



Minutes of the meeting of the Amenities Committee of New Milton Town Council held on Monday 28th February 2023 at 6.30 pm at the Town Hall, Ashley Road, New Milton, BH25 6AS.

Chairman p G R Blunden
Vice Chairman p D E Hawkins

Councillors: p M Craze p C V Ward
D A Rice-Mundy p A D O'Sullivan
R Murrow p V E Schooling

In Attendance:

Councillor: S J Clarke

Officers: G Flexman - Town Clerk M Jeffries – Estates Manager
T Elliott – Assistant Town Clerk J Bean – Committee Administrator

The Chairman welcomed ten members of the public to the meeting, as well as the local reporter.

Public Participation

Bob Lord is Chairman of the Friends of Ballard Water Meadow. He advised that one of the requirements of the HLS funding scheme is for education. The scheme has now been extended up to 2028. Various activities have been organised at Ballard including school visits to learn about woodcraft, bird territories and insects. He is keen to engage bigger groups and he is keen to purchase a Moth Trap which would enable them to attract moths for moth trapping nights. The traps are very portable and so it could be used at Barton Common as well as Ballard. The trap would attract various species of moths who could be studied and examined before being released back into the wild. The trap costs £430, the Friends of Ballard Water Meadow do not have that money and sought contribution from the councillors. The trap would help to fulfil the requirement for education in the HLS agreement. (**Post Meeting Note: Grant received from HBIC**)

Julia Stamper is the chair of the Community Garden Committee. She had been invited by the chairman to provide an update. She advised that there has been a lot of work going on. The application to the Charity Commission to set the charity up has been submitted. Some funds have been raised and there are a couple of outstanding funding applications. She was hoping for a bit more visibility on the Town Council website. She had been to Fawcetts field and was very pleased to see that the pipe for the new water supply has been put in. She said that the practical work on the garden would begin this month. She asked when the path infrastructure would be instated and when the pines would be coming down.

Goff Beck is a former councillor and chair of the Friends of the Indian Soldiers Memorial committee. He gave a short history of the Town Council involvement with the Memorial including Ted Horne BEM alerting the Town Council to its importance to the community. The monument had been steam cleaned. A representative of the Indian High Commission was present at the inaugural 2018 event as was the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, and many others. He reported that he had received an email from Brigadier Vikram Gill who attended the Act of Remembrance last year. He had been advised of the plans for the mural of Khudadad Khan to be placed on the wall close to the Indian Obelisk he sent an email in response which described the plans as a "laudable effort".

Nick Saunders is a local historian. He advised that there is no single place for the descendants of the Indian soldiers who died in the New Forest to visit to remember their dead. He found a document in the British Library which referred to the fact that there was an intention to erect memorials to the soldiers that died in the New Forest at the time. It is not clear why it did not happen at the time, but the need was recognised. And it seems to him that the logical place for such a memorial would be at the Indian Obelisk.

He went on to address the particular criticisms which were made at the last Amenities Meeting on 23rd January. Namely that any mural should celebrate the ordinary soldiers rather than just one man. Nick advised that Khudadad Khan had been a private soldier at the time of his gallant action. And that the names of the fallen soldiers would be commemorated as well. So far as the issue with putting his picture onto a toilet block wall, he understood the concern about the issue of respect. But Brigadier Vikram Gill has visited the site and was happy with where it is to go as were the representatives of the Asian Community on the committee. He was pleased that the matter was being discussed in such detail.

Callum is a student at Durlston Court School. He gave some background on the events which had led to Khudadad Khan being awarded his VC.

Mr Petty a history teacher at Durlston Court School made the suggestion that a board displaying the mural and other information could be sited on the grass verge in front of The Dome former hotel building adjacent to the Indian Obelisk, and spoke of the religious significance of the dome to the Indian soldiers and offered it as an alternative space, close to and overlooking the Obelisk.

113. APOLOGIES

Cllrs D Rice-Mundy and R Murrow.

114. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

115. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman thanked Bob Lord and the Friends of Ballard Water Meadow for all their work. So far as financing the moth trap he stated that individual councillors may be able to assist him with the finance when they get their grant allocations for the next financial year.

There was then some discussion about the Town Council paying for the entirety of the moth trap with Cllr S Clarke speaking up for the idea, and Cllr D Hawkins feeling that it's not a priority given the financial issues facing so many New Milton residents. The Chairman said that this could not, in any event, be decided this evening, the matter should be brought back for further discussion in due course.

The Chairman thanked Julia Stamper for her update and said that the matter would be further discussed at Item 10.

The Chairman then thanked all the speakers who spoke in relation to the Indian Obelisk and Khudadad Khan and stated that the matter would be brought forward and Item 13 on the agenda would be discussed next.

116. INDIAN OBELISK MURAL

There was some discussion on this topic. Firstly, the wall on which the mural is due to be sited is the responsibility of NFDC. A request for pre-application advice had been submitted and the response is to be found at Appendix 2, previously circulated. NFDC advise there are no concerns relating to visual amenity.

Cllr S Clarke spoke about what a special place the Obelisk is and is keen to ensure that any additions commemorate all the Indian soldiers, not simply Khudadad Khan. He suggested a trip to the national arboretum where there are some inspiring memorials to fallen soldiers from the First World War. Cllr D Hawkins was concerned that the ordinary soldiers should be remembered. Cllr M Craze was taken with the idea of siting a board in front of The Dome. Cllr A O' Sullivan pointed to the fact that Khudadad Khan would be seen as a representative of the ordinary soldiers, not simply in his own right. He felt a board would be more appropriate than the wall.

The Chairman summed up that this is a community led project and that they are looking to the Amenities Committee for a steer, rather than anything hard and fast. He thought the options were:

1. Another information board similar to the one currently in place.
2. A memorial stone with names of all the soldiers on it.
3. An information board opposite The Dome.

He understood that the friends' group is not only looking for a steer, but that also they want to get on with it. It is a very special site, almost unique in the country, there is an opportunity to do something very special and ambitious although this would cost more than their current plans, he felt that they would receive support if they sought it.

117. MINUTES

There were no amendments to the last Amenities Committee minutes held on 23rd January.

It was,

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd January 2023, previously circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The Minutes were duly signed.

118. MATTERS ARISING FROM THOSE MINUTES

The Town Clerk confirmed all action points listed had been addressed and that some appeared on this evening's agenda.

Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
98 a)	Dropped Kerb at Molyneux Road	ASAP	Cllr Mel Kendal
99 a)	Land use request Circus Ginnett	ASAP	Administrator
99 b)	Land use request Lions Club	ASAP	Administrator
99 c)	Land use request New Life Church	ASAP	Administrator
99 d)	Land use request Highcliffe Hawks	ASAP	Administrator
105	Bus stops at Bashley / Brockhills	01.06.23	Town Clerk / HCC
108	Khudadad Khan portrait as mural	10.07.23	Town Clerk / NFDC
109	Baseball facility at Fawcetts Field	2023-24	Estates Manager
111	Ashley Recreation Ground Project	30.01.23	Estates Manager
111	Funding completion of above	30.01.23	Town Clerk / F&GP

119. CORRESPONDENCE

The Town Clerk reported on a letter he had received from John Warden the Chair of the Cango Users Forum.

He read the following extract:

"I am heartened by a reply that I have received from the Department for Transport following my letter to the Secretary of State for Transport the Rt Hon Mark Harper MP. The letter tells me that 'all English LTAs were asked in 2022 to publish Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) setting out their visions for the step-change in bus services needed – such as in rural areas. ' it goes on to say 'To support Local Transport Authorities to improve bus services in their areas, we have provided over £1billion of new money to make bus services more frequent.....'. 'Unfortunately, Hampshire County Council was unsuccessful in receiving BSIP funding this time.'"

The Town Clerk advised that there is a meeting on Monday 6th March to discuss the way forward in relation to the £2,000 contribution made by the Town Council and which previously contributed to the booking service and which might now be channelled to providing more stops in the Bashley area for a stopping service. The Town Clerk will report back following that meeting.

120. LAND USE REQUESTS**a) Conservation Connection Bee Fayre – Saturday 26th August 2023 and Saturday 24th August 2024**

A request from Fran Carpenter to use the Recreation Ground for the annual Bee Fayre in 2023 and 2024.

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

b) Lion's Club – New Milton Recreation Ground – Saturday 20th August 2023

A request from Alan Watson of Lion's Club to use the Recreation Ground for the New Milton Town Show, as they have done in the past.

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

121. KING'S CORONATION

The Assistant Town Clerk reported that the most recent meeting took place on 9th February. The Estates Manager had confirmed the facilities and the acts who would be attending. We still have no timings for the actual Coronation. There is a further meeting next Thursday. The notification has been submitted to SAG as it is likely to be a large event.

122. VISION PLAN

The Chairman advised that Men's Shed had started work on their new premises having laid the concrete base prior to delivery to their unit. Progress has also been made regarding the Community Garden project, as follows.

123. COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Chairman confirmed that the new water pipe was now in at Fawcetts Field as mentioned by Julia Stamper. He stated that the pine trees are due to be felled in the week commencing 13th March. In answer to Julia's query about the footpath works, these form part of the wider Vision Plan and are linked to the development in Gore Road which is some way off. He said that if there was a problem with access, it may be that some interim work could be done to make it easier for the group. It is to be hoped that the Community Orchard will be planted this year together with the three oaks.

124. STREETSCENE IMPROVEMENTS

The Chairman referred to the ongoing question of improving the street scenes at Old Milton Road, and Ashley Parade. HCC had no money to fund anything. The Town Council has budgeted for hanging baskets and flower troughs in both areas but cannot do much more. He advised that there is a "Supporting Villages" programme which he is hoping will provide Ashley with some funding at district level.

There was some discussion then about the terrible state of the pavement at Ashley Parade. This land is not HCC land, it is in fact divided up between the shop owners. The Estates Manager mentioned that HCC could issue a notice under the Highways Act for the landowners to improve the land, but this is the only option open to them, and they were unlikely to use it. There was a discussion about whether the Town Council could apply pressure on HCC to take this action, but this would need consideration on another occasion.

The Chairman felt that further dialogue with HCC might help. Cllrs C Ward and V Schooling expressed their view that HCC was unsupportive of New Milton and more inclined to assist other towns such as Lymington and Ringwood.

The Chairman moved on to discuss the issue of trees on Manor Road. HCC had said that they were not happy for trees to be planted directly into the ground but they would be OK with trees in containers. The Estates Manager had found a couple of possible options which would look good and hopefully these could be put in place soon.

125. RECREATION GROUND LICENSING

The Assistant Town Clerk referred to Appendix 1, previously circulated being the revised application form for events on the Recreation Ground. The variations have been approved.

Highlighted items 1,7 12, 47 and 50 were explained. The new ability to sell alcohol from various stalls across the site has created new requirements in terms of consumption management. This includes need to display signs near exits reminding of need to drink up or pour away alcohol in an open vessel before leaving site. Signage is currently being produced for this.

The Chairman stated that the new licensing requirements are not intended to give any problems, simply to ensure the safety of visitors and residents. He wanted to make sure that local groups could and would continue to use the Recreation Ground for local events, particularly with this change allowing craft alcohol sellers.

He referred to the remit of the Amenities Committee which includes:

“The promotion of leisure activities and facilities which shall include maintenance of public recreation grounds, parkswhich are the responsibility of the Council.....This shall include recommendations for financial assistance.”

He noted that there had been some issues with organisations hiring additional toilets for events and he proposed that for future charity and community events the Town Council would provide any necessary additional toilets at no extra cost. Members agreed.

It was,

RESOLVED: That the Town Council provide any necessary additional toilets for community and charity events on the Recreation Ground at no extra cost. Terms and Conditions of Use to be altered and reflect in relevant application forms.

126. HLS EXTENSION

The Town Clerk referred to Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) Agreement Extension which had been circulated at Appendix 3. The extension is for five years up to 2028. The monies received for 2023 will be £3,735.33 dropping to £2,274 in years 2024-27 and then to £1,513.93 in 2028. The Rural Payments Agency have set out what is required at Ballard and Barton as far as maintenance of these sites is concerned.

By way of background, there are approximately 8,500 HLS agreements in existence. They are still delivering important environmental benefits across the country, including SSSIs and SINCs like Barton Common and Ballard Water Meadow where grazing was re-introduced.

Under European Union CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) rules, the Government could only offer annual extensions for HLS agreements following Brexit in 2019. But from 2023 onwards, the Government is able to offer existing agreement holders' extensions of five years under new domestic terms.

127. FESTIVE LIGHTS REPORT

The Assistant Town Clerk referred to Appendix 4, the report on 2022-23 Xmas displays which had been circulated previously. There had been some initial problems with the switch on. The display was greatly appreciated by traders and public alike.

The Chairman stated that this is the final year for their contract, and that certain adjustments may be needed next year. But the lights are very important, and more sponsors should be sought for the displays.

128. CHAIRMAN'S ITEMS

The Chairman mentioned that this is the final Amenities Committee meeting of this administration. He thanked all the Committee members, the Officers and staff members who have supported it.

129. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 30th May 2023 at 18.30 hours at the Town Council Offices, New Milton.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending, and closed the meeting at 8.20pm.

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____

Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
116	Indian Obelisk Mural review	30 May 2023	Friends Group
119	CANGO meeting at Sway	6 March 2023	Town Clerk
120 a)	Bee Fayre on the Rec	26 August 2023	Cllr Fran Carpenter
120 b)	Lions Club – Town Show on Rec	20 August 2023	Alan Watson
121	King's Coronation event on Rec	6 May 2023	Estates Manager
122	Vision Plan – Fawcetts Field	On-going	All
123	Community Garden initial works	13 March 2023	Estates Manager
124	Streetscene Improvements Ashley	On-going	Town Clerk / HCC
125	Recreation Ground Licencing rules	1 April 2023	Assistant Town Clerk
126	Higher Level Stewardship scheme	16 Feb 2023	Town Clerk
127	Festive Lights Report - contract	On-going	Assistant Town Clerk

Distribution:

Town Councillors

Estates & Facilities Manager

District Councillors J L Cleary

County Councillors M Kendal, F Carpenter and K Mans

New Milton Police

Press

Alan Watson – FOCUS & NMRA