

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Amenities Committee of New Milton Town Council held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at 6.30pm at the Town Hall, Ashley Road, New Milton, BH25 6AS.**

Chairman:           p G R Blunden (Chair)                   M Craze (Vice Chair)

Councillors:       p D Hawkins                                   R Murrow

                          p J Baker                                   p A D O’Sullivan

                          p D Rice-Mundy                       V Schooling

                          K Trehorn

In attendance:

Councillors: D N Tungate and S J Clarke

Officers:       G Flexman - Town Clerk  
                  T Elliott – Assistant Town Clerk  
                  M Jeffries - Estates and Facilities Manager  
                  S Welch – Administration Officer

The Chairman welcomed Councillors, Officers and Jill Colclough from NFDC to the meeting, together with a member of the press.

49. APOLOGIES

Cllr M Craze, Cllr R Murrow, Cllr V Schooling and Cllr K Trehorn

50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - None

51. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

52. MINUTES

The Chairman referred to the previous Committee minutes of 02 September 2024.

**RESOLVED:**

***That the Minutes of the meeting held on 02 September 2024, previously circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.***

The minutes were duly signed.

53. MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman reviewed the action points from the previous committee meeting. The Town Clerk confirmed that all action points had been addressed, including the removal of 'Youth Trust' from the youth work group project heading.

Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
37	Licensing query - Lions Club	ASAP	Assistant Town Clerk
41a)	Land Use – Lions Club Car Boots 2025	ASAP	Comms Officer
41b)	Land Use – Firefly Festivals Music Festival 2025	ASAP	Comms Officer
42	Working Parties Amended	Attached	Town Clerk
43a)	Project Groups Amended	Attached	Town Clerk
43b)	Review Youth Project Group	17.09.25	F&GP
47	Station Road benches	On-going	Estates Manager

54. CORRESPONDENCE

- a) An email was received from Mandy Hayes of Friends of New Milton Station, noting that the group is active with posters and flowerpots placed around the station.

**[Post Meeting Note: New Milton Station was awarded a Silver Gilt at the Stations in Bloom awards ceremony held at Castle Gardens, Sherborne on the 16th October 2024. It was a joint effort between the Friends of New Milton Station and the Town Council. The judging and awards are in recognition of all staff and volunteers for nurturing stations across the network and is organised by Stations in Bloom, supported by South-Western Railway (SWR).]**

Next year is Railway 200, and the Friends of New Milton Station are planning joint projects with the New Milton Horticultural Society and participating in the national celebration of 200 years of railways in the UK. Ideas include a mural, and joint events. The Chairman said the Town Council will do what it can to support such joint projects.

Councillor D Hawkins inquired about the status of the Station Master's building.

Councillor A D O'Sullivan responded that Mandy's group has been in communication with a railway trust currently renovating Romsey station with a £1.2m project. The trust is keen to help and contribute to New Milton station. The viability of the building will be investigated, with most of the work led by the Friends of New Milton Station.

The Chairman suggested the Town Council might consider providing a small amount of seed funding.

- b) An email was received from New Forest District Council regarding Free Parking Days. NFDC will provide four days of free parking in 2024 to support local businesses, including on Small Business Saturday (7th December) and the last weekend before Christmas (21st/22nd December). They are also willing to suspend parking charges for a Christmas event on a nominated day provided by New Milton Town Council.

It was unanimously,

**RESOLVED: That Saturday 23 November 2024 Xmas Event be our nominated day for free parking.**

The Town Clerk had informed NFDC accordingly.

- c) An email was received from former Cllr Goff Beck, thanking the Town Council and councillors for the invitation to attend Sammy Miller's Freeman of the Town Ceremony on Wednesday 25 September 2024.

He congratulated all concerned with the organisation of the prestigious event.

- d) An email was received from Inspector Darren Ord of New Forest Police regarding the possibility of a front desk presence at the Town Hall, explaining that it's become an area of difficulty.

The Town Clerk will try and resolve the situation by holding a meeting between interested parties, including Police, Citizens Advice and NFDC. The Chairman expressed hope that all parties can collaborate to make this work.

It was then

**RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk organise a meeting with all interested parties.**

55. LAND USE REQUESTS

A lady named Oot from the local Thai Buddhists has requested use of the old skatepark area on Sunday 20 October 2024 from 1.00 – 2.00pm for an event.

It was,

***RESOLVED: That the Thai Buddhists be permitted use of the old skatepark area on Sunday 20 October 2024 between 1-2pm for a gathering of people.***

56. NEW FOREST CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN (LCWIP)

The Assistant Town Clerk gave a brief summary of Appendix 1 (previously circulated).

Members then discussed the document as follows:

In reference to a plan displayed on screen, the Chairman commented that he preferred the newer plan over the previous one, provided by Transition Lymington which resembled a tube map, as it was easier to understand.

Cllr A O'Sullivan expressed concern about the narrow roads in the forest, noting that it would be challenging to prioritise cyclists, especially with recent cuts to pothole repair funding by Hampshire County Council.

In response, the Assistant Town Clerk explained how the money comes from Active Travel England. Transition Lymington have recently evidenced need for change at Rhinefield, enabling a crossing over the A35, noting that the funding has been earmarked.

Cllr A O'Sullivan asked if there will be enough money. The Assistant Town Clerk responded that funding will be provided from Central Government.

Cllr S Clarke stated that support was necessary, noting that Waterside has already implemented a walking and cycling plan. He emphasised the importance of shared road use and explained how this plan aligns with the Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan, highlighting the need to look at green ways and how they link up around the town.

Cllr Clarke mentioned the aspiration for a complete circular route around the town.

Cllr Clarke noted that significant work is needed to improve the network around the town and parish, with the main drivers being the cycling community but also a lot within the walking community.

Cllr Clarke concluded that this is a worthwhile project to support, funded directly by central government money rather than local taxpayers.

Cllr Tungate stated that the council should welcome any measures that make routes safer. He agreed with the Transition Lymington alternatives (shown on screen) and emphasised that the council should support all efforts.

The Chairman mentioned residents' concerns about the current condition of roads, highlighting potholes as a key issue.

It was then,

**RECOMMENDED:**

- **That NMTC are concerned about the use of direct routes, which tend to be busiest therefore less safe, and the higher costs associated. We support the alternative routes offered by Transition Lymington (Route 3, 5a, 10 and 11) and these are supported in our upcoming Neighbourhood Plan. These quieter routes will encourage novices more readily, and the lesser cost will deliver a whole rather than partial network.**
- **That reopening the public debate around the Station Road/Whitefield/Osborne Road junction is surprising, after years of NMTC being told that all solutions had been investigated and there was insufficient evidence for change.**
- **That there are errors in the LCWIP Consultation Document, as follows:**
  - a) **Page 134 Route 220 as the map doesn't follow the text,**
  - b) **The existing signalled and informal crossings on Station Road and Old Milton Road are not fully represented.**

## 57. BALLARD LAKE

Jill Colclough ran through updates following her previous presentation where comments were made that meant a review of the scheme was needed. She then went through her presentation as shown at Appendix 2.

The Chairman noted how there was no real link to Brook Avenue.

In response, Jill Colclough explained that part of woodland is within the Pond Copse SINC (Site of Importance to Nature Conservation) also known as a Local Wildlife Site and is suffering from the current amount of foot traffic. When the railing is installed, a small gap will allow access to desire lines from a single point, helping to control movement and protect the woodland.

The Chairman queried whether people would follow that route. Jill Colclough responded that the restricted access would leave them with little choice. She empathised the importance of keeping an open boundary around the lake and noted replacement knee height railing around Lake Grove Road.

Jill Colclough then discussed plans for a new seating area where a large weeping willow once stood. She proposed creating a seating area overlooking the lake, with a sense of enclosure at the rear using low-level timber features, grasses, and open-form shrubs like buddleia, along with new waterside planting at the lake's edge.

Jill said they are now debating material choices and seating options and has spoken to the Estates & Facilities Manager regarding seat options. Replacement seats on the southern side would be more akin to traditional seating with the hope for curved seating in a new area. Jill would like to see a community art-based project to create a bespoke seat design for the new seating area, referring to 'Spud Seating'.

Cllr Hawkins expressed concern that the proposed longer curved seat might discourage others from sitting if there are already people at one end. He suggested considering whether the bench could be separated into two benches. In response Jill Colclough explained that the seat should have capacity for 4 or 5 people, and the curved nature of it would encourage such use.

Cllr Clarke expressed his satisfaction with the changes and inquired about linking up the areas as the project progresses. He noted that if connected, one could walk from the top of Brook Avenue almost to the Sammy Miller Motorcycle Museum. He suggested considering Dark Lane to create a loop and asked how these areas could be joined and signposted to form a significant route. Jill responded regarding the linking query that this is likely to be discussed shortly at NDFC.

The Chairman expressed his uncertainty on the new seating area and asked Jill to take another look at that aspect, and she agreed to do so.

58. CRICKET CLUB

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 3 and highlighted queries from the Cricket Club.

Regarding the annual rent, it is comparable to the rents at our other sports facilities and pavilions in the town. He also mentioned that the Town Council would need to retain control of the first aid room, as it may be needed by other users of the facility.

The Chairman mentioned that this seems like really good value and suggested that more benchmarking might be beneficial. The Town Clerk will look at this as part of the ongoing budget exercise when setting Fees & Charges. Cllr Clarke noted that the cricket club should be aware that their level of exclusivity might not be as high as they perceive.

59. ASHLEY FAMILY HUB

The Chairman referred to Appendix 4 Sessions for Young Families and expressed his appreciation for the increased use of the Ashley Family HUB.

The Town Clerk referred to the Youth Services Report and highlighting Youth Hubs' schedule of activities will begin in November, providing a safe space for families with young children to participate in activities, receive advice, and learn about available services. The Chairman stated that next financial year, we may need to adopt a more business-oriented approach and evaluate how we can best support the community.

Cllr Hawkins was pleased the council is continuing what the school started and emphasised that mums need all the support they can get. He thanked the Town Council and the Youth Services Manager for their efforts in maintaining the initiative.

60. GRAZING LICENCES

The Chairman announced that Dexters are now back at Ballard Water Meadow. The ponies at Barton Common were taken off due to fencing issues, but the fencing is due to be upgraded on 4th November. This upgrade, the biggest in 12 years, will include work on the gates and fencing near the golf area. There is also a long-term ambition to introduce cattle grazing on Barton Common, with a grazier in line already.

Cllr Clarke queried whether there is a suitable emergency number in case they escape. In response, the Chairman confirmed that there was, and the Estates & Facilities Manager will ensure this for Barton Common as well.

61. COUNCIL PROJECTS

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 5.

The Chairman explained that this is the first stage to inform members about what is being considered and to provide an idea of what will be reviewed when setting budgets as far as capital expenditure is concerned.

Cllr Hawkins queried the fire doors. The Estates & Facilities Manager responded that this was a statutory requirement and our responsibility as the landlord.

62. CHAIRMAN'S ITEMS

The Chairman reminded everyone about the relaunch of the *Plant A Tree* Initiative and noted that National Tree Week is approaching, from 23rd November to 1st December. He suggested that it would be a nice idea for some members to consider sponsoring a tree.

63. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> November** at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, Ashley Road, New Milton.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.34pm.

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



**SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS**

<b>Minute</b>	<b>Action Points</b>	<b>Action by date</b>	<b>To be actioned by</b>
54b	FOC Parking Xmas Event	15.10.24	Town Clerk / NFDC
54d	Station Enquiry Officer	ASAP	Town Clerk / NFDC
55	Thai Land Use Request	20.10.24	Town Clerk /Buddhists
56	LCWIP Recommendation	04.11.24	Asst Town Clerk
57	Ballard New Seat Details	25.11.24	Jill Colclough NFDC
58	Cricket Club New Lease	25.11.24	Town Clerk/NMCC
60	CAPEX Projects 2025-26	01.11.24	Executive Committee

Distribution:

Town Councillors

Estates & Facilities Manager

District Councillor J L Cleary

County Councillors M Kendal, F Carpenter, and K Mans

New Milton Police

Press

Sue Larking – NMRA