

Minutes of the meeting of the Amenities Committee of New Milton Town Council held on Monday 16 October 2023 at 6.30pm at the Town Hall, Ashley Road, New Milton, BH25 6AS.

Chairman: G R Blunden

Vice-Chairman: M Craze

Councillors: p B Murrow
p J Baker A O' Sullivan
D Rice-Mundy p V Schooling
p D Hawkins

In attendance:

Councillors: J Adams

Officers: G Flexman - Town Clerk
M Jeffries – Estates & Facilities Manager
J Bean – Committee and Civic Administrator
J Hayward – Communications and Community Engagement Officer

The Chairman welcomed Councillors, 3 members of the public, and a representative of the press.

The Town Clerk opened the meeting advising that both the Chairman and the Vice Chairman had given their apologies, and it would therefore be necessary to elect a “Chairman” for this meeting.

Cllr B Murrow proposed that Cllr D Hawkins be elected as Chairman and Cllr V Schooling seconded the proposal. Following a vote, Cllr D Hawkins was unanimously elected as Chairman.

Public Participation

Helen Wallis-Dowling who is chair of New Milton Youth Trust came to speak about the Story Quest event at Ballard Lake taking place from 23rd October. She advised that 1000 copies of the story have been sent to print. The story has been written and illustrated by a local writer in collaboration with children from the Junior Schools. The story is intended to help children with their reading and writing. The year long project launches next Monday between 11am and 2pm. The artist will be there to do a workshop, the youth trust will be running a paint your own fairy door event, there will be a storyteller and representatives of the library.

Alan Watson as a representative of the RNLI and as Vice President of the Lions club of New Milton advised that the RNLI have a meeting next week at which they will debate whether or not they are able to continue to hold car boot sales. The £50 charge for the superintendent is causing financial concerns and means that each of the car boot sales costs £95. The RNLI have calculated that they can raise more from one quiz night than from six car boot sales. The Lions consider that car boot sales are a valuable community asset, but they would not



be able to pick up a further six dates if the RNLI do decide to drop them. He said that he was asking the committee to strongly consider making a quick decision to drop the £50 charge.

Julia Stamper as Chair of the New Milton Community Garden had good news, the Community Garden is going well and although the weather has been against them she is hopeful that the main structures will be in place very soon. She advised that they had been given grants by National Lottery and the Charles Burnett Memorial Trust of £10K each. She thanked Mark and his team and the Town Council for being so supportive and advised that work was going on in the background, both Eaglewood and Arnewood Schools will include the Community Garden as part of their education programme. She invited all Councillors to attend the Community Garden on 21st and 22nd November between 10am and 3pm, to bring a spade and help with planting 420 hedging whips to form a new hedgerow boundary.

55. APOLOGIES

Cllrs G Blunden, M Craze, A O' Sullivan, D Rice-Mundy

56. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

57. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman advised Alan Watson that the Town Council would shortly be considering the annual budget and therefore he would have an answer about the £50 charge as soon as possible.

The Chairman thanked Helen Wallis-Dowling and Julia Stamper for their contributions and updates.

58. MINUTES

The Chairman referred to the previous Committee minutes of 4th September 2023.

It was then

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2023, previously circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The minutes were duly signed.

59. MATTERS ARISING

The Town Clerk confirmed all action points listed had been addressed and/or are up for further discussion at this meeting.

Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
42	Community Garden ops items	16.10.23	Estates Manager
44 c)	BT Openreach phone boxes	16.10.23	Estates Manager
47	Advertise for Ballard Grazier	16.10.23	Town Clerk
48	Carrick Way/Ashington Park woods	ASAP	Jill Colclough, NFDC
49	Street Trading consultation	16.10.23	TDM / Estates Manager
50	Reduce Allotments Waiting List	ASAP	Estates Manager
51	Maintain Col Wheeler's grave	On-going	Green Spaces Team
52	Meet with Police regarding ASB	12.09.23	Town Clerk

a) Minute 44 c)

The Town Clerk advised that the Estates Manager had managed to contact BT and that they are planning to clean the two public phone boxes and then consider whether they will remove one, but that would have to be put out to consultation.

b) Minute 47

The Town Clerk advised that a new grazier had now been found and that 2 dexters were due to be arriving at Ballard Water Meadow this afternoon.

c) Minute 51

The Town Clerk advised that Col Wheeler's grave has now been cleaned.

60. CORRESPONDENCE

The Town Clerk referred to the following:

- a)** A report by the Estates Manager in relation to the impact of Anti-Social behaviour and Travellers costs. The total amount for rectifying damage caused by ASB is £20k and for damage related to the Travellers is £13k. Total £33k from April this year.

The Estates Manager drew attention to the impact on the team. Time spent clearing up from ASB put programmes back and takes up a lot of time.

The Chairman commented that this money comes out of the budget which is provided by the residents of New Milton. The meeting with the police is coming up on 27th October. The Chairman felt we are not currently getting what we need from the police.

Cllr V Schooling stated that the figure is shocking. We need more support from the police.

Cllr J Baker observed that at a recent meeting the police sergeant advised he is shared 50/50 between Lymington and New Milton. She said that given the difference in the population sizes of the towns with New Milton being larger, this is very likely to be an unfair division.

- b) An email from Chris Clarke of Lions Club of New Milton, as follows:

“We are well into our formal planning for our next big event as above. And the subject of Additional Toilet Provision has once again been raised for consideration. You will appreciate this event will not involve the Recreation Ground. However we decided to raise this need with the Town Council to see if we can obtain support for, or towards the costing of additional toilets.”

The Chairman stated that the toilets on the Recreation Ground are the responsibility of NFDC and that if they are all working there should not be a problem, therefore contact would be made with NFDC to request that they check on them.

- c) A second email from Lions Club, this time from Alan Watson as follows:

“The Lions Club of New Milton would like to donate a Bench for the Recreation Ground in New Milton, which would act as a Memorial Bench for those Lions who have passed away. We would like to use the New Milton Recreation Ground as this has been and always will be the location of many events organised by the Lions Club. The bench we would like to be wooden and of high quality, will have a small plaque, along the back top rail for any Lions to be remembered. “

The Estates Manager had given a response advising on the Bench policy adopted in 2017 and now advised the Committee that the Bench policy was streamlined and that only memorial type metal benches were now used on the Recreation Ground.

- d) An email from Brian Byrne in relation to CCTV addressed to the Town Clerk and Mayor.

The email asked if the Town wishes to proceed with camera installations in the town. And based on the contributions of £734 pa per camera what would be the maximum number? The Town Clerk confirmed they had advised two additional cameras be deployed at Ashley Recreation Ground.

Following further discussion and a vote.

It was,

RECOMMENDED: That further CCTV cameras be installed in the town, as required.

- e) An email from a local resident as follows:

“Just to let you know that the Caird Avenue broad-leaved helleborines have all finished setting seed, so that area can now be safely cleared up by strimming, as we spoke about previously. Many thanks once again for your help and that of the estates workforce in helping to safeguard these beautiful wild orchids. With the summer weather conditions also having been perfect for them to thrive, they’ve had their best year ever!”

f) An email from Nick Adams-King at Hampshire County Council addressed to all town and parish councils. The email provided two template letters to be sent to residents regarding flooding / drainage problems and overgrown hedges / trees as required.

g) An email from NFDC relating to the availability of £1m CIL funds for local projects.

h) An email from SWR advising that:

“As today is **Restart a Heart Day**, SWR has now installed publicly accessible defibrillators at all of our staffed stations”.

The Town Clerk confirmed that at the moment, this includes New Milton.

i) An email from NFDC in relation to some trees on Barton Common, stating a local resident had requested TPO's be placed on them, having heard the Town Council was planning to cut down some trees. NFDC will clarify that the trees are in fact classed as scrub. The Town Clerk also read a response from the Assistant Town Clerk who advised that some trees are to come out as part of the Town Council's HLS agreement with Natural England.

Cllrs Hawkins and Schooling expressed concern at the general loss of trees.

61. LAND USE REQUESTS

a) A request from Tom Rothwell of **New Life Church** to use the Recreation Ground on Saturday 16th December for a nativity activity trail, with hot drinks and mince pies for all following some carol singing on the High Street.

RESOLVED: Agreed, subject to our usual terms and conditions of use.

b) A request from **Power On** utility company for an easement for electricity across a small section of land at the corner of Brook Avenue / Fernhill Lane, in respect of a proposed development by New Milton Extra Care Hampshire, called Wooldridge View.

This new development off Fernhill Lane along Violet Lane requires high voltage connection point at a location along Brook Avenue. Wooldridge View, located in the Forest Pines area of New Milton, is a new independent living scheme within New Milton.

It was

RESOLVED: That an easement for electricity be agreed, subject to our usual terms and conditions of use, providing the land is made good to NMTC's satisfaction.

c) A request from **New Milton Rugby Club** to place advertising on the new Gabions at the Rugby Club. The request enclosed a pictorial representation of their proposed location. After some discussion, and a vote, it was unanimously:

RESOLVED: That the application from New Milton Rugby Club be declined.

Advertising can be installed around the balcony area it was noted.

62. GRAZING UPDATE

The Estates Manager confirmed that a new grazier has now been found for Ballard Water Meadow and two Dexters, Dexter and Jasper are due to be taking up residence very shortly. He said the grazier called Ollie and is well respected having been recommended by NFLAS.

63. CARRICK WAY/ASHINGTON PARK

The Estates Manager advised that the main infrastructure has been completed at Ashington Park, the area has been tidied up, tree management greatly improved, with new pathways.

The Town Clerk referred to some correspondence between NMTC and NFDC arising from the approach of a local resident who is concerned about steep steps from the land adjacent to Tesco.

The informal steps down are Tesco's responsibility and are used as an unofficial shortcut.

64. STREET TRADING

The Town Clerk advised that the Town Development Manager has drawn up some questions for businesses and the public. He noted some interesting statistics from a recent NABMA report called "An Elected Member Guide to Markets", that was distributed to Councillors at the meeting. The results of a survey carried out by NABMA show that there is a general decline in the market industry, noting that nationally:

- ***"Stall occupancy is down from 77% to 72%.***
- ***The number of traders is around 32,000 and falling.***
- ***Only 8% of traders are under 40 years of age.***
- ***Only 40% of markets have an annual financial surplus.***
- ***Only 13% can record footfall."***

The Town Clerk then referred to a letter from NABMA dated May 2018 after they assisted the Town Council in an appeal against assessment for business rates in respect of street trading legislation. He quoted the following from the letter:

"Whilst the Valuation Office has not indicated why it agrees, I think that one can draw from this a number of general principles. In particular, that street trading on the public highway should not warrant rating assessment provided:

- ***There is no third-party intermediary who is acting as agent on behalf of the council.***
- ***If there is any such agent, that there should be no rent paid by that agent to the council.***
- ***That the stalls are portable and in the ownership of the street traders.***
- ***That the actions of the Council at all times sit within the statutory scheme, and that it is transparently clear that they are doing no more than administering in accordance with the terms of the legislation Part III of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982.***



- ***That whilst the council may collect a rent form the street traders the level of chargin and the sums collected must do no more than cover the council's administrative costs."***

The Chairman stated that this should help the Working Party to come to a decision. It seems clear that we must run the market ourselves for the benefit of the town. Once the feedback from the questionnaires has been received the Working Party can meet to consider the way ahead.

65. SHARED PROSPERITY FUND

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 1 an email from Patricia Salami, Interim Programme Manager at NFDC advising that the District Council has allocated £15K as part of its Levelling Up fund from Govt. to New Milton.

The Town Clerk then referred to the other document at Appendix 1 the proposal prepared by the Estates Manager for the regeneration of Ashley Parade and the surrounding area the total cost would be £30K and this would be made up of the £15K from the Levelling up Fund and £15K of CIL monies.

The Estates Manager said that there may be some legal issues as 90% of the forecourt is privately owned, but it will be a worthwhile project which the Council has been keen to implement for a while now. Cllr V Schooling thanked the Estates Manager for his report and was very happy that plans are afoot to bring Ashley Parade back into the fold after so many years of neglect.

Following a vote, it was

RECOMMENDED:

That the regeneration of Ashley Parade in the sum of £30k overall should be endorsed by F&GP and referred to the next Town Council meeting for approval.

66. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 2 Information about CIL from NFDC which had previously been circulated. The document advises that the District Council has the right to reclaim any CIL monies which have not been spent after five years. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Town Council did not have any CIL monies older than 3 years. He further advised that the majority of the CIL monies are earmarked for projects including making up the shortfall on the Ashley Project.

The Town Clerk advised that both he and the Estates Manager had attended an online meeting about CIL monies and during the course of that meeting they had learned that Town Councils can apply for portions of the CIL monies kept by the District Council. This is limited to a maximum of £75k or 75% of the full value of any project.

The CIL monies can be applied to community projects and the Town Clerk advised that an application has already been made in respect of match funding for the Ashley Parade Project mentioned above.

67. FOREST ARTS CENTRE

The Town Clerk referred to the remit of the Amenities Committee which can include...

“As appropriate, monitor, liaise, advise and where necessary arrange activities for functions connected with powers relating to entertainment the arts, welfare services, public library, and tourism. This shall include recommendations for financial assistance.”

He then referred to Appendix 3 a report from the New Milton Advertiser that suggests that Forest Arts is likely to suffer a funding cut of almost 50%. Forest Arts is run by Hampshire Cultural Trust which also runs the Red House Museum in Christchurch (a throwback to when Christchurch was part of Hampshire before 1974 when the county boundaries were redrawn).

The Chairman stated that Forest Arts is an integral part of New Milton arts & culture, and we should fight tooth and nail to keep it. He suggested the Town Council contact Forest Arts with a view to finding out precisely what the financial shortfall will be and how we and others may be able to help to retain this local facility in the future.

68. DEMENTIA ALLOTMENT

The Communications and Community Engagement Officer summarised her report which had previously been circulated as Appendix 4.

Cllr B Murrow thanked the Community Engagement Officer and the Estates Manager and praised the volunteers. He hoped that more volunteers can be found and that the allotment at Becton can be open more than once a week.

Cllr J Adams said he thought the Dementia Allotment was a great resource but felt people with dementia would be more inclined to stay for longer if there was access to a WC there.

The Estates Manager said that putting a toilet on the allotment had been considered previously, but it could be looked at again. Any toilet would need to be temporary as the expense of plumbing a permanent toilet in would be far too expensive.

69. ALLOTMENTS

The Estates Manager reported that the first phase of dividing allotments had been taking place, there were 8 vacant plots at Middle Ashley and 7 at Upper Ashley. Helen Omerod is contacting people on the waiting list and showing them the allotments and signing them up. The waiting list should be coming down quite nicely and by the end of the month the final pegging out of the newly divided allotments will be complete.

70. CHAIRMAN'S ITEMS

The Chairman had no items to mention but took the opportunity to thank the Estates Manager and the green spaces team for all their hard work. Thanks also to the Officers generally. He took the opportunity to also thank Councillors and members of the public attending for their contributions and the representative of the press.

70. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 27th November 2023 at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, Ashley Road, New Milton.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.40 pm.

CHAIRMAN _____ DATE _____

SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
57	Annual Budgets / Fees & Charges	27/10/23	Execs
60a)	Meeting with Police	27/10/23	Execs
60b)	Contact NFDC re: Rec toilets	ASAP	Estates Manager
60c)	Benches on the Rec	ASAP	Estates Manager
60d)	CCTV additional units	ASAP	Town Clerk
60f)	Implement HCC template letters	ASAP	Town Clerk
61	Land Use Requests	ASAP	Comms Officer
65	Ashley Parade improvements	30.10.23	F&GP
67	Forest Arts Centre future	30.10.23	TDM

Distribution:

Town Councillors
 Estates & Facilities Manager
 District Councillor J L Cleary
 County Councillors M Kendal, F Carpenter, and K Mans
 New Milton Police
 Press
 Alan Watson – NewMilton.net
 Sue Larking – NMRA