

Extract of 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

Councillors: 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

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.

Rec. No.	Recommendations	Response
Review of Accounting Records & Bank Reconciliations		
R1	The Clerk/RFO should liaise with DCK Accounting Services on this matter and work towards resolving this discrepancy.	R1 DCK having reviewed opening/closing balances, checking both sets of figures, they all Matched confirming Quilter Cheviot fig. £262,848.41. DCK believe auditors were checking the figure against the Omega <i>post close down</i> but before the production of the final year end accounts. Apparently, the Omega data was updated in June 2024 with the investment and fixed asset movements to 31 March 2024.
Review of Assessment & Management of Risk		
R2	The Clerk/RFO is advised to ensure that the Council's Risk Register portfolio is reviewed and readopted during the 2024-25 financial year.	R2 The Risk Assessments for 2024-25 previously reviewed on 25 March 2024 will be reviewed, re-adopted and Endorsed by F&GP on 10.12.24.
Review of Investments & Loans		
R3	The Clerk/RFO and Members should continuously review its current investment with Quilter Cheviot, and its other investments, to ensure that, as far as is practicably possible, that the risk of loss due to poorly performing and/or high-risk investments is mitigated to the extent that this is possible.	R3 Regards investments, the Quilter Cheviot portfolio recorded a 12.1% growth over the 12 months to 28 June 2024 now valued at £262,848. The Average Fund Yield of the CCLA (Charities, Churches & Local Authorities) for the 6-month period to 30 June 2024 was just over 5% pa.
R4	<p>Where the Clerk/RFO and Members are caused to debate the Council's Investment Strategy, and the investment of public funds within financial institutions, it is imperative that all parties declare a 'Prejudicial and Pecuniary' interest if either they themselves, or members of their immediate family, or business associates are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Employed by any financial advisory service or funds management organisation; and, b) hold an investment from a financial institution providing existing or proposed financial investment services to the Council. <p>This interest MUST be recorded in the Declarations of Interest section of the Minutes, and in such circumstances, we strongly recommend that any affected Officer or Member recuse themselves from related debate and vote. This is to ensure total transparency relating to the management of public funds and to ensure that all parties are protected from unwarranted accusations of impropriety.</p>	R4 Noted

TOWN COUNCIL

06.01.25

RISK ASSESSMENTS 2024-25

The Town Council uses an updated version of Local Council Risk Assessment (LCRS) software program that was originally installed to help identify and address a small number of potential risks.

The program now covers up to 50 risk areas from allotments to websites identifying 300+ potential risks facing local councils. Some risk areas such as burial grounds and cemeteries do not apply to New Milton and are discounted. For 2024-25, over 50 risks are identified.

This latest Risk Assessment review was undertaken by the Town Clerk/ Estates Manager. The likelihood of each risk arising and the impact on the Council were considered in turn. If the likelihood was low it scored 1 medium 2, high 3. If the impact was low it scored 1, medium 2, high 3.

By way of exception reporting 28 main risk areas are highlighted below:

1. Allotments – Covering inspection of 5 allotment sites & over 100 plots.
2. Bonfires – Public safety, control of numbers attending events via SAG.
3. Bonfires – Ensure adequate Risk Assessments & Insurances in place.
4. Bus Shelters – Ensure cleanliness plus ongoing repair & maintenance.
5. Bus Shelters – Complete replacement programme nearing completion.
6. Car Parks – Reduce fly-tipping / ensure safety NMTC gravel car parks.
7. Commons – Ensure safe grazing, maintaining security of open access.
8. Computing - Homeworking protocol introduced as & when appropriate.
9. Data Protection –GDPR compliance / ongoing system security checks.
10. Flooding – Minimise risk, work with Environment Agency NFDC / NPA.
11. Staffing - Resource maintained via TDM, YSM and new youth workers.
12. Governance – General Power of Competence (GPC) is being retained.
13. Land – Protect all Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).
14. Land – Long Meadow proper also has Village Green status protection.
15. Meetings - Duty to hold all meetings in a safe and secure environment.
16. Recs – Reporting ASB / vandalism via New Forest Safety Partnership.
17. MUGA / Rec areas – Ensure adequate security measures are in place.
18. Play Areas – Ensure adequate and regular inspections are carried out.
19. Community Facilities – Plan / provide new youth / family HUB facilities.
20. Skatepark – A Multi-agency approach / CCTV to tackle ASB problems.
21. Insurance – Ensure all assets and potential risks have adequate cover.
22. Car Boots – Employ Supervisor to oversee risk on behalf of operators.
23. Investments – Monitor and review Quilter Cheviot investment of £250k.
24. Youth Club – Ensure continuation of weekly youth service on the Rec.
25. Succession Planning – Plans are in hand for key members of the staff.
26. Town Development Manager – Admin of Neighbourhood Plan review.
27. Youth Services Manager – Remit includes running Ashley Youth Club.
28. Public Events - Continue to support community events where possible.

RECOMMENDED:

Town Council re-adopts the Risk Assessments for 2024-2025.

NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2025

Month & Year	Town Council	Amenities Committee	F & GP Committee	Planning Committee
	Monday	Monday	Monday	Alternate Thursdays
January 2025	6	20	-	16 & 30
February 2025	17	-	3	11 (Tue) & 25 (Tue)
March 2025	31	3	17	13 & 25 (Tue)
April 2025	-	7	28	8 (Tue) & 24
May 2025 08 VE Day (80 th)	13 Annual Meeting 07 (Wed) Town's	27	-	6 (Tue) & 22
June 2025	23	-	9	5 & 17 (Tue)
July 2025 10 Indian Obelisk	-	7	21	3, 17 & 31
August 2025 23 WWII Clock	5	-	-	14 & 28
September 2025 02 VJ Day (80 th)	29	1	16	9 (Tue) & 25
October 2025 20 Annual Allots	-	14	27	7 (Tue) & 23
November 2025 9 Remembrance	10	24	-	6 & 18 (Tue)
December 2025 6 Carol Service	-	-	8	4 & 18

**All meetings are normally held at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, 2 Ashley Road, BH25 6AS
Members of the Public are welcome to attend any meeting and may speak as follows:**

- a) If time permits, Town Council meetings will be adjourned at the end for a '**DEMOCRATIC HALF HOUR**' during which members of the Public, with the approval of the Chairman, may initiate discussion on matters of community interest and which fall within the responsibility of the Town Council.
- b) Prior to the commencement of other meetings, and at the discretion of the Chairman, a short period of Public Participation may take place. Members of the public may speak on any item(s) appearing on the public agenda, or on any other matter that falls within the Committee's terms of reference.

Annual Assembly (Town's Meeting) - Is a public meeting required by statute to be held between 1 March and 1 June (inclusive) each year. **Note: It is not a Town Council meeting.**

Annual Meeting of the Council - In a year of ordinary elections of parish councillors, the annual meeting shall be held within 14 days of the councillors elected at that election taking office.