

## NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF A MEETING OF NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> JANUARY 2023 AT 6.30 PM AT NEW MILTON TOWN HALL

Councillors:	p K E Craze (Chairman)		R Murrow (Vice-Chairman)
	M Brownsea	p	D A Rice-Mundy
	p G R Blunden		D Samber
	p S J Clarke	p	V E Schooling
	p M Craze	p	A D O'Sullivan
	p S P Davies	p	D N Tungate
	p D E Hawkins	p	C V Ward
	p R A Reid	p	J G Ward
	p H Wallis-Dowling		

#### In Attendance:

G Flexman - Town Clerk

C Rabbito – Town Development Manager

J Bean – Committee Administrator

The Chairman welcomed Councillors and Officers, one member of the public and PS Arron Wood to the meeting and as Mayor of the Town he invited Members to stand in 1 minute silence to remember Cllr Alan Rice who passed away recently.

#### 77. APOLOGIES

Cllrs M Brownsea, R Murrow and D Samber

#### 78. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS / MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

The Chairman said the Town Clerk had been in touch with HCC who will be recognising Alan's service at their full County Council meeting on Thursday 23 February 2023 when there will be an opportunity for those Members who knew Alan to offer their tributes. They will also arrange for their flag at Elizabeth II Court to be flown a half-mast from sunrise to sunset on the day of the funeral.

Cllr G Blunden suggested that the Town Council should do the same with their flags on the day of his funeral. Members expressed agreement.

The Chairman reported on his recent engagements:

16 November	The unveiling of the Mencap Mural on the wall at Boots.
3 December	The Annual carol service held at St Mary Magdalene
9 December	Ballard School Carol Service represented by Cllr R Murrow
21 December	Inaugural business breakfast meeting at Kingfishers Care Home

The Chairman thanked Cllrs D Hawkins and R Murrow for standing in for him recently.

79. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All members have a dispensation to discuss and set a Budget and Precept for 2023-24.

80. MINUTES

The Chairman referred to the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 15 November 2022 and moved their adoption.

It was

**RESOLVED:**

***That the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 15 November 2022, previously circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.***

The Minutes were duly signed.

81. CORRESPONDENCE

The Town Clerk referred to the following items of correspondence:

- a) A handwritten letter from John Warden, Chairman of the CANGO Users Forum, to Hampshire County Councillors in relation to the CANGO bus service, questioning whether Hampshire County Council has acted fairly, rationally, and legally in relation to the service.
- b) An email from a local resident thanking the Town Council for their swift action on three occasions, firstly when he reported some torn anti slip wire netting on a woodland footbridge which he had tripped over, this was replaced on the same day. Next, there was a problem with a broken water main in Cull Lane, water was trying to flow into the ditch but it was full of leaves and water froze on the surface. One of his neighbours attempted to clear the leaves, but this was difficult, the council came the following day and cleared all the leaves, fixed the leak and the water was flowing well. Finally, he reported that a dog waste bin had been vandalised during the Christmas break, he was planning to report it but when he arrived on the scene members of the council team were rigging up a temporary solution and the broken bin has now been replaced. He said that he had lived in the town for 66 years, and his mother before him and was pleased to award the team Top Marks.
- c) An email from a local resident thanking the Estates Manager for replacing the baby swings on the recreation ground in a prompt and efficient manner.

82. QUESTIONS – None

The Chairman came out of session at 6.45pm and invited PS Arron Wood to update the meeting on policing in the town.

PS Wood reported that there had been more burglaries in the town. They had arrested someone who has been taken into custody and would be appearing in

Court on 5<sup>th</sup> January. Since they have been in custody there have been no more burglaries.

There has been a lot of malicious damage in the town, broken windows and so on. The team had been off for a few days but were now back at work and had requested permission for overtime so that they could patrol into the early hours of the morning in the hope of catching criminals in the act.

PS Wood answered some questions from councillors:

- a) Councillor G Blunden advised of the recent damage at Ashley Recreation ground, PS Wood said he was aware of it and that this area would be an area of focus. Damaged windows costing £7.5K to replace would be the subject of an insurance claim.
- b) Cllr V Schooling asked about the regularity of night patrols, whether there is any connection with drink and drugs and whether PS Wood thought he could catch the culprits. PS Wood confirmed that he had applied for an overtime budget to fund late night patrols, he did not know if there was any connection with drink or drugs until he had caught the culprits, he stated that he was determined to catch those responsible for these crimes and his team would work hard towards achieving that.

PS Wood finished by expressing his gratitude for people attending the public meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> December at the Memorial Hall and advised that he plans to have further public meetings in the future.

PS Wood then left the meeting and the Chairman went back into session at 6.55pm.

### 83. REPORTS BY COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Cllr S Davies reported that he was attending a meeting of the environmental panel the following day and that the timetable for the waste strategy would be changed due to delays at the proposed Eastleigh plant and delayed a year.

Cllr S Clarke flagged the fact that he had recently been approached by a couple of residents in relation to fireworks in the town which were causing disturbances to people and pets from October through to the New Year. He thought this could well become quite an area of concern generally.

The Chairman advised that he had a meeting in relation to the new Co-op at Barton and that should be opening in January.

He also reported back on the toilets at Barton, and new toilets could now be expected in June.

Cllrs G Blunden, S Clarke, C Ward, J Ward and N Tungate had nothing to report.

#### 84. COMMITTEE REPORTS

##### a) Planning Committee

Cllr S Clarke, Chairman of the Planning Committee, submitted the minutes of the Committee meetings held on 24 November, 8 and 22 December and moved their adoption.

Regarding Minute 170a Cllr Clarke thanked Cllrs D Hawkins and A Reid for attending the District Council Planning meeting relating to the Brockhills development. The matter is still ongoing and there will now be a further meeting with a number of residents who have been obtaining evidence in relation to the current traffic conditions in the area.

Cllr S Clarke also mentioned that there will be a public meeting on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> January to further consider HCC Minerals & Waste Consultation starting at 6pm in the Town Hall, noting any concerns regarding the inclusion of Ashley Manor Farm in the draft document.

Regarding Minute 180c this relates to a variation to the licence for the War Memorial Recreation Ground to allow greater flexibility for the community and the Council's needs.

**RESOLVED:**

***That Minutes 151 to 182 inclusive of the meetings held on 24 November, 8 and 22 December, be received.***

b) Amenities Committee

Cllr G Blunden, Chairman of the Amenities Committee, submitted Minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2022 and moved their adoption.

**RESOLVED:**

***That Minutes 151 to 182 inclusive of the meeting held on 28 November be received.***

c) Finance and General Purposes Committee

Cllr N Tungate Chairman of the F&GP Committee submitted, the minutes of F&GP Committee meeting held on 19 December 2022 and moved their adoption.

**RESOLVED:**

***That Minutes 69 to 83 inclusive of the meeting held on 19 December 2022 be received.***

d) Executive Committee

Cllr K Craze, Chairman, submitted the minutes of the Executive Committee meetings held on 11 November and 5 December 2022.

**RESOLVED:**

***That Minutes 35 to 54 inclusive of the meetings held on 11 November and 5 December 2022 be received.***

85. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

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

**RESOLVED:**

***That the Schedule of Payments No 06/22/23 in the sum of £348,587.45 for the period 1 October – 30 November 2022 be approved.***

The Schedule of Payments was duly signed.

86. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS SERVING ON EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Cllr A O' Sullivan reported on his involvement with Forest Arts Centre. He advised that they had put on some good shows and plenty of activities including their wellness walks. They had partnered with other organisations, including the Milton Musical Society who had a five-night residency with their show Westenders. This had resulted in high takings for the bar. All in all, the organisation is going from strength to strength.

Cllr G Blunden asked about the new parking arrangements at Forest Arts as he had heard from a couple of residents who had been hit with £100 fines. Cllr A O' Sullivan said that the new arrangements had been well publicised, and that people were advised to enter their vehicle details as they entered the building, but that said he would mention it at their next meeting.

87. COUNCIL BUDGET/PRECEPT FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2023/24

The Chairman referred to the budget and precept papers endorsed by the F&GP Committee, proposing a budget of £1,279,891 & Precept of £1,246,391.

Cllr D Hawkins said he could not support any increase in the precept, citing the cost-of-living crisis, increase in energy costs and austerity.

Cllr A O' Sullivan referred to Minute 75b of the F&GP Committee meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> December. The vote was 3-2 in favour. The 3 voting for the budget were all on the Executive Committee and could not realistically vote against it. In the last 4 years the budget had increased by 26.6%. His view was that that the Council could avoid any increase by using underspends and reserves.

Cllr A Reid supported the comments of Cllrs Hawkins and O' Sullivan. He mentioned that there are Council Tax relief schemes in operation which could help some residents.

Cllr J Ward wanted to record his opposition to the increase and stated his view that any increase should be avoided, and would prefer to see a reduction.

Cllr S Davies' view was that it behoves the Town Council to be robust about their finances. BCP was fighting off bankruptcy although their finances had been healthy when the councils had come together. The precept is a small part of the budget and residents get a lot for their money. HCC were likely to require a bigger increase. If it is not increased, he questioned where cuts should be made. His view was that reserves are for rainy days and real emergencies.

Cllr N Tungate, said that he had expressed his disquiet at the Executive Committee Meetings, and wondered why a proportion of last year's underspend could not be employed to prevent the increase.

Cllr H Wallis-Dowling felt that the current cost of living crisis amounts to a rainy day, and a real emergency, such that reserves should be used.



Cllr S Clarke's view was that failing to increase the precept now would be storing up trouble for the future. Inflation is currently high for everyone including the Town Council. The 5% increase is moderate. As far as the underspend is concerned it is his understanding that the Ashley Hub project will suck this up as it was now exceeding its budget due to increased costs of materials.

Cllr A O' Sullivan proposed that there should be a transfer of £60K from this year's budget to next year's budget either from reserves or underspend to avoid an increase in the precept.

The Town Clerk was invited to give further information and he stated that the expected underspend had been calculated at the half year mark and prior to the huge increase in costs for the Ashley project. In all likelihood, the year-end outturn would be on budget.

Based on the above, the precept for 2023-24 could be reduced by transfer of £33.5K from General Reserves, maintaining an overall increase in Precept of 5%, the same as this year.

Cllr A O' Sullivan's counter-proposal was put to the vote with 7 in favour and 7 against, the Chairman used his casting vote against the amendment.

**It was**

**RESOLVED:**

***That the 2023/24 budget of £1,279,891 be accepted and a precept of £1,246,391 was approved using £33,500 from Reserves.***

*RECORDED VOTE: Cllrs J Ward, N Tungate, D Hawkins, A O' Sullivan, C Ward, H Wallis-Dowling and A Reid voted against. Cllrs K Craze, G Blunden, S Clarke, M Craze, S Davies, V Schooling and D Rice-Mundy voted for.*

**The Town Council element of Council Tax will be £117.32 next year for average Band "D" properties in New Milton compared to £111.67 this year.**

88. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Chairman referred to Appendix 2, the first Interim Interim Audit report for 2022/23.

The Town Clerk read out the two recommendations and the proposed responses, with both being “noted”.

89. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 3, Calendar of Meetings for the whole of 2023 with a couple of changes, two planning meetings had been moved from a Thursday to a Tuesday, these will be held on 4<sup>th</sup> July and 5<sup>th</sup> December. The Civic Service date has been added, it will take place on 5<sup>th</sup> February, and the Annual Carol Service will take place on 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

***RESOLVED: That the Calendar of Meetings for the year 2023 be adopted.***

**(Post Meeting Note The date for the Amenities meeting in January has now been moved from 16<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> due to a clash with an NFDC meeting.)**

90. CHARITY COMMISSION – ANNUAL RETURN

The Chairman referred to Appendix 4, the Annual Return for 2021/22 for the War Memorial Recreation Ground Charity for the year ending 31 March 2022.

Members approved this ahead of it being submitted to the Charity Commission before the end of the month, with figures being updated online.

91. TOWN DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

The Chairman asked the Town Development Manager to present her report which was previously circulated at Appendix 5.

Cllr S Davies stated that he thought the town was busier and he wondered if there was any evidence of an increase in footfall. The Town Development Manager said that New Forest District Council were recording this, she had not yet received the results, but will check with them.

Cllr V Schooling asked for further details on the Shared Prosperity Fund (Levelling Up grant) bid by New Forest District Council. The Town Development Manager advised that NFDC is considering various projects, Cllr G Blunden advised that our share of any monies which NFDC succeed in obtaining is likely to be small.

Cllr G Blunden then referred to a recent email about help available for supporting Village Halls and reference was made to the email attached, noting there is a limited time frame for this.

Cllr C Ward and Councillor N Tungate advised that they would use some of their Community grant to support the socially prescribed cookery courses, that Chiara referred to.

Cllr A O' Sullivan asked for more detail about the Green Infrastructure project. Cllr G Blunden advised that this is being considered by the Amenities Committee, that there is currently no new funding for it, but he was always looking for quick wins which do not cost much; £10K of CIL monies has already been put aside for this project, and the matter was discussed at the last Amenities Committee meeting (Minute 84 refers).

92. ANY ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT/IMPORTANT

None

93. NEXT MEETING – **Monday 13 February at 6.30 pm in the Town Hall.**

**Democratic Half Hour**

Alan Watson Chair of the Residents' Association wished all members a Happy New Year.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.45pm.

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

Distribution:

Town Councillors

District Councillor Mrs J L Cleary

County Councillors M Kendal, F Carpenter, K Mans

New Milton Police

Press

Alan Watson – NMRA

Editor - Focus

Mark Jeffries – Estates & Facilities Manager

**From:** Matt Wisdom <[Matt.Wisdom@NFDC.GOV.UK](mailto:Matt.Wisdom@NFDC.GOV.UK)>

**Sent:** 03 January 2023 09:26

**Subject:** Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Fund

Dear Town/Parish Clerk,

### **Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Fund**

The government announced (20 December) that the Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Fund had opened for applications.

The fund is managed by the charity Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) and village halls in England can now apply for grants to improve and modernise their facilities.

Village halls interested in applying can request grants from £7,500 to £75,000, and up to a maximum of 20 per cent of eligible project costs. Capital grants will be allocated to support infrastructure improvements, the refurbishment of facilities, such as kitchens and toilets, and measures to improve energy efficiency.

The application window will close on 20 January 2023, with successful applicants being able to draw on the funding from April 2023.

More information, including how to apply for the fund, can be found linked below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/village-halls-to-see-major-revamp-as-platinum-jubilee-fund-opens>

<https://acre.org.uk/platinum-jubilee-village-halls-fund/>

This email has been copied to NFDC Councillors for information.

Kind regards

Matt

#### **Matt Wisdom**

Service Manager – Democratic & Support Services

New Forest District Council

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# 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)	23	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**