



**Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of New Milton Town Council held on Tuesday 10 December 2024 at 6.30 pm in New Milton Town Hall.**

Chairman	p	D N Tungate
Vice-Chairman	p	A D O'Sullivan

<u>Councillors:</u>	p	J Adams	p	W Davies
	p	G R Blunden	p	R Maynard
	p	S J Clarke	p	R A Reid
	p	M Scott-Johns		

In Attendance:

Councillors: D Hawkins

Officers: G Flexman - Town Clerk  
S Welch – Administration Officer

The Chairman welcomed Councillors, 2 Officers, 3 members of the public and member of the press.

Public Participation

Laura Myhill, Senior Youth Worker, and Sarah Conacher, Deputy Chair and Secretary, both of New Milton Youth Trust, spoke on behalf of the organisation regarding the Grant Aid Application. They outlined the Trust's initiatives to support local young people and provided members with an overview of their activities. Members expressed their appreciation for the update and were impressed with the valuable work being done, noting how beneficial it is for young people within the town.

Christine Wraight, Chaplain and Deacon at Ashley Baptist Church, introduced herself as potential Chaplain for New Milton High Street to support shop workers. She explained that the role would focus on providing emotional support, guidance, and assistance in managing stress and anxiety, as well as connecting individuals to additional resources.

The initiative would specifically support shop staff rather than shoppers. Chris highlighted her experience as a retired nurse with mental health experience and was open to training others for the role if required. Ashley Baptist Church would provide premises for the Chaplaincy. Examples of similar initiatives in Southampton, Bromley, Bristol, and transport hubs were shared.

Christine Wraight emphasised this would be a voluntary role, with no financial request, and sought the Council's support.

68. APOLOGIES

None.



69. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr R A Reid being a Trustee of New Milton Youth Trust, would not vote but would speak on Agenda item 14a.

Cllr S J Clarke being a Trustee of New Milton Youth Trust, would not vote but would speak on Agenda item 14a.

The Chairman advised that he is a Trustee of HOPE and would not therefore speak or vote in relation to the Grant Aid Application made on their behalf.

Members have a general dispensation to prepare budgets and set a precept.

70. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The proposal for a High Street Chaplain was noted as a positive initiative with potential benefits for supporting shop workers.

Members raised concerns about lone working, liability, the need for collaboration with the police, and the possibility of securing support from multiple churches. It was acknowledged that this initiative did not require the Council's permission and that Christine Wraight's decision to inform them was a courtesy. It was suggested that the concept be shared with local businesses and the police for feedback, with progress to be monitored through regular updates.

The Town Clerk is meeting with local police tomorrow and would mention the suggestion.

71. MINUTES

The Town Clerk referred to page 26 of the Minutes from the meeting held on Monday, 28 October 2024, and at the request of the police, reference to carrying weapons and screwdrivers would be deleted from Minute 62.

***RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 28 October 2024, as previously circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the above amendment.***

The Minutes were duly signed.

72. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON AGENDA

The Town Clerk advised that most action points had been addressed, as follows.

**60a)** The Go New Milton Website will cease at the end of December.

**60b)** Tom Morrissey will become a direct employee of NMTC in the New Year and Barrie King the other contractor will only be used on an ad hoc basis next year.

**62)** Youth Report – Police update as above minute.



73. CORRESPONDENCE

The Town Clerk referred to the following items of correspondence:

- a) An Email from Susan Day of SGN regarding latest town centre emergency road closure.

Cllr S Clarke highlighted that the gas escape is an emergency that must be addressed but emphasised the severe impact of its timing. He urged the gas company to expedite the work and sought clarification on the timeline. Concerns were raised about inadequate and unclear signage, with requests for clearer communication regarding road closures.

Cllr S Clarke noted feedback from one business, which reported that December accounts for 30% of their annual turnover and suggested exploring whether any compensation is available to affected businesses.

Cllr W Davies noted concerns over the town's gas network and inquired about upcoming plans or necessary actions.

Cllr G Blunden suggested utility companies collaborate to see if other necessary work, including issues with the water mains, could be carried out simultaneously.

Cllr S Clarke expressed concern about the number of road closures and their impact on daily life, noting that the public expects clear answers. He emphasised the need for SGN to provide details on the scale of the issues within the town, as well as information on planned works over the next 18 months to two years, to help inform the public.

Cllr S Clarke concluded by requesting that the Town Clerk write to SGN seeking information on what can be expected in the coming years.

- b) A thank you letter from Royal British Legion in London thanking the Town Council for their contribution of £44 towards the Poppy Appeal, ie 2 wreaths purchased.
- c) An email from the HAF (Holiday Activities and Food) Programme Administrator at Hampshire County Council, confirming award of £5,280 for Christmas activities at Ashley Hub.
- d) A thank you letter from Parkinson's UK New Forest Branch thanking the council for the £500 Grant Aid towards replacing their sound system.
- e) A thank you letter from Open Sight thanking the council for the £500 Grant Aid towards their New Milton Social Club.

74. BUDGET PROPOSALS 2025/26.

- a) The Chairman referred to the Amenities Committee having already agreed their budget for 2025-26 in the sum of £834,451. Members endorsed it for council approval.
- b) The Chairman referred to Annex B F&GP Budget and following some discussion, members agreed the F&GP Budget in the sum of £615,776.

The Chairman proposed that £33,500 be taken from reserves to support the 6.9% increase.

It was then,

**RECOMMENDED:**

***That the 2025/26 Budget of £1,450,227 be accepted and a Precept of £1,416,727 be approved using £33,500 from Reserves as in previous years.***

75. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 1 - Schedule of Payments for the period from 1 to 31 October 2024 in the sum of £112,071.11. The Town Clerk highlighted the following items:

1	Tom Morrissey Ltd	General works site wide - Contractor, 14.10.24 - 25.10.24	£1,600.00
2	Barrie King Building Ltd	General works site wide - Contractor, 2 weeks ending 29.09.24	£1,050.00
3	Tom Morrissey Ltd	General works site wide - Contractor, 16.09.24 - 27.09.24	£1,600.00
4	BDO LLP	Limited assurance review for year end 31 March 2024 - External Audit	£2,520.00
5	Commercial Energy Matters	Inspections of 8 properties to provide EPC's, Legal requirement for all NMTC facilities	£1,720.00
6	HCC (Hants LGPS)	Pension Contributions - September 2024	£12,438.97
7	HMRC Cumbernauld	Tax and NIC - September 2024	£11,574.97
8	Lions Club	Grant aid in support of annual Xmas event	£3,000.00
9	rCOH ltd	Consultation fees for Neighbourhood Plan (Locality grant covers cost)	£5,427.00
10	Rejuvenate	Pre-paid support hours, provision of IT support and telephone service	£1,338.04
11	Vita Play	Supply & install replacement bridge handrail at Recreation Ground	£1,461.31
12	Barrie King Building Ltd	General works site wide - Contractor, 2 weeks ending 13.09.24	£1,050.00
13	Tom Morrissey Ltd	General works site wide - Contractor, 30.09.24 - 11.10.24	£1,440.00
14	Aqua Care	Provision of written scheme to ensure Legionella compliance & Monthly Water Hygiene checks at 3 locations	£1,866.62
15	Source for Business	Water & Sewerage charges for Fawcetts Field 19.04.24 - 02.10.24 + water charges for Moore Close 16.04.24 - 02.10.24 (£94.89)	£4,286.71
16	Staff/Members	Salaries and expenses October 2024	£35,019.09
17	WPGroup	Vehicle fuel	£4,660.67
18	Lombard	Vehicle leasing BC21 NLU, DX67 UYD, BW21 NYH, DY20 HTT - Contract Hire	£1,918.04

Councillors queried the following items on the schedule:

- a) The Chairman asked about the frequency of EPCs in regard to item 5. Answer: 10 years.
- b) Cllr A Reid asked, regarding item 11, whether the replacement handrail at the Recreation Ground was due to wear and tear or vandalism. Answer: Wear and tear.
- c) Cllr R Maynard inquired about the frequency of water checks item 14. Town Clerk explained they are conducted monthly as a legal requirement at Fawcetts, Ashley & Fernhill.

**RECOMMENDED: That the Schedule of Payments No 06/24/25 for the period 1 – 31 October 2024 in the sum of £112,071.11 be ENDORSED for Town Council approval.**



76. OCTOBER ACCOUNTS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 2 - Monthly Accounts for October. The Town Clerk advised that Amenities is £15k over budget. However, invoices due to go out shortly should balance this out. Regarding F&GP, the Town Clerk explained that savings of £46k had been made and additional income had been received year to date.

In particular, savings to date on Town Development (£7,388), Neighbourhood Plan (£4,197), Youth Co-ordination (£10,163) and Prof Fees (£9,351) plus additional income from events (£1,225), NP Grant (£9,299), Interest received (£3,225) and Youth Donations (£1,542).

77. INTERNAL AUDIT

The Chairman referred to Appendix 3, Interim Audit Report for 2024-25.

The Town Clerk referred to the last page of the Appendix and highlighted the four Recommendations, in particular Review of Investments & Loans.

The Town Clerk proposed the following responses under the four various headings.

**Review of Accounting Records & Bank Reconciliations**

R1 *The discrepancy referred to was resolved between the Accountants and Auditors.*

**Review of Assessment & Management of Risk**

R2 *Risk Assessments for 2024-25 will be reviewed, per the next agenda item.*

**Review of Assessment & Management of Risk**

R3 *The Quilter Cheviot investment recorded growth of 12.1% over the 12 months to 28 June 2024, compared to Average Fund Yield of the CCLA investment of over 5% for the 6-month period to 30 June 2024.*

R4 *Members noted recommendation number 4.*

Cllr A Reid referred to the Overall Conclusions section of the report and highlighted the following extract "The Clerk/RFO and his team are again to be complimented on the exemplary performance of New Milton Town Council both in terms of its public facing services and its corporate governance and administration" He commended and extended his gratitude towards the Town Council staff.

**RECOMMENDED:**

***That the Interim Audit Report Recommendations and the proposed Responses be ENDORSED for Town Council approval.***

78. RISK ASSESSMENTS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 4 being Risk Assessments for 2024-25.

As mentioned in the latest Internal Audit Report above, for the sake of good order these Risk Assessments should be reviewed and re-adopted in the 2024-25 Financial Year. It was then,

**RECOMMENDED:**

***That Risk Assessments for 2024-25 be endorsed by F&GP for Town Council approval.***



79. CIL REPORT

The Chairman referred to Appendix 5, the Community Infrastructure Levy Annual Report for 2023/24. The Town Clerk provided a summary of the CIL receipts and expenditure which was noted by members. The report will be uploaded to the NMTC and NFDC websites.

80. YOUTH REPORT

The Chairman referred to Appendix 6 - Youth Report, which had been circulated previously. Members commended the Youth Services Manager and her team for their excellent work.

81. GRANT AID

The Chairman to referred to Appendix 7 being grant aid requests from the following:

**New Milton Youth Trust**

A request from NMYT for £12,138 from the Town Council's Youth Grant Aid budget to fund 6 month's salary and on-costs and training for 1 senior youth worker and 2 support workers for building-based provision in the Empire Skate Building on New Milton Recreation Ground.

A discussion was held, with members being highly impressed with the work being done. Cllr G Blunden suggested increasing the amount to £13,000, with all members in agreement.

Cllrs A Reid and S Clarke abstained from the vote.

**RESOLVED:**

***That New Milton Youth Trust be granted £13,000 from the Youth Grant Aid Budget.***

**Helping Older People New Forest**

HOPE New Forest sought £500 from the Grant Aid budget for an electronic donation station at the till point in their New Milton shop.

The Chairman abstained from the discussion and the vote

**RESOLVED:**

***That Helping Older People New Forest be granted £500 from the Grant Aid Budget under the General Power of Competence.***

**New Forest Bike Project CIC**

This Community Interest Company (CIC) sought £1,000 Grant Aid towards core costs to support placements at their New Milton workshop, including teaching sessions and work experience (eg. Eaglewood / Arnewood schools).

A discussion followed, during which members spoke very positively about the company and its activities. It was acknowledged that the request for £1,000 exceeds the normal Grant Aid budget limit of £500.

**RESOLVED:**

***That New Forest Bike Project CIC be granted £500 from the Grant Aid Budget under the General Power of Competence.***



### **The Honeypot Children's Charity**

This charity sought a Grant of £1,000 in total (£500 Grant Aid / £500 Youth Grant Aid) as last year in order to provide 2 young carers from the New Milton area with a 3-day/2-night residential respite break at Honeypot House in the New Forest.

A discussion was then held. Cllr S Clarke mentioned that there are young children in the community caring for people with a variety of problems, and that these children can often feel deeply isolated. He proposed increasing the grant to £1,500, with all members in agreement.

#### **RESOLVED:**

***That The Honeypot Children's Charity be granted £500 from the Grant Aid Budget and £1,000 from Youth Grant Aid Budget under the General Power of Competence.***

### **Home-Start Hampshire**

This charity in the New Forest is people focused and sought £400 Grant Aid to recruit, train and supervise volunteers in the New Forest, providing emotional and practical support to families with children aged 0-11 years who are finding life challenging.

A discussion was then held. Cllr S Clarke suggested increasing the grant to £500, with all members in agreement.

It was then,

#### **RESOLVED:**

***That Home-Start Hampshire be granted £500 from the Youth Grant Aid Budget under the General Power of Competence.***

## 82. **REFERRED MATTERS**

### **a) Amenities**

The Chairman referred to Appendix 8 / Minute 71 from the Amenities Committee meeting of 25 November 2024, that recommended the Management Plan for Ballard Water Meadow & Woodland for 2025-30 be adopted by the Town Council.

It was,

**RECOMMENDED: *That the Management Plan for Ballard Water Meadow & Woodland for 2025-30 be adopted by the Town Council.***

### **b) Planning**

The Chairman also referred to Minute 156 c) from the Planning Committee of 3 December 2024 regarding the HCC Proposed Traffic Order for Barton-on-Sea with members of that Committee wishing to send a strong objection to the County Council that this proposal is totally unacceptable recommending that this item be endorsed at F&GP on 10 December.

***This item was duly ENDORSED by F&GP ahead of the deadline of 13 December 2024***

The Assistant Town Clerk would forward our strong objection to HCC.



83. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATES - The Chairman had no updates.

84. NEXT MEETING **MONDAY 03 FEBRUARY 2025** at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, New Milton.

There being no further business in the Public Session, the Chairman thanked members of the public for attending and then requested that the following matter be discussed in Private Session at 7.50pm.

**PRIVATE SESSION**

**PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960**

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

85. ROBINS NEST – FERNHILL

The Chairman referred to a Valuation recently received regarding the property for sale, next to the cricket club, including land earmarked for formal open space in the NFDC Local Plan. The Town Clerk had forwarded the valuation to the selling agent as an opening move.

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

Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
70	Meet with Police as noted	11.12.24	Town Clerk
71	Amend F&GP Minute 62	11.12.24	Town Clerk
73	Write to Susan Day, SGN	12.12.24	Town Clerk
74	Budget Proposals for 2025-26	06.01.25	Town Council
77	Internal Audit Report	06.01.25	Town Council
78	Risk Assessments 2024/25	06.01.25	Town Council
79	CIL Report for website	31.12.24	Comms Officer
81	NMYT Grant of £13,000	06.01.25	Town Council
82	Referred Item Amenities/Planning	06.01.25	Town Council

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