



Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of New Milton Town Council held on Monday 10th June 2024 at 6.30 pm in New Milton Town Hall.

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

Councillors: p J Adams p W Davies
p G R Blunden p R A Reid
p S J Clarke p M Scott-Johns
p K E Craze

In Attendance:

Officers: G Flexman - Town Clerk
J Bean - Committee and Civic Administrator S Welch – Administration Officer

The Chairman welcomed Councillors and Officers. There was no public participation.

4. APOLOGIES

None

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest, but the Town Clerk took the opportunity to remind Councillors about the onus to adhere to important restrictions on publicity and decision-making activity, especially for key issues, during a pre-election period.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

7. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meetings held on 22nd April and 14th Mayth 2024 previously circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The Minutes were duly signed.

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

The Town Clerk mentioned the action point in relation to Minute 119 - Investment Strategy and this will be considered later in the meeting under Item 13 Internal Audit Report.

9. CORRESPONDENCE

a) An email from Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks advising of upcoming works:

***“We will be upgrading a section of the electrical cable and are currently letter dropping to inform all affected parishioners/homeowners. The cable replacement route of works will incorporate Chatsworth Way, Beaulieu Close, Cadhay Close, Breamore Close, Blair Close & Hatfield Court. Access to properties will be maintained during these works. We will be working in your parish for 8 weeks with a commencement date of the 17 June.*”**



- b) An email from Rosie Carter at Widespread Reptiles, Species Conservation Strategies

“I am writing to request permission to survey your land to identify the presence/absence of reptiles. Your information was found via the Rural Land Registry. The four widespread reptile species are thought to be declining at local and regional scales, with their conservation hindered by a patchy understanding of their current distribution and conservation status. Surveys will require an initial visit at least two weeks before the surveys(s). The area we would like to survey is the central part of Barton Common.”

Members were happy for Natural England to carry a reptile species survey free of charge.

10. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The Chairman referred to the Schedule of Payments for the period 1 – 30 April 2024 in the sum of £148,783.75. The Town Clerk highlighted items over £1,000.

a)	Lombard	Vehicle leasing x 3 BV71 ZJZ/BW21 NYH/BC21 NLU	£1,477.62
b)	Fireguard Services	Fire detection system - Ashley Facility - CAPEX	£5,058.36
c)	Greenlock Electrical	Installation of submain at Ashley Youth facility (cable size increased so incoming duct had to be adapted and main contractor being recharged)/Improvements to Away changing rooms (CAPEX)	£4,137.72
d)	Groundwork UK	Grant underspend	£1,297.00
e)	HALC	Development partner fee 2024/25	£1,100.00
f)	HCC	Pension contributions - March 2024	£10,232.92
g)	HMRC	Tax and NIC	£9,494.52
h)	Hygienic Walls Ltd	Carry out additional preparation work at the new Ashley facility - CAPEX	£2,227.68
i)	NPower	Electricity supplied at Fawcetts Field main site/Moore Close/Talking Newspaper/ASBOC/Ashley Sports Pavilion/Mallard Court/Spencer Rd South from 1 - 29 Feb	£1,118.54
j)	NFDC	Tree surveys/enquiries from March 23 to Feb 24/ mixed waste bin servicing from 1/4/24 to 30/9/24 and advertising at forecourt 67, Station Rd	£1,948.26
k)	NM Youth Trust	Grant aid as approved at F & GP 11 March 2024	£11,500.00
l)	Rejuvenate	Monthly provision of IT/telephone services	£1,323.40
m)	rCOH Ltd	4 days to cover January/February meeting, action plan	£3,240.00
n)	DH1 Consultancy Ltd	General works site wide (9 days @£100 per day plus VAT)	£1,080.00
o)	Lamps and Tubes	Installation of bunting - Station Road & Old Milton Road/Recreation Ground	£3,714.60
p)	Rialtas	Software support and maintenance contract, software, training, consultancy and end of year services	£1,021.20
q)	Staff/Members	Salaries and expenses April 2024	£32,784.57
r)	Autocross Euroshel	Supply and install stainless steel invincible bus shelters x 2 with hammer glass panels - CAPEX	£27,266.70
s)	Greenlock Electrical	Upgrade faulty internal lights, fit external bulkhead lights and fit 2 hand driers - ASBOC cafe (CAPEX)	£7,337.03
t)	John Shutler Tree Services	Deal with invasive species in Pond Copse and Balard Lake improvements CIL / S.106	£4,104.00

It was,



RECOMMENDED: That the Schedule of Payments No. 1/24/25 for the period 1 – 30 April March 2024 in the sum of £148,783.75 be ENDORSED for Town Council approval.

Councillors asked about:

- a) the Fireguard Services payment of £5,058.36 covered Fire Detection equipment at the new Ashley facility, including Fire Alarms and Call Points, etc.
- b) the Greenlock Electrical payment of £4,137.72 covered installation of full 3-phase electrical submain for the new Ashley facility.
- c) the Groundwork UK grant underspend in the sum of £1,297.00 which relates to the Review of the Neighbourhood Plan that has now grown, the Town Development Manager looking for further funding in this regard.
- d) the payment to Travis Perkins in the sum of £234.82 in which there is reference to repairs at the brand-new Ashley Facility was slightly misleading. The repairs refer to other sites; it was new work materials for the Ashley facility.

11. APRIL ACCOUNTS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 2, Monthly Accounts for April, the Town Clerk advised that there has been a good start to the year with the Council in saving mode, which Cllr Blunden welcomed.

12. YOUTH REPORT

The Chairman referred to Appendix 3 - Youth Report, which had been circulated previously. Cllr S Clarke said he had nothing to add to the report but took the opportunity to mention a visit he had made to Doe Copse play park where he had encountered a group of parents who regularly travelled from Bransgore to visit this local play park in New Milton.

13. STANDING ORDERS/FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 4 a copy of the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations which have undergone their annual review with all changes tracked and shown. This year there have been minimal changes to the Standing Orders, but NALC have issued a new model Financial Regulations which entails more substantial changes. If Councillors wish to make any comments on the proposed amendments, they are requested to contact the Assistant Town Clerk by 3rd July.

14. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2023/24

The Chairman referred to Appendix 5, being the Financial Statements for the Year ended 31st March 2024, which was noted by members. The Town Clerk went through the Financial Statements page by page highlighting salient matters as well as noting minor changes.

There was discussion about reserves, and in particular the £5,000 PJ Kain Legacy which has been held for a while. The Chairman suggested that this be put towards a community project which is being undertaken by the Town Council for the benefit of the town, rather than by any particular group. Cllr G Blunden suggested that it should be referred to the Amenities Committee and the Town Clerk suggested that a plaque could highlight where the money for the chosen project had come from in appreciation of the legacy.



It was then:

RECOMMENDED:

That the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 be ENDORSED for Town Council approval.

15. **ANNUAL RETURN 2023/24**

The Chairman referred to Appendix 6, Annual Return, which was noted by Members. This will be presented to the Town Council meeting on 24th June 2024 for final approval.

It was:

RECOMMENDED: Annual Return 2023-24 be ENDORSED for Town Council approval.

16. **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOR 2023/24**

The Chairman referred to the Internal Audit Report. The Town Clerk advised that the internal audit had been postponed and will take place later this week, with the report to follow before Town Council. He also advised of some matters raised by the External Auditor, as follows:

- We need to officially confirm Auditing Solutions reappointment and consider the scope of their work following annual review and information received. The Town Clerk said we do not officially reappoint Internal Audit every year, nor solicitors, insurers and accountants. It's an ongoing process, subject to continuous appraisal.
- Additionally, External Auditors BDO have asked us to "confirm that internal audit does not undertake tasks or give advice which may compromise or fetter their independence or invalidate the smaller authority's insurance". The Internal Audit Work Program was issued in 2022 and reviewed during COVID when a lot of audit work was undertaken on-line. Sometimes Internal Audit looks at operational matters.
- External Auditors (BDO) also require confirmation each year that there are "no conflicts of interest between New Milton Town Council and BDO LLP" asking us to "Please ensure this is discussed at a meeting and minuted and evidenced on the form" provided for this purpose. The form is to be signed by the Town Clerk and the Chairman of the Council. As far as we are aware, there are no conflicts of interest between NMTC and BDO LLP, and this will be confirmed at Town Council.

The Chairman asked when the auditors had last been confirmed. Town Clerk advised that this was in 2021/22, his view is that the relationship is ongoing like solicitors or insurers, and it does not need to be confirmed annually. The Chairman suggested that perhaps they could be reconfirmed at the next F&GP meeting.

17. **CHAIRMAN'S UPDATES**

The Chairman advised that he has now raised over £5,500 for Oakhaven following his walk in Spain and the Oakhaven walk. The Just Giving page remains open for any last-minute donations.



18. NEXT MEETING - **Monday 22 July 2024** at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, New Milton.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending, and closed the meeting at 7.20pm.

PRIVATE SESSION

PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS OT MEETINGS) ACT 1960

The Chairman moved that the 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 grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reasons of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted:

19. COUNCIL AWARDS

Members discussed policies and agreed to further discuss at the next Town Council meeting.

CHAIRMAN _____ DATE _____

Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
9b)	Natural England Survey	ASAP	Town Clerk
10a)	Fireguard Services info	ASAP	Town Clerk
10b)	Greenlock Electrical info	ASAP	Town Clerk
10c)	Groundwork UK info	ASAP	Town Clerk
10d)	Travis Perkins info	ASAP	Town Clerk
13	Standing Orders/Financial Regs	03.07.24	Asst Town Clerk
14	Financial Statements	24.06.24	Town Council
15	Annual Return (AGAR)	24.06.24	Town Council
16	Internal Audit Report	24.06.24	Town Council
19	Council Awards	24.06.24	Town Council

Distribution:

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