public spoke under Public Participation in support of Nature Reserves, as noted at Minute 94.

The meeting went into session at 6:45pm following Public Participation period.

92. APOLOGIES

Cllr R Murrow

Cllr A O Sullivan

93. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

94. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION –

**Bob Lord**, Chairman of Ballard Water Meadow Friends Group and Barton Common Volunteer Ranger, spoke in favour of Local Nature Reserve (LNR) proposals at Agenda Item 9, explaining that the benefits of designating sites as LNRs are well-documented and significant.



He noted that the perceived disadvantages listed in the notes, such as increased disturbance to wildlife, littering, irresponsible dog walkers, and livestock worrying, and argued that these issues are not unique to LNRs and occur in various public spaces across the country. Bob emphasized that the advantages for wildlife and people far outweigh these concerns and stated that the LNR designation will almost certainly have no influence on these issues. He noted that a minority of people might not respect the area, referencing recent vandalism at the Town's Recreation ground, but stated that this should not deter the LNR designation.

**Mandy Hayes** also spoke regarding Agenda Item 9, expressing her support for the Local Nature Reserve designation. She explained that the Friends of Ballard Water Meadow have delayed installing new signage and information boards at the Meadow in the hope of it becoming a Local Nature Reserve. Additionally, Mandy encouraged Councillors to visit the Volunteers at the Meadow to see the work being done and to get involved if they would like to.

**Julia Stamper** also spoke regarding Agenda Item 9, expressing her support for the Local Nature Reserve designation. She reiterated her previous suggestion of installing a new gate at the Meadow entrance to make it more inviting. If the Meadow becomes designated as a Local Nature Reserve, she would like to see a plate attached to the gate to signify that the area is a Nature Reserve.

Referring to an original Neighbourhood Plan survey, Julia explained that the community was asked what they liked most about New Milton, and most responded with its location. She highlighted the town's lovely location, quoting 'Twixt Forest and Sea' and reiterated her recommendation from the previous Amenities meeting held on 20 January 2025 to install brown tourist signs within New Milton pointing to notable locations and attractions around the town.

The Chairman clarified that Appendix 2 consisted of meeting notes rather than formal minutes and emphasised that no decisions regarding Nature Reserves were being made at this meeting. The purpose was to update members and allow for comments, assuring attendees that differing views on the matter were understood.

The Chairman acknowledged the significant number of hours contributed by volunteers, highlighting how their hard work was truly appreciated. In response to Julia's comment regarding recent vandalism at the Recreation Ground, the Chairman noted that the Council was working with the police and other agencies to address not only issues at the recreation ground but also antisocial behaviour in general.

Regarding Julia's suggestion for directional signs to points of interest, the Chairman clarified that this does not fall within the Town Council's remit and is instead approved by Hampshire County Council (HCC). While the Council has made similar requests in the past, strict parameters must be met (per HCC Guidance attached).

Cllr V E Schooling inquired about the process for initiating a request and expressed support for improved signage. The Chairman reiterated that HCC has specific criteria for approving brown (tourist) signs and asked that these be included within the minutes, as below.

Information & Guidance: <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/transport/tourist-sign-guidance.docx>

Application Form: <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/transport/tourist-application-form.docx>

95. MINUTES

The Chairman referred to the previous Committee minutes of 20 January 2025.

It was,

**RESOLVED:**

***That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2025, previously circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.***

The minutes were duly signed.

96. MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman reviewed the action points from the previous committee meeting.

The Town Clerk confirmed action points had been addressed and highlighted the following:

- **Minute 85b:** The New Milton Robins Tournament will now be held on Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> June, and Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2025.
- **Minute 85c:** The New Milton Rugby Club Family Day date was incorrectly listed in the previous minutes and will be held on Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> June 2025.



Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
84a	Cattle on Barton Common	03.03.25	Town Clerk
84b	Paint Car Park Barriers	03.02.25	F&GP
84c	Nature Reserves WP	03.03.25	Town Clerk
85	Land Use Requests	ASAP	Estates Manager/ Comms Officer
87	CG Container/ Noticeboard	ASAP	Estates Manager
89	Allotments Parking	ASAP	Admin Officer
90	Ballard Lake Enhancements	ASAP	Estates Manager

## 97. CORRESPONDENCE

- a) The Town Clerk referred to the below email from SGN regarding the reopening of Bashley Common Road.

**“We are pleased to advise the gas main replacement work on Bashley Common Road is now complete and the road will be officially back open to through traffic by 3pm, Friday 28 February.**

**Our traffic management company will start removing signage from site today and tomorrow, with all operational equipment removed by 4pm tomorrow Saturday 1 March. VMS signs on the diversion routes will be turned off today and removed tomorrow. The team still have work activity within the verges, they are able to work under a give and take in place for traffic. Road sweepers have been booked again this will not require any traffic management.**

**This project has been successfully delivered 28 days ahead of our planned completion date of the 28 March. We have replaced a total of 900 metres of medium pressure gas main and all service connections to properties. This gas main is critical for the supply of gas to the wider community, by replacing the pipe we can ensure we avoid further disruptive emergency gas escapes on this section of pipe in the future and ensure we maintain local supplies.**

**We’d like to thank the community for their support, we appreciate how disruptive this closure has been for you all. Thank you again for patience and understanding.”**

- b) The Town Clerk referred to an email from South Western Railway highlighting that a Railway 200 “special exhibition train will be touring the country this year and next, as part of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the modern railway (Railway200)”, as attached.

The Train will be visiting London Waterloo on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> July, and the Bluebell Railway in Sussex from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

More Information can be found at: [Railway 200: Unique touring exhibition train comes to Waterloo this July](#)

**98. LAND USE REQUESTS****a) New Milton Rugby Club**

A request was received from New Milton Rugby Club for assistance from the Town Council in providing Portaloos for their upcoming Funday event. During discussion, the Town Clerk suggested waiving the usual £250 fee for the event, a recommendation supported by the Chairman and members. The Chairman also offered to supplement this amount using his NFDC Community Grant.

***RECOMMENDED: That the Town Council waive the £250 fee for the Funday.***

**b) Lions Club of New Milton & District**

An email received from Alan Watson of the Lions Club confirming that the VE80 Commemoration Get Together Event, originally planned for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of May 2025 at the War Memorial Recreation Ground, will now take place as a one-day event on Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2025. Additionally, on Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2025, a commemorative concert for VE80 will be held at New Milton Memorial Centre, featuring a performance by The Band of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary.

**c) New Life Church**

A request was received from New Life Church to use the War Memorial Recreation Ground for an event on Good Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> April 2025. Members were in agreement.

***RESOLVED: That New Life Church be permitted to use the War Memorial Recreation Ground on Good Friday, 18 April 2025, subject to the usual terms and conditions of use.***

**d) Wipeout World**

A request was received from Wipeout World to use Moore Close for their inflatable event on the weekend of April 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> 2025. This event has been held in the town previously with great success, and the Estates Manager noted that the organisers have always left the site in excellent condition.

***RESOLVED: That Wipeout World be permitted to use Moore Close on April 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025 subject to the usual terms and conditions of use.***

**e) Carrick Wood Geocache**

A request was received from a member of the public seeking permission to place a Geocache within Carrick Wood.

Cllr R A Reid clarified that caches are usually contained in small boxes, are not easily visible, and have little to no value contained within. He also mentioned that geocaching is a good pastime to get people out and about. Cllr D Hawkins saw no issue with the suggestion so long as the environment is not harmed in any way.

***RESOLVED: That Carrick Wood be used for Geocache provided it does not harm the environment.***

99. MEN'S SHED

The Chairman referred to Appendix 1, which included an email with drawings of proposed plans for additional storage within the New Milton Men's Shed area. The email also mentioned the need for storage of batteries for solar panels and a donated dust extractor from Ballard School, which requires a suitable location.

While appreciative of the valuable work carried out by the Men's Shed, the Chairman suggested seeking planning advice from NFDC.

It was,

***RECOMMENDED: That this item be referred to NFDC for planning advice and further information.***

100. LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

The Chairman referred to Appendix 2, being notes from the Local Nature Reserve Working Party meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

The meeting was held to gather information and discuss the proposal for designating Local Nature Reserve status, with a focus on Ballard Water Meadow. The Chairman invited comments that could be taken back to the working group. Cllr K Trehorn suggested that the Town Council upload videos showcasing the meadow onto the council's website to help raise awareness.

Cllr D Hawkins praised the volunteers for their hard work, noting that they had done a superb job in maintaining the area. However, he questioned what tangible benefits the designation would bring, whether it would make a real difference, and acknowledged that there would be associated costs. He did, however, agree that more promotion of the meadow was needed.

Cllrs J M Baker, D A Rice-Mundy, and V E Schooling spoke in support of designating Ballard Water Meadow as a Local Nature Reserve. They highlighted that it would be a valuable asset to the town, enhance its image, and encourage greater respect for the area. They also felt that the designation would attract more visitors, as people tend to recognise and appreciate the significance of a Nature Reserve.

All three councillors also expressed their gratitude to the volunteers for their outstanding contributions.

**101. GRAZING**

The Chairman informed members that there are currently three ponies on the common, with a fourth due any day, but no cattle at present.

A meeting will be held in September to discuss grazing arrangements for Ballard Water Meadow and Barton Common, with a particular focus on cattle options for Barton Common. Plans are in place to reintroduce cattle in the autumn/winter, and various grazing options are being considered, including alternatives to Dexter cattle.

**102. PLANT A TREE**

The Administration Officer informed members that a total of 111 trees had been planted by the Estates & Facilities team over the season, with 17 of those funded by the Plant A Tree initiative. He added that this year's initiative had been a great success, members were pleased to hear this.

**103. NFDC CIL BIDS**

The Chairman noted that no update had been received from NFDC regarding the submitted CIL bids. It was agreed to defer the item until further information is available.

**104. ALLOTMENTS**

The Administration Officer informed members that there are currently 11 people on the allotment waiting list, a significant reduction from 48 just over a year ago. Six of those on the list are specifically waiting for a plot at Becton Lane, where there are currently no vacancies.

There are four vacant plots elsewhere, which are due to be viewed by the end of the month. Additionally, allotment inspections have been scheduled, with the first set to begin in mid-March.

**105. BALLARD LAKE ENHANCEMENTS**

The Chairman, along with the Estates Manager, informed members that Phase 2 of the Ballard Lake Enhancements, which is being headed by NFDC, will be starting next week and will include improvements to walkways, seating, and railings. The timescale provided for this is 12 - 14 weeks.

106. CRICKET CLUB LEASE

The Town Clerk updated members on the progress of the lease, explaining that correspondence was ongoing with the Cricket Club's solicitor. The Town Clerk clarified that the rent would be reviewed every three years. After discussion, it was

**RECOMMENDED: That this matter be endorsed by F&GP on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025.**

107. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

**Monday 07 April 2025** at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, Ashley Road, New Milton.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7:24 pm.

CHAIRMAN \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS**

<b>Minute</b>	<b>Action Points</b>	<b>Action by date</b>	<b>To be actioned by</b>
98a)	Rugby Club Fun Day	17.03.25	F&GP
98b)	Lions Club event	04.05.25	Estates Manager
98c)	New Life Church event	18.04.25	Estates Manager
98d)	Wipeout World event	26.04.25	Estates Manager
98e)	Carrick Wood Geocache	ASAP	Comms Officer
99)	Men's Shed plans	07.04.25	Asst Town Clerk
106)	Cricket Club lease	17.03.25	F&GP

**Distribution:**

Town Councillors

Estates & Facilities Manager

District Councillor J L Cleary

County Councillors M Kendal, F Carpenter, and K Mans

New Milton Police

Press

Sue Larking – NMRA