

NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD
ON MONDAY 5 JANUARY 2026 AT 6.30PM IN NEW MILTON TOWN HALL**

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

In Attendance:

G Flexman - Town Clerk

J Bean – Administrative Officer

The Chairman welcomed Councillors, Officers, 2 members of the public and a representative of the press to the meeting and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Alan Watson spoke under Public Participation referring to emails relating to the Lions Club proposal to organise a Spring event on Sunday 24th May 2026, following the cancellation of their Christmas Festival on 29th November 2025 due to the weather, asking whether the Lions can hold over the majority of the £3,200 granted to them to support the Christmas Festival, and if NMTC would support the Road Closures, barriers and stewards previously agreed for the cancelled event.

The Chairman formally opened the meeting at 6.35pm.

78. APOLOGIES

Cllrs J Adams (other engagement), M Craze (unwell), D Hawkins (oversight) and R Murrow (unwell)

79. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

80. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS / MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

The Chairman reported on events that he had attended since the last Town Council meeting on 10th November 2025 as follows:

6th December Mayor's Carol Service

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank everyone for coming to the Carol Service and advised that £500 had been raised for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance, his chosen charity as Mayor.

The Chairman went on to mention two other upcoming fundraising events: The Mayor's Tea Party on 21st February 2026 at Barton on Sea Golf Club and the Mayor's Quiz Night on 7th March 2026 at Bashley Village Hall.

81. MINUTES

The Chairman referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 10th November.

It was

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2025 having been circulated be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The minutes of the meeting were duly signed.

82. CORRESPONDENCE

- a) An email from the Communications Officer advising of progress with declaring Ballard Meadow & Woodland a Local Nature Reserve. Alerting members to the Public Declaration Notice and the Declaration of Local Nature Reserve Status, the Town Clerk advised that the application is progressing well and that the notices will appear in the local press shortly. Once the application is complete the area will be known as Ballard Nature Reserve.
- b) An email from the Assistant Town Clerk advising that Rejuvenate will be attending the office on Saturday 10 January 2026 to replace the IT cabinet in order to provide a more secure dedicated unit.
- c) An email from Russell Crate of Glossbrook Builders, the developers behind New Milton Barns along Gore Road, requesting permission to connect into a manhole cover on NMTC land off Gore Road. Our solicitor advised that this should attract a fee of up to £10k. The builder has now offered £5k together with £3k works to improve the manhole connection plus our legal costs. The matter will be referred to F&GP.
- d) The emails referred to by Alan Watson during public participation. The Chairman declared an interest in this matter as a fellow Lion. The Vice-Chairman took the chair for this item. The Town Clerk advised that F&GP and Amenities standing committees need to consider their support for this event.

Cllr G Blunden Chair of the Amenities Committee stated that it had been very unfortunate that the event had been cancelled for the second year running, and while he could not pre-empt any decision by Amenities, he would be in favour of supporting the event. Cllr D N Tungate, Chair of F&GP stated that he could not pre-determine a committee decision but felt it would be churlish if the Lions request was not accepted.

The matter will be referred to the Amenities Committee on 19th January 2026 and F&GP on 2nd February 2026 for their respective decisions.

83. REPORTS BY COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Cllr G Blunden

Cllr Blunden spoke about the cliff falls at Becton Bunny. The paths at the top of the cliff have been blocked off although people are not necessarily taking account of the closures. The cliff is currently very unstable, but it is impossible to predict when and where the next fall might occur. But the heavy rainfall over the winter has added to the risk.

He advised residents to dispose of their Christmas Trees at the NFDC Crossmead Avenue Car Park collection point, or they can be broken up and placed in their green bins at home.

Cllr G Blunden had heard many complimentary remarks on the Xmas lights and the four free parking days in the run up to the festivities.

Cllr S P Davies

Cllr Davies will be attending to two further meetings in Portsmouth in relation to the freeport that he referred to at the last Town Council meeting.

The formal Govt review of the Housing process he had alluded to at the last meeting would likely go-ahead next year. In the meantime, there had been an annual review via Zoom communications, and the provision seemed to have been well received, but that there would be no formal feedback following this. He felt sure that there would have been feedback if things had not gone well.

Cllr Davies said 16 flats in the old A&T building were now all occupied by some very fortunate local families.

Finally, he recounted a comment from a resident who had recently moved back to New Milton after living abroad, praising the town's Xmas lights, Amenities in general and the overall environment stating it was the best town in the district.

Cllr A O' Sullivan

Cllr O' Sullivan had chaired the Community Grant Task and Finish Group that considered many worthwhile CIL applications that were whittled down to a reasonable number. He felt that around a third of the applications would succeed. The large number of applications for CIL funding was a sign that charities were not receiving the money they need via other sources.

Cllr S Clarke

Cllr Clarke had been on the Task and Finish Group meeting with Cllr O' Sullivan and provided an update on the Local Plan consultation which had been put on hold, he felt it was likely that this would begin again in February.

Cllr D N Tungate

Cllr Tungate advised that he too had been on the Grants Committee and felt that the worst aspect was having to decline so many worthy bids.

84. COMMITTEE REPORTS**a) Planning Committee**

Cllr S Clarke, Chairman of the Planning Committee, submitted Minutes of Committee meetings held on 6 & 18 November and 4 & 18 December and moved their adoption.

RESOLVED: That Minutes 125 to 164 inclusive of the meetings held on 6 & 18 November and 4 & 18 December 2025 be received.

b) Amenities Committee

Cllr G Blunden Chairman of the Amenities Committee submitted Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 24 November 2025 and moved their adoption. As far as Minute 61 is concerned, both areas identified by Julia Stamper had been reviewed by the District Council and had not been found to be actionable. In relation to Minute 68, he congratulated the Youth Service Manager and her team on the excellent Christmas event that took place at the Ashley Hub on 19th December 2025.

RESOLVED: That Minutes 59 to 73 inclusive of the meeting held on 24 November 2025 be received.

c) Finance & General Purposes Committee

Cllr D N Tungate, Chairman of Finance & General Purposes Committee submitted Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 8 December 2025 and

moved their adoption. The Town Clerk mentioned minute 80 in relation to a proposed addition to Standing Orders, to be discussed later on under Item 13.

RESOLVED: That Minutes 67 to 82 inclusive of the meeting held on 8 December 2025 be received.

d) Executive Committee

Cllr D N Tungate, member of the Executive Committee submitted Minutes of the Committee meetings held on 31 October and 14 November 2025 and moved their adoption.

RESOLVED: That Minutes 13 to 33 inclusive of the meetings held on 31 October 2025 and 14 November 2025 be received.

5. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The Schedule of Payments, covering the period from 1 – 31 October 2025 previously endorsed by F&GP, was submitted for Council approval. It was

RESOLVED: That the Schedule of Payments No 07/25/26 in the sum of £142,616.82 for the period 1- 31 October 2025 be approved.

The Schedule of Payments was signed by the Chair, Vice-Chair & Town Clerk.

86. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS SERVING ON EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

None.

87. COUNCIL BUDGET / PRECEPT FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2026-27

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 1 being the Precept Request from NFDC for New Milton Town Council as previously circulated. The Town Clerk advised that the form must be completed and returned by 15th January, noting there had been a small increase of 85 taxable households in the town.

Referring to the figures themselves, the increase in the precept is predominantly due to increased Capital Expenditure and an increase in the salary bill as two new members of staff will be recruited. The Chairman also mentioned that other items had been taken out of the budget such as the

provision for Ash Tree die-back where money had been earmarked but not spent in previous years.

Following a unanimous vote.

It was

RESOLVED: That Budget & Precept of £1,631,666 for 2026-27 be approved

The Precept request form was duly signed for onward transmission to NFDC.

88. INTERNAL AUDIT

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 2 Interim Internal Audit Report for 2025-26. The Town Clerk highlighted a comment on page 4 relating to Management of Risk as follows:

“Noted the Council’s Risk Strategy, with the Council’s Risk Registers endorsed for the 2025-26 financial year during the 7th April 2025 meeting of the Amenities Committee under Minute reference 118. The Risk Strategy Registers were further endorsed during the 28th April 2025 meeting of the F&GP Committee under Minute reference 130 with the recommendation that these be Adopted and Approved at Full Council. We note that this action has not yet been taken.”

The Town Clerk explained these two outstanding matters would be addressed under the next two Agenda Items at this meeting.

The Chairman opined that the rest of the report was extremely positive with no qualifications.

It was then

RESOLVED: That the Interim Internal Audit Report for 2025-26 be adopted.

89. RISK ASSESSMENTS

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 3 being the Risk Assessments mentioned in the Audit Report.

Following a unanimous vote,

It was

RESOLVED: That Risk Assessments for 2025-26 be formally approved.

90. RISK MANAGEMENT

The Town Clerk then referred to the Risk Management Strategy for 2025-26. Following a unanimous vote, It was

RESOLVED: That the Risk Management Strategy for 2025-26 be adopted.

91. STANDING ORDERS

The Town Clerk referred the members to Appendix 5 being a proposed addition to Standing Orders, pointing out NALCs template Standing Orders have seen the role of Town Clerk diminish, with separation of the roles of Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer which may be suitable for some local councils, but not for New Milton. The proposed amendment clarifies the role of Town Clerk at New Milton and should be incorporated in our Standing Orders. It was

RESOLVED: That the proposed / revised SO17 be adopted when the F&GP Committee next formally review Standing Orders.

92. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 6 Calendar of Meetings for 2026 which has been updated to include the Mayor's Quiz night in support of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance. The list of meetings was noted by members.

93. LGR CONSULTATION

The Chairman referred to Appendix 7 being information on the Consultation Process relating to LGR provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The Chairman introduced the matter advising that the District Council had unanimously endorsed Option 1 as their preferred option.

Cllr G Blunden set out the reasoning behind the support for Option 1 as it was the only option taking account of the rural nature of the Forest and united it with other similarly rural areas rather than some of the other options which joined the Forest to more urban areas which have very different needs.

Cllr S Davies spoke in support of Option 1 also, although the decision is a matter for central government at the end of the consultation process.

The LGR Consultation process closes on 11 January 2026.

Following a unanimous vote
It was

RESOLVED: That NMTC submit a response to the Local Government Reorganisation consultation supporting Option 1 put forward by NFDC.

Cllr R Maynard asked that our submission make it clear that although we support Option 1, LGR is being imposed on Local Authorities by Central Government.

94. TOWN DEVELOPMENT REPORT

The Chairman referred to Appendix 8 being Town Development Manager's report, stating he was pleased to see the TDM is moving on from the focus on the Neighbourhood Plan that was now referred to NFDC & NFNPA to progress.

95. COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

The Chairman referred to Appendix 9 being Communication Officer's Report that highlighted updates on the website and upcoming Civic Events.

96. NEXT MEETING

Monday 16 February 2026 at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, New Milton.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and the meeting was closed at 7.10pm.

Chairman _____ Date _____

Distribution:

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