

CANGO USERS' FORUM

Appendix 1

Councillor full name

home address or

Members' Secretariat

19 DEC 2022

Copy - as sent to 78 County Councillors

Barn Farm,
Lower Mead End,
Sway, Lymington,
Hampshire. SO41 6EL

01590 682223

Mobile :- 07765 200 370

1st. December, 2022.

Dear Councillor *surname*

Road Traffic Act, 1985 and Consultation on Proposed Changes to Supported Passenger Transport Services May-July, 2022.

Has Hampshire County Council acted unlawfully?

Section 63 (1)(a) of the above Act states that A County Council has a Statutory Duty to secure the provision of such public transport services as the Council consider it appropriate to secure to meet any public transport requirement within the County which in their view would not be met apart from any action taken by them for that purpose?

This is a lawful duty and not a power imposed on Hampshire County Council (H.C.C.).

Although the Act has been substantially changed by both the Transport Act, 2000 and the Local Transport Act, 2008, the Public passenger transport services remain as defined in Section 63 of the 1985 Act.

When exercising a Statutory Duty H.C.C. must observe its public law obligation to act fairly, rationally and legally.

The above Consultation, although fulfilling a legal requirement to consult, was certainly not conducted fairly or reasonably. As a consequence H.C.C. was not honouring its legal duty.

Continued.

Road Traffic Act, 1985 and Consultation on Proposed
Changes to Supported Passenger Transport Services, 2022.

1st December, 2022

The reason being that Hampshire County Council (H.C.C.) has compared 2020/2021, the year of strict Covid 19 pandemic lockdown rules for comparison with 2019/2020 when Covid 19 had little or no impact on passenger numbers. Not only is this comparison unreasonable it is grossly unfair on passengers who had observed the rules because of their age, disability or vulnerability. It is even more unfair to use the drop in patronage as a reason to severely cut or change a bus service which, until March 2020, had met every standard of performance and financial value that H.C.C. itself had set in 2007.

This is the situation here in the New Forest with Cango C32 and C33 bus services. You may have a similar situation in your area. If you have I should be very pleased to gather this information.

The proposed cuts and changes are so severe that for more than 80% of the present users Cango will be rendered unusable and take away the very reasons for designing the timetable and flexible route by H.C.C. in 2007.

I am sure that you will know that the New Forest is uniquely different from other countryside areas of Hampshire. Villages are generally more linear in form, since they sit in high quality arable farming land with large farms and estates. Usually there is a spine road with a ribbon of dwellings or closely related spur roads.

The historic difference in the New Forest, which has created its own uniqueness, is that the ancient pastoral system of commoners' small holdings and small farms, has led to a network of small lanes and roads without footpaths. All of these have their own ribbon of mainly small dwellings.

Even in the village of Sway there are principal roads without pavements, where the road is the only place to walk.

Continued.

Road Traffic Act, 1985 and Consultation on Proposed
Changes to Supported Passenger Transport Services, 2022

1st. December, 20

In the whole New Forest there are four 'Defined Villages' all having approximately equal residency. Sway is one of these. The difference is that Ashurst, Lyndhurst and Brockenhurst all have commercially operated bus services five days a week with a minimum one hourly service in both directions, Sunday and Bank Holiday services and, in the summer, the New Forest Tour buses. Sway has just one Cango vehicle operating a sparse service. Even the last service from New Milton has to be booked.

The proposal is to make the services so useless that it will not be of benefit to anyone and H.C.C. will say it is a 'Cannot Go' service in six months time. It must not happen.

A very brief story of New Forest Cango is important to relate.

In 2006 it was proposed that Cango C32 and C33 services be withdrawn. More than 40 passengers robustly challenged the Leader of Hampshire County Council (H.C.C.) the late Councillor Ken Thornber, C.B.E., at a Sway Parish Council (S.P.C.) meeting in January, 2007.

Ken Thornber was highly respected in his more than 40 years continuous service to H.C.C. with almost two decades of elected leadership. If a problem was placed before him, he always investigated the problem himself.

In this case he spent a whole day on Cango to learn from the driver and every passenger the importance of the service to its users and to what extent it might be improved.

The result was that, at the next S.P.C. meeting, Ken Thornber told the Councillors of his findings. In particular he said how impressed he was by the variously disabled and challenged young adults at the Fortune Centre of Riding Therapy at Wootton Hall. These students, under supervision, used Cango to help them integrate into society. Cango was also used for access to and from work placements at riding establishments and small farms in the countryside. It was also used for shop or charity work in the local towns and villages.

The late Ken Thornber then sent the Head of Passenger Transport, Keith Willcocks with a Community Transport Officer and a Community Care Officer to Sway to discuss with users, improvements to Cango.

At that time Lymington and New Forest Hospital had moved to a new out of town location at Ampress.

Continued.

Road Traffic Act, 1985 and Consultation on Proposed
Changes to Supported Passenger Transport Services, 2022.

1st, December, 2022

New timetables were designed with important timed stops and a flexible route in two room zones. The well designed timetables allow passengers to book most hospital appointments to suit Congo times. In the case of the afternoon visiting, it allows spouses, relatives and friends to visit and return from any point in the service area. Congo is the only bus having access to the hospital from the West.

By 2008 passenger numbers increased by 247% and the cost per passenger trip had dropped below the maximum figure acceptable to Hampshire County Council (H.C.C.) As stated before this timetabling and financial target; set in 2007, had been maintained until March, 2020. A period of fourteen years.

Everyone knows that we are in a serious financial crisis. None more so than the disabled, blind, vulnerable, elderly and even Ukrainian refugees who are utterly dependent on these Congo services for work (voluntary and salaried), doctors and other health professionals appointments, shopping and other independent living needs. To deny these residents a vital bus service for a mere 0.4025% saving of the total £80 million saving required is neither fair or reasonable.

When, a few years ago, Cambridgeshire County Council began a similar move to cut its subsidies for public transport services, it was challenged by the organisation 'Campaign for Better Transport' in a judicial review. Pre-judgement caused Cambridgeshire to undertake a complete review.

Every statement in this letter can be validated in the documents relating to it.

As with the recent setback in the economy, the forecast for recovery is that it will be slow but the setback brought about by Covid 19 has so far, in 2022, shown Congo recovery to be around 28% down against the 47% drop used in the consultation. Fare payments are about 8% down. Each month it is improving.

Thank you for reading this long letter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or if public transport services in your area are as seriously affected.

At this season of goodwill, I respectfully offer good wishes and wish you every blessing for 2023.

Copies to:
 Minister of Transport,
 Two local M.P.s,
 Council Members via Clerks,
 Lymington Times and New Millen Advertiser.

Yours sincerely,



John W. Warden, Chairman.



AUDITING SOLUTIONS LTD

Appendix 2

New Milton Town Council

Internal Audit Report 2022-23 (Interim)

Claire Lingard
Consultant Auditor

For and on behalf of
Auditing Solutions Ltd

Background

Statute requires all town and parish councils to arrange for an independent internal audit examination of their accounting records and system of internal control and for the conclusions to be reported each year in the Annual Return.

This report sets out the work undertaken in relation to the Internal Audit process for the 2022-23 financial year; the Interim review took place, on site on the 7th and 8th November 2022.

Internal Audit Approach

In concluding our review for the year, we have again had regard to the materiality of transactions and their susceptibility to potential mis recording or misrepresentation in the year-end Statement of Accounts contained within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). Our programme of cover is designed to afford appropriate assurance that the Council has appropriate and robust financial systems in place that operate in a manner to ensure effective probity of transactions and to afford a reasonable probability of identifying any material errors or possible abuse of the Council's own and the national statutory regulatory framework. The programme is also designed to facilitate our completion of the 'Internal Audit Report' as part of the Council's AGAR process, which requires independent assurance over a number of internal control objectives.

Overall Conclusions

We have followed up the suggestions and formal recommendations made in our FY2021-22 reports and acknowledge that the members have noted and considered these in their deliberations and have implemented these as appropriate. The Council has continued to make significant business processes and performance improvements, and report that, on the basis of the work undertaken to date in the current year, the Council continues to operate robust and effective internal controls in all areas examined to date. Resultantly, only two recommendations for improvement have been made which are detailed in the main body of this report and the appended Action Plan.

We have noted that the Council has continues to keep public health matters in mind as the country emerges from the Covid situation. The Clerk/RFO and his team are again to be complimented on the exemplary performance of New Milton Town Council the economic recovery phase, which is very much, work in progress.

Once again, we commend the Clerk/RFO, Assistant Clerk and their team for their continued professional management and administration of the Council's finance, governance and delivery functions. As in previous years, the requested audit files and associated documentation were presented for audit in timely and professional manner by the Clerk/RFO and the Assistant Clerk, making this in-person review a relatively straightforward process.

We ask that Members consider the content of this report and acknowledge that the report has been formally reviewed and adopted by Council.

Detailed Report

Review of Accounting Records & Bank Reconciliations

Our objective here is to ensure that the accounting records are being maintained accurately and currently and that no anomalous entries appear in cashbooks or financial ledgers. The Council uses the Omega accounting software to maintain its accounting records, which also provides the basis for preparation of the year-end Statement of Accounts and Annual Return.

The Council maintains the public funds under its management in three National Westminster Bank accounts, A Quilter Cheviot Investment Account and a Churches, Councils and Local Authorities Public Sector Deposit Fund (CCLA PSDF).

The services of external contact accountants (DCKs) are employed to maintain the day-to-day accounting records and prepare the year-end detailed Statement of Accounts / Annual Return data. We have to date: -

- Verified that an appropriate cost centre and nominal ledger structure remains in place for 2022-23;
- Agreed the opening Trial Balance in the accounting software for 2022-23 to the closing Financial Statements for 2021-22 to ensure that all the detailed balances have been properly rolled forward;
- Checked and agreed two sample months' receipts and payments transactions (April and September 2022) from all NatWest accounts, including the daily "sweep" transfers, to the relevant Omega cash books;
- Noted that the Council has, as per the recommendations in our prior year internal audit report, taken action to diversify its investments, to ensure as far as it is possible to do so, that the council's funds are protected whilst generating a reasonable rate of return;
- Noted the contents of the latest Quilter Cheviot investment report, covering the period from the to the 30th September 2022 confirming total funds invested in the amount of £270,978.00 (£317,182 as at the 30th September 2022);
- Noted that the Council continues to maintain a CCLA PSDF account with the intention of transferring the half-year Precept payment directly into this account. The Account balance as at the 30th September 2022 stood at £500,000 (£500,000 as at the 30th September 2022); and,
- Checked and verified the Rialtas bank reconciliations, for all the Council's bank and investment accounts as at the 30th April, 30th September 2022 to ensure that there are no long-standing, uncleared items or other another anomalous entries arising.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising during this area of our review warranting further comment or recommendation.

Review of Corporate Governance

Our objective is to ensure that the Council has robust corporate governance documentation and processes in place, and that, as far as we may reasonably be expected to ascertain (as we do not attend Council or Committee meetings) all meetings are conducted in accordance with the

adopted Standing Orders and no actions of a potentially unlawful nature have been or are being considered for implementation. We have: -

- Noted that the Council received an Unqualified Audit Certificate from the External Auditors on the 21st September 2022,
- Reviewed the Full Council and Standing Committee minutes (except Planning) for the financial year to the 30th September 2022 to ensure that no issues affecting the Council's financial stability either in the short, medium or long term exist;
- Noted that the Council last reviewed and re-adopted its revised combined Standing Orders and Financial Regulations at the 18th March 2022 meeting of the Full Town Council (revision number 11) under minute reference 132c;
- Noted that the Council confirmed that it continued to meet the criteria to avail itself of the General Power of Competence, and Resolved to readopt the General Power of Competence for FY 2021-22 during the Annual Meeting of the Town Council on the 9th May 2022, under Minute reference 9;
- Noted that the Council's website has now been redeveloped, is fully compliant with the prevailing Accessibility legislation and is very easy for visitors to use and readily access information;
- Noted that the Council provided the opportunity for the Exercise of Public Rights for 32 working days including the first 10 working days in July, from the 30th June to the 12th August 2022 inclusive, rather than the 30 days as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations for the examination of the 2021-22 financial year financial statements and supporting documents;
- Noted that the Council has reviewed the Council's Risk Strategy at the Amenities Committee of the 25th July 2022, under Minute reference 34, where Members received a report from the Town Clerk advising that two items, one of moderate and one of minor risk be added to the register in relation to the Council's Investment Risks.

The Council's main Health & Safety and Business Risk Registers have not been formally reviewed during the financial year to the 30th September 2022;

- Noted that the Clerk/RFO and Assistant Clerk continue to take all reasonable steps to ensure the Council's immediate and ongoing compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This includes, but is not limited to, arranging secure off-site cloud backup facilities, the ongoing development of new Information & Data Protection and Privacy policies, the provision of dedicated Council e-mail addresses for all council members and administration staff, and the amendment of forms and e-mails to ensure users of the council's services are aware of what data will be retained and the Council's Privacy Policy.

We note that the Council continues to make significant investment into Youth Services which currently include the proposed development of a community facility on a site at Gore Road to replace the Phoenix Centre sold by Hampshire County Council. It is anticipated that the New Milton Youth Trust, a CIO established by New Milton Town Council in December 2019 will assist in securing funding to develop the new youth and community facility.

The Council is currently engaged in the upgrade of the Ashley Recreation Ground and the establishment of a new youth facility there, which is hoped will eventually be run by the New

Milton Youth Trust. As at the date of the interim audit, £265,000 of section 106 monies received from New Forest District Council have helped to fund the project.

We have noted the Chairman's report, delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council, and the Minutes of the Full Council and all its standing committees (with the exception of the Planning Committee which is beyond the remit of the Internal Audit process) and find that New Milton Town Council continues to place the public health and well-being of its constituents at the heart of its Neighbourhood Plan, with the Council's youth services widely regarded to be amongst the best available in the New Forest.

Additionally, the play and recreation areas in the Council's control provide sports and leisure facilities for all age groups within the town. All these facilities have been subject to regular risk review during the ongoing public health situation as detailed later in this report.

The Council continues to support several initiatives promoting local business and shopping areas, including award winning spring and summer floral displays and the Christmas Lights. Additionally, the Council now manages the "Go New Milton" website which promotes local shops and businesses.

In relation to the Council's forward planning, we note that the Clerk/RFO and Members have made all reasonable efforts to implement the recommendations made in our prior year reports and continue to undertake a thorough budgetary process (which is commented on later in this report), and focus on the provision of services to constituents and the promotion of New Milton as a shopping destination and business friendly town.

The Clerk & Members have continuously demonstrated a prudent approach to financial management that have, and will continue to assist the New Milton community as the recovery from the public-health lockdowns continues. It should also be noted that despite the additional demands placed on the council, its operational targets have been largely met, with major new projects, as mentioned above, in progress during the first half of the 2022-23 financial year.

Conclusions

There is only one matter arising in this area of our interim review warranting formal comment or recommendation: The statutory Notice for the Exercise of Public Rights is required to be published for a period of exactly 30 days to include the first ten working days in July, commencing at least one day after the formal announcement is made. For the 2021-22 financial year, the Notice for the Exercise of Public Rights was made for the period of the 30th June to the 12th August 2022; 32 days in total.

R1. The Statutory Notice for the Exercise of Public Rights is required to be for the period of exactly thirty (30) days, to commence at least one full day after the announcement is made, to include the first ten working days in July.

Review of Expenditure

Our aim here is to ensure that: -

- Council resources are released in accordance with the Council's approved procedures and budgets;
- Payments are supported by appropriate documentation, either in the form of an original trade invoice or other appropriate form of document confirming the payment as due and/or an acknowledgement of receipt, where no other form of invoice is available;

- An official order has been raised for all purchases and service delivery where one would be expected;
- All discounts due on goods and services supplied are identified and appropriate action taken to secure the discount;
- The correct expense codes have been applied to invoices when processed; and
- VAT has been appropriately identified and coded to the control account for periodic recovery.

We have commenced our examination of payments for compliance with the above criteria, selecting a sample of 59 payments in total, comprised of all payments individually above £3,000, together with every 30th cashbook transaction (irrespective of value), and totalling £373,119.76 and equating to approximately 63% of all non-pay expenditure processed to the above date with no issues arising.

Conclusions

There are no matters arising in this area of our review warranting further comment or recommendation.

Review of Assessment and Management of Risk

Our aim here is to ensure that the Council has put in place appropriate arrangements to identify all potential areas of risk of both a financial and health and safety nature, whilst also ensuring that appropriate arrangements exist to monitor and manage those risks in order to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition. Consequently, we:

- Noted that the Council's insurance cover continues to be provided by Zurich under a 'Select for Local Councils Policy' on a long term agreement to reduce costs.

The current year's policy schedule running to 31st March 2023 is as follows:

Policy number: YLL-272009-6773

Term of cover: 01st April 2022 to the 31st March 2023

Key features

- Public Liability £15M
- Employers Liability £10M
- Fidelity Guarantee £2M
- Hirers' Liability £2M
- Libel & Slander £250K
- Personal Accident £2M per incident / £500k per person
- Legal Expenses £200k

We consider the above appropriate for the Council's immediate requirements.

- Noted that the Council's Risk Management Strategy remains robust with a dynamic approach to Risk Management with Risk Registers reviewed on an ongoing basis throughout the year and governed by an umbrella Health & Safety policy;
- Noted the Council's Risk Strategy. Received a report from the Town Clerk that 2 items re moderate and minor risk be added to the register in relation to the Council's

Investment Risks, at the 25th July 2022 meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee under Minute Reference 34;

- Reviewed the Council's arrangements for the regular inspection of playgrounds and recreational areas, noting that Zurich Insurance inspect the playgrounds monthly, making recommendations for replacement, repair and general maintenance. Additionally, the Council's play areas, MUGA and skatepark are visually inspected weekly by members of the Estates Team who have been trained and are qualified to carry out weekly visual inspections. These inspections are recorded, and hard copies kept on file and also electronically stored in their own folder on the Town Council shared drive.

Any minor repairs required as a result of inspections are carried out by the Council's nominated and certified sub-contractor 'Vitaplay'. Any equipment or area deemed to be in need of a major repair and/or presents a potential health and safety risk is taken out of service immediately until a full repair can be undertaken. All play areas, the MUGA and Skatepark are fully inspected annually, generally in July, by the Play Inspection Company.

Finally, in this area of our review and as an adjunct to the above, we have noted that the Town Council now organises and holds Play Inspector Courses carried out by qualified instructors. These courses are open to employees of other government and not for profit entities. To date, New Milton Town Council has hosted course delegates from organisations including New Forest District Council, Lymington, Pennington Town Council, Horsham Town Council, Warminster Town Council, and the Fleet Air Arm Museum Yeovilton.

This training process continues to enable New Milton Town Council to train members of the Estates Team at net neutral cost, as the course fees have been offset by the income received from running the course, which is a benefit both to the Council and its Constituents and is, in this auditor's opinion, an exemplary initiative.

Conclusions

There are no matters arising in this area of our review warranting formal comment or recommendation. Members are reminded to review and formally readopt its Business and Health & Safety Risk Registers at least once annually, during the financial year.

Review of Budgetary Control & Reserves

Our objective here is to ensure that the Council has a robust procedure in place for identifying and approving its future budgetary requirements and level of precept to be drawn down from New Forest District Council; also, that an effective reporting and monitoring process is in place. We also aim to ensure that the Council retains appropriate funds in general and earmarked reserves to finance its ongoing spending plans, whilst retaining appropriate sums to cover any unplanned expenditure that might arise. We have:-

- Noted that the Council's actual expenditure to the 30th September 2022 is broadly in line with its budgetary projections for the financial year, although there are potential cost overruns with the Ashley ground community facility upgrade due to the significant increases in materials and labour due to the high rates of inflation;
- The Council continues to conduct a robust Budget setting and Precept determination process, against a pre-agreed schedule of planning and review meetings, which had just commenced and was ongoing at the time of the Interim Internal Audit; and,

- We note that members continue to be provided with detail of the current budgetary performance at the monthly meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising in this area of the Final Update review warranting formal comment or recommendation.

Review of Income

In considering the Council's income streams, we aim to ensure that robust systems are in place to ensure the identification of all income due to the Council from its various sources, to ensure that the invoice is submitted in a timely manner and that effective procedures are in place to pursue recovery of any outstanding monies due to the Council. We note that, in addition to the Precept, the Council continues to receive income from a variety of sources including sports field hire, allotment rents, property leases, market stall rents, investment interest, recovered VAT, sundry wayleaves, sponsorship, grants and CIL monies.

As with all Council's throughout the UK, New Milton's income stream was impacted by the mandatory 'lockdowns' imposed by Central Government in relation to the Covid-19 situation, we are pleased to note that the Council's non-Precept income has recovered to almost pre-lockdown levels:

- We have noted that the Council undertook a formal review of its fees and charges during the prior-year budget setting process, with increases approved accordingly for the 2022-23 financial year;
- We have checked and agreed all receipts recorded in Cashbook 1 to the corresponding Bank Statements for the months of April and September 2022;
- We have reviewed all invoices and receipts pertaining to Sales Receipts as entered on Cashbook 1, for the months of April and September 2022, ensuring that the fees charged were in accord with the published scales with no undue delays identified in settlement by customers;
- We have checked and verified the receipt of Allotment Rental payments for the 2022-23 financial year to the 30th September 2022, with reference to the Allotment Rental control sheet, Sales Ledger, Sales invoices, Cashbook and corresponding bank statements with no issues arising;
- Reviewed the Sales Ledger for aged debt and any anomalous entries; and,
- We have reviewed the way in which cash and cheque receipts are recorded for banking for the financial year to 30th September 2022 with no issues arising.

Conclusions

There are no matters arising in this area of our review warranting formal comment or recommendation at this time. We noted that there were a small number of aged debts recorded on the Sales Ledger and discussed these with the Clerk/RFO who advised us of his strategy to manage this situation which we consider both reasonable and proportionate. We shall review the aged debt situation again during the year-end audit.

Review of Petty Cash Accounts

The Council operates a limited petty cash account, topped up "as and when" with periodic cheque re-imbursements (generally of £250 each). The DCK contractor maintains appropriate Excel based control sheets to analyse the expenditure for posting to Omega.

We have checked and agreed two sample month's transactions, April and September 2022, to ensure that each payment was supported by relevant supplier invoices / till receipts and that the expenditure was appropriate for the Council's activities with no issues arising. To this end, we have checked and verified the DCK produced and approved Petty Cash reconciliation reports, which have been endorsed in the Management Accounts by the F&GP Committee and which have been certified by the Clerk/RFO.

We have checked and verified the 30th September 2022 Petty Cash reconciliation in the amount of £292.74.

Conclusions

There are no matters arising in this area of our review warranting formal comment or recommendation.

Review of Salaries

In examining the Council's payroll function, we aim to confirm that extant legislation is being appropriately observed as regards adherence to the Employee Rights Act 1998 and the requirements of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) legislation as regards the deduction and payment over of income tax and NI contributions, together with meeting the requirements of the LGPS (further revised with effect from 1st April 2020 as regards employee contribution percentage bandings).

The Council continues to outsource the production of its monthly payroll to its contractor accountants; we have examined the September 2022 payroll, which included payroll payments to councillors in relation to their emolument payments, the grounds and office staff. We have: -

- Noted that the Council's payroll function continues to be outsourced to DCK Accounting Solutions;
- Ensured that the Council has approved employee pay rates for the Financial Year, ensuring that these were correctly applied;
- Ensured that appropriate PAYE tax codes are being applied to both employees and members' allowances;
- Checked and verified all Timesheets for the September 2022 pay period had been correctly tabulated, transcribed and authorised and that the corresponding variable pay had been paid at the correct overtime rate;
- Ensured that NI deductions were computed accurately based on the current "tables";
- Ensured that the correct percentage superannuation deductions, based on the revised LGPS, are being applied where appropriate; and,
- Verified that net salary payments have been made to staff appropriately and been recorded accurately in the accounting records, noting that all salary and members' allowance payments continue to be made by BACS.

Conclusions

There are no matters arising in this area of our review warranting formal comment or recommendation.

Review of Investments and Loans

We have noted that the Council continues to maintain a detailed Investment Strategy and policy.

Account	Cashbook Number	Reconciled balance as at 30-09-22
Current Account	CB1	£1,725.00
First Reserve Account 1	CB2	£06.47
Business Reserve Account 2	CB3	£6,662.26
Special Interest Bearing Account 3	CB5	£916,868.25
		Total £925,261.98

As at the 30th September 2022 the Council held surplus funds, totalling circa £925,262, as indicated in the table above, (£132,666 as at the 31st March 2022). The detail of each account has been checked and verified against the prime documentation, i.e. bank statements as at the 30th September 2022, cashbook entries and corresponding bank reconciliations.

The Council also holds a share portfolio investment with Quilter Cheviot which had decreased in value by £17,696 (5.5%) to £305,775 during the financial year to the 31st March 2022, and has decreased in value again, by a total of £50,767 (15.78%) from the original investment, to £270,978.00 as a result of market volatility. Checked and verified against the Quilter Cheviot report dated 30th September 2022.

Noted that the Council maintains a CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund (PSDF) account, opened on the 17th September 2021, and that the funds balance as at the 30th September 2022 stood at £500,000.

The Clerk/RFO and Members had reduced the funds invested with the National Westminster Bank not covered by the Government's Financial Services Compensation Scheme from £1,140,022 as at the 30th September 2021 to £47,666 as at the 31st March 2022. However, with the receipt on the 29th September 2022, of the second tranche of the Precept Payment in the amount of £593,000, additional CIL funds and S.106 funds in the amount of £265,000 received from New Forest District Council, the level of funds that were not protected by the FSCS as at the 30th September 2022 stood at approximately £840,262.

We have discussed the above matter with the Clerk/RFO who was in the process of developing a plan for the investment of these excess funds to be discussed at the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

The Council has no loans repayable by or to it currently.

Conclusion and recommendation

We have noted the Clerk/RFO and Council's actions, in the prior year, aimed at reducing the level of public funds under the Council's management which had been significantly successful. However, it is critical that the level of exposed funds are reviewed on a continuous basis, so that the public's funds are protected to the extent that it is possible to do so.

- R2. *The Clerk/RFO and Members should continuously monitor the level of the public funds under its management at all times, keeping in view the level of funds that are not protected by the Government's FSCS, and take all reasonable and proportionate steps to minimise this.*

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NOTE TO REPORT

We confirm that all confidential & sensitive information, supplied for the purposes of this audit including, Personnel Minutes, Payroll and Employment data have been permanently deleted from Auditing Solutions Ltd.'s servers and any printouts made for the purposes of this audit have been destroyed in accordance with the Company's data and document retention policies and with the prevailing General Data Protection Legislation.

FY2022-23 Action Plan

1

Rec. No.	Recommendations	Response
Review of Corporate Governance.		
R1	The Statutory Notice for the Exercise of Public Rights is required to be for the period of exactly thirty (30) days, to commence at least one full day after the announcement is made, to include the first ten working days in July.	<i>Noted</i>
Review of Investments and Loans		
R2	The Clerk/RFO and Members should continuously monitor the level of the public funds under its management at all times, keeping in view the level of funds that are not protected by the Government's FSCS, and take all reasonable and proportionate steps to minimise this.	<i>Noted</i>

NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2023

Month & Year	Town Council	Amenities Committee	F & GP Committee	Planning Committee
	Monday	Monday	Monday	Alternate Thursdays
January 2023	3 (Tues)	16	30	19
February 2023 5 Civic Service	13	28	-	2 & 16
March 2023 20 Annual Towns	27	-	13	2, 16 & 30
April 2023 PURDAH PERIOD	-	-	-	13 & 27
May 2023 4 ELECTIONS	15 Annual Meeting	30 (Tues)	-	11 & 25
June 2023	26	-	12	8 & 22
July 2023 10 Indian Obelisk	-	11 (Tues)	24	4 (Tue) & 20
August 2023 23 WWII - Clock	7	-	-	3, 17 & 31
September 2023	-	4	18	14 & 28
October 2023	2	16	30	12 & 26
November 2023 12 Remembrance	13	27	-	9 & 23
December 2023 2 Carol Service	-	-	12 (Tues)	5 (Tue) & 21

**All meetings are normally held at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, 2 Ashley Road, BH25 6AS
Members of the Public are welcome to attend any meeting and may speak as follows:**

- a) If time permits, Town Council meetings will be adjourned at the end for a 'DEMOCRATIC HALF HOUR' during which members of the Public, with the approval of the Chairman, may initiate discussion on matters of community interest and which fall within the responsibility of the Town Council.
- b) Prior to the commencement of other meetings, and at the discretion of the Chairman, a short period of Public Participation may take place. Members of the public may speak on any item(s) appearing on the public agenda, or on any other matter that falls within the Committee's terms of reference.

Note: The Annual Town's Meeting is a public meeting normally required by statute to be held in the period between 1 March and 1 June (inclusive) each year (not 2020) at which any elector for the town area then present may speak at any time at the discretion of the Chairman, on matters arising or on matters of direct concern in the said area.

But it is not a Town Council meeting

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES – WAR MEMORIAL RECREATION GROUND
(CHARITY NO. 301891) FOR THE YEAR ENDED - 31 MARCH 2022**

After Covid, the Recreation Ground gradually reopened for events from August 2021.

Sunday 1 August - Afternoon of Music, Antigua Joe Our first event was well attended

Saturday 21 August – Bee Fayre organised by Conservation Connection New Forest

Sunday 5 September – Afternoon of Music, Blue Tides Band – very well attended

Thursday 11 November – Armistice Day at the War Memorial, RBL assemblage

Sunday 14 November – Remembrance Sunday Wreath-laying and outdoor service at the War Memorial, with Christchurch Scout Band was well attended by community

As reported in the local New Milton Advertiser & Times newspaper at the time, thousands of visitors flocked to the New Milton Easter Extravaganza to enjoy one of the town's first major public event since the pandemic hit.

Organised by the Lions Club of New Milton, the festivities on Saturday 16 April 2022 at the War Memorial Recreation Ground were blessed with good weather.



Crowds of up to 4,000 visitors were thought to have attended (photo Steve West)

New Milton's debut Easter event came after 2021's planned revival of the popular Xmas festival - that was cancelled by Covid in 2020 - was stymied by a storm.

A host of stalls filled the green, selling a variety of locally sourced food and crafts, as well as offering a host of activities. These included the New Milton Men's Shed, which sold items made by members to raise funds for their new base at Fawcett's Field. Barton's Long Meadow Friendly Dog Club provided a local Dog Show.

Receipts and Payments Account for 2021-2022 is attached and shows net expenditure of £6,717.13 (2020-2021: £5,017.76) with Payments of £20,638.65 (2020-2021: £24,551.34) less Income received of £13,921.52 (2020-2021: £19,533.58).

New Milton Recreation Ground - Receipts and Payments 2021-22

Receipts (Consolidated)		Payments (Consolidated)	
1011	Rent NM Outdoor Bowls Club	4012	Rates
1012	Rent NM Indoor Bowls Club	4013	Water
1016	Clubhouse Income	4014	Electricity
1039	Events	4015	Gas
1111	Hire NM Outdoor Bowls Club	4017	Sewage & Refuse
1113	Hire of Public Tennis Courts	4101	General Maintenance
		4102	Grounds Maintenance
		4103	EOS Pitch Maintenance
		4109	Weedkiller
		4110	Chemicals & Sprays
		4113	Pest Control
		4125	Skate Park Maintenance
		4101	Groundsmans Wages
		4990	Expenditure Finance from Reserves
Total Receipts		Total Payments	
13921.52		20638.65	
		Excess of Payments over Receipts	
		6717.13	
		0.00	
		182.63	
		878.65	
		0.00	
		365.38	
		6748.84	
		27655.58	
		398.60	
		0.00	
		0.00	
		385.00	
		849.27	
		4174.70	
		-21000.00	

I certify that the Receipts and Payments detailed above in respect of New Milton Recreation Ground for the financial year ended 31 March 2022 is a true extract from the Town Council Accounts for that year.

G P Flexman

K E Craze

Town Development Manager's Report

Town Council 3rd January 2023

Appendix 5

1. *Cost of Living Crisis*

Support is still being set-up across the town, as we continue to update the Town Council website with information and links to warm spaces, food larders, chat and support groups. The Town Council website also signposts to advice on cost of energy support. I have identified further interest in setting up a warm space and potentially community fridges. Both Hampshire County Council (up to £5000) and New Forest District Council (up to £1000) have funding for those looking to set up a warm space.

2. *Socially prescribed cookery courses*

As our socially prescribed cookery courses continue into the new year, I am delighted to say the classes have received New Forest District Council funding of £437 from Cllr Steve Davies, so thank you. We are still seeking further funding to enable the classes to continue beyond March 2023 when the current funding ends. To date the classes have seen 53 participants learn about low carb and healthy cooking, with fantastic results. The classes are already fully booked for January and February.

3. *Shared Prosperity Fund*

NFDC are waiting to hear on an application for the governments Shared Prosperity Fund, submitted earlier this year. The opportunity to bid for £1,000,000 funding over a three-year period would help to support communities, high street initiatives and opportunities for the deprived.

4. *Green Infrastructure*

NFDC within their Green Infrastructure work, have identified five potential improvement projects for New Milton, although funding would need to be found for any work. The projects are being reviewed by the Amenities Committee.

5. *Building Relationships*

Since moving into the role of Town Development Manager, it has been a priority of mine to introduce myself to local businesses, charities, groups and associations within New Milton, either in person or via a friendly telephone call. To date, I have enjoyed meeting with the Memorial Centre, New Milton Residents Association, Lions Club, Community Centre, Friends of Ballard Water Meadow, Friends of the Indian Memorial, Coastal Medical Partnership, Police, Quaker House, Pebble Beach and Forest Arts Centre. Over the coming months, I intend to dedicate time to build further relationships with those I haven't yet had the pleasure to meet.

6. *Christmas Window Dressing*

I am delighted to report the results of the New Milton 2022 Lions Club Xmas Window Dressing Competition.

Retail category

First: Rose Petals

Second: Mower Services

Third: Milford Supplies

Charity category

First: MIND

Second: Oakhaven

Third: Revitalise

It's superb to see incredible displays from all participants. So much so, that it was hard to choose a winner.

