



Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of New Milton Town Council held on Monday 31 October 2022 at 6.30 pm in New Milton Town Hall.

Chairman p D N Tungate

Vice-Chairman p S P Davies

Councillors: p K Craze p S J Clarke
 p R A Reid p A D O'Sullivan
 p J Ward M Brownsea
 p G R Blunden

In Attendance:

Councillor: D Hawkins

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

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

Brian Coy of Open Sight gave some background to his Grant Aid application and advised members that Cllr Reid had attended one or more of their meetings.

Martin Medhurst of the Men's Shed spoke about a draft lease that had been prepared and which was now with their recently instructed solicitors. He had hoped the Lease would be ready to sign today and expressed regret that the matter had not yet been finalised.

Having recently appointed solicitors, they have now instructed them to negotiate with the Town Council solicitor.

54. APOLOGIES

Cllr M Brownsea

55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a) Cllr Reid advised that he knows Brian Coy of Open Sight having previously been his neighbour. And that he had visited Open Sight meetings on a couple of occasions. He did not consider that this should stop him joining in the debate.
- b) Cllr Davies stated that he had looked through the paperwork in relation to the grant aid application by Compass Counselling and noted that one of the directors is a Mrs M Swayne, he was concerned that she is known to several members of the Committee.

The Chairman acknowledged his concern, and it was suggested that perhaps the matter should be deferred to the next meeting pending further investigation, and whether it would constitute a conflict of interest.

- c) Councillor Craze stated that he would not be involved in any discussions relating to the grant aid application by Parkinson's New Forest, his brother is suffering very badly with the disease, and he stated that he finds the matter emotive.

56. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman thanked Brian Coy and Martin Medhurst for their comments and advised both items were on the agenda and would be dealt with later in the meeting.

57. MINUTES**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2022, previously circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The Minutes were duly signed.


58. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE

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

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	03.01.23	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

59. CORRESPONDENCE

The Town Clerk referred to the following items of correspondence:

- a) An email from Goff Beck conveying the gratitude of the Royal British Legion for the Town Council's sponsorship of the poppy appeal this year.
- b) A message from the New Forest Bike Project to thank the Town Council for the donation which has now been received.
- c) An email from the parking office at NFDC advising of their intention to have 4 days in 2022 when charges will not apply in their car parks. The days will be Saturday 3rd December, to coincide with small business Saturday; Saturday 26th November which is the day of the New Milton Christmas Festival & Carnival Parade. Town Clerk to confirm 26 November with NFDC Parking Office by 18 November. Also, parking charges will be suspended on Saturday and Sunday 17th/18th December, being the final weekend before Christmas.
- d) The next tranche of the Community Infrastructure Levy monies has arrived in the sum of £19,371.80.



- e) An email has been received from Lisa Cook, Team Leader – HCC Passenger Transport, following a recent on-line meeting with interested parties about Passenger Transport Savings and CANGO.

The outcome of the recent Consultation confirmed that people broadly preferred to have reduced trip opportunities over reduced destinations. The fact is that CANGO offers the Council the poorest value for money in terms of subsidy per passenger trip of all the services in the New Forest. All options are on the table with regards to what happens with the service.

This includes not operating all existing days; a change in the length of the operation day; a move to a conventional timetable; completely withdrawing the service; and some or equally none of those options. Lisa confirmed there had been discussions on all those options, and others and that she had gone back to the bus company for their feedback.

There was a discussion also about the possibility that the service converts to a conventional timetable and that the booking service may no longer be needed, and maybe the funding that the three councils currently contribute could be recycled back into the service.

Lisa advised she is briefing Cllr Heron, the Executive Member on all possible options to achieve required savings. Finally, Cllr Heron will decide about what savings are to be made on 7th November 2022. The report with all proposed detail is due to be published a week ahead of this Decision Day.

Cllr David Hawkins commented that HCC have not helped the older residents of the town, now the main buses are down to one an hour (following recent withdrawal of Yellow Buses) and they no longer run late into the night, many OAPs cannot now go anywhere and return at a convenient time. Hampshire needs to do something for the residents, it is not fair to diminish their opportunities for travel, especially at this time.

The Chairman thought that was a good point made. Members agreed.

The Town Clerk was asked to write to Cllr Edward Heron, highlighting the above salient points prior to Decision Day.



60. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 1, being Schedule of Payments, for the period from 1 to 30 September 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) DCK Payroll/Accounting - Monthly provision of accounting/payroll services and annual allotment invoices. £1,057.14
- c) Gristwood & Toms - Completed tree works August 2022 £1,299.80
- d) HCC – Pension Contributions August 2022 £9,151.73
- e) HMRC – Tax and NIC August 2022 £8,890.75
- f) Lite Ltd – 60 load tests including structural engineers report £2,499.60
- g) Lion's Club – Grant Aid as approved at F & GP 25/07/22 £3,000
- h) NMSB – Disposal of fly tip/general vegetation/hazardous waste various locations – soil for Fawcetts toilet area improvements £1,015.58
- i) Source for Business – Water charges for Becton Lane, upper/lower/middle Ashley allotments/Indoor and Outdoor bowls club/Ashley sports ground/trough Barton Common Road (Feb- Aug 2022) £1891.61
- j) Turflet Hire – End of season trilo hire Ashley & Fawcetts/John Deere tractor and front loader hire £1,728.00
- k) Bowcom – Line marking paint for Ashley and Fawcetts £1,224.00
- l) David Ogilvie – Queen's Platinum Jubilee seat x 7 (£5,126 + All vat CIL monies and Cllr Contribution) £8,551.20
- m) Manor Grounds Maintenance – Middle Ashley allotment – clear excess debris and vegetation becoming a health and safety issue £1,187.47
- n) NMSB – Ashley project car park extension excavation work/compost open spaces beds/vegetation waste disposal (part CAPEX)
- o) PKF – External audit limited assurance review of Annual Governance and Accountability return for year ended 31 March 2022
- p) Staff / members' Salaries and allowances September 2022 - £29,449.81



Members queried:

- The sums paid to Tom Morrissey. The Town Clerk advised that Tom is a contractor who does not wish to be employed at this time. He said that the estates team is generally understaffed by one operative at present.
- The monies paid to 'We Are Robot' and the advertising for the Afternoon of Music which they appeared at. The question was what the budget for these events is. The Town Clerk advised that in the past there was a budget of £5,000 per year for such events, but during Covid no events had taken place and so there is no budget at present but would be considered for next financial year.

- The sum of £411.82 paid to Pitney Bowes (quarterly charge), the point was made that surely most communication should be by email nowadays. The Clerk will pursue the matter and put something in the minutes.

(Post Meeting Note: The charge levied is that agreed at contract, so applies regardless of level of use. Consumables changes with use accordingly. Most information is already emailed, and we were forced to further reassess during 2020 office closures. However, we still serve a demographic where not everyone has access to e-mail and neither should be expected to.)

- The sum of £1,187.47 paid to Manor Grounds Maintenance, what is the excess debris and vegetation? The Town Clerk said debris from allotments and will put some further explanation in the minutes.

(Post Meeting Note: Clearances relate to Upper & Middle Ashley allotments where a significant build of assorted debris on untenanted plots and at the end of Middle Ashley was becoming a major health & safety issue. The in-house team still understrength were unable to carry out the works so Manor was engaged to clear and dispose, they work at the same agreed rate as Tom Morrissey and are brought in to assist when absolutely necessary. Robust procedures are being put in place across our allotments to ensure that untenanted plots are not allowed to deteriorate into dumping grounds.)

It was then

RECOMMENDED:

That Schedule of Payments No. 04/22/23 covering the period 1-30 September 2022, in the sum of £105,024.01 be ENDORSED for Town Council approval.



61. SEPTEMBER ACCOUNTS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 2, being Monthly Management Accounts for the half year ending 30 September 2022.

The Town Clerk reported accounts show overall savings to date of circa £100,000. There had been additional income from several sources including £30k from a developer in connection with a development adjacent to land at Barton Common. Also, £15k from the organisers of the music events at Chewton Glen. As a result, Amenities shows an underspend of £36k to date.

There is a similar trend with F&GP that also benefitting from savings/underspends. Grants had also come in from Government departments for Covid-related signage in the sum of £7,929 and monies from the Welcome Back fund for the cookery lessons in the sum of £5,777. Overall £64k savings to date.

However, the Town Clerk warned there are likely to be overspends in relation to the project at Ashley and the purchase of land in the town.

62. YOUTH REPORT

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

YSM advised that at the recent Play and Youth Forum meeting it had been announced that the NMYT would be supporting the group financially and on meeting days, this had been decided to ensure continuity particularly with the vacant/temporary positions within youth service. The NMYT AGM has now taken place at the Community Centre in Osborne Road.

Ashley Youth Club has a regular attendance of up to 25 young people each session and that more were added each week. Mostly they are year 11s. When the new building in Ashley opens there will be separate sessions of under 14s and over 14s.

The need for separate sessions had been highlighted following a visit from Youth Options who provided a workshop on knife crime. The year 11s proved to be very knowledgeable already whereas the younger members would benefit from a slightly different presentation.



As numbers are increasing quickly while based at the Memorial Centre she has no doubt that there will be even more interest once the club is based back in Ashley.

YSM had recently provided some ideas to the Executive Committee in relation to the future plans for youth services following her retirement on 23rd November. It has been agreed that she will return one day a week as a consultant.

The YSM confirmed a meeting with Coastal Medical Partnership with her associate Dr Maret Dymond Bassett. They spoke about the Youth MOT program and were asked if a similar program could be provided for adults. Maret had advised that if an organisation could sponsor some of the cost this would be a possibility.

Finally, the YSM stated that this is her last report and she advised that she had enjoyed her role a great deal and had been pleased to make a difference within the community and to the young people of New Milton.

There was much deserved applause from members.

63. COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 4, being the proposed 10-year Licence for the Community Garden that is now ready for signature.

64. MEN'S SHED FAWCETTS

Chairman referred to Appendix 5, being the proposed 21-year Lease for Men's Shed.

The Chairman acknowledged the comments which Martin Medhurst made during public participation and agreed that it was regretful this had taken so long. However, he hoped the Lease would be agreed soon, asking the Town Clerk if he had an idea about how much longer it would take.

The Town Clerk advised that he hoped it would be quick once the two solicitors had a chance to discuss any amendments required.

65. GRANT AID

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 6, being the Grant Aid Applications as follows:

- a) Open Sight who had requested a grant of £500. Cllr Reid confirmed his attendance at some of their meetings, and his view that the charity did an excellent job and that the Town Council should support it.

Cllr Davies agreed with this but was concerned that the bank account on the form was a general Hampshire Open Sight account rather than a local New Milton one.

The Chairman took the meeting out of session so that Mr Coy could respond.

Mr Coy stated that as the local account had started to incur charges whenever a cheque was issued the organisation now had more centralised accounts, the monies paid into the Hampshire account for the New Milton branch would only be used by the New Milton branch.

The Chairman went back into session and following detailed discussion and a unanimous vote in favour

It was

RESOLVED:

That Open Sight New Milton be granted £500 from the Grant Aid Budget under the General Power of Competence.

- b) Compass Counselling who had requested a grant of £500.

It was

RESOLVED:

That this application be deferred until the next meeting pending further investigations as to whether there is a conflict of interest.

(Post Meeting Note: It's a non-pecuniary interest but members need to decide if they are biased / predetermined or not. If not, they can discuss and vote. If they are, they should be excluded. It's their individual risk. Each Cllr should complete an interests register form and choose accordingly what to tick.)



- c) Parkinson's New Forest who had requested a grant of £500. Cllr Clarke spoke in favour of making this grant, stating many people in the town suffered from Parkinson's and that organisations such as this offered very valuable assistance.

Following detailed discussion and a unanimous vote in favour

It was

RESOLVED:

That Parkinson's New Forest be granted £500 from the Grant Aid Budget under the General Power of Competence.

- d) An application received somewhat late in the day from Julia Stamper for £2,000 for the Community Garden group.

Following discussion and a unanimous vote in favour

It was

RESOLVED: That this application be deferred until the next meeting

66. CANF/CAB Statistics

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 7, being detailed documents sent by CANF showing key data broken down by wards.

67. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATES - None.

68. NEXT MEETING – **Monday 19 December 2022** 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 7.10pm

CHAIRMAN _____ DATE _____



Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
59c)	FOC Car Parking - 26 Nov 2022	18.11.22	Town Clerk / NFDC
59d)	Prepare Annual CIL Report	31.12.22	Town Clerk / NFDC
59e)	Forward minute to Cllr E Heron	07.11.22	Town Clerk / HCC
60	September Payments Schedule	14.11.22	Town Council / Estates Manager
63	Sign Community Garden Licence	ASAP	Town Clerk
64	Men's Shed Lease preparation	ASAP	Council Solicitor
65 a / c	Grant Aid payments	ASAP	Assistant Clerk
65b)	Compass Counselling Check potential Interests	19.12.22	Assistant Clerk
65d)	Community Garden group Defer to next F&GP meeting	19.12.22	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