

NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 5 AUGUST 2024 AT 6.30PM IN NEW MILTON TOWN HALL

| | | | |
|--------------|---------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Councillors: | p J Adams | | p P Moores |
| | p J Baker | | R Murrow |
| | p G Blunden | p | A D O'Sullivan |
| | p S Clarke | p | R A Reid - Chairman |
| | K Craze | | D Rice-Mundy |
| | p M Craze – Vice Chairman | p | V Schooling |
| | p S Davies | p | M Scott-Johns |
| | p W Davies | p | K Trehorn |
| | p D Hawkins | p | D N Tungate |

In Attendance:

G Flexman - Town Clerk
S Welch – Administrative Officer

J Bean - Committee Administrator

The Chairman welcomed Councillors, Officers, HCC Cllr Fran Carpenter, 10 members of the public and a representative of the press.

32. APOLOGIES

Cllrs B Murrow, D Rice-Mundy and K Craze.

33. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS/MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

The Chairman reported on his engagements for the past six weeks stating that he had been very busy, he then handed over to the Deputy Mayor for her to report on the engagements she had attended on his behalf.

| Date | Mayor's Event |
|-------------|--------------------------------|
| 28/06/2024 | Durlston School Art Exhibition |
| 3/07/2024 | Bowling Club Centenary |
| 10/07/2024 | Indian War Memorial |
| 11/07/2024 | Ballard School Speech Day |
| 12/07/2024 | Durlston School Speech Day |
| 20/07/2024 | Ashley Opening, Youth Hub |
| 25/07/2024 | Mayor Making |
| 04/08/2024 | Afternoon of Music |

Deputy Mayor's Events

| | |
|------------|--|
| 07/07/2024 | Christchurch Service of Thanksgiving |
| 10/07/2024 | Indian War Memorial |
| 18/07/2024 | NMRA Networking Event |
| 20/07/2024 | Ashley Opening Youth Hub |
| 25/07/2024 | Mayor Making |
| 29/07/2024 | Bridgerton Tea Party at Bethel House Care home |

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

35. MINUTES

The Chairman referred to the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 24 June 2024.

It was

RESOLVED:

That Minutes of Town Council Meeting held on 24 June 2024, having been circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The minutes were duly signed.

36. CORRESPONDENCE

The Town Clerk referred to:

a) An email dated 5 August 2024 from Alan Watson as President of the Lions Club:

"I am writing to ask whether the Town Council might like to forego all or part of its revenue from the Lions Club, for the Car Boot Sale which we will be holding on Sunday 1 September 2024.

The Lions Club of New Milton & District will be donating 100% of all the profit from that Car Boot Sale to the BBC's Children in Need Appeal.

If the Council would like to be involved in this way, we will issue a Press Release headlined 'Council and Lions work together for Children in Need' in an advance release announcing the Car Boot Sale and highlighting the visit by Pudsey Bear on 1 September 2024 and also acknowledge in all promotions including an entry on the night in the on-screen credits.

I fully understand costs pressures if you feel this is not possible but hope you might give this idea some thought."

The Chairman suggested this be referred to Amenities, however the next Amenities meeting postdates the car-boot sale. The Town Clerk suggested an Executive Committee meeting could be convened to discuss the matter.

- b) An email sent by the Town Clerk on 5 August 2024 to a local resident who complained how long the Long Meadow play area swings had been closed.

“There was a four week lead in for the hangers when the order was placed, I spoke to Vita Play towards the end of last week and they are expected imminently, Vita will fit them and put up the swings as soon as they arrive.

We are all doing our very best to ensure we get the equipment up and running again but once again we are in the hands of a third party, having said that we will have them back up or the bulk of the summer holidays.”

- c) An email from Southern Gas Network (SGN) dated 19 July 2024 as below:

“Due to ongoing leakage, we need to replace the section of gas main between the cattle grid (near Rising Sun pub end) to approximately the junction of Ossemsley South Drive.

This work needs to be completed before the winter months when the pressure for gas increases in the network. We’re planning to complete these works in early September.

Option 1 – a full road closure with a duration of 8 to 10 weeks – this is SGN’s preferred option and considered safest, particularly for residents along Bashley Common Road as access in and out of properties would be much safer. SGN will maintain access to all properties, liaising with resident directly. They can reduce the timeframe as working on longer sections of road.

Option 2 – traffic lights with an approximate duration of 16 weeks – SGN state that this would take significantly longer as they can only work in shorter sections due to distance of traffic light heads and engineering adaptations that would delay progress. They would also have a safety issue for the many properties needing to access in and out of their properties, with no view of changing light heads particularly a problem at night.”

The Town Clerk advised this matter had been discussed at short notice under correspondence at the Executive Committee meeting held on 19 July 2024.

The Chairman brought forward Agenda item 8d) – Executive Committee Minutes - to allow further discussion on this matter.

37. COMMITTEE REPORTS – Executive Committee

The Vice-Chairman of the Town Council, Cllr M Craze submitted Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 19 July 2024 and moved their adoption.

It was

RESOLVED:

That minutes 1 to 10 inclusive of the Executive Committee meeting held on 19 July 2024 be received, with the exception of Minute 6d) which was noted.

The Chairman then went out of session at 6.43pm to allow members of the public to give their views on the two options and mentioned a possible third option of making the street one way while the work is carried out.

Several members of the public who own businesses along Bashley Common Road spoke about the devastating effect closing the road would have on their businesses as there would not be any passing custom and it would make it difficult for customers to visit their premises. They would go elsewhere. Some advised that they have a lot of money tied up in seasonal stock, and that it cannot be returned. There was also the issue of large vehicles needing access, to make deliveries for instance. There was concern that this notification had come quite late given that the work is due to start in September, and that previous short road closures had gone on for longer than expected, and that the businesses had lost substantial sums of money.

The Chairman went back into session at 6.50pm to seek the views of the members.

Cllr J Adams thanked the members of the public for attending and for providing their views. He felt that the only answer is for there to be traffic lights.

All Councillors provided their comments. The unanimous view was that on the basis of the information provided, in order to support local businesses, there should be traffic lights rather than a full road closure.

Cllr S Clarke spoke for many when he said that he was disappointed by the late notice and the lack of detail, for instance, there is no map to show the precise position of the gas main, so it is not possible to judge the feasibility of either of the two options.

Cllr W Davies opined the gas company itself may not know the precise position of the gas main.

In regard to Executive Committee Minute 6d) and following a vote, it was unanimously

RECOMMENDED:

That Option 2 be supported – traffic lights with a duration of approx. 16 weeks.

This will be communicated to HCC who will make the decision, and also to SGN who would be carrying out the work.

38. QUESTIONS

None.

39. REPORTS BY COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Cllr Fran Carpenter advised that Cllr Keith Mans, Chairman of HCC, is the County Council member for Bashley and that any approach to the County Council regarding Bashley Common Road should be copied to him.

Fran advised that there was nothing specific to report from HCC, but that Nick Adams-King, the new Leader of HCC, is focussing once again on devolution. Her view is that things are likely to remain the same.

Cllr Carpenter advised that Children's Services had received an "outstanding" rating from Ofsted, and that this is the second time in a row. There are many summer activities across Hampshire for parents, children, and grandchildren.

Cllr Carpenter has a new role as Vice-Chair of the Fire Service and has seen a huge amount of good work from the Prince's Trust and has been attending Passing out Parades, saying it had been inspiring.

In response to a question from Cllr John Adams, Cllr Carpenter stated that the Fire Service and the Police Service have been asked to share facilities, and Donna Jones is keen on this from a police perspective, noting there is no plan to amalgamate, just to share facilities.

Cllr Carpenter also advised that she had been very pleased to provide grants to New Milton Dementia Allotment and the Ashley Youth Hub recently.

Cllr S Davies, Cllr G Blunden, Cllr S Clarke, Cllr D N Tungate and Cllr A O' Sullivan had nothing to report at this meeting, but all expect to provide a more detailed update after the August holiday period at the next Town Council meeting on 30 September.

40. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Planning Committee

Cllr S Clarke, Chairman of the Planning Committee, submitted the minutes of the Committee meetings held on 2 and 18 July 2024 and moved their adoption.

RESOLVED:

That Minutes 34 to 53 inclusive of the meetings held on 2 and 18 July 2024 be received.

b) Amenities Committee

Cllr G Blunden, Chairman of the Amenities Committee submitted Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 9 July 2024 and moved their adoption.

RESOLVED:

That Minutes 19 to 34 inclusive of the meeting held on 9 July 2024 be received.

c) Finance & General Purposes Committee

Cllr D N Tungate, Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee submitted Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 22 July 2024 and moved their adoption.

RESOLVED:

That minutes 1 to 19 inclusive of the meeting held on 22 July 2024 be received.

41. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The Schedule of Payments, previously endorsed by F&GP, was submitted for Council approval. It was unanimously,

RESOLVED:

That the Schedule of Payments No 02/24/25 in the sum of £275,395.75 for the period 1 May – 30 June 2024 be approved.

The Schedule of Payments was duly signed by the Chair, Vice Chair & Town Clerk.

42. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS SERVING ON EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- a) Cllr A O' Sullivan reported that the Forest Arts Centre continues to do well.
- b) Cllr M Craze reported that the Friends of the Indian Soldiers' Memorial are now under the umbrella of the Heritage Society, noting Joanna recently stepped back. Sue Larking and Nick Saunders will be running it in future with some council input.

43. TOWN DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

The Chairman referred to Appendix 3 - Town Development Manager's Report dated 5 August 2024 which was noted.

Cllr S Clarke provided a further update on the Neighbourhood Plan as he and the TDM had attended a meeting with the Neighbourhood Plan consultant Andrew Mills, NFDC.

Following the change in government there is likely to be an increase to the Housing Allocation in the area, and we are reviewing potential development sites.

Cllr S Davies referred to a doubling of new homes target to 1,465 per annum for the district, up from 729 per annum at present.

Cllr V Schooling referred to the recent A&T article about firms quitting Station Road because of high rents / low footfall. The Town Clerk highlighted the TDM's responses in the attached press article that he referred to as 'scaremongering'.

Cllr A O'Sullivan referred to a meeting with the Heritage Society that the TDM attended in her own time, to discuss future opportunities at the railway station.

44. STANDING ORDER REVIEW

The Town Clerk confirmed that following a request for comments on Standing Orders only one response had been received. Cllr J Adams had asked for further explanation under Standing Order 23 which has now been clarified. It was then

RESOLVED: *That the revised version 18 of Standing Orders be approved.*

45. NEXT MEETING: *Monday 30 September 2024 at 6.30pm – Town Hall, New Milton.*

The Chairman closed the public session of the meeting at 7.25pm prior to the private session.

PRIVATE SESSION**PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO 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 (Admission 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:

46. HCC PENSION SCHEME

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 3 which sets out proposals for dealing with discretions relating to the Pension Scheme, noting Hampshire Pension Services had emailed on 13 May 2024 as follows:

“It has come to our attention that we may hold an old Discretions Policy on file for New Milton Town Council which was signed on 30/06/2014.

The LGPS Regulations require that all employer in the LGPS must publish a written Discretions Policy document, setting out what decisions they will make under LGPS regulations where they have discretion to do so.

This should then be reviewed every 3 years, and a newly signed Policy will then need to be sent through to us as a replacement.”

The Town Clerk then referred to the one-page Summary of Pension Scheme Discretions and invited members comments. His view being that NMTC would not offer any discretion as standard, but F&GP could consider it on a case-by-case basis.

Following some further discussion, the proposed responses were agreed by members.

It was

RESOLVED: That the latest version of Employer Pension Discretions be adopted.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and officially closed the meeting at 7.40pm.

Chairman _____ Date _____

Distribution:

Town Councillors

District Councillors J L Cleary, C Ward

County Councillors M Kendal, F Carpenter, K Mans

New Milton Police

Press

Alan Watson – NewMilton.net

Sue Larking - NMRA

Mark Jeffries – Estates & Facilities Manager

Editor - Focus