



Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee of the New Milton Town Council held on Monday 14 December 2020 at 6.30 pm through Zoom video communications.

	Chairman	p	S P Davies	
	Vice-Chairman	p	D N Tungate	
Councillors:	p	G R Blunden	p	S J Clarke
	p	K Craze	p	A D O'Sullivan
	p	A Reid		J G Ward
	p	M Brownsea		
In attendance:	Cllrs D Samber, R Murrow, D Hawkins			
Officers:	G Flexman - Town Clerk			
	E Towler - Business Administrator			
	S Ramsaywack - Youth Services Manager			

The Chairman welcomed councillors, officers, and a member of the public to the virtual meeting.

199. APOLOGIES – Cllr J Ward

200. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Blunden, Clarke and Reid declared an interest on agenda item 13, being Youth Services Update, as Trustees of the Youth Trust.

201. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – None

202. MINUTES

The Chairman referred to the minutes of the last meeting.

It was

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2020, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The minutes would be signed in due course.

203. MATTERS ARISING – None

Minute	Action Point	Date	Action By
191	PMN's - Schedule of Payments	16 November 2020	Town Clerk
193	Referred Matters CIL report	14 December 2020	Town Clerk
194	Interim Internal Audit	3 & 4 December 2020	Town Clerk
196	YSM Report for A&T	3 November 2020	Town Clerk
198	Grant Aid request	16 November 2020	Town Council

204. CORRESPONDENCE

The Town Clerk referred to the following correspondence:

- a) An email from the Assistant Town Clerk suggesting the offices be closed Wednesday 23 and Thursday 24 December 2020 as part of Boris' 5 days off over Xmas. Agreed.
- b) An email from NFDC proposing increase in members allowances of £26.58 (2.75%) per annum backdated to 1 April 2020, being 15% of the NFDC allowance. Agreed.
- c) An email from Colin Read of NFDC regarding the Draft Waste Strategy. Comments may be made now to 20 December 2020. <https://newforest.gov.uk/wastestrategy>
- d) Notice of Completion of Audit received from External Auditors PKF Littlejohn having recently completed their limited assurance review for the year ended 31 March 2020, signing off our accounts while noting that the long-term (Quilter Cheviot) investment of £250k was not treated correctly by our accountants within the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR), requesting us to please ensure that amendments are corrected in the prior year comparatives when completing next year's AGAR.
- e) The New Milton Town Council draft Interim Internal Audit report for 2020-21 was received today with just two recommendations being made at the end, as follows:
 - Whilst we note the healthy levels of the Council's earmarked reserves, the low level of the General Reserve should be reviewed with the Council's external accountants, a reserve level of between 6 - 12 months spending being more appropriate for a council with New Milton's operational span. General Reserve increased last year from £157k to over £250k, being 3 months precept equivalent to Quilter investment.
 - With over £1m of its funds invested with NatWest (following receipt of 6 months precept of £565k at the end of September) the Clerk and Members should now move with all possible haste to minimise the risk of having all of the Council's funds invested in one financial institution, by investing surplus funds elsewhere. The Town Clerk suggested the precept could be paid monthly by NFDC at £100k pm, and that £350k surplus NatWest medium term funds could be invested with Quilter Cheviot.
- f) An email received from NFDC regarding Covid-19 financial support. At the December meeting of Cabinet, it was unanimously agreed that NFDC would make a distribution of £107k support grant funding to all 38 Town and Parish Councils within the District in the 2020/21 financial year, based on £1.50 per Band D property. Based on 10,515 such taxable properties, the payment to New Milton will be £15,773 non ring-fenced.

205. AMENITIES/EXECUTIVES REFERRED MATTERS

- Minute 101 of the Executive Committee held on 23 November, recommending that £25k be earmarked in Reserves next year for an Environmental Action Plan.
- Minute 227 of the Amenities Committee held on 30 November that recommended a pre-planning application be made to NFDC to assist relocation of the Men's Shed from Fernhill to a more appropriate site in the car park at Fawcetts Field.

Both of the above referred items were agreed and supported by members of F&GP.

206. BUDGET PROPOSALS 2021/22

Chairman referred to Annex A & B being the Fees & Charges and Committee Budgets.

a) Amenities Committee

Members reviewed the Amenities Budget and noted the Fees & Charges for 2021/22.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Amenities Budget for 2021/22 of £593,231 be adopted by Town Council.

b) F&GP Committee

The Chairman referred to Annex B, and in particular the F&GP Budget for 2021/22.

RECOMMENDED:

That the F&GP Budget for 2021/22 of £536,981 be adopted by the Town Council.

NB The overall budget of £1,130,212 for next year remains the same as for this year

207. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 1, Schedule of Payments for the period 1 October - 30 November 2020 in the sum of £ 213,862.07, as previously distributed. The Town Clerk highlighted the following items over £1,000:

- a) World Medical - Defibrillators and maintenance - £1,908.00
- b) Citizens Advice New Forest - Grant Aid F&GP 21 Sept - £5,000.00
- c) Hibbs NMS - Pitch maintenance and green waste disposal - £1,897.41
- d) NFDC - Officer tree surveys and resident calls - £4,092.00
- e) NF Signs - Replacement Fawcetts and COVID signs - £1353.60
- f) Site Safety - PPE in line with COVID regulations - ££2,445.43
- g) Turfleeet Hire - Tractor Hire for May and September - ££1,698.00
- h) A Tech - Fawcetts trim trail lights & Morrisons Xmas replacement lights - £1,978.49
- i) Aptitude Ltd - Hypo and disinfectant pump - ££2,403.60
- j) Farol - Turf Groomer - £1,782.00
- k) Fireguard Services - Replacement extinguishes risk/assessments all sites - ££2,654.34
- l) Gristwood & Toms - September tree work - £7,010.27
- m) Lush Signs - Town Centre noticeboard refurbishment - £1,063.15
- n) NMS - Veg waste clearance/materials for Ashley pitch renovations - £3,717.66
- o) Npower - July-September usage of sites - £1,313.52
- p) Northfield Nurseries - Winter/Spring florals - £1,115.70
- q) Turfleeet Hire - Graden hire for bowls club renovation - £1,250.40
- r) SM Lockyer - Digger and tipper hire for repairs £2,184.00
- s) Rejuvenate - IT Services October/November - £1,384.31
- t) Site Safety - PPE, new staff uniform, cleaning equipment - £1,622.94
- u) Turfleeet Hire - Tractor Hire, progator for pitch maintenance - £1,620.00
- v) Christchurch Pwr Tools - replacement and repaired equipment - £3,378.36
- w) Complete Weed Control - Feed for Fawcetts and Ashley Rec - £3,049.49
- x) Dorset Waste Clearance - Allotment sites - £1,750.00
- y) NMS - Maintenance and pothole filler - £1,175.48

Cllr O’Sullivan queried the charge for Zoom Video Conferencing subscriptions and queried whether more than one account needed to be paid for. The Clerk confirmed he will check with the Assistant Town Clerk and report in the minutes. *[Post meeting note: The Zoom subscriptions, having been set up for several months now, were cost effective and allowed us to host meetings for longer than the free 45 minutes (something members asked for). We each have flexibility over the meetings we attend, noting one generic account would hamstring us into only having one meeting at a time, yet frequently now we can hop onto Zoom when Theresa or Jo or Emma are meeting others about something entirely different]*

Cllr O’Sullivan also queried the payments on two different occasions regarding tree work. It was confirmed that NFDC do cyclical inspections and respond to resident calls and Gristwood & Toms do the actual pruning and felling of trees on behalf of the Town Council.

Cllr O’Sullivan also referred to the cost of £900 to South Coast Social and asked whether this was cost effective. The Town Development Manager will provide an explanation in the minutes. *[Post meeting note: TDM will provide details in her next report to Town Council.]*

Cllr Reid queried whether it was time to review our contract with IT suppliers Rejuvenate which was supported by members. Cllr Clarke addressed the Youth Services Manager and asked whether the lone working badges were working properly as there had been issues in the past. The YSM confirmed they are working OK at the moment, despite limited use due to COVID restrictions, but will keep an eye on them.

It was then

ENDORSED:

The Schedule of Payments 05/20/21 covering the period 1 October - 30 November 2020, in the sum of £ 213,862.07 was ENDORSED for Council approval.

The Chairman welcomed HCC Cllr K Mans to the meeting and asked whether he would like to provide an update. Cllr Mans referred to the latest COVID position in the New Forest which was encouraging and wished everyone a Merry and safe Christmas.

208. MONTHLY ACCOUNTS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 2, October Accounts, which was noted by members. The Town Clerk provided an update, noting Amenities is now close to budget year to date following some recent staff changes and review of vehicle maintenance/contract hire arrangements. Overall, Amenities is £10k (3%) under budget to date. F&GP continues to show savings, £14k in the month and £86k (29%) year to date, with savings in salaries / pension costs, likewise large savings in events expenditure, neighbourhood planning, Youth Co-ordination, Communications & Marketing, professional fees, reduced CIL income, all due to Covid-19.

209. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

The Chairman referred to Appendix 3, CIL receipts and expenditure for 2019/20, which was noted by members. The report can be viewed on the Town Council website <https://www.newmiltontowncouncil.gov.uk/service/finance/>

210. YOUTH WORK

The YSM provided an update on the Ashley Youth Club, noting the sessions involving social bubbles have been successful and will start up again in the New Year.

Youth MOT sessions have also proved to be popular with a poster presented to members showing feedback from parents and the youth themselves.

Following a Youth Trust meeting at which several projects were discussed, the trust will soon be seeking additional trustees, actively encouraging applications from suitably qualified and experienced members of the wider community. They are currently formulating the document specifying the skills required of the trustees.

A December newsletter with more information can be found on the Council website.

211. ANY ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

Cllr Tungate highlighted planting of a Hawthorn Paul's Scarlet tree at Ballard Lake on 11 December to honour the special relationship that New Milton has with its twinned town of Canteleu in France with the Twinning Charter formally signed on 20 January 2001.

212. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on **Monday 1 February 2021** at 6.30 pm, via Zoom.

With there being no further business to discuss, the Chairman thanked members, officers and the public for attending and closed the meeting at 7.32pm, wishing everyone a Happy Christmas.

Chairman _____

Date _____

Minute	Action Point	Date	Action By
204 e)	Audit recommendations	4 January 2021	Town Council
205	Endorse referred matters	4 January 2021	Town Council
206	Budget proposals 2020/21	4 January 2021	Town Council
207	Endorse Oct/Nov payments	4 January 2021	Town Council

Distribution:

Town Councillors

District Councillors Mrs C V Ward, Mrs J L Cleary

County Councillors M Kendal, K Mans, F Carpenter

New Milton Police

Press

NMRA – Alan Watson