



Minutes of the Meeting of the Amenities Committee of New Milton Town Council held on Monday 07 April 2025 at 6.30pm at the Town Hall, Ashley Road, New Milton.

Present:

Chairman:	p G R Blunden - Chairman	p M Craze - Vice Chair
Councillors:	D E Hawkins	p R Murrow
	p J Baker	p A D O'Sullivan
	p D Rice-Mundy	p V Schooling
	p K Trehorn	

In attendance:

Councillors: R A Reid

Officers: Graham Flexman - Town Clerk
Theresa Elliott – Assistant Town Clerk
Sam Welch – Administration Officer

The Chairman welcomed Councillors, Officers, five Members of the public and Jill Colclough of NFDC.

Bob Lord, Chairman of the Friends of Ballard Water Meadow and Volunteer Ranger, spoke regarding a small clearing in Fawn Gardens on the Crest estate, adjacent to Woar Copse. The group is working to restore this area into a wildflower meadow and the wildlife population associated with one.

Bob expressed surprise that three new trees, which are counterproductive to this goal, had been planted in the area. He explained this action was not in line with the previously agreed management plan submitted in 2022.

Bob also spoke on Agenda Item 9, relating to CIL Bids and asked if the committee would consider requesting funds to upgrade the public right of way between the Milford Road lay-by and the Golf Course through Barton Common. Currently, the route is almost impassable in wet weather, and alternate paths created by people trying to avoid the wetter sections are degrading the native ground flora.

He also requested any updates on the potential source of pollution in the Ballard stream, which he believes may be linked to recent ditching work undertaken by Ballard School.

[Post Meeting Note: An email was received from Ballard School who explained that “The ditch was re-dug by hand on school property to reinstate existing and legacy drainage system from the new playing fields. The re-digging of ditches every few years is good maintenance and doing it by hand near the public is best practice.”]

The meeting went into session at 6:35pm following the Public Participation period.

108. APOLOGIES

Cllr D Hawkins

109. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

110. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In response to Bob Lord, the Chairman noted the comments regarding Fawn Gardens and explained the method of deciding projects for CIL funding is a committee process, but assured Bob's comments would be taken on board

111. MINUTES

The Chairman referred to the previous Committee minutes of 03 March 2025.

It was,

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 03 March 2025, previously circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The minutes were duly signed.

112. MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman reviewed the action points from the previous committee meeting.

The Town Clerk confirmed action points had been addressed, with minutes 99 and 106 being discussed at agenda items 12 and 14, respectively tonight.



Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
98a)	Rugby Club Fun Day	17.03.25	F&GP
98b)	Lions Club event	04.05.25	Estates Manager
98c)	New Life Church event	18.04.25	Estates Manager
98d)	Wipeout World event	26.04.25	Estates Manager
98e)	Carrick Wood Geocache	ASAP	Comms Officer
99)	Men's Shed Plans	07.04.25	Asst Town Clerk
106)	Cricket Club lease	17.03.25	F&GP

113. CORRESPONDENCE

- a) The Town Clerk informed members that Alan Caswell, husband of 55 years to Sue Caswell, the Vice-Chairperson of the New Milton & District Twinning Association, passed away peacefully on 15th March at the age of 87 years. Members expressed their sincere condolences.
- b) The Town Clerk referred to an article from New Milton Advertiser & Times regarding the recent passing of Paul Brockman. It was noted that a celebration of his life is scheduled to take place at the New Milton Memorial Centre on Saturday, 26th April, from 2pm to 5pm, and is open to all who knew him.
- c) The Town Clerk referred to an email from Angela Jackson of the New Milton Community Garden, which included a mock-up of the proposed noticeboard design that was circulated to members. The Chairman noted the design was in keeping with existing noticeboards and would be installed within the community garden itself.

It was also reported that a recent site visit had taken place to discuss the positioning of the shipping container, the placement of which had been previously agreed, subject to certain conditions being met. It was confirmed that the container would be located near the trees, and that insurance coverage would be provided under the Town Council's policy if possible. Members expressed their approval of the proposals.

- d) The Town Clerk referred to an email from New Milton Cricket Club, requesting permission to install advertising boards on both sides of the clubhouse entrance. The Town Clerk advised that, following legal advice, there is no provision for such advertising in the draft lease agreement.

Additionally, it was noted that much of the building is communal, forming part of a multi-user site. There is potential for advertising to promote organisations that the Town Council or others may not support, which could lead to complications.

Members agreed that, in the light of these considerations and following legal advice, permission should not be granted for advertising boards at the clubhouse entrance.



114. STATION MASTERS HOUSE

Mandy Hayes and Julia Stamper of the Friends of New Milton Station (FNMS) gave a presentation on the No.1 Project, concerning the future of the Station Master's House and Southside Building.

The Chairman welcomed the presenters and took the item out of session at 6:56 pm

Julia commended Mandy for her leadership of the Friends group and noted recent improvements made to the station environment and explained that the Station Master's House had previously been identified as a key heritage asset through the Neighbourhood Plan, and widely agreed the building should be preserved.

Mandy outlined the history of the project, originally led by the Town Council in 2018, which stalled in 2021 due to structural concerns. Network Rail had reportedly invested around £100,000 in the property prior to this. FNMS have since revived the project with the aim of bringing the building into community use. A public consultation will help determine the final use of the building.

FNMS see their role as facilitators, bringing together partners rather than determining the final use. Flexibility is key to attracting funding. A fundraising campaign to raise £40,000 in seed funding will launch on 18 April 2025, covering surveys, legal and lease costs, planning, and consultation. The project will be managed by the Hampshire Community Rail Partnership (HCRP), a Community Interest Company with experience restoring disused station buildings. They are currently working on Romsey Station House and received national recognition in 2023.

Julia added that raising the £40,000 would demonstrate community commitment and strengthen future grant applications, including to the Railway Heritage Trust.

The Chairman invited questions from members.

- Cllr K Trehorn asked about the breakdown of Network Rail's reported £100,000 investment along with a query from Mandy Hayes whether damp issues had been resolved. Cllr O'Sullivan confirmed that remained and believed the majority of funding had been used for electrical works and external decoration.
- Cllr J M Baker asked about timescales. Julia indicated that once the £40,000 was raised, preparatory work could begin immediately. Mandy advised that the anticipated timeline for the project was 18 to 24 months, and noted that although the lease process could take 6–9 months, other tasks could proceed alongside it.

The Chairman resumed the meeting at 7:16 pm

- Cllr A D O'Sullivan expressed strong support for the project and noted the enthusiasm of Nick Farthing, Chair of HCRP, and Gary Wilburn, Managing Director of EP Architects. He encouraged public, organisational, and financial backing from the Council.
- Cllr V E Schooling emphasised the importance of visible support and suggested a financial contribution from the Council to help initiate fundraising.
- Cllr R A Reid echoed this, highlighting the need for both financial and practical assistance.



The Chairman acknowledged the Council's past involvement and expressed confidence in the renewed approach. He proposed that a financial contribution of £10,000 from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocation be made to demonstrate the Town Council's commitment to the initiative and support the community fundraising campaign. This was seconded by Cllr A D O'Sullivan and unanimously supported by the Committee.

It was,

RECOMMENDED: That a financial contribution of £10,000 from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocation be approved by the Finance & General Purposes Committee, in support of the No.1 Project.

115. LAND USE REQUESTS

The Town Clerk referred to the following requests:

a) Car Parking at Fawcetts

A request was received from Events by Stir to use Fawcetts Field for car parking on Saturday, 6th September 2025, in support of the Clifftop Music Festival in Highcliffe. As the event takes place outside the town, it was considered appropriate to apply a charge. The same company made a similar request last year, for which a fee of £400 was applied. A revised charge of £500 plus VAT was proposed for 2025. It was noted that the revised fee would cover any maintenance and associated costs.

It was,

RESOLVED:

That the use of Fawcetts Field for car parking be permitted in support of the Highcliffe Music Festival on 6th September 2025, subject to a charge of £500 plus VAT and the Council's usual terms and conditions of use.

b) Lions VE80

The Chairman referred to Appendix 1, which set out the proposed site plan for the VE80 Get Together event at the Recreation Ground on 4th May 2025. It was noted that the plan was required in connection with licensing arrangements, as previously agreed.

It was,

RESOLVED: That site plan for the VE80 Get Together on 4th May 2025 be approved.



116. CIL BIDS

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 2, which outlined the outcome of five Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) bids recently submitted to New Forest District Council (NFDC). Of the five bids submitted, three were recommended, with a combined total of £113,550.

It was also noted that the Friendly Dog Club is in line to be awarded £75,000 in CIL funding for replacement of their building, which is situated on land leased from the Town Council. This was a separate and independently submitted bid.

The Town Clerk reviewed the successful bids. One Town Council bid — for a footpath at Ballard across the water meadow — was not approved through this round of funding. However, it was confirmed that this project would be covered under the previously allocated Green Route CIL funding.

117. XMAS LIGHTS REPORT

The Assistant Town Clerk referenced Appendix 3 and provided an update on the first year of the Council's contract with Merlin Lighting Installations, noting that while some challenges were encountered mainly due to outdated and inconsistent infrastructure — the contractor had responded well, and improvements are expected going forward.

A key proposal for 2025 involves installing suspended lighting in three large street trees (between Boots and the former Halifax) and two outside Vision Express. This method is intended to reduce damage caused by wind and passing vehicles. A preview was displayed last year and received positively. This had been suggested by Merlin as a solution to ongoing outages at the location.

The Assistant Town Clerk recommended installing 22 lighting units per tree to achieve greater visual impact. Members were advised that guarantee is a standard 12 months, no guarantee is provided on the longer lifespan of the new lighting stock, insurance provisions are in place to cover damage caused by adverse weather, which has led to losses in previous years.

During the discussion, members expressed support for the proposals. Cllr A D O'Sullivan welcomed the use of two-colour tones for added contrast, while Cllr V E Schooling described the scheme as refreshing and inspiring, emphasising the joy the lights bring to residents.

Sponsorship remains strong, with support from both new and returning contributors, and the financial position is positive. Further sponsorship opportunities will be pursued. The Chairman thanked the Assistant Town Clerk and the Working Party.

ENDORSED: That the 2025 display to include 22 lighting units per large tree mentioned, with a colour scheme comprising warm white / bright white for the suspended installations. The existing festoon lighting, now beyond use, would be replaced with multicoloured bulbs, in keeping with the current scheme.

118. RISK MANAGEMENT

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 4, noting the annual review of potential risks undertaken using the Local Council Risk Assessment (LCRS) software. This year's review identified 45 risk areas and 333 potential risks.

The Town Clerk summarised key areas and highlighted 7 new risks had been added to this year's assessment. These included considerations around local government reorganisation, asset transfers, and future planning for Town Hall facilities, noting the current 25-year lease ends in 2028. There may be a requirement for more space.

The Committee was supportive of the Risk Assessments as presented. It was,

ENDORSED: That Risk Assessments for 2025–26 be considered by Finance & General Purposes Committee in conjunction with Risk Management Strategy.

119. MEN'S SHED

The Town Clerk referred to a response received from NFDC Planning regarding the request for pre-application advice on the Men's Shed proposal to construct a storage building for dust extraction equipment and to install solar panels with battery storage.

The informal advice indicated that the proposal is supported in principle, and that a planning application could be submitted, subject to appropriate supporting documentation. Key considerations include the site's location within the Green Belt, proximity to trees, potential noise impact, and the need for new materials to match the existing building.

The Chairman highlighted the importance of ensuring that materials are in keeping with the current structure, as detailed in the NFDC planning response and noted that it would be for the Men's Shed to take forward the planning application themselves.

120. BALLARD LAKE ENHANCEMENTS

Jill Colclough of New Forest District Council (NFDC) provided an update on Phase 2 of the enhancement works, confirming that the project remains on schedule and contractors are now in their fifth week on site.

Footpath installation continues, largely following desire lines and using hoggin or SMA surfaces. Several previously planted trees have been replanted due to being in the way of the new path route. Drainage improvements are also underway, including covering of an exposed surface drain that previously posed both a trip hazard and a visual obstruction along with installation of underground drainage beneath new paths.

A planned section of no-dig tarmac path on the eastern side of the site will instead be constructed using hoggin, due to tree root constraints and low overhead clearance that would pose a safety risk if the path were raised.

The Chairman welcomed the practical approach taken to preserve trees and members noted the positive improvements to the site.

121. CRICKET CLUB LEASE

The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council's solicitor is currently awaiting a response from the Cricket Club's solicitor regarding what is expected to be the final draft of the lease. The Town Clerk expressed confidence that the lease will be completed before the Committee next meets.

122. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 27 May 2025 at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, Ashley Road, New Milton.

With no further business to discuss, the Chairman thanked members and staff for attending and for their work on the committee throughout the year. Also, thanks to members of the public who regularly attended and provided comments during public participation period

Councillor R A Reid expressed his gratitude for the support he received during his tenure as Mayor. He highlighted that it had been a brilliant year with many accomplishments and concluded by saying it was a pleasure to represent everyone.

The Chairman then closed the meeting at 7:49 pm.

CHAIRMAN _____ DATE _____


SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
113c)	Insurance for container	ASAP	Town Clerk/ Estates Manager
113d)	Cricket Club advertising request	ASAP	Town Clerk
114	£10k CIL for No.1 Project	28.04.25	F&GP
115a)	Car Parking at Fawcetts	ASAP	Estates Manager
117	Xmas Lights enhancements	28.04.25	F&GP
118	Risk Management Strategy	28.04.25	F&GP
119	Men's Shed planning application	ASAP	Men's Shed

Distribution:

Town Councillors

Estates & Facilities Manager

District Councillor J L Cleary

County Councillors M Kendal, F Carpenter, and K Mans

New Milton Police

Press

Sue Larking – NMRA