

## NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF A MEETING OF NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 24 JUNE 2024 AT 6.30PM IN NEW MILTON TOWN HALL

Councillors: P	J Adams	p	P Moores
	J Baker	p	R Murrow
p	G Blunden	p	A D O'Sullivan
p	S Clarke	p	R A Reid - Chairman
p	K Craze	p	D Rice-Mundy
	M Craze – Vice Chairman	P	V Schooling
p	S Davies	p	M Scott-Johns
p	W Davies	p	K Trehorn
p	D Hawkins	p	D N Tungate

#### In Attendance:

G Flexman - Town Clerk

J Bean - Committee Administrator

S Welch – Administrative Officer

The Chairman welcomed Councillors, Officers, and 3 members of the public a representative of the press and Sgt Arron Wood. He took the opportunity to formally welcome Sam Welch who has recently taken up the role of Administrative Officer.

The Chairman invited Sgt Arron Wood to provide an update in relation to crime in the town. Sgt Wood advised that there had been 24 incidences of shoplifting in May 6 were carried out by one female, possibly more, she has just come out of prison, the Magistrates had given her a conditional discharge in relation to these offences, and she would be returned to prison if she committed further crimes. Shoplifting is a big problem, and shoplifters are coming from outside the town, he said that they take it very seriously and that New Milton has the best outcome rate by prosecutions.

There had also been a few dwelling burglaries, and some vehicle thefts although these incidences have gone down.

He spoke about the issue with children on dirt bikes which is causing a great deal of concern on local social media. He takes the stance that the parents are to blame and that when caught, the culprits are dealt with robustly and the bikes confiscated.

In response to a question from Cllr D N Tungate he advised that taking photographs and film of them would be helpful, he is very concerned about the potential for a serious accident involving one of these bikes.

Cllr D Rice-Mundy asked about electric scooters. Sgt Wood said that they are completely illegal save in areas designated by the government under a trial scheme. No such scheme exists in New Milton. Electric scooters are light electrically charged vehicles, and are subject to the rules of the road, including insurance.

Cllr K Trehorn asked if any measures had been put in place to prevent the shoplifting lady re-offending. Sgt Wood stated that he had made representations to the Magistrates to ban her from the shops she had targeted, but they declined to do that.

The Chairman thanked Sgt Wood for his update.

#### **15. APOLOGIES**

Cllrs J Baker and M Craze.

#### **16. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS/MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

The Chairman took the opportunity to remind everyone that the rules governing the pre-election period apply to this meeting. He asked that members bear them in mind. He then reported on his engagements for the past six weeks since becoming Mayor.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
14 <sup>th</sup> May	Annual Meeting voted in as Chair
15 <sup>th</sup> May	Safer New Forest event
17 <sup>th</sup> May	Mornington Court 3 <sup>rd</sup> Birthday
18 <sup>th</sup> May	Dementia Week Tea Dance at St Mary Magdalene
21 <sup>st</sup> May	Freemasonry in the Community event
22 <sup>nd</sup> May	Nedderman Centre
25 <sup>th</sup> May	Lions May Fayre
2 <sup>nd</sup> June	Afternoon of Music
6 <sup>th</sup> June	D Day Memorial
7 <sup>th</sup> June	Opening of the New Mens' Shed
8 <sup>th</sup> June	New Forest Airfields D Day Service
8 <sup>th</sup> June	D Day Anniversary Concert Memorial Hall
10 <sup>th</sup> June	Rugby Club Fun Day at Ashley
22 <sup>nd</sup> June	National Meadow Day at Ballard

#### **17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**18. MINUTES**

The Chairman referred to the minutes of the Annual Council meeting.  
It was

**RESOLVED:**

***That the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 14 May 2024, having been circulated, be confirmed, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.***

The minutes were duly signed.

**19. CORRESPONDENCE**

The Town Clerk referred to:

- a) A letter from Cllr Lulu Bowerman Portfolio Holder for Highways at Hampshire County Council, who has replaced Cllr Nick Adams-King since he became Leader of Hampshire County Council.

The letter advises of Carriageway Surface Repairs to the whole length of Station Road. The letter arrived in response to one sent by the Town Clerk to Cllr Nick Adams-King on behalf of our Town Mayor.

***“The works are currently programmed to start 01 July 2024 in Station Road New Milton until 05 July 2024. The working time is typically from 7:00pm to 6:00am weeknights. While the works are carried out the road will be closed to vehicular traffic. Access for residents and business will be maintained wherever possible. Pedestrian access will always be available.”***

- b) A letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024 from Sammy Miller, being a local resident.

***“I am writing once again regarding the recent roadworks saga at Bashley Cross Road which have resulted in the road being closed for four days in May and eight days so far in June. Despite these closures and disruption to businesses and traffic, there are, believe it or not still numerous potholes by Meyrick Farm which are both vehicle damaging and dangerous. I estimate that this patch up job must have so far cost over £350,000 and road is still not ready for resurfacing. This leaves us with the most expensive but sadly one of the worst roads in Europe.”***

Cllr S Davies advised that the road has now been resurfaced.

**20. QUESTIONS - None.**

## 21. REPORTS BY COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

There being no County Councillors present the Chairman invited reports from the District Councillors and took the opportunity to remind them of the rules governing the pre-election period and asked them only to report on meetings and activities where details are already in the public domain.

Cllr S Davies advised that the Annual Report from May is still in draft form and that it will be published after the election, and he will report at the next Town Council meeting in August.

Cllr G Blunden advised that:

- The renovations to the clifftop shelters are underway and there are notes on them to contact NFDC with any comments.
- The damaged beach huts at Hordle and Milford have been removed.
- The Sea wall repairs at Hordle are underway.
- The green waste scheme is proving a success with 23,000 customers signed up to it.
- No Mow May is now over, and lessons are being learned from it.
- The Street Scene team will be attending various town council meetings across the district to give presentations on district matters of interest.

Cllrs S J Clarke A D O'Sullivan and K E Craze had nothing to report. Cllr D N Tungate advised that his meetings have been cancelled although a planned bus tour had taken place.

## 22. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### a) Planning Committee

Cllr S Clarke, Chairman of the Planning Committee, submitted the minutes of the Committee meetings held on 14 and 23 May, plus 6 and 20 June 2024 and moved their adoption.

### **RESOLVED:**

***That Minutes 1 to 33 inclusive of the meetings held on 14 and 23 May, plus 6 and 20 June 2024 be received.***

### b) Amenities Committee

Cllr G Blunden, Chairman of the Amenities Committee submitted Minutes of the meetings held on 14 and 28 May 2024 and moved their adoption.

Cllr Blunden updated members on some items, advising that the resurfacing at Ashley referred to at Minute 11 will start on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> June. The official opening of the Youth Facility referred to at Minute 12 takes place on 20<sup>th</sup> July. As to Minute 13, the Ballard Lake Enhancements are due to commence in the week beginning 15<sup>th</sup> July.

**RESOLVED:**

***That Minutes 1 to 18 inclusive of the meetings held on 14 and 28 May 2024 be received.***

c) Finance & General Purposes Committee

Cllr D N Tungate, Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee submitted Minutes of the meeting held on 14 May and 10 June 2024 and moved their adoption.

**RESOLVED:**

***That minutes 1 to 19 inclusive of the meetings held on 14 May and 10 June 2024 be received.***

**23. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS**

The Schedule of Payments, previously considered by F&GP, was submitted for Council approval. It was unanimously,

**RESOLVED:**

***That the Schedule of Payments No 01/24/25 in the sum of £148,783.75 for the period 1 - 30 April 2024 be approved.***

The Schedule of Payments was duly signed by the Chairman and Town Clerk.

**24. BDO REQUEST**

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 1, an extract from the F&GP Minutes of the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> June previously circulated.

External auditors BDO had previously scrutinised Risk Assessments but had now turned their attention to internal audit and raised some general issues.

The Town Clerk took the committee through F&GP Minute 16 and highlighted that BDO requested we officially confirm Auditing Solutions reappointment every year.

The Town Clerk expressed his view that this is not necessary and that the relationship with internal auditors is an ongoing one similar to that of our solicitors, insurers and accountants. Nevertheless, in order to comply with this requirement, their appointment or reappointment will be undertaken at the next F&GP meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

External Auditors BDO also asked us to “confirm that internal audit does not undertake tasks or give advice which may compromise or fetter their independence or invalidate the smaller authority’s insurance”. Internal Audit Work Program was issued in 2022, reviewed during COVID when a lot of audit work was on-line. Occasionally, Internal Audit looks at operational matters.

Finally, the Town Clerk advised that BDO now require a signed form confirming we have no conflicts of interest with BDO LLP. Members unanimously confirmed that there are no such conflicts of interest, and the form was duly signed by the Town Clerk and the Chairman.

**25. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

The Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, previously circulated as Appendix 2, were submitted for Council approval.

It was unanimously,

**RESOLVED:**

***That Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 be approved.***

The Financial Statements were signed off by the Town Clerk and the Chairman.

**26. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT**

The Internal Audit Report for 2023/24, previously circulated as Appendix 3, was submitted for Council approval. The Town Clerk drew attention to responses to recommendations on the final page of the report particularly R7 which dealt with investment strategy, to be reviewed at the next F&GP meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> July.

It was then

**RESOLVED:**

***That the Internal Audit Report for 2023/24 be approved and that its recommendations be noted and forwarded to Auditors.***

**27. ANNUAL RETURN**

The Annual Return for 2023/24, previously circulated as Appendix 4, was submitted for Council approval.

It was then unanimously,

**RESOLVED:**

***That the Annual Return for 2023/24 be approved and signed as follows:***

***a) Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24***

***b) Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24***

The Annual Governance Statement was approved and signed off by the Town Clerk and Chairman. The Accounting Statements 2023/24 were signed by the RFO in advance of the meeting, as per the updated form. The Chairman then counter-signed it at the meeting.

The accounts are as yet unaudited by the appointed external Auditor BDO, and are subject to the Exercise of Public Rights, in accordance with the attached details of Notice and Publication of the 2023-24 AGAR.

Members expressed their thanks to the Town Clerk and his team for producing the year end accounts and reports in a timely manner.

**28. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS SERVING ON EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

- a) Cllr A O' Sullivan reported that Forest Arts Centre is doing well, events are selling well, and some are sold out. They have an upcoming open day with 70 people booked to attend.
- b) Cllr B Murrow reported that the recent open day at the Dementia Allotment had gone well with a good number of visitors, and it is hoped that the future events will follow the same pattern.

**29. TOWN DEVELOPMENT MANAGER**

The Chairman referred to Appendix 5 the Town Development Managers Report for June which was noted.

**30. NEXT MEETING**

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024 at 6.30pm – Town Hall New Milton

The Chairman closed the public session of the meeting for the Democratic Half Hour but as no members of the public wished to speak, he closed the public session at 7.10pm prior to the private session as follows.

**PRIVATE SESSION**

**PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS) Act 1960**

The Chairman moved that the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business pursuant to section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reasons of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted:

**31. COUNCIL AWARDS**

Members agreed to the nomination of Sammy Miller as the fourth recipient of the prestigious award of Honorary Freeman of New Milton, that the Town Council is entitled to bestow upon those who have rendered eminent service to the Town, subject to his acceptance of the nomination.

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Distribution:

Town Councillors

District Councillors J L Cleary, C Ward

County Councillors M Kendal, F Carpenter, K Mans

New Milton Police

Press

Alan Watson – NewMilton.net

Sue Larking - NMRA

Mark Jeffries – Estates & Facilities Manager

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