

Minutes of the Meeting of the Amenities Committee of New Milton Town Council held on Monday 24 November 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
	p D Rice-Mundy	p V Schooling
	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, three members of the public and a member of the press.

Three members of the public spoke under Public Participation:

Mandy Hayes:

On behalf of the Wombles, thanked the Estates & Facilities team for their support in removing the majority of bags collected during litter picking, noting that 1,163 bags had been collected around the town. She suggested collaborating with the Council on a “Bin the Butt” campaign to address cigarette litter in the town.

As a representative of the Friends of New Milton Station, reported on the station’s recent Gold Award at the South & South-East in Bloom Celebration Stations, thanking the Estates team for their assistance with watering planters and waste clearance. She also noted the group’s success as Winner in the Best Community Engagement Category. The judge will be visiting the town to present the award on 20 January; further information would be provided when available.

She further expressed her thanks for the addition of a plaque to a bench in the town, recognising her achievement as Community Champion.

Julia Stamper:

Requested an update on the Council’s progress regarding town signage and efforts to raise the profile of New Milton, including the use of the “twixt forest and sea” branding.

Concerns were raised regarding the condition of certain premises in the town, with reference to Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as a possible means to address neglected properties. It was confirmed that she had been liaising with the Assistant Town Clerk on how the Town Council can help notify New Forest District Council about specific areas, as this falls within their remit rather than the Town Council.

Bob Lord:

Bob Lord, Chairman of the Friends of Ballard Water Meadow and Barton Common Volunteer Ranger, enquired about the grazing arrangements at Ballard Meadow and what had gone wrong this year. He noted that bramble management along the margins had been missed by NFDC and that, due to areas becoming overgrown, contractor intervention may soon be necessary. In relation to the designation of Ballard Meadow and Woodland as a Local Nature Reserve, hoped for encouraging news on proposals and for an event to celebrate the designation, along with rejuvenated signage to reflect this status.

The meeting then went into session at 6:44pm.

59. APOLOGIES

Cllr R Murrow

Cllr Kani Trehorn

60. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members have a general dispensation to discuss budgets and set a precept.

61. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman thanked Mandy Hayes for her contributions and reiterated the Council's ongoing support for the Friends of New Milton Station and their activities. The Chairman hoped that some Members and Officers would be able to attend the award presentation on 20 January.

In response to comments from Julia Stamper, the Chairman confirmed that signage would be addressed under matters arising. Regarding the condition of certain premises in the town, the Chairman advised that the Planning Committee is managing the matter and leaves it to them to follow up, with Cllr S Clarke, Chairman of the Planning Committee, noting that enforcement is unlikely unless health and safety concerns arise, as appearance alone wouldn't necessarily meet the threshold. The Chairman, acknowledging that a resolution is unlikely, said that efforts to apply pressure will continue.

Cllr V Schooling noted unsightly areas and possible safety hazards from bent and twisted railings, with Cllr D Hawkins recommending a cautious approach to avoid deterring landlords.

In response to comments made by Bob Lord regarding grazing, the Chairman explained that the issues had arisen due to circumstances beyond the Council's control. The Council had made considerable efforts to secure graziers but had been let down. The Chairman noted that the Council is still seeking to resolve the issue, though not confident this will be achieved within the year and may have no choice but to clear the site using mechanical means. Regarding the designation of Ballard Meadow and Woodland as a Local Nature Reserve, the Chairman confirmed that this would be addressed under Agenda Item 12.

62. MINUTES

The Chairman referred to the previous Committee minutes of 14 October 2025.

It was,

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2025, previously circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The minutes were duly signed.

63. MATTERS ARISING

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

The Town Clerk confirmed all action points had been addressed or on the agenda.

Referring to Minute 47 regarding tourist road signs, work had commenced on reviewing signage options. The Estates & Facilities Manager has the guidance book on brown tourist signs from Hampshire County Council and is considering various possibilities.

The Chairman noted that the focus extends beyond town signage to include gateway signs, footpath signs, and the potential use of technology such as QR codes. The Chairman proposed forming a working party to review signage, inviting any members interested in participating to inform the Town Clerk.

Also, the views of other organisations in the town would be sought.

Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
47	Tourist Road Signs	On-going	TDM
48 a)	NFDC Free Car Parking	ASAP	Town Clerk
49	Land use requests	ASAP	Comms Officer
52	Ashley Family HUB	ASAP	YSM
58	Long Meadow Play Area	27.10.25	Estates Manager

64. CORRESPONDENCE

The Town Clerk referred to the following items of correspondence:

- a) "Lullaby", A free Winter Family Cycling event will take place in New Milton on 16 December 2025. The event is described as an artwork and will feature decorated bikes playing sound along a pre-determined route. Further details are available at: <https://cultureincommon.co.uk/event/lullaby-family-cycling-event/>
- b) A handwritten letter from pupils of the Eco Club at Durlston Prep & Senior School, previously addressed at the Town Council meeting on 10 November (minute 68), was referred to the Amenities Committee. The letter concerned protecting hedgehogs in the local area and possibility of installing signage.

The Chairman advised that, if pupils wished to display information on town noticeboards, this could be arranged and suggested they work with the Men's Shed to produce small signs for sites owned by the Town Council, including Barton Common car park and the entrance to Long Meadow Village Green.

Members were very supportive of this proposal and welcomed the initiative.

65. LAND USE REQUESTS

- a) The Town Clerk noted that all Car Boot slots for 2026 have now been allocated between The Lions Club of New Milton & District and the RNLI New Milton & Barton on Sea Fundraising Branch, noting a full summer of Car Boot sales.

RESOLVED:

That The Lions Club of New Milton & District and RNLI New Milton & Barton on Sea Fundraising Branch be permitted to use Fawcetts Field, Moore Close, to hold Car Boot sales during the 2026 season, subject to the usual terms and conditions of use.

- b) A request from The Lions Club of New Milton & District to hold a 'Lions Whit Extravaganza' event on the Recreation Ground on Saturday 23 May 2026, with an option to extend for a further day to Sunday 24 May 2026.

RESOLVED:

That the Lions Club of New Milton & District be permitted to hold a 'Lions Whit Extravaganza' on the Recreation Ground on 23/24 May 2026, subject to the usual terms and conditions of use.

- c) A request from DNA Girls Football seeking a space at Fawcetts Field approximately 80 yards by 50 yards, similar to a 9v9 football pitch, to hold football training sessions for girls.

RESOLVED:

That DNA Girls Football be permitted to use the training pitches at Fawcetts Field to hold football training sessions for girls, subject to the usual pitch hire charges set out in Fees & Charges.

- d) A local resident, who is a member of a geocaching group, has requested permission to carry out a litter pick at Fawcetts Field on Wednesday 04 February 2026, from 10am to 11am. The litter pick is expected to involve 8 to 14 participants.

RESOLVED:

That a litter pick be permitted at Fawcetts Field on Wednesday 4 February 2026 from 10am to 11am.

66. **FEES & CHARGES 2026/27**

The Chairman referred to Annex A (Version 2) Fees & Charges for 2026/2027.

The Town Clerk went through the proposed Fees & Charges for 2026/2027 page by page, explaining fees and charges are being increased by a 4% inflation rate.

Cllr D Hawkins enquired whether the Football Club lease was fixed. The Town Clerk clarified that the lease is reviewed every three years and is next due for review in 2028, though this may be subject to change in future.

The Chairman noted that a recent request regarding the Friendly Dog Club lease had been received and would be considered at the forthcoming F&GP meeting.

The Chairman then invited further comments from members of the committee.

Cllr D Hawkins emphasised the importance of keeping pricing competitive, particularly being cautious not to price young people out.

It was

RECOMMENDED: That Annex A (Version 2) Fees & Charges for 2026/2027 be endorsed by the Finance & General Purposes Committee at its meeting on Monday 08 December 2025

67. AMENITIES COMMITTEE BUDGET 2026/27

The Chairman referred to Annex B (Version 2) Committee Budgets for 2026/2027.

The Town Clerk presented the proposed Amenities Budget for 2026/2027, highlighting that an extra member of staff had been budgeted and that statutory testing costs had increased considerably. It was noted that the auditor had advised the Council it would require a health and safety manager next year.

Cllr S Clarke remarked that statutory testing and health and safety issues represent increasing costs each year and are unavoidable, also noting the Council's obligation regarding staff training. Cllr S Clarke commented on the total expenditure of keeping staff safe and up to date, including training and equipment such as boots.

The Town Clerk explained a CAPEX amount of £250k, including a £17k contingency.

The Chairman invited any further comments from members.

It was then

RECOMMENDED: That the Amenities Budget, Annex B (Version 2) for 2026/2027 in the sum of £963,341 be endorsed by the Finance & General Purposes Committee at its meeting on Monday 08 December 2025.

68. ASHLEY FAMILY HUB

The Chairman advised members that on Friday 19 December, from 3pm to 6pm, a Christmas Fun event will take place at Ashley Youth & Family Hub. The event will feature stalls, food, and toys, including bookable visits to Santa and a wreath-making workshop. Free spaces for Santa visits and wreath-making are available for low-income families, funded by community grants.

69. LONG MEADOW PLAY AREA

The Chairman said he was pleased to see the new bridge in place and commended the quality of work. The Estates & Facilities Manager reported that the order had been placed with the contractor, with works scheduled to begin in mid-January and expected to last five weeks, subject to weather conditions. A site meeting is planned before Christmas to discuss further details and go through risk assessments. Cllr D Hawkins enquired about feedback; The Chairman responded that it had been quiet. The Estates & Facilities Manager noted there is another month to receive feedback, and that a picture of the new park layout, as previously agreed, is in place.

70. BALLARD NATURE RESERVE

The Town Clerk outlined the designation process and requirements to be met, including the future signing of a public declaration notice. He confirmed that the process is progressing well and that the “Declaration of Local Nature Reserve Status” for Ballard Meadow and Woodland was ready to be signed. The Town Clerk and Chairman duly signed the document, which will be sent to Natural England.

The Chairman emphasised the project is progressing well.

71. STREET TRADING

The Chairman noted that only one stall (fruit and veg) was regularly operating and proposed reconvening the working party to review options and consider ways to generate more interest. The Chairman expressed concern about the future viability of Street Trading, given the ongoing difficulty in attracting stallholders. Cllr V Schooling spoke against continuing Street Trading, suggesting it had not been successful for a long time and ought to be discontinued. Cllr D Hawkins noted that many customers, particularly older residents, would be disappointed if the fruit and vegetable stall was no longer operating. The matter will be further considered by the working group, with recommendations to be brought back to the Committee.

72. PLANT A TREE

The Administration Officer reported that nine trees have already been funded through this year’s initiative, with participation on track to match previous years. During Tree Week, a Prunus “Sunset Boulevard” is to be planted near Ashley Youth Hub tomorrow, with another tree to be planted at Arnewood School in early December. Members and the public were invited to take part in the initiative, with anyone interested encouraged to get in touch before 31 December.

Cllr S Clarke enquired about the number of disease-resistant elms now planted in the town and expressed support for planting more elms to restore a once distinctive feature of the area. The Estates Manager confirmed that numerous elms have been planted over the years through the initiative.

73. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 19 January 2026 at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, Ashley Road, New Milton.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending, wishing all a Merry Christmas and closed the meeting at 7:40pm.

CHAIRMAN _____ DATE _____

**SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS**

Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
64b)	Durlston School Hedgehogs	ASAP	Town Clerk
65a)	Car Boot Sales - Land Use	ASAP	Comms Officer
65b)	Lions Club - Whit Event	ASAP	Comms Officer
65c)	DNA Girls Football	ASAP	Estates Manager
65d)	Geocaching Litter Pick	ASAP	Estates Manager
66	Fees & Charges (Version 2)	08.12.25	F&GP
77	Amenities Budget (Version 2)	08.12.25	F&GP

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