


Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of New Milton Town Council held on Monday 13 March 2023 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 |
| | p | G R Blunden | | |

In Attendance:

Councillors: Cllr D Hawkins

Officers: G Flexman - Town Clerk
J Bean – Committee Administrator

The Chairman welcomed members and officers, together with 1 member of the public.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Alan Watson of the Lions Club presented his Grant Aid Application for £500 for the Lions Easter Extravaganza. He mentioned that he had put the wrong date on and that it should be Saturday 8th April and not 11th.

He also took the opportunity to thank the Town Council, on behalf of all local charity groups who organise events on the Recreation Ground, for agreeing to pay for extra toilets required for those community events.

 97. APOLOGIES

Cllr J Ward

 98. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr A Reid advised that he is a member of the Lions Club and that he would not join in the discussions, nor vote on item 9.

 99. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman thanked Alan Watson for his comments and advised that the Grant Aid Application would be considered under item 9.

 100. MINUTES
RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2023, previously circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The Minutes were duly signed.


101. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE

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

He advised that moving from monthly to quarterly payments of members' allowances would result in a saving of £840 per year.

The Chairman and the members agreed that this would represent a good saving and prove a worthwhile step.

It was,

RECOMMENDED

That payment in arrears of Members' Allowances would take place with the new administration, from May 2023.

| Minute | Action Points | Action by date | To be actioned by |
|---------------|---|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 90 | Investigate quarterly Cllr payments | 01.04.23 | Town Clerk |
| 92 | Approve quote from MTST – Ashley Project | 13.02.23 | Town Council |
| 92 | Approve funding of shortfall for Ashley project from CIL monies and reserves | 13.02.23 | Town Council |
| 93 | Arrange Executive Committee meeting to discuss ASBOC, Youth Services, Youth Trust | 17.02.23 | Town Clerk |

102. CORRESPONDENCE

The Town Clerk referred to the following items of correspondence:

- a) A letter from Jackie Keeble of New Forest Disability advising that she will be retiring at the end of March and that Dr Heidi Harrison will be taking over. She has worked with Dr Harrison since the beginning of the year and she will continue to be involved with the charity helping volunteers from May.
- b) An update relating to CANGO following attendance at a meeting on 6th March 2023 where it was decided that Booking contributions could be earmarked for more scheduled service bus stops from June, with 10 in New Milton, 8 in Lymington, 5 in Sway and 7 in Tiptoe, subject to a further on-line meeting with the bus operator on 30 March 2023.
- c) An email from NFDC relating the Council Tax increases for 2023/24. The Town Clerk referred to the following increases:
 - Hampshire County Council up 4.99%
 - New Forest District Council up 2.99%
 - Police and Crime Commissioner up 6.34%
 - Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service up 6.63%
 - Town and Parish Councils as a whole up 7.79%


103. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 1, being Schedule of Payments, for the period from 1 Jan – 28 February 2023 in the sum of £185,036.29, as previously distributed. The Town Clerk highlighted the following items over £1,000:

| | | |
|-----|--|------------|
| a) | Lombard Vehicle- monthly contract costs of 4 works vehicles | £1,945.99 |
| b) | Silma Ramsaywack - Consultancy work - Community & Youth Services December 2022 (33.5 hours) | £1,165.50 |
| c) | Natasha Beatty - Provision of cookery education classes -daytime and evening 4/1, 11/1, 18/1 and 25/1 2023 | £1,600.00 |
| d) | Christchurch Garden Machinery - Annual servicing of various equipment and repairs to cordless hedge-trimmer | £1,009.29 |
| e) | Edmat Gas Services - Replace taps at Fernhill Pavilion with non-concussive taps/stop water leak and replace failed pressure vessel at ASBOC | £1,694.28 |
| f) | HCC – Pension Contributions December 2022 | £9,850.22 |
| g) | HMRC - Tax and NIC - December 2022 | £10,191.55 |
| h) | Manor Grounds Maint. - Provide labour to assist with various works site wide | £1,400.00 |
| i) | Autocross Euroshel - Replace vandalised roof and end panels to bus shelter on Whitefield Road (Subject to insurance claim) | £2,635.50 |
| j) | Atech Electrical - Failed cable & lights southwest trim trail lights | £1,734.75 |
| k) | Bowcom - Line marking paint | £1,224.00 |
| l) | Natasha Beatty - To provide 3 courses of cookery education classes, daytime and evening in February 2023 / one off valentines pudding lass/replacement induction hob | £2,659.00 |
| m) | Christchurch Garden Machinery - Annual service - various machinery | £3,030.82 |
| n) | Hillier Nurseries - Annual service - Tree replacement general / Naish Estate | £11,881.44 |
| o) | Rejuvenate - Replacement Youth Services PC/8 hours pre-paid support (£62.50 per hour) | £1,278.37 |
| p) | Staff/Members - Salaries/expenses/allowances | £27,654.01 |
| q) | SparkX - Festive lighting contract (paid in full) | £4,310.40 |
| r) | Lombard - Vehicle leasing x 4 vehicles on contract hire | £1,945.99 |
| s) | HMRC - PAYE and NIC -January 2023 | £9,997.37 |
| t) | Hants County Council - Pension contributions - January 2023 | £9,354.32 |
| u) | A Harris and Co - Mens Shed lease | £1,200.00 |
| v) | Christchurch Garden Machinery - Annual service cricket mower x 2, Kubota screws | £1,095.09 |
| w) | Gristwood & Toms Tree works (reactive and walk throughs January) | £3,309.78 |
| x) | Hillier Nurseries Tree planting stakes and ties | £1,860.43 |
| y) | Lush Signs - Bench Plaque Richardson, Info board Long Meadow | £1,878.60 |
| z) | Staff/Members - Salaries/allowances February | £25,308.48 |
| aa) | Natasha Beatty - Cookery school for March | £2,400.00 |
| ab) | NM Quaker Meeting Hse - Venue for socially prescribed cooking May-Mar 23 | £2,300.00 |
| ac) | J Shutler Tree Services - Winter works Barton Common HLS agreement | £10,464.00 |
| ad) | Total Energies - Ashley & Fawcetts electricity January | £1,960.71 |



Members raised queries about the payments to Joycelin Ramsaywack, it was confirmed that this is Silma's full name.

The Town Clerk mentioned that the cookery classes were initially funded from the Welcome Back fund, but this would be exhausted soon. The Chairman commented that several District Councillors had made recent payments from their allowances towards on-going costs.

It was then,

RECOMMENDED:

That the Schedule of Payments No. 07/22/23 covering the period 31 January – 28 February 2023, in the sum of £185,036.29 be ENDORSED for Town Council approval.

104. MONTHLY ACCOUNTS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 2 being January 2023 Monthly Management Accounts.

The Town Clerk noted overall we are on course to break even at the year end. Amenities was over budget by £62k due mainly to £83k extra CAPEX with £234,721 Capital expenditure incurred to date against a budget of £150k - including £31k on Fawcetts Field upgrades, £158k on the Ashley Play project, plus £43k on Green Routes and £3k on Barton Common upgrades.

So far as F & GP is concerned, there are large savings of almost £70k overall, with £1,500 pm Interest on CCLA investments. There were savings under the following budgets: Youth Co-ordination £6.5k, Comms and Media £12k, Town Development £3.5k and Youth grant aid £10k, Professional Fees £5k plus £25k from reserves for Town Hall costs and £8k Covid grant received, belatedly.

Cllr G Blunden asked if his assumption that CIL monies and S106 monies would not be applied to the accounts until year end meant that Amenities is only temporarily over budget. The Town Clerk confirmed that this is the case, auditors/accountants leaving it to the year end to determine precisely how much needs transferring from such reserves.

Cllr D Hawkins expressed his dismay about the ongoing issues with anti-social behaviour and costs of vandalism every year. He was particularly referring to incidents at Ashley including the play park. Some is covered by insurance, but it is sickening that a small number of young folks are set on vandalising Town Council property. The Town Clerk advised that further CCTV will be set up at Ashley.

Cllr K Craze suggested that Ashley should be incorporated into the night time patrols that Sgt Arron Wood had started in the town and which appeared to have been very effective on the high street.

Overall, the Management Accounts for January were noted by members, with a break-even situation envisaged.

105. GRANT AID

The Chairman referred to the Grant Aid Application submitted by the Lions Club as described by Alan Watson at the beginning of the meeting. The Town Clerk advised that there is £680 in the budget. Following a vote,

It was,

RESOLVED: That Lions Club of New Milton be granted £500 from the Grant Aid Budget under the General Power of Competence.

106. AMENITIES REFERRED MATTERS

The Town Clerk referred to Amenities minute 125, regarding the provision of additional toilet facilities for events on the Recreation Ground.

He further advised that the budget for Events for next year had been increased from £2K to £8.5K and that the Community Budget which was nil for the last couple of years due to covid is to be reinstated in the sum of £5K.

The Chairman said he thought this made sense, and members agreed. .

Cllr Blunden 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 to the organisers. Members agreed.

It was then,

ENDORSED: 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.

This was **ENDORSED** for Town Council approval.

107. YOUTH CO-ORDINATOR

The Town Clerk reported that two interviews for the Youth Co-ordinator position will take place on Wednesday 15th March.

He also advised there had been some discussions with Totton who use Youth Options for their youth club provision. It is not cheap, they invest £100K per year on their youth provision as follows:

£80k on Youth Options

£20k Maintenance of their building known as the "Garage".

When it comes to Youth Work, there is no cheap option by the look of it.



Cllr S Clarke picked up on Cllr D Hawkins' comments about vandalism in the town. He felt that some outreach work should be undertaken with the youth of the town. There was evidence that this could lead to reductions in anti-social behaviour. He felt that the youth club only helped those who wanted to go there, to take part and engage. But many youths were not interested, some intervention and prevention work is very much needed. He pointed to a big underspend in the youth Grant Aid budget YTD.

Cllr D Hawkins advised that he had travelled through New Milton on Sunday and had noticed pockets of local youths gathering on Whitefield Road in the bus shelter and other areas. He asked whether there were still street pastors in the town, he was aware that they had worked at engaging with the young people in the past.

Cllr K Craze said that he would be interested to hear what Youth Options have to say, and that the issue needs to be considered from a more strategic perspective.

Cllr S Clarke said that the street pastors were no longer operating in the town, there is a real need to develop a wider strategy to engage with the town's youth.

It seems that the Council has been left to pick up the pieces following the demise of the Phoenix Centre and HCC involvement that ceased around 5 years ago.

108. RISK ASSESSMENT

The Chairman referred to Appendix 3.

The Town Clerk advised that the internal auditor likes the Council to review its Risk Assessment Action Plan before the end of the financial year.

There was quite a lot of discussion about various matters which appear on the list, the Chairman suggested that an in depth review would be in order for the new administration.

Cllr A Reid then asked about succession planning for key members of Town Council staff. He also asked about the Investment Strategy and how this was faring.

Cllr M Brownsea said that the Quiller Cheviot investment had not lost money but was still ahead of the initial investment. Original investment of £250k now valued at £279k.

The Town Clerk said he would add the latest (December 2022) figures to the minutes and report on the situation at the year ending 31st March.

109. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATES

The Chairman had no updates, save that he did not intend to have a further meeting before the upcoming election. He thanked the committee members and officers for their work and attendance over the last four years.



110. NEXT MEETING – **Monday 12TH June 2023** at 6.30pm in Town Hall, New Milton.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.17pm.

CHAIRMAN _____ DATE _____

| Minute | Action Points | Action by date | To be actioned by |
|--------|---------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 101 | Members' Allowances - quarterly | 27.03.23 | Town Council |
| 103 | Schedule of Payments | 27.03.23 | Town Council |
| 106 | Amenities Referred Matter | 27.03.23 | Town Council |
| 107 | Youth Co-ordinator interviews | 15.03.23 | Interviewers |
| 108 | Risk Assessments Review | 31.03.23 | 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