



Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of New Milton Town Council held on Monday 28 April 2025 at 6.30 pm in New Milton Town Hall.

Chairman p D N Tungate
Vice-Chairman p A D O'Sullivan

Councillors: p J Adams p W Davies
p G R Blunden p R Maynard
p S J Clarke p R A Reid
p M Scott-Johns

In Attendance:

Officers: Graham Flexman - Town Clerk
Joy Bean – Administration Officer
Theresa Elliott – Assistant Town Clerk

The Chairman welcomed Councillors and Officers.

116. APOLOGIES

None

117. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Alan O' Sullivan is our representative on Forest Arts who applied for a grant under minute 127a).

118. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

119. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 17 March 2025, as previously circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The Minutes were duly signed.

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

The Town Clerk advised that all Action Points from the last meeting had been addressed.

Cllr Robert Maynard said that he had taken the opportunity to examine responses from Rejuvenate to questions he had asked in detail, and he felt that overall, they are providing good value, with some things being slightly expensive, namely the site hosting and the mailboxes, but the hourly rate for support is low and represents excellent value. He also bore in mind the expense of changing provider. He felt that we should continue to keep it under review.

The Assistant Town Clerk advised that she had received breakdowns relating to support hour invoices which demonstrated there are elements of support which they do not charge for and that any discrepancies have been resolved in our favour.

Cllr Maynard then asked about the payments to Vodafone, that is being progressed through the Estates Manager.

121. CORRESPONDENCE

The Town Clerk referred to the following item of correspondence:

An invitation from Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Local Policing Conference. Taking place in person at the Hilton Southampton - Utilita Bowl on 7th May commencing at 9:45am. They asked that the invitation be sent to councillors.

122. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 1 - Schedule of Payments for the period from 01 February to 31 March 2025 in the sum of £241,381.41. The Town Clerk highlighted the following items over £1,000.

Barrier Direct	Supply of cycle shelters and racks, funded by NFDC	£5,942.81
Barrie King	General Works Site Wide - Contractor	£1,050.00
HMRC Cumbernauld	Tax and NIC - December 2024	£13,102.29
HCC (Hants LGPS)	Pension Contributions - December 2024	£12,328.57
John Shutler	Undertaking of agreed tree works	£2,915.41
Latus Group	Statutory Health Screening of Estates Operatives	£1,194.00
rCOH	Neighbourhood Plan consultations	£4,863.00
Merlin Lighting	Christmas lighting display provisions including installation + removal	£11,670.36
South Coast Sports Academy	4 day of youth sports provision + Lunch & Snacks + Equipment. As part of HAF provision funded by HCC (Holiday Activities & Food program)	£1,774.95



Vita Play	Playground Inspections & Maintenance for Doe Copse, Ashley Recreation Ground, New Milton Recreation Ground and Long Meadow play areas during July, Aug, Sep & Oct	£1,404.48
Greenlock Electrical	Completion of car park lighting for Ashley project (CAPEX), replacement of faulty emergency light at Ashley Rugby Club, installation of new transformer in defib unit, call out for water heater fault at Empire Skate Building on the Rec.	£1,843.52
Juice	Website development, 2x Poster design (Afternoon Tea & Citizen of the Year)	£1,404.00
Lombard	Vehicle leasing BV71ZJZ, DX67UYD, DY20HTT, BC21NLU, BW21NYH	£2,215.23
npower	Electricity bills for various locations, includes invoices previously not paid spanning back to 2021	£3,560.18
Source for Business	Water bills including sewerage charges for various locations	£3,306.84
Staff/Members	Salaries and expenses February 2025	£37,590.10
Barrie King	General Works Site Wide - Contractor	£1,050.00
The Cliff House	Mayors Tea Party, Guest funded at £16.50 per person (82)	£1,253.00
HMRC Cumbernauld	Tax and NIC – December 2024	£12,964.76
HCC (Hants LGPS)	Pension Contributions – December 2024	£12,820.57
AquaCare	February Monthly Water Hygiene Monitoring at Indoor & Outdoor Bowls Club, Ashley Youth Centre, Ashley Sports Ground, Fawcetts Field & Fernhill	£1,642.82
Rejuvenate	Provision of managed services & all IT support + Line rental charges February	£1,523.95
WPGGroup	Fawcetts vehicle + plant fuel	£4,668.71
Barrie King	General Works Site Wide - Contractor	£1,050.00
John Shutler	Crown lifts and high priority tree works	£2,041.76
Juice	Website form development for Grant Aid Application & Allotment Waiting list. Poster design and artwork	£1,218.00
Merlin Lighting	Christmas Lights display - Supply of new festoon lighting & stripping of old lighting + installation	£9,532.56
Npower	Electricity including Recreation Events Supply, Sports Pavilion, AS-BOC, Moore Close/ Fawcetts. For period 01.02.25 + 28.02.25	£1,826.38
NFDC	Mixed waste bins servicing 01.04.25 to 30.09.25 & Town Hall offices annual rent 01.04.24 - 31.03.25	£8,674.76
Staff/Members	Salaries and expenses March 2025	£39,691.58
Lombard	Vehicle leasing BV71ZJZ, DX67UYD, DY20HTT, BC21NLU, BW21NYH - March	£2,452.61

Cllrs queried the following items:

- a) Cllr Wyn Davies asked about the ages of some of the vehicles on lease from Lombard. The Town Clerk advised that the Estates Manager has this under consideration and it might be time to change supplier. Cllr Robert Maynard said that there seems to be a tendency for lease companies to keep older vehicles going as the newer vehicles are so much more expensive and the rates we pay now are probably competitive.
- b) Cllr R Maynard asked about the monies paid to Aquacare for testing the water in respect of legionnaires disease, he wondered if that is something which could be brought in house. The Town Clerk said that this is a time-consuming operation, and not part of the core business of a Town Council. The Chairman suggested we could look at other suppliers.
- c) Cllr R Maynard asked about the money paid to Juice, particularly the amount spent on posters, Canva as a possible alternative for staff to use in house.
- d) The Town Clerk mentioned an invoice just received from NFDC in respect of the by-election last October in the sum of £8,600 – a large increase since the last by-election. Cllr Steve Clarke said that this must be what has been spent as NFDC cannot charge more.

RECOMMENDED: That the Schedule of Payments for the period 01 February to 31 March 2025 in the sum of £241,381.41 be ENDORSED for Town Council approval.

123. FEBRUARY ACCOUNTS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 2 - Monthly Accounts for February. The Town Clerk advised that Amenities is currently £51k over budget, predominantly due to employing contractors for ground works.

This is offset by F&GP which is currently under budget by £95k including a £12k saving on Town Development, £15k on Youth Co-ordination, £15k on Professional Fees and £30k more income than budget including £20k Youth Donations.

In total, the accounts show an overall saving of £44k to the end of February.

124. XMAS LIGHTS

The Assistant Town Clerk referred to Appendix 3 Christmas Lighting Display report for 2024-25 and highlighted issues which had been encountered this year including poor weather, vandalism and the first year with a new contractor, Merlin Lighting Installations.

Cllr Geoff Blunden thanked the Assistant Town Clerk for her report saying it had been a challenging year but that the display had been good all in all.



125. POLICIES

The Chairman referred to Appendix 4, being policies and procedures on Absence Management, Environmental Sustainability, Data Protection, Equality & Diversity, Recording/Use of Social Media/Exclusion of Public.

The Assistant Town Clerk advised Exclusion of the Public and Member/Officer Safety is a new policy, the others being updated in line with current legislation. Members noted these and it was,

ENDORSED: That these policies be referred to Town Council for formal adoption.

(The Assistant Town Clerk left the meeting at 6.54pm)

126. REFERRED MATTER

The Chairman referred to Appendix 5, being a matter referred from the Amenities Committee.

Minute 114: A recommendation that a financial contribution of £10,000 from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocation be agreed by the Finance & General Purposes Committee, in support of the No.1 Project.

Committee members expressed strong support for this renewed initiative.

ENDORSED: That this matter be referred to Town Council for approval of £10k CIL.

127. GRANT AID

The Chairman referred to Appendix 6, being summary of Grant Aid for 2024/25.

- a) Application from Forest Arts Centre towards the costs of redefining and repainting the parking bay lines and on-floor safety notices in their car park which will increase the capacity in the car park. The Chairman expressed disappointment that the request was not for a cultural event. Cllr Geoff Blunden felt that this amounts to a maintenance issue. Following discussions and a vote

It was,

RESOLVED:

That this particular request from Forest Arts be declined.

- b) Application from Artful Scribe for £1,000 towards the costs of delivering the Play on Words festival.

Cllr Alvin Reid pointed out that the limit for a grant is £500 and asked that this be noted on the Grant Aid request form.

It was

RESOLVED:

That Artful Scribe be granted £500 from the Grant Aid Budget under the General Power of Competence.

128. **YOUTH REPORT**

The Chairman referred to Appendix 7 – Youth Report, which had been circulated previously.

Members commended the Youth Services Manager and her team for their excellent work and noted the contents of the report.

Cllr S J Clarke stated that he had been at a meeting of the New Milton Youth Trust, noting that the Storyquest Event which takes place at Ballard Water Meadow is ongoing. It involves the Fairy Doors at the water meadow some of which need to be renewed.

The Estates Manager had advised that they will be renewed by the end of the month, and some of the noticeboards which are also involved in the trail need to be replaced as they have fallen down. Cllr A Reid suggested that the Men's Shed might be able to help with replacing them.

129. **RISK ASSESSMENTS**

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 8 Annual Review of Council Risk and advised that he and the Estates Manager reviewed the risks together and scored them in terms of both likelihood and impact. The big risk at present is investments, the £250k originally invested in Quilter Cheviot, now valued at £318k at the end of March, down from a high of £324k in December 2024. There had been a loss of £6k and a further loss is expected for April. However, the markets are recovering following initial White House dynamic policy changes.

There was some discussion about flooding and power outages and the need to work with NFDC on a local Disaster Recovery Plan and Emergency Planning generally.

The Town Clerk mentioned that the lease of the Town Hall comes to an end in 2028.



Cllr Alvin Reid asked if there was any other risk systems which we might look at as we have been using the Local Council Risk Assessment (LCRS) program for some years. The Town Clerk advised that he would investigate other alternatives.

RESOLVED: That the Risk Assessments for 2025/26 be endorsed for Town Council approval.

130. RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 9 Risk Management Strategy Report and drew attention to the impact of LGR, a new risk for the Town Council, in particular budgetary issues.

There was discussion about potential changes which LGR will bring, and the possible areas of work that might be passed over to Town and Parish Councils, with associated risks.

RESOLVED: That the updated Risk Management Strategy for 2025/26 be endorsed for Town Council approval.

131. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATES

The Chairman advised that he will be undertaking the Oakhaven Walk again this year to raise funds for the Oakhaven Hospice. The walk is taking place on 17th May. The Communications Officer is sending out an email giving details of the walk and a link for sponsorship, noting the recent rise in National Insurance had really hit the hospice sector very hard and therefore any sponsorship would be very welcome.

132. NEXT MEETING **MONDAY 9 JUNE 2025** at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, New Milton.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8pm.

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____



Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
120	Vodafone information	ASAP	Estates Manager
122	Schedule of Payments	13.05.25	Town Council
125	Policies & Procedures	13.05.25	Town Council
126	Referred Matter – CIL	13.05.25	Town Council
127(b)	Grant Aid – Artful Scribe	ASAP	Assistant Town Clerk
129	Risk Assessment 25/26	13.05.25	Town Council
130	Risk Management Strategy	13.05.25	Town Council

Distribution:

Town Councillors

District Councillors J L Cleary

County Councillors M Kendal, F Carpenter and K Mans

Estates & Facilities Manager

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