

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of New Milton Town Council held on Monday 24 July 2023 at 6.30 pm in New Milton Town Hall.

Chairman p D N Tungate
 Vice-Chairman p R A Reid

Councillors: J Adams W Davies
 p G R Blunden p A D O’Sullivan
 S J Clarke p M Scott-Johns
 P K E Craze

In Attendance:

Officers: G Flexman - Town Clerk
 J Bean – Committee/Comms Administrative Assistant

The Chairman welcomed members and officers as well as a representative of the press.

21. APOLOGIES

Cllrs John Adams, Wyn Davies and Steve Clarke

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Reid mentioned that he is a Trustee of the Youth Trust.

23. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

24. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12th June 2023, previously circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The Minutes were duly signed.



25. 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
9b)	Pay £10k deposit Gore Road land	26.06.23	Town Council
12	Pay Grant Aid monies as shown	26.06.23	Assistant Clerk
13	Risk Assessments for 2023-2024	26.06.23	Town Council
16	Financial Statements 2022-2023	26.06.23	Town Council
17	Annual Governance & Accounts	26.06.23	Town Council
18	Internal Audit Report 2022-2023	26.06.23	Town Council

Cllr A Reid asked about Minute 9b) whether the deposit for the Gore Road land has now been paid. The Town Clerk confirmed that it had been paid as well as the principal sum.

26. CORRESPONDENCE

a) A thank you letter from Victim Support for the £250 Grant Aid which was sent, stating:

“The donation is a most welcome contribution enabling us to provide help to victims of crime and their families in their local community. Your support of our organisation is very much appreciated. Without the support of Councils such as yours we would not be able to provide the level of support victims of crime and traumatic events in your area deserve.”

b) A letter from Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre, the Deputy Lieutenant of Hampshire, as follows:

“It was a great pleasure to be able to once again attend the Remembrance Ceremony at the obelisk on Monday which was a truly fitting reminder of the major contribution and great sacrifices made by so many thousands of Indian soldiers during the Great War. It was an honour to be present and to lay a wreath in remembrance on behalf of the Lord-Lieutenant. The whole event was splendidly organised and I would be most grateful if you could kindly pass on my sincerest thanks to the Mayor and the Friends of the Indian Soldiers Memorial for their warm welcome and wonderful hospitality at the Cliff Edge Gardens afterwards.”

- c) A letter addressed to the Town Clerk from Brian Byrne of New Forest District Council;

“As part of the 23/24 budget the District Council agreed a capital sum of £300,000 to be spent over the next 2-3 years on extending the existing public network of CCTV cameras in the District..... I would like to invite you to a meeting to discuss this proposal further, including whether your council would like to take up this offer.”

Members expressed interest and the Town Clerk proposed to discuss the matter with the Mayor who had also been invited to the meeting, and to attend the meeting himself.

- d) An email from John Lay-Flurrie seeking support in appealing against the closure of the ticket office at New Milton Station. The closing date is Tuesday 25th July.

The Town Clerk will write in support of the appeal, and comment generally.

- e) An email from a local resident of Marine Drive West regarding overnight parking:

“I understand that the next full Council meeting is to be held on 7th August 2023 and that the proposal we submitted for the installation of additional signage prohibiting overnight sleeping in Campervans along Marine Drive West will be on that Agenda.”

There was some discussion about this, Cllr K Craze advised that he had been in touch with the local resident, but this is not something that the Town Council can help with, it's a matter for NFDC and HCC.

Therefore, the matter would not be appearing on the Town Council agenda. The Town Clerk would inform the resident accordingly.

- f) An email from Anthony Harris, the Town Council solicitor, advising that following the payment of monies for the land at Gore Road, and the signing of the Transfer document there is an issue in relation to the proposed route of a new sewer from 178 houses over the HUB land.

The Town Clerk advised that the route will be through the car park, and it may be that we would use it too. In any event, it should not hold things up too much. The Town Clerk was asked to expedite matters with the Town Council solicitor.



27. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 1, Schedule of Payments, for the period 1 – 30 June in the sum of £146,728.95.

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

a)	Lombard Vehicle	Monthly contract costs of 5 works vehicles	£2,341.78
b)	Amberol Ltd	Supply planters x 8 for floral displays (with a £500 donation coming from NMRA)	£1,745.68
c)	Auditing Solutions	Final internal audit service for 2022-23 including preliminary and subsequent work (2 days)	£1,152.00
d)	Autocross Euroshel Ltd	Removing existing bus shelters and replace with new stainless steel shelters with hammer glass	£19,017.60
e)	DCK Accounting	Monthly provision of accounts and payroll and year end preparatory accounts work.	£1,350.36
f)	Gristwood and Toms	Tree works for May 2023	£2,153.44
g)	Hampshire County Council	Pension Contributions May	£10,387.76
h)	HMRC	Tax and NIC – May 2023	£10,439.13
i)	Manor Grounds Maintenance	General Works site wide (20.5 days) @ £100 per day, May and beginning of June	£2,050.00
j)	Tom Morrissey	General works site wide (19 days) @ £150 per day	£2,850.00
k)	NMSB	Vegetation waste – Ashley/gravel for green routes footpaths/Fawcetts end of season pitch renovation/multi-purpose compost for open spaces/floral displays	£4,299.54
l)	SparkX	Repair and replacement works / 8-way switch on kit hire – re Christmas Lights.	£8,717.40
m)	Turfleet Hire	John Deere Tractor monthly hire & Propagator/top dresser/groundkeeper hire for end of season pitch maintenance work	£2,880.00
n)	NFDC	Plan checking and inspection fees NFDC – Ashley Recreation Ground project	£1,641.60
o)	Anthony Harris	Option to buy – Land at Gore Road 10% deposit	£10,000.00
p)	DCK Accounting	Preparation of year end accounts / monthly payroll June 2023 and Financial Statements.	£1,002.84



q)	G Farwell Ltd	Clear fly tip left by travellers at Ashley Recreation Ground	£1,183.78
r)	Lions Club (Town Show)	Grant Aid as approved at F & GP - 12 June 2023	£2,500.00
s)	Maltby's the Bookbinders	Statutory Binding of Council minutes 2017-2021	£1,293.50
t)	Tom Morrissey	General works site wide (10 days) in June	£1,500.00
u)	NFDC	Dog waste collection – dog bin emptying- Fawcetts Field April/Sept 2023 – 6 months	£1,111.40
v)	NMSB	Floral displays/open space planting/bulkbags to fill in gap at Whitefield Road/general waste site wide/Roffey super soil/general waste/height barrier excavation	£1,173.35
w)	Npower	Electricity supplied to Spencer Rd south/Mallard Court/Fawcetts Field/Ashley Sports Pavilion/Talking Newspaper – 1 Apr to 31 May 2023	£1,220.50
x)	Staff/members	Salaries/expenses/allowances – June 2023	£28,375.10
y)	Travis Perkins	Supplies re Ashley Fun Day/Ashley height barrier/Ashley traveller measures/Barton Common fence repairs/Brook Ave green route link footpath/Recreation ground play area repairs/replacement lock Ashley lower field	£1,443.91
z)	Vita Play Ltd	Playground inspections – May 2023 at Doe Copse/Ashley Rec/NM Rec/Long Meadow and removal and reinstatement of stepping logs at the Recreation Ground.	£1,905.12

Members queried:

- a) The monies paid to G Farwell Ltd for clearing the fly tip at Ashley Recreation Ground.

Cllr G Blunden stated that it's a lot of money, and we still have to take account of the costs of any works to be carried out at Fawcetts Field following the travellers' similar incursion and unauthorised occupation there and he also highlighted a huge amount of work being done in respect of ASB. Mark Jeffries is currently collating data.

The Town Clerk advised that the Estates Manager is preparing a report which will be presented at the next Town Council meeting on 7th August.



- b) Cllr A O' Sullivan questioned the monies being paid to SLCC for a Planning Themed Summit.

The Town Clerk explained that this is the fee for an on-line event which the Town Development Manager is attending in regard to Neighbourhood Planning.

- c) Cllr A O' Sullivan mentioned various expenses for the Afternoons of Music, viz: advertising of £146, Fee for the band of £400, First Aid cover of £475 and PA fee of £960. The costs had increased considerably.

Cllr G Blunden said these events are extremely well attended and that they do offer something to residents, noting there is a dedicated budget for events.

The Chairman said that if we are to put bands on it is important to have a proper PA system so that they sound good.

Councillor K Craze confirmed these events are very popular and are well attended, not only by residents of New Milton, but also by residents from other towns nearby, as well.

It was agreed that the costs of the events would be considered in the round at the end of the season and budgets for next year will be reviewed accordingly.

ENDORSED:

That the Schedule of Payments No. 02/23/24 for the period 1 – 30 June in the sum of £146,728.95 be ENDORSED for Town Council approval.

28. **JUNE ACCOUNTS**

The Chairman referred to Appendix 2 - Monthly Management Accounts for June 2023. The Town Clerk advised that it is early days in the financial year, but Amenities are slightly overspent against their budget, while F&GP is significantly under. This is entirely normal and should work itself out across the year.

The Town Council is receiving nearly £2,000 per month by way of interest payments. This had not been budgeted for and may need to be factored in for next years budget.

29. YOUTH REPORT

The Chairman referred to Appendix 3 - Youth Co-ordinator report for July 2023.

The Town Clerk said that the Co-ordinator had hit the ground running and was working very closely with ASBOC, looking at taking over some of their activities as they will probably cease operating at the end of this year.

Cllr G Blunden commended the report and agreed the Youth co-ordinator made a good start.

30. REFERRED MATTERS

The Chairman referred to the Appendix 4 - Land Use Request by ASBOC for outreach work at Ashley Rec and the main Recreation Ground that Amenities recently agreed to, as follows:

ASBOC – Thursdays in August

Permission is sought by ASBOC to use the War Memorial Recreation Ground and Ashley Recreation Ground for outreach work on alternate Thursdays throughout August, the dates being: 3, 10, 17, 24. Cllr A O' Sullivan said that this is much needed in the summer.

The Town Clerk advised that there is a request for some funding towards this which will be addressed at the upcoming F&GP meeting. It was

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

31. GRANT AID APPLICATIONS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 5 - Youth Work Grant Aid request from ASBOC seeking the sum of £3,600 for assistance with outreach work. The Town Clerk advised that the last time ASBOC received funds from us was back in September 2019 when F&GP granted them £10,360 for 14 – 17 year old youth work and £1,640 for 11 - 13 year old youth work. A total of £12k towards youth work, pre-covid. The youth grant aid budget this year is £15k. Following a detailed discussion, and a vote. It was

RECOMMENDED:

That ASBOC be granted £3,600 from the Youth Grant Aid Budget under the General Power of Competence.

32. INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Chairman referred to Appendix 6 - New Milton Town Council Investment Strategy, and the Town Clerk highlighted additions which he had made following a review. The document now specifies investments New Milton Town Council will use, including:

Deposits with banks (NatWest / CCLA)

Local district public authorities a) for lending them short-term surplus funds

b) asking their accountants' advice

He reported that the investment in Quilter Cheviot had not fared very well initially last year, but it seems to have turned a corner and is back above our initial investment. He pointed out that Councils are not covered by the £85,000 rule which applies to individuals. The Town Clerk said that he would be asking NFDC if it was possible to have the precept paid monthly. At present it's paid in two large tranches, circa £600,000 in April and the same in September. Given that the Town Council has regular monthly outgoings a regular monthly income would be more helpful. He had asked for this last year and the year before and will make further contact and press the point again for second half of this financial year. It was,

RECOMMENDED:

That the updated Investment Strategy be adopted by the Town Council.

Cllr G Blunden asked how often the strategy is reviewed, and wondered if the Quilter Cheviot investment should be closed. The Town Clerk said he keeps a close eye on the investments, both our auditors and accountants had advised that it is prudent to spread them. As to Quilter Cheviot, the investment is now starting to grow again, so now would not be the time to close it down. The Chairman agreed now would not be the time to consider closing it.

33. RISK STRATEGY

The Chairman referred to Appendix 7 the New Milton Town Council Risk Strategy document. The Town Clerk referred to the final page which sets out Types of Risk & Impacts and advised that additions had been made to these and took the members through them. For example, life-changing injuries is a major risk as well as death and had been added as well as reference to a loss of operational capability. He mentioned this had come into play while the Estates Team were having to deal with issues relating to the travellers, and that had a detrimental effect on their day-to-day operational capabilities over a protracted period. It was,

RECOMMENDED:

That the updated Risk Strategy be adopted by the Town Council.



Cllr G Blunden asked about the resilience of GDPR protections. The Town Clerk stated that he is the data controller and that there had been no breaches so far and went on to say that Rejuvenate who look after the data security are experts in the field and keep the protections in place and up to date.

34. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATES

None.

35. NEXT MEETING - **Monday 18 September 2023** at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, New Milton.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.12pm.

CHAIRMAN _____ DATE _____

Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
26c)	CCTV meeting acceptance	ASAP	Town Clerk
26d)	Ticket Office appeal	ASAP	Town Clerk
26e)	Resident of Marine Drive West	ASAP	Town Clerk
26f)	Land off Gore Road	ASAP	Town Clerk
31	Grant Aid – ASBOC	07.08.23	Town Council
32	Investment Strategy	07.08.23	Town Council
33	Risk Strategy	07.08.23	Town Council

Distribution:

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