



Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of New Milton Town Council held on Monday 26 September 2022 at 6.30 pm in New Milton Town Hall.

	Chairman	p	D N Tungate	
	Vice-Chairman	p	S P Davies	
<u>Councillors:</u>	p	K Craze	p	S J Clarke
	p	R A Reid	p	A D O'Sullivan
		J Ward	p	M Brownsea
		G R Blunden		

In Attendance:

Councillor: B Murrow

Officers: G Flexman - Town Clerk
 J Bean – Committee/Comms Administrative Assistant
 S Ramsaywack – Youth Services Manager
 Chiara Rabbito – Town Development Manager

The Chairman welcomed members and officers, together with four members of the public.

Martin Medhurst of Men's Shed thanked the Town Council for its support, having been set up 4 years ago, their first meeting was in September 2018 and now, with the help of the Council they were close to fulfilling their dream of having their own purpose-built building at Fawcetts Field. Both parties have legal representation and there is now hope that the lease for the land will be finalised shortly.

The Chairman opened the meeting with a reflection on the death of the Queen and an acknowledgement of our new monarch, King Charles III.

The Chairman then welcomed Chiara Rabbito as the council's New Town Development Manager.

38. APOLOGIES

Cllrs G R Blunden and J Ward

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

40. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman thanked Men's Shed representatives for their kind words and comments.

41. MINUTES**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2022, previously circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The Minutes were duly signed.

42. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON AGENDA

The Town Clerk confirmed all action points listed had been addressed.

Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
27a)	HCC Consultation "20 is Plenty"	12 Sep 2022	Asst Town Clerk
27b)	HCC Consultation Passenger Transport including CANGO	24 July 2022	Town Clerk
27c)	Letter from N Pressnell Arnewood Headmaster - For our WEBSITE	ASAP	Admin Assistant
28k)	Cost of Doors	ASAP	Estates Manager
31a)	Grant Aid – New Forest Bike Project	ASAP	Asst Town Clerk
31b)	Grant Aid – Lions Club of New Milton (over £2K)	8 August 2022	Town Council
32a)	Air Raid Shelter	8 August 2022	Town Council
32b)	Community Garden	8 August 2022	Town Council
32c)	CCTV for MUGA	8 August 2022	Town Council

43. CORRESPONDENCE

The Town Clerk referred to the following items of correspondence:

- a) A letter from PKF Littlejohn confirming that the Council has received a 'clean bill of health' so far as the accounts for last year 2021/22 are concerned. The letter enclosed a Notice of Conclusion of Audit together with an unqualified External Auditor Report and Certificate for the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) which must be displayed on the council website and noticeboard at the front of the Town Hall by 30 September 2022.



- b) An email from local resident Malcolm Mecklenburgh advising of the death of David Burns who was the first Chairman of the “New Milton Neighbourhood Council” the predecessor of the Town Council. It was noted that his name appears on our Honours Board.
- c) An email from Goff Beck, Vice-Chair of the New Milton branch of the RBL asking if the Town Council would sponsor the annual poppy appeal. The Town Clerk advised it had become customary for a local organisation to sponsor the launch of the annual appeal. The Chairman suggested the matter be considered by Town Council as a whole.
- d) An email from Anthony Harris advising that a standard (Law Society) lease for the Men’s Shed has been prepared and is being reviewed by Men’s Shed. The Clerk advised this lease is more complex than the Fernhill licence, but it was hoped to complete very shortly. Meanwhile, Men’s Shed have been issued with a Tenancy at Will to allow them on site.
- e) An email from Spencer, one of the youth workers at ASBOC who advised that the summer activities had been very successful. They had run around 8 sessions, two per week in August. Silma confirmed Tuesdays and Fridays. There had been regular attendees of the youth club and passers-by who were not known to the youth centre.

The age range had been predominantly 10-16 years. Each session attracted around 10-20 young people from a variety of catchment areas. He reported that the youth club is becoming a hub for a new cohort and a recent trip to New Forest Waterpark had proved a big success.

- f) An email from Alison Talbot of Citizens Advice New Forest, mentioning they have now opened all five of their offices for face-to-face appointments and drop-ins.

In New Milton, they have helped 636 clients with 2,586 issues last financial year. On 30 March 2022, CANF received a visit from Patron, HRH The Princess Royal, who opened their new office in New Milton and also attended a reception at the Nedderman Centre to see how a Food Larder operates and met with local volunteers, and some Cllrs.

Locally, CANF attend two weekly food larders at Ashley Hub and the Nedderman Centre and their Digital Champions are at the New Milton Library and New Milton Memorial Centre on Thursdays 10.00am - 12.00 noon. CANF would not be able to do any of this without funding and support from New Milton Town Council.

The Citizens Advice New Forest is now leading a partnership of voluntary organisations to coordinate a response to the *cost-of-living* crisis across the New Forest.

CANF has appointed a Campaigns Manager to lead work on the *Cost-of-Living* project. As part of her role Lisa Knott is happy to come and talk to the Town Council about how this will help the New Forest in the future and the New Milton wards in particular.

CANF would be very grateful if we were able to consider Citizens Advice New Forest again this year when drawing up a list of grants or donations,

It was agreed the Town Clerk will arrange payment of the £5k budgeted grant to CANF.



44. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 1, being Schedule of Payments, for the period 1 July – 31 August 2022 in the sum of £224,705.01, as previously distributed.

The Town Clerk highlighted the following items over £1,000:

- a) Lombard - vehicle leasing x 4 + hire of Nissan Rapid £1,945.99
- b) Atech Electrical - Replace damaged de-fib cabinet Ashley Rugby Club/attend outdoor Bowls Pavillion re tripping light/replacement intruder alarm at Fawcetts Field/statutory testing bollards in Station Road/5 yearly statutory fixed wire testing at the Rugby Club £3,138.65
- c) Bittles Limited – Supply and fit irrigation system and GPRS Irrigation controller (CAPEX) £36,420
- d) DCK Accounting Solutions – Monthly provision of accounts/end of year accounts £1,371.30
- e) Edmat Gas Services – carry out gas safety checks/landlord safety statutory requirement at Ashley/Bowls club/Fawcetts/Fernhill – check water flow and fluctuating temp problem at Fernhill and replace valve - £3,733.83
- f) HCC – Pension contributions – June 2022 - £9,992.93
- g) HMRC – Tax and NIC – June 2022 - £11,127.87
- h) NMSB – Materials – various sites and green/general waste removal - £2,213.41
- i) Rejuvenate – Provision of managed services and IT Support for July 2022 and telephone service June 2022 - £1,304.58
- j) Turfleet Hire – Hire of Amazone Groundkeeper Scarifier for use at Ashley and Fawcetts/Hire of Wessex rotovator for ground prep at Ashley and Fawcetts/hire of Wessex grader bar soil levelling/John Deere Tractor and front loader hire - £2,634.00
- k) WP Group – Fawcetts machinery fuel (price has increased by 46p per ltr since Jan 2022)
- l) Autocross Euroshel Ltd – Bus shelter works including installation of longer seat and replacement glass at Whitefield Rd/bus shelter timetable cases at Poundstretchers/removal of bus shelter at Naish A337 - £2,690.40
- m) Citation Ltd – Assessment of current HAVs values on NMTC equipment - £1,194.00
- n) Farol – Purchase of Felming towed ground surface roller 1980mm (CAPEX) - £1,116.00
- o) Mencap – County Councillor and District Councillor contributions - £5,150.00
- p) Staff/Members – salaries and allowances July 2022 - £27,929.74
- q) Lombard – vehicle leasing x 5 vehicles - £2,332.87
- r) HCC - Pension Contributions – July 2022 - £9,512.09
- s) HMRC – Tax and NIC – July 2022
- t) Seton – Statutory safe storage of COSHH materials - £1,037.21
- u) Tom Morrissey – carry out pitch watering/general works (7 days) inclusive - £1,050.00
- v) Glasdon UK Ltd – 6 x green Jubilee litter bins/3 x Phoenix seats/2 x black Jubilee litter bins - £4,438.87
- w) PDP Architecture – Preparation of designs, drawings and prep planning application for Ashley project (as agreed 40% of total cost) – section 106 monies - £1,896.00
- x) RMB Hydroseeding – Hydroseeding Wessex pitch /bags winter sports grass seed/fertiliser
- y) Staff/members – salaries and allowances August 2022 - £27,456.90



Members queried:

- The sum of £661.95 paid to Screwfix for a pump to pump the water at Ballard Lake after incidents of dead fish. Cllr Clarke suggested that the fish should be removed from the lake as they are not native, the pond is not designed for them and include large Koi Carp. This is an expensive way of dealing with the issue. The Town Clerk advised that the lake had been drained by his predecessor some 25 years ago and over 100 fish had been rehomed. The Estates Manager is currently looking to install a permanent pump next to the island, for aeration purposes, and investigating clearing the lake of fish by net without draining it altogether.
- The cookery classes with Cllr O'Sullivan asking whether they had been well attended. Town Development Manager confirmed they have been well attended and that attendees were losing weight and reducing their blood sugar readings. She also advised that there is a social element once the classes are over as the attendees have a *WhatsApp* group so they can continue to benefit from their newly found colleagues and compare notes on food and diet. Cllr Craze advised that his wife had been attending and had made changes to their diet. He felt it to be a good programme which is doing well at helping people to help themselves.

It was then

RECOMMENDED:

That the Schedule of Payments No. 03/22/23 covering the period 1 July to 31 August 2022, in the sum of £224,705.01 be ENDORSED for Town Council approval.

45. **JULY ACCOUNTS**

The Chairman referred to Appendix 2, being Monthly Management Accounts for July 2022. The Town Clerk reported that there had been additional income this year, and that Amenities was £38k under budget.

In regard to F&GP, £5,777 had been received from the Welcome Back fund relating to the cookery lessons, and £7,929 relating to Covid Signage, plus £25k from reserves to cover Town Hall costs from last year, received this financial year. F&GP is £43k under budget.

Cllr Clarke asked about the budgets, in particular relating to the building works at Ashley, as he is aware that costs of building materials has risen considerably and in some cases by almost 100%. The Town Clerk advised that the costs were likely to be £30k more than the £265k received from NFDC by way of S.106 Developers' Contributions for this project.

The Town Clerk advised that the costs of utilities need to be looked at as they would be increasing, possibly doubling next year. It would be good to put money away for a rainy day. We are currently looking at circa £100k savings /underspends at the half-way stage this year.

We will be looking at budgets for next year 2022/23 in detail over the coming two months.



46. YOUTH REPORT

The Youth Services Manager gave her report, previously circulated as Appendix 3.

The six-week mindfulness course which was due to start today has been put off for a while either later this term or possibly at the beginning of next year, once new students have settled.

YSM stated that with her impending retirement at the end of November, she had offered her services one day a week as a consultant in future, if required. YSM confirmed attendance at a recent play and youth forum meeting, which had proved useful including a course due to be run at the Rugby Club – **Talking with Teens** - which would help parents struggling with various teen issues.

YSM also confirmed she would attend the Youth Employment Hub event which is to take place on 7th October between 5 and 7 pm at the Community Centre. The recommended age range is 16–24 but other ages would be welcomed. YSM would be encouraging youth club members to attend.

Cllr Clarke expressed the view that Arnewood should be providing the mindfulness courses themselves, rather than relying on us to provide it. YSM advised that Arnewood had made a donation, but this was for £40, around a third of the actual cost of the course.

Cllr Clarke then went on to express his gratitude to Silma Ramsaywack for all the work she has done in the role of Youth Services Manager, and how she had improved the relationship with the youth of the town. She was liked and trusted by the young people.

Cllr Craze then added his thanks and suggested that perhaps the fact that Arnewood are now teaming up with other schools in the area, it may offer further opportunities to widen the scope of youth services run locally, and throughout the New Forest district.

47. COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 4, being notes of a recent joint meeting with Alan Watson and Julia Stamper that had previously been circulated. He advised that the meeting had been productive, and the plan is for a 10-year licence of a part of the Moore Close site, which should be in place by 4th January next year.

48. INTERNAL AUDIT

The Chairman referred to Appendix 5, being an email from Auditing Solutions, previously circulated. The Town Clerk reported their response advising that Internal Audit this year will be conducted on-line, following the same work program as previously. Regarding External Audit, the Director of Auditing Solutions provided the following, unsolicited advice:

“On balance and weighing up the cost of physically seeking an alternative to the SAAA appointed provider, to say nothing of the probability that other such providers will undoubtedly seek higher fees than those agreed nationally, I would suggest that the Council is probably better to stay with the existing appointed provider.”

49. EXTERNAL AUDITOR

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 6, being an email from HALC regarding the appointment of external auditors for the next five years, as previously circulated. The Town Clerk advised that External Auditors PKF Littlejohn had provided good service, and like our Internal Auditor suggested above, recommended they be retained from next year. It was then

RECOMMENDED: That the Council retain the services of PKF Littlejohn next year and remain with the SAAA sector-led appointment scheme.

50. LOCAL COUNCIL PRECEPT

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 7, being a list received from NALC of Local Councils with precepts of over £1m. Totton & Eling is listed at 41 and New Milton at 59. The Chairman noted that NMTC is placed above Devizes and other similarly large towns, implying that we are also a large town council which is good to see.

51. HALC AGM

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 8, being an email from HALC notifying us of a change to their articles of association, previously circulated. There is now an option to attend and vote at meetings of HALC without having to join NALC. We are now classed as Hampshire Members (paying HALC affiliation fees only).

52. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATES - None.53. NEXT MEETING - **Monday 31 October 2022** at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, New Milton.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.15pm

CHAIRMAN _____ DATE _____

Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
43a)	Publish Notice from PKF	30.09.22	Town Clerk
43c)	Consider request from RBL	03.10.22	Town Council
43d)	Prepare Men's Shed Lease	ASAP	Town Clerk
43f)	Arrange payment to CANF	ASAP	Asst Town Clerk
44	Endorse Schedule of Payments	03.10.22	Town Council
47	Community Garden Licence	03.01.22	Town Council
48	Internal Audit Work Program	On-going	Town Clerk
49	External Audit appointment	03.10.22	Town Council
51	HALC Membership Changes	03.10.22	Town Council



Distribution:

Town Councillors

Estates & Facilities Manager

District Councillors J L Cleary

County Councillors M Kendal, F Carpenter and K Mans

New Milton Police

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Alan Watson – FOCUS & NMRA