NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON FRIDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2024 AT 14.00 HRS AT THE TOWN HALL.

Councillors: p R A Reid – Chairman p S J Clarke

p G R Blunden p D N Tungate

In attendance:

Councillor: D E Hawkins, A D O'Sullivan

Officer: G Flexman - Town Clerk

The Chairman welcomed members to this second budget meeting for 2025-2026.

21. APOLOGIES - M Craze

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members have a general dispensation to discuss budgets and set a precept for 2025-2026.

23. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

24. MINUTES

The Chairman referred to the minutes of the last meeting held on 1 November 2024. It was,

<u>RESOLVED</u>: That minutes 11 – 20 of the meeting held on 1 November 2024 be signed as a correct record.

The minutes were duly signed.

25. MATTERS ARISING - None

26. CORRESPONDENCE

- a) The Clerk referred to HCC approving New Milton Sand & Ballast's Ashley Manor Farm quarry plans on Wednesday of this this week, despite New Forest West MP Sir Desmond Swayne saying there is "no overriding need" for the development, adding "I wonder if we're not proceeding with this a little prematurely".
- b) Following the recent Government Budget, an email from Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC) confirming the Employer Rate of National Insurance Contributions will increase next financial year from 13.8% to 15% (a rise of 8.7%) subject to the tax free employer band for national Insurance reducing to £5,000 per employee (currently £9,000 per employee) meaning councils will be paying additional National Insurance contributions on the extra £4,000 worth of salary per employee).
- c) An email from NFDC Finance about Precepting Arrangements for 2025-26, including a 1% increase of 122 Taxable Properties from 10,619 in 2024-25 to 10,741 for 2025-26.
- d) A request from New Milton Cricket Club to install an artificial pitch on the bottom square. The matter was referred to the Amenities Committee for further consideration.

- e) An email from our Internal Auditor enclosing the Interim Internal Audit Report for the 2024-25 financial year, commending the delivery of the new Ashley Youth Hub facility, "on time and on budget in such a challenging economic environment, which is a credit to the administrative skills of the Executive Committee and the Council's Management".
- f) An email from SGN about a road closure for essential gas main replacement work along Bashley Common Road (from 6 January 28 March 2025) with proposed drop-in event on Tuesday 3 December (2.30pm 7.00pm) at St John Baptist Church, St John's Road.

27. FEES & CHARGES 2025-26

The Town Clerk referred to Annex A (Version 2), being Fees & Charges for 2025-26 based on an inflation rate of 2.5%, with annual review of leases and licences as they arise. It was

RECOMMENDED:

That Schedule of Fees & Charges for 2025-26 be endorsed by Amenities Committee.

28. COMMITTEE BUDGETS 2025-26

The Town Clerk referred to Annex B (Version 2) including those items previously discussed.

Members went through and agreed the Amenities Committee items mentioned at Minute 18 re-instating an Ash Tree Dieback budget (4723) in the sum of c.£12k – plus the adjustments mentioned under Ashley Rugby Ground including revised rents and a General Maintenance budget (4101) under Open Spaces, and also Amenities Capex budget of £160k. It was:

RECOMMENDED:

That the Amenities Budget (v.3) for 2025-26 be endorsed by the Amenities Committee

Regarding Finance & General Purposes Committee Budget for 2025-26, a presentation by the Comms Officer detailed a revised Communications budget of £10k and an Advertising budget of £5k. Other items referred to at the end of Minute 18 of the last meeting were agreed by members. Any savings under the TDM budget would go to Ash Tree Dieback.

RECOMMENDED:

That the F&GP Budget (Version 3) for 2025-26 be endorsed by the F&GP Committee.

29. CHAIRMAN'S ITEMS

The Chairman referred to two items that were discussed under Private Session protocols:

PRIVATE SESSION - PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS OT MEETINGS) ACT 1960

The Chairman moved that the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business pursuant to section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reasons of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted:

ROBINS NEST - FERNHILL

The Clerk updated members on the current status of land for sale next to the cricket club, earmarked for formal open space in Local Plan. Execs expressed interest having previously made an offer of £350k for 4+ acres of land; that offer remains on the table. But the family wish to sell the whole plot with bungalow for circa £925k. Town Clerk was asked to arrange a fresh valuation for the whole property, and research a Public Works Board Loan (PWBL).

FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT

The Town Clerk circulated Town Council policy regarding flexible retirement arrangements.

30. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - FRIDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2024 AT 3.00PM IN TOWN HALL

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman closed the meeting at 3.30 pm.

CHAIRMAN	DATE
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Distribution:

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