

Minutes of the Meeting of the Amenities Committee of New Milton Town Council held on Monday 20 January 2025 at 6.30pm at the Town Hall, Ashley Road, New Milton.

Present:

Chairman:	G R Blunden (Chair)	p	M Craze (Vice Chair)
Councillors:	p D Hawkins		R Murrow
	p J Baker	p	A D O'Sullivan
	p D Rice-Mundy	p	V Schooling
	p K Trehorn		

In attendance:

Councillors: S J Clarke

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

In the absence of the Chairman, who sent his apologies, the Vice Chair presided over the meeting.

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

Four members of the public spoke under Public Participation, as noted at Minute 81.

The meeting went into session at 6:49pm following Public Participation period.

79. APOLOGIES

Cllr G R Blunden

Cllr R Murrow

80. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors S J Clarke & A D O'Sullivan noted that they are due to be members of an NFDC committee not yet formed which will consider recent CIL Bids.

81. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION –

Alan Watson, speaking as a trustee of New Milton Community Garden and in reference to Appendix 2, expressed his support for the requests to install a shed and noticeboard at the garden. He explained that the shed is essential for storing the various tools used at the garden, while the noticeboard is required to display legal documents and other information relevant to the garden's operation. Mr. Watson also highlighted ongoing collaboration with the Men's Shed to create seating for the garden. Additionally, he noted that, following feedback from residents, plans are underway to adjust the garden pathways to improve accessibility, particularly for mobility scooter and wheelchair users.

Julia Stamper spoke about raising the profile of New Milton and made two suggestions. Firstly, she supported registering Ballard Water Meadow and Barton Common as local nature reserves. Secondly, she recommended installing brown tourist signs at key locations around the town, pointing to notable attractions such as the sea, along with the distances to them.

Bob Lord, Volunteer Ranger for New Milton Town Council, spoke against the proposal outlined in Appendix 3 for a gravel path at Ballard Water Meadow. He also addressed concerns regarding the introduction of Dexter Cattle to Barton Common, expressing his full support for their introduction. Mr. Lord explained that since the Dexters were introduced to Ballard Water Meadow in 2014, there have been no recorded incidents and noted that the breed is known for being tame.

A member of the public, who submitted an enquiry via Facebook (referred to under correspondence), spoke about the introduction of cattle at Barton Common, and expressed concerns regarding safety and suggested that the presence of the cattle might deter people from visiting the Common. The local resident also queried what plans were in place to address any potential incidents.

The above items were duly noted.

82. MINUTES

The Chair referred to the previous Committee minutes of 25 November 2024.

It was,

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2024, previously circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The minutes were duly signed.

83. MATTERS ARISING

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

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

- **Minute 66:** In regard to the Tennis Tables on the Recreation Ground, the Estates Manager informed members that the plaques are in production and will be installed in early February. Base alterations will coincide with the scheduled resurfacing works at the War Memorial Recreation Ground.
- **Minute 68:** In regard to Ballard Lake Seating, Jill Colclough of NFDC provided an email update. Councillors were shown the specified benches, noting an off-white frame has been chosen to lighten their appearance. Evaluation of tenders is still in progress, allowing time for revisions and alternative suggestions. Cllr A D O'Sullivan commented that he liked the friendly appearance of the semi-circular benches, which encourages conversation. Cllr D Hawkins proposed that the benches be placed in appropriate areas, with Cllr A D O'Sullivan supporting that proposal.
- **Minute 68:** The Town Clerk advised that the new Cricket Club Lease will be ready in March.

All other items had been addressed.



Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
66	Plaques for Tennis Tables	20.01.25	Chairman of Amenities
68	Details of Ballard seating	20.01.25	Jill Colclough, NFDC
68	New Cricket Club Lease	20.01.25	Town Clerk, Solicitor
70	Land Use requests x 3	ASAP	Comms / Estates Man
71	Ballard Water Meadow Management Plan 2025-26	10.12.24	F&GP
72	Fees & Charges 2025-26	10.12.24	F&GP
73	Amenities Committee Budget 2025-2026	10.12.24	F&GP

84. CORRESPONDENCE

- a) An enquiry received via Facebook from a resident expressed concerns about the introduction of cattle onto Barton Common, highlighting potential safety risks to the public, especially the elderly and vulnerable. They also inquired about contingency plans in case of an incident

Cllr S Clarke supported the introduction of cattle to Barton Common, noting that similar concerns were raised when they were introduced to Ballard Water Meadow. However, since their introduction in 2014, there had been no significant incidents. He also clarified that the cattle being introduced are Dexters, known for their tame nature, and that no young calves will be present.

Cllr D Hawkins also supported the introduction, commenting that humans and animals should coexist and reminding dog owners to be responsible while walking their dogs. The Town Clerk advised he would reply to the resident in writing.

Following correspondence with Sam Loades of New Forest Land Advice Service, the Town Clerk circulated copies of his advice to members.

- b) An email was received from a resident regarding the entry and exit infrastructure at Barton Common Car Park:

“The entry and exit infrastructure metal frame has recently been replaced at the Barton Common Car Park [personal information redacted]

The structure itself looks sensible and practical to control entry to the popular car park. My issue is that it has been painted bright yellow which completely stands out against the trees and ecological environment by the Common. It was previously matt grey which blended in much better in this conservation area.

Is it possible to return this to a grey colour, perhaps just leaving the yellow horizontal warning plates which hang underneath? This would meet all needs?”

The Estates Manager explained that most site barriers are yellow, and from a safety and insurance perspective, it is recommended that they remain yellow.

Cllr D A Rice-Munday agreed that the barrier looks unsightly, and that he wouldn't be opposed to it being painted a more natural colour.

Cllr V E Schooling also expressed her disapproval of the yellow and inquired whether there were any alternative colours that could be used.

Members then discussed the matter and agreed that green could be a suitable alternative.

The Chair subsequently suggested that the uprights be painted green, while retaining the yellow crossbar.

A vote was then held, and it was:

RECOMMENDED: That the uprights of the car park barrier along Barton Common Road be painted green, while retaining the yellow crossbar.

- c) An email from Bob Lord, Chairman of the Friends of Ballard Water Meadow (FBWM), requesting an update on his inclusion within the Nature Reserves Working Group and when its inaugural meeting will be held.

The Town Clerk responded that the meeting is planned to take place before the next Amenities Meeting on 3 March 2025, and that it includes a representative of FBWM.

85. LAND USE REQUESTSa) Lions Club of New Milton & District

A request from The Lions Club of New Milton & District to use Fawcetts Field for Car Boot sales during the 2025 season on the first and third Sundays of each month. Additionally, the RNLI New Milton & Barton On Sea Fundraising Branch requests use of the field on the second Sunday of each month.

RESOLVED: That The Lions Club of New Milton be permitted to use Fawcetts Field to hold Car Boot sales during the 2025 season on the first and third Sundays of each month, excluding 15th June due to a proposed Robins Football Tournament. The RNLI New Milton & Barton On Sea Fundraising Branch be permitted to use the field on the second Sunday of each month, excluding 11th May 2025 due to the proposed Shamrocks Music Festival (approve at minute 41b) of 2 September 2024), subject to our usual terms and conditions of use.

b) New Milton Robins

A request from New Milton Robins for their annual Football Tournament to be held at Fawcetts Field, including use of the overflow car park, on Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th June 2025.

RESOLVED: That New Milton Robins be permitted use of Fawcetts Field and the overflow car park on Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th June 2025, subject to our usual terms and conditions of use, the provision of risk assessments, collaboration with the Safety Advisory Group (SAG), and the provision of necessary first aid requirements.

c) New Milton Rugby Club

A request from New Milton Rugby Club for their annual family fun day to be held at Ashley Recreation Ground on Saturday 14th June 2025.

RESOLVED: That New Milton Rugby Club be permitted use of Ashley Recreation Ground on Saturday 14th May 2025, for their annual Family Fun Day, subject to our usual terms and conditions of use and the provision of at least 6 visible Portaloo's.

d) Circus Ginnett

A request received today from Circus Ginnett to use the Moore Close site from 22nd to 28th September 2025 to host a circus.

RESOLVED: That Circus Ginnett be permitted use of the Moore Close site from 22nd to 28th September 2025 to host a circus, subject to our usual terms and conditions of use.

86. MOORE CLOSE

The Chair referred to Appendix 1, which noted the allocation of CIL monies received from NFDC in October towards a new footpath at Moore Close, connecting with the Community Garden.

The Town Clerk highlighted the need to confirm that previous CIL monies have been spent or allocated before making new CIL bids through New Forest District Council.

87. COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Chair referred to Appendix 2, which included a request for permission from New Milton Community Garden to erect a shed and noticeboard at the Community Garden, with all work to be funded from their charitable donations.

The Town Clerk ran through the requests, and a discussion followed regarding whether a metal or wooden shed would be appropriate.

Cllr S Clarke suggested that, for added security, a container like the one at Ballard Water Meadow might be a better option, although concerns were raised about its potential appearance. The Estates Manager agreed, stating that the only issue would be the visual impact. Cllr D Hawkins emphasised that whatever is built must be sympathetic to its location, and that efforts should be made to soften its appearance, preferably by painting it green.

In addition, members expressed approval for a new, dedicated noticeboard. While no final decision was made regarding the shed, members agreed in principle that a suitable shed/container would be needed, and further discussions will be held to determine the best option, and precise details.

**88. NFDC CIL BIDS**

The Chair referred to Appendix 3, a summary of five individual bids and one joint bid with NFDC, recently submitted as CIL bids to NFDC.

The Estates Manager briefed members on the CIL bids submitted. Cllr A D O'Sullivan questioned the necessity of a path at Ballard Water Meadow, referencing alternative access via Lake Grove Road.

In response, Cllr S Clarke expressed support for the path, emphasising its role as an important part of the Green Route and its potential to provide an all-weather passage through an area currently difficult to traverse.

Cllr D Hawkins also voiced support, highlighting the importance of coexisting with nature. It was also noted that this path would connect with the fairy trail, offering a direct and more convenient route for visitors, and a safer one for youngsters.

89. ALLOTMENTS

The Admin Officer informed members that there are currently 9 people on the allotment waiting list. Frequent inspections, particularly in the first couple of months, will begin the first week of March.

Cllr D Hawkins noted that he had seen people parking on the footpath outside the Lymington Road Allotment, suggesting it may be the allotment holders and that the council should discourage this.

90. BALLARD LAKE ENHANCEMENTS

The Town Clerk referred to an email from a member of the public asking about the start date for the phase 2 works at Ballard Lake. In response, Jill Colclough of NFDC informed him that the expected start date is mid-March. The Estates Manager added that phase one of the works is complete, with only some remedial tasks and general tidying left.

New Milton Town Council will collaborate with New Forest District Council on phase two, which will include improvements to walkways, new seating, and new metal railings along Lake Grove Road. Phase two is expected to be completed by the end of April.

91. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 03 March 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 7:40 pm.

CHAIRMAN _____ DATE _____

SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

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

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