



Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of New Milton Town Council held on Monday 09 June 2025 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
G R Blunden p R Maynard
S J Clarke p R A Reid
p M Scott-Johns

In Attendance:

Officers: Graham Flexman - Town Clerk
Sam Welch – Administration Officer
Louise Beardmore – Youth Services Manager

The Chairman welcomed Councillors and Officers.

4. APOLOGIES

Cllr G R Blunden
Cllr S J Clarke

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

7. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meetings held on Monday 28 April & 13 May 2025, as 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 reported that all Action Points from the previous meeting had been addressed. Regarding Vodafone charges, it was noted that 5 unused phones would have their contracts terminated.

9. CORRESPONDENCE

The Town Clerk referred to the following items of correspondence:

- a) An email received from New Forest District Council regarding a social media toolkit for the new waste collection service. The toolkit is intended for town and parish councils and dealing with residents in the Phase 1 area.
- b) An email from NFDC regarding a Consultation outcome from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government regarding proposed Remote attendance and proxy voting in local authorities. The conclusion was that:

“The government is of the view that in-person authority meetings remain vital for local democracy, but that hybrid and remote attendance, and proxy voting, will enable local authorities in England to develop more modern, accessible, and flexible working practices.

We have carefully considered arguments for and against remote attendance and proxy voting, and we plan to legislate to support permanent provision in relation to both policies, when parliamentary time allows.

On remote attendance, we plan to permit local authorities to develop their own locally appropriate policies, if they decide to hold remote meetings.

On proxy voting, we plan to require principal (unitary, upper and second-tier) councils to implement proxy voting schemes, to provide consistency for members who are absent when they become a new parent, or for serious or long-term illness. We plan for this requirement to apply to meetings of full council. For all other meetings, proxy voting may be used but will not be required, and substitute or pairing schemes may be more appropriate. We plan for other local authorities not listed above to be enabled but not required to implement proxy voting schemes, for any of their meetings, in the context of member absences for serious or long-term illness or becoming a new parent.”

The Town Clerk responded to the email seeking clarification over the sentence **“On proxy voting, we plan to require principal (unitary, upper and second-tier) councils to implement proxy voting schemes”**- specifically, whether this would apply to local councils (towns and parishes) in addition to local authorities.

The response received clarified that, regarding the **“proxy voting point, the word “principal councils” is used, which would not include Town Councils, including New Milton.”**

One member questioned who would become the principal council if plans for devolution were implemented and NFDC were removed as the second tier. To be advised.

- c) A thank you letter received from The Honeypot Children’s Charity following grant money received totalling £1,500 with them saying **“The total grant of £1,500 is enough to provide a 3 day/ 2 night residential respite break at Honeypot House for three young carers. These children are often taking on the role of the adult at home and cooking or preparing meals. So, sitting down for meals that have been prepared for them whilst on a Honeypot break is a real respite for many of these children.”**

10. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 1 - Schedule of Payments for the period from 01-30 April 2025 in the sum of £155,455.28. The Town Clerk highlighted the following items over £1,000.

Honeypot Children's Charity	Further Grant aid payment as previously agreed at F&GP	£1,000.00
Zurich	Insurance & Inspection contract 01/04/2025 – 31/03/2026	£21,335.66
Barrie King	General works site wide – Contractor	£1,050.00
Chirstchurch Garden Machinery	Annual services & maintenance for Estates machinery	£1,813.88
John Shutler	Tree works- 2x crown lift 1x felling	£1,266.30
Juice	Poster design + website design & development	£1,296.00
Keffen Plant Hire	Recreation Ground preparation & footpath resurfacing - CAPEX	£35,508.00
Lamps & Tubes	Annual Town bunting supply & installation, including cherry picker and new wire/ brackets	£4,550.81
rCOH	Consulting on the Neighbourhood Plan Feb/ March 2025	£4,389.00
Rejuvenate	Provision of managed services and all IT support, telephones & new laptop (£1,036.76)	£1,928.66
Rialtas	Accounting software, support & maintenance for 1 year	£1,220.40
HCC (Hants LGPS)	Pension Contributions – February 2025	£12,816.10
HMRC Cumbernauld	Tax and NIC – February 2025	£14,212.97
Barrie King	General works site wide – Contractor (final invoice)	£1,050.00
Staff/Members	Salaries and Expenses – April 2025	£40,415.04
Lombard	Vehicle leasing, DY20HTT, DX67UYD, BC21NLU, BV71ZJZ, BW21NYH – April 2025	£2,373.48

Councillors queried the following items:

A payment of £660 to Abbas Cabins Ltd was queried by a member, who sought clarification on whether this amount was recouped from the Lions Club or if it was additional to the grant they received. The Town Clerk clarified that this payment was additional and had been approved at a previous amenities committee meeting.

Regarding a payment to Lombard for vehicle leasing, it was inquired whether the oldest vehicle had now been replaced, with the Town Clerk confirming it was. The Chairman suggested considering the idea of purchasing aging vehicles outright. To be advised, noting they are leased on contract hire terms, not hire purchase.

RECOMMENDED: That the Schedule of Payments for the period 01-30 April 2025 in the sum of £155,455.28 be ENDORSED for Town Council approval.

11. LATEST ACCOUNTS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 2 - Monthly Accounts for April. Highlighting savings in Wages (£1,695), Tree Work (£1,120), Vehicle Maintenance (£1,393) and Fuel (£1,289), the Town Clerk reported Amenities is currently £5,000 under budget, noting that Open Spaces is £5,000 over budget due to contractor costs, but this will change once the contractor is salaried. F&GP is under budget by £1,000. Youth Coordination is currently over budget; the Youth Services Manager clarified that this doesn't reflect HAF funding that has been provided by HCC. Overall, the accounts show a total saving of £6,000 to the end of April.

12. YOUTH REPORT

The Chairman referred to Appendix 3 - Youth Report, which had been circulated previously. The Youth Services Manager guided members through the report, highlighting a positive increase in girl participation, an area she had specifically worked to improve.

A question was raised about staffing and support for the day to day running of the youth club. The Youth Services Manager explained that, in addition to herself, she has one part-time employee and several volunteers. She also receives significant support from the sports coach at South Coast Sports Academy and from Stacey Miller Consultancy.

When asked whether the children attending the club were predominantly from Ashley, she clarified that the youth come from all over New Milton.

A member inquired about safeguarding practices in cases where there might be concerns about a child's welfare. The Youth Services Manager responded that any suspected issues are reported to the relevant authorities, and the child is kept informed and supported throughout the process.

Following a question regarding financials, she explained that much of the funding comes from external sources and that she is satisfied with the current budget.

All members expressed their satisfaction with the contents of the report and the quality of services being provided.

13. PRECEPTS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 4, listing the top national precepts for 2025-26. The Town Clerk highlighted that there are around 10,000 parishes in the UK. New Milton has moved up to 65th place, an increase from last year's position of 69. The Chairman noted it was interesting to see New Milton among other widely recognisable names.



14. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2024/25

The Chairman referred to Appendix 5, being the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2025, which was noted by members. The Town Clerk went through the Financial Statements page by page, highlighting salient matters and noting some minor changes required. A revised version, correcting a few identified errors, will be circulated for the Town Council at the next meeting being held on 23rd June 2025.

One member asked about the components of Promotion and Marketing for the area, as shown on page 12, and the Town Clerk would enquire of our accountants.

It was:

RECOMMENDED: That Financial Statements be ENDORSED for Town Council approval

15. ANNUAL RETURN FOR 2024/25

The Chairman referred to Appendix 6, Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR), which was duly noted by Members. The document will be presented to Town Council for final approval at its meeting on 23rd June 2025, at which pages 4 and 5 of the document will be signed off by the Chair & Clerk. The Internal auditor is due to attend on 19th and 20th June, for final audit, and sign off page 3.

External Audit BDO acting on behalf of the Government will sign page 6 by September.

It was:

RECOMMENDED: Annual Return 2024/25 be ENDORSED for Town Council approval

16. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2024-25

The Chairman referred to the Interim Internal Audit Report, the Town Clerk explaining that any changes to the report, along with the final figures, will be distributed at the Town Council meeting on 23rd June 2025 following the final audit on 19th & 20th June 2025. Noted.

17. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATES

None.



18. NEXT MEETING **MONDAY 21 JULY 2025** at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, New Milton.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7:46pm.

CHAIRMAN _____ DATE _____

Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
9a)	Social Media Toolkit	On-going	Comms Officer
9b)	Proxy Voting Proposal	On-going	Councillors
9c)	Honeypot Children's Charity	On-going	Youth Services Manager
10.	Schedule of Payments	23.06.25	Town Council
14.	Financial Statements	23.06.25	Town Council
15.	Annual Return (AGAR)	23.06.25	Town Council
16.	Internal Audit Report	23.06.25	Town Council

Distribution:

Town Councillors

District Councillors J L Cleary

County Councillors M Kendal, F Carpenter and K Mans

Officers

New Milton Police

Press

Editor - Focus

Sue Larking – NMRA