



Minutes of the Meeting of the Amenities Committee of New Milton Town Council held on Monday 01 September 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:	p D E Hawkins	R Murrow
	p J Baker	p A D O'Sullivan
	D Rice-Mundy	p V Schooling
	p K Trehorn	

In attendance:

Councillors:

Officers: Graham Flexman - Town Clerk
Mark Jeffries – Estates and Facilities Manager
Sam Welch – Administration Officer

The Chairman welcomed Councillors, Officers, nine members of the public and a member of the press.

Three members of the public spoke under Public Participation.

Mandy Hayes, representing the Friends of Ballard Water Meadow, spoke in relation to Agenda Item 9. She requested that consideration be given to renaming Ballard Water Meadow as Ballard Nature Reserve, suggesting this would look neater on signage and makes clear what the site is. She also raised concern regarding members of the public feeding ducks at Ballard Lake with inappropriate food such as white bread. She asked whether the Town Council might consider installing advisory signage and additionally proposed the idea of a solar-powered food dispenser supplying suitable feed for purchase, supplying details of a supplier.

Julia Stamper asked about progress on town signage and emphasised the need to raise New Milton's profile. She referred again to the town's historic branding "twixt forest and sea" as a strong message which should be promoted more widely and offered to assist the Council in this regard. She noted support from partner organisations, referencing NFNPA Green Halo Project, and highlighted that over 80% of respondents in the Neighbourhood Plan survey valued the town's location between the forest and the sea. She welcomed Ballard Meadow designation as a Local Nature Reserve and supported the proposal to rename it Ballard Nature Reserve.

Bob Lord, Chairman of the Friends of Ballard Water Meadow and Barton Common Volunteer Ranger, spoke on Agenda Item 8d) regarding the gravel path at Barton Common South. He suggested that, as it is a public right of way, Hampshire County Council Countryside Services should be involved in maintaining the surface and access. He asked whether the Town Council had considered joint working with them. He also questioned CIL figures provided and requested a breakdown of costs. Additionally, he spoke against the gravel path proposal, suggesting instead a raised boardwalk to allow water to flow beneath. On Agenda Item 10, he claimed full support for Local Nature Reserve designation, regardless of the final name chosen.

The Chairman welcomed two members of the Friends of New Milton Station who provided a power point presentation and update on Station Masters House.

Presentation: Update on No. 1 New Milton from Friends of New Milton Station

An illustrated presentation was provided by Julia Stamper and Mandy Hayes, the project representatives, as attached. Community consultations are scheduled to take place on Friday 5th September at the Town Hall and on Sunday 6th September at the Lions VJ80 Event on the Recreation Ground and Online from 5th to 19th September.

Following their presentation, there was a Q&A session. The following matters were discussed:

Discussion was held regarding the structural safety of the building. Concerns were raised over previous underpinning and the condition of the back wall. In response, the project representatives advised that they hope the issues may not be as serious as first believed, noting that Network Rail had previously fenced off and monitored the site for 18 months before reopening it. They referred to advice from a contractor experienced in railway works, who indicated the house was unlikely to present a major issue for them, and suggested that if issues were to arise, Network Rail would be approached for funding. It was confirmed that structural engineers will be required to investigate the extent of any issues.

Attention then turned to VAT liability on the estimated £620k project cost. Cllr A D O'Sullivan confirmed the Heritage Society's support for the project and queried whether organisations involved were VAT registered, noting the potential to reclaim a proportion of the costs. The project representatives advised that, while the architect was of the opinion heritage projects should not be liable for VAT, it was acknowledged

that in practice VAT would apply. The Chairman noted that renovation works would generally be subject to VAT, whereas certain new works may not.

Further discussion covered the inclusion of a heritage museum within the floor plan, which was confirmed as a major element of the project. Clarification was given on rental arrangements, with Hampshire Community Rail Partnership to hold the lease on a peppercorn rent, and occupiers contributing a small rate. The work previously undertaken by the late Cllr Keith Craze, together with the Estates & Facilities Manager, was acknowledged, with reports confirmed as having been of assistance. It was also confirmed that the house and garden would be made wheelchair accessible as far as practicable.

The Chairman thanked the project representatives for their presentation and reiterated that the Town Council was fully supportive of the project, noting that the Council had set the foundation stone for others to continue. He acknowledged the challenges around final costs but expressed hope that, at the appropriate time, further funding opportunities such as NFDC could be explored.

Reference was made to potential CIL funding. It was confirmed that the deadline for the current round had passed, but that a substantial bid could be considered in future rounds, with the next round expected in August 2026. The Chairman wished the project every success, with Members echoing this.

The meeting then went into session, shortly after 7:15pm

31. APOLOGIES

Cllr D Rice-Mundy

Cllr B Murrow

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr D E Hawkins declared an interest regarding Agenda Item 9 as his son is on the Ashley Rugby Club committee.

33. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In response to Mandy Hayes, the Chairman expressed the view that the proposed name "Ballard Nature Reserve" appeared appropriate and the naming process would be put forward for public feedback. On the matter of duck feeding, he acknowledged it as a longstanding issue and stated that officers would be asked to look further into it. He expressed uncertainty regarding the feasibility of a solar powered duck feed dispenser.

Responding to Julia Stamper, the Chairman confirmed that signage was on the programme but noted the Town Development Manager was currently focused on the Neighbourhood Plan.

In response to Bob Lord, he confirmed that Hampshire County Council (HCC) would be consulted. He explained that detailed budget figures were currently confidential due to the tendering process, noting that these are budget figures rather than detailed ones. He acknowledged the comments made regarding the construction of the footpath and reiterated that the Council will be working with HCC.

34. MINUTES/ACTION POINTS

The Chairman referred to the previous Committee minutes of 07 July 2025.

It was,

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meetings held on 07 July 2025, previously circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The minutes were duly signed.

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

The Town Clerk confirmed that all action points had been addressed, noting that Minute 20 ("Nature Reserve WP") and Minute 24b) Advertising Policy were included as Agenda items. He also noted that the official opening of the Ballard Lake Enhancements would take place on Tuesday 9th September at 2:00pm for a 2:30pm start.



Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
20)	Nature Reserve WP	31.07.25	Comms Officer
20)	Community Garden Bin	ASAP	Estates Manager
20)	Moore Close Hedge Cut	ASAP	Estates Manager
22)	Wessex Internet Agreement	ASAP	Town Clerk
24a)+c)	Land Use Requests	August	Estates Manager
24b)	Advertising Policy – POS	01.09.25	Town Clerk
28)	Ballard Lake Improvements Official Opening	TBA	Town Clerk

35. CORRESPONDENCE

The Town Clerk referred to the following items of correspondence:

- a) Two habitat surveys from Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) were received for Ballard Water Meadow and Barton Common. These were noted by Members. The Chairman added that the reports would be circulated for any comments. The Town Clerk highlighted an interesting point that Ballard Water Meadow is not, strictly speaking, a water meadow.
- b) An email from Sue Larking, Chairman of New Milton Residents Association (NMRA), was received regarding fly tipping, specifically who to report it to and what measures residents can take to verify the credentials of builders and other contractors to ensure they hold the correct licences for waste disposal.

The Town Clerk and Estates & Facilities Manager responded clarifying that fly tipping is considered anti-social behaviour (ASB) and should be reported via the non-emergency police number 101 and to New Forest District Council.

Residents were advised that they can check the Environment Agency's Public Register to confirm whether a contractor responsible for waste removal is properly licensed. Anyone transporting waste from a client's premises must hold an Upper Tier Waste Carrier's Licence, which must be renewed every three years.

The Chairman noted that this will be further referred to NFDC for their comments.

c) An email was received from a local resident stating:

"I understand that the council is investigating if more use could be made of the land surrounding the cricket club. Would the council consider a croquet club? We would require two lawns. Each lawn 35 yards by 28 yards."

The Town Clerk highlighted tacit support had been received from the Cricket Club.

The Chairman explained the matter would be referred to the next Amenities Committee meeting on Monday 14th October 2025, pending further details, but acknowledged that it aligns with the vision plan for Fernhill Sports Ground.

36. REFERRED MATTER

The Chairman referred to Appendix 1, being a recommendation from Town Council.

The Town Clerk introduced the item, referred from Town Council, regarding an extended green loop forming a circular route around the town. The Chairman highlighted the map, noting the circular design with spokes linking the town centre to key areas such as Barton on Sea and Barton Common.

Questions were raised regarding cycling, noting the route is intended for pedestrians and not all sections are suitable for cycling. Signage was discussed, with reference to the Neighbourhood Plan meeting, and it was noted that any new signage would need to align with NFDC and Hampshire County Council to ensure consistency.

Questions regarding costs were brought up. The Chairman confirmed that CIL funds had been allocated to cover sections of the route, with a focus on addressing the worst areas first. The Estates & Facilities Manager gave the example of the recent Ballard Lake works, noting that larger projects would also be funded through CIL.

Concern was noted regarding the use of e-scooters. The Chairman noted that this was part of a wider national challenge beyond the remit of the Town Council.

It was also noted that the path adjacent to the station was in poor condition. The Estates & Facilities Manager confirmed this was a Hampshire Right of Way, outside the Town Council's remit, though small repairs could be carried out under our SLA. This path would again be reported to Hampshire County Council. The Chairman further noted that HCC's budget for such works is very limited, which is why the Town Council occasionally undertakes minor works, although capacity is restricted. Noted.



37. LAND USE REQUESTS

A request was received from New Milton Rugby Club:

“New Milton Rugby Club are hosting a mini rugby festival on Sunday 5th October where we will host 800 rugby players aged 5 yrs – 11 yrs. It’s an amazing festival of rugby and New Milton fortunate to be the host to many visiting teams across Hampshire & IOW.

I am writing to ask if NMTC would support the event with a contribution towards the portaloos similar to the Family Fun Day hosted in June?”

The Town Clerk suggested, as previously in March, that the usual £250 fee for the event be waived. This was supported by the Chairman and Members.

RECOMMENDED: That the Town Council waive the £250 fee for the Mini Rugby Festival on Sunday 5th October 2025.

38. CIL BIDS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 2, which was noted by Members. He went on to explain that applications would be considered by the NFDC Task & Finish Group on 21 October 2025, Cllr A D O’Sullivan confirmed.

39. ADVERTISING POLICY

The Chairman referred to Appendix 3 and outlined the background, noting the number of clubs supported across the town. He highlighted that many sites, including Fawcetts, the Recreation Ground, Fernhill, and Ashley, are open spaces in a rural setting, and that introducing signage would be out of keeping. He emphasised that significant work had been undertaken to reduce signage clutter.

The Chairman proposed that the existing policy remain unchanged, which was seconded by Cllr M Craze. Cllr D E Hawkins spoke against the proposal, emphasising the financial pressures on clubs, particularly the Rugby Club, arguing temporary signage on matchdays would provide valuable support without causing significant impact.

The Chairman clarified that the request before the Council related to permanent signage on fence posts and hedges. Further discussion followed, with Members raising concerns about setting a precedent for other clubs and the importance of maintaining fairness. Alternative suggestions, such as limiting signage use or trialling

temporary boards, were considered but noted to be inconsistent with the established policy of reducing visual clutter.

The Chairman then re-stated his proposal that the existing policy remain unchanged, which was seconded by Cllr A D O'Sullivan.

Upon being put to the vote, it was,

RESOLVED: That, with 5 in favour and 2 against (Cllrs D.E. Hawkins and Cllr J. Baker), the existing policy remain in place.

40. NATURE RESERVE

The Chairman referred to Appendix 4 and noted the extensive background work undertaken to get to this stage and was pleased to see the project progressing.

One Member asked whether any implications or criteria needed to be considered before the site could be formally named. The Chairman confirmed the next stage would be to contact NFDC, as landowner, seeking permission and then approach Natural England, with further stages to follow.

Another Member asked what would happen to NFDC owned land if unitary authorities were established. The Chairman responded that such land would transfer with existing policies in place, though these may be subject to future change. It was,

RESOLVED: That the designation of Ballard Water Meadow as a Local Nature Reserve be progressed.

41. LONG MEADOW PLAY AREA

The Chairman referred to the Estates & Facilities Manager for a verbal update, who advised that the working party had met some time ago and at that stage three quotations had been obtained. The process has since progressed, and as is now required, the opportunity was advertised on the Government's Contract Finder website. Eight enquiries were received before the deadline closed, two of which were rejected as not meeting the criteria. Six valid submissions remain, with scope of works and design briefs issued with responses due by 23rd September.

42. BALLARD LAKE

The Chairman invited members to the official opening of the Ballard Lake Enhancements, taking place on 9th September at 2:00pm for a 2:30pm start. He also thanked the Estates & Facilities Team for their prompt response in clearing up recent vandalism at the lake.

43. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 14 October 2025 at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, Ashley Road, New Milton.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7:44pm.

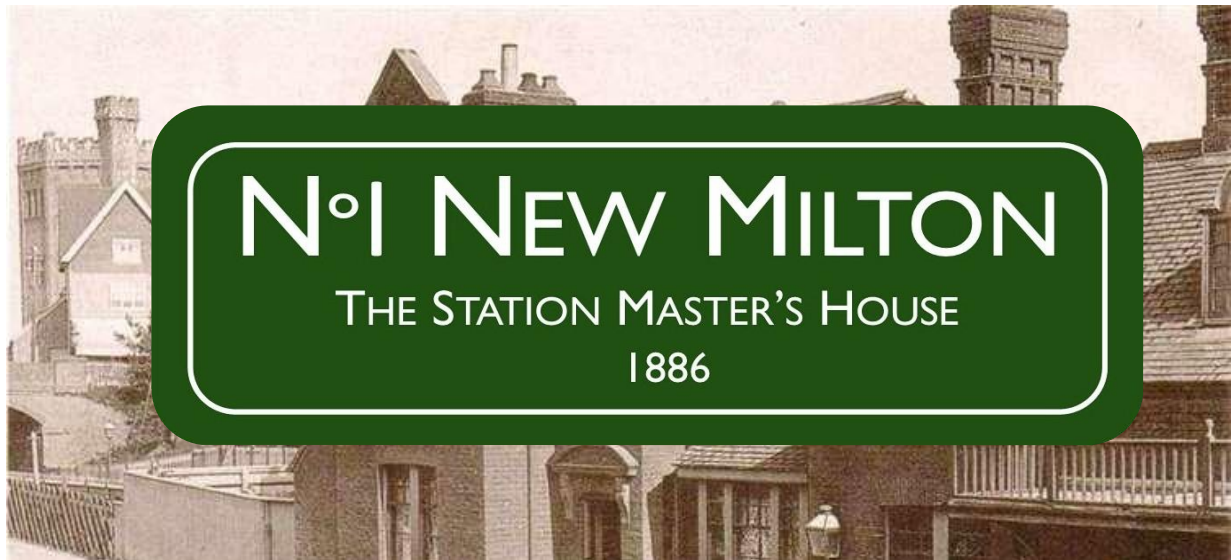
CHAIRMAN _____ DATE _____

SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
36	Distribution of map of Green Loop extension	ASAP	Sam Welch
37	Land use request - NMRC	ASAP	Comms Officer
38	CIL Bids evaluation	21.10.25	NFDC
39	Advertising Policy	No Change	Amenities
40	Nature Reserve status	On-Going	Town Clerk
41	Long Meadow Play Area	23.09.25	Estates Manager
42	Official Ballard Lake "Enhancements Opening"	09.09.25	All

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



The No. 1 Project



A presentation by
the Friends of New Milton Station
to New Milton Town Council

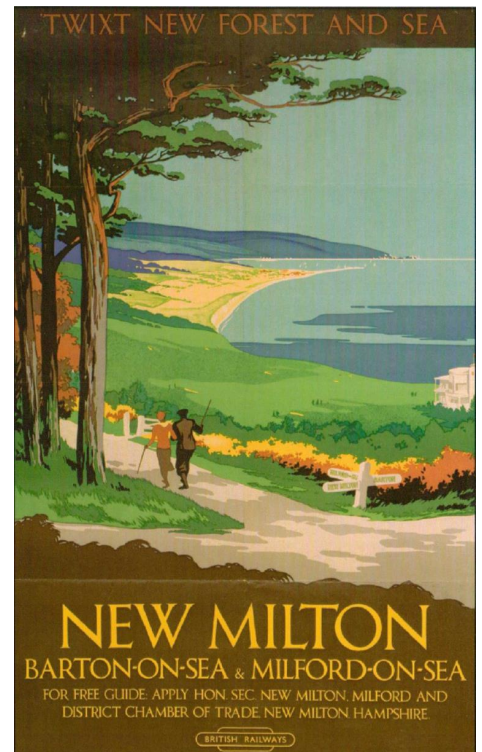
Presented by Mandy Hayes and Julia Stamper

1st September 2025



The Vision

- To bring the Station Master's House and Southside Building into community use.
- Create a stunning venue New Milton can be proud of.
- Ideas put forward so far include a Heritage Centre, Tea Room, Shop, Exhibition Space, Study Centre, Meeting Room.
- Public consultation will guide the final use/s.



Who?

These are some of the organisations working with us on this project.

Fundraising

- Target for the seed money is £40,000
- To date, we have raised just over £20,000 via:
- Grants
- Donations
- Crowdfunder
- Publicity
- Merchandise sales



Fundraising, continued/...

- Pennyfarthing has kindly made a generous donation and their PR team are working with us.
- Presentations and meetings lined up with other organisations to explore fund raising.
- The 'visuals' of the project will enhance the fundraising profile.
- Merchandise sales

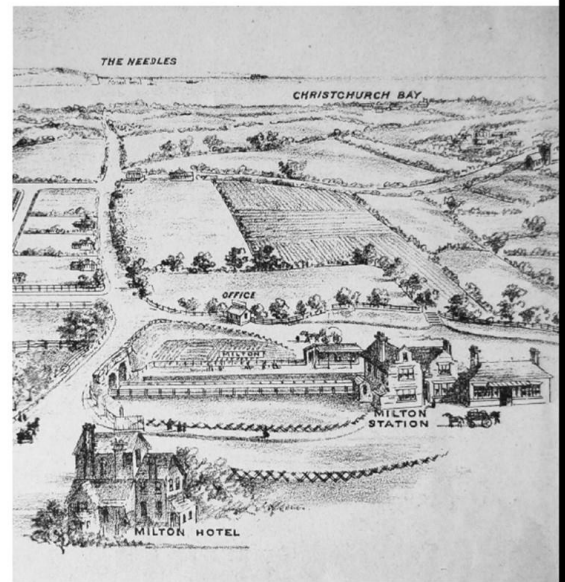


EP Architects Preliminary Report

- EP Architects have provided us with a Preliminary Report on the project.
- This looks at the context of the project, the condition of buildings and some preliminary recommendations.
- This can be forwarded to the Council if desired.

CONTENTS

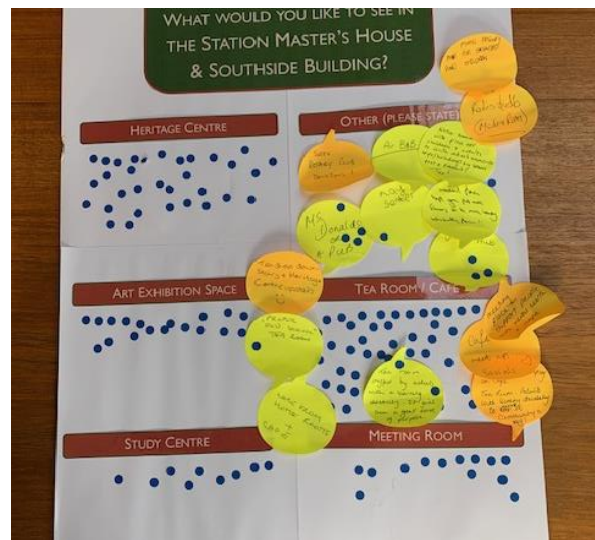
4	INTRODUCTION
5	SITE LOCATION
6	SITE HISTORY
7	SITE PHOTOGRAPHS
11	BUILDING DESCRIPTION
12	BUILDING CONDITION
15	RECOMMENDATIONS
16	LOCAL CONTEXT
17	DEMOGRAPHIC
18	PLANNING POLICY
19	POTENTIAL USES
20	EXISTING DRAWINGS
25	PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS



Preliminary Community Consultations

The Friends have conducted some informal consultations at various events over the past 6 months asking people for their views on the use of the buildings. All results have been recorded. Most popular were:

- Tearoom / Café
- Heritage Centre
- Exhibition Spaces
- Meeting rooms



Official Community Consultation

- This consultation will help shape the future of the project.
- It is imperative for planning applications and grant applications that the community are consulted on how the buildings should be used.
- 5th September 10:00am to 7:45pm at the Town Hall
- 6th September 11:00am to 4pm at the VJ80 event on the Recreation Ground
- 5th to 19th September online at www.newmilton.org.uk



Preliminary Visuals for No.1

EP Architects

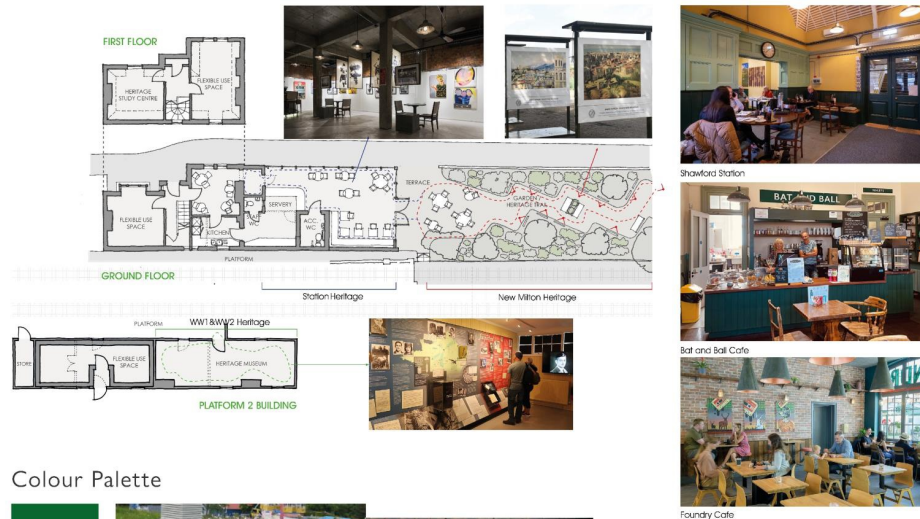
These visuals reflect the ideas put forward by the community during the informal consultations.

It is now time for the whole community to have their say.

N°1 New Milton : The Future

Preserving and celebrating our town's heritage and creating a community asset

The Heritage Journey



Colour Palette



N°1 New Milton : The Future

Preserving and celebrating our town's heritage and creating a community asset

Design Idea 1



N°1 New Milton : The Future

Preserving and celebrating our town's heritage and creating a community asset

Design Idea 2



Exterior view



View from the cafe



View from the 'New Milton Heritage Garden'

This design shows a pitched roof that could accommodate solar panels



The Renovation Costs

- Avon Construction have put forward initial detailed costings based on EP Architects Preliminary Drawings.
- The cost for these works will be in the region of £620,000 which includes VAT and a 10% contingency.



Funding the renovation costs

- Grants will be sought from Railway Heritage Trust and others.
- We are still at the very early stage of the project and the Friends will keep the Council updated.



Thank you

Questions?