



NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON
MONDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2026 AT 6.30PM IN NEW MILTON TOWN HALL**

Councillors:	p	J Adams	p	P Moores
	p	J Baker	p	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
	p	M Craze	p	V Schooling
	p	S Davies	p	M Scott-Johns
	p	W Davies	p	K Trehorn
	p	D Hawkins	p	R Maynard

In Attendance: G Flexman - Town Clerk

J Bean – Administrative Officer

The Chairman welcomed Councillors, Officers, two members of the public and a representative of the press to the meeting. As no member of the public wished to speak the meeting was formally opened at 6.30pm.

97. **APOLOGIES** – None.

98. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – None.

99. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS / MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

The Chairman reported on events he had attended since the last Town Council meeting on 5th January 2026, as follows:

10th January Opened the new signage at the Parish Church.

The Chairman took the opportunity to remind everyone about the Mayor's Tea Party on 21st February 2026 from 2pm at Barton on Sea Golf Club and the Mayor's Quiz Night on 7th March 2026 from 7pm at Bashley Village Hall.

100. **MINUTES**

The Chairman referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 5th January 2026.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 5th January 2026 having been circulated be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The minutes of the meeting were duly signed.

101. CORRESPONDENCE

- a) An update from the New Milton Police. The Town Clerk advised that he had invited the Police to attend the meeting, but nobody was available, but they had provided the following written update.

“Shoplifting – shoplifting continues to be one of the more prevalent crimes we investigate. We continue to be a targeted location easily accessed by train. 8 incidents in the past month – but 11 lower than last year.

As a team we work very hard on these incidents. CCTV is crucial in these cases, and we have a shoplifting pilot that means we don’t need to interview suspects if the evidence is clear – we can report for summons at a later date.

In terms of specific offences:

Burglaries – Residential – 3 incidents Down by 2 from last month.

Business break-ins – 2

Drug related Harm - . One offender charged and remanded in prison.

Warrants – Three drugs warrants in the past three months. All positive (drugs located) – ongoing enquiries with expected positive outcomes.

Vehicle Crime – Several thefts from motor vehicles including Catalytic converter thefts and tools stolen.

Harassment – One suspect charged to go to court.

Criminal damage – Nothing of note. In May last year we had some Swastika graffiti on the town public toilets and bowls club. A 14-year old youth was identified for that and has been working with the youth offending team, having admitted to the damage.

Bike marking event at New Milton Train Station on 19/02/2026 plus County Lines ongoing focus.

The report concludes “New Milton Neighbourhood Team continues to be the top performing team in the New Forest. Our detection rate sits well above what senior management desire. We are currently investigating 74 crimes, between four officers.”

- b) An announcement that the government has abandoned plans to delay 30 council elections in England following legal advice.

“Reform UK had launched a legal challenge against the plans to delay May’s elections, which was due to be heard in the High Court on Thursday. MHCLG - The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government said: “following legal advice” the government had “withdrawn its original decision to postpone 30 local elections.”

- c) A notification from NALC:
“We welcome the government’s decision to formally exclude parish and town councils from referendum principle on council tax increases for the 2026/27 financial year.

The confirmation, published this week as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2026/27, follows our representations urging ministers to exempt parish and town councils from the referendum threshold to give them the certainty they need to set responsible and transparent budgets for the year ahead.”

- d) A reminder about the Local Plan Briefing tomorrow in the office at 10am.
POST MEETING NOTE: (now rearranged for February 24th online)
- e) A letter from Cllr Rob Maynard relating to the announcement in the Southern Daily Echo that BT has lodged an appeal against the rejection of a planning application for an advertisement on Station Road in New Milton. The application was strongly opposed by the Planning Committee. Cllr S Clarke as Chair of NMTC Planning Committee advised that the appeal will be discussed at the NMTC Planning Meeting tomorrow and it will likely be decided on written representation.

A strongly worded letter will be sent upholding our view that the application and the appeal should be rejected.

102. REPORTS BY COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Cllr Fran Carpenter

Cllr Carpenter advised that Hampshire have been budget setting. The Council has a £37.8m underspend for 2025-26 which is good news as it means that there will be less needed from Council reserves. The Chief Financial Officer has agreed that this can be delivered and that the reserves are OK for now with a permitted 4.99% increase in Council Tax. Cabinet papers include an officer suggestion relating to a higher increase in Council Tax (15%), but in her view this is unlikely to happen. There is still a gap of £101 million to close and that Capital Spending has been delayed for now, although it has not been cancelled.

There was then some discussion about pothole repairs, Cllr Carpenter said that the weather is preventing much progress in that regard but once the weather improves there should be more progress. Cllr J Baker raised the problem of a particularly large pothole at the junction between Ashley Road and Normans Way she was concerned that a child could be severely injured if they came out of school on a bicycle or a scooter and got their wheel caught in it.

Cllr Schooling mentioned damage to railings close to the Arnewood Practice opposite the new Tesco and wondered why it’s taking HCC so long to fix.

Cllr J Adams

Cllr Adams advised that the National Park Authority has now purchased three small properties on the Foxlease Park estate, two of which will be modernised after being empty for some time. The three-bed semi-detached properties will be rented out. The Authority is investigating whether the third building might be suitable for a staff and volunteer drop-in base to support its conservation work in the National Park, while retaining office space in Lymington.

In 2025, there had been 108 road traffic accidents in the forest involving animals and 47 deaths. The number of accidents at night had fallen while those in daylight or twilight had increased. The National Park is making more efforts to raise awareness of these fatalities to try to reduce them as there had been many accidents involving ponies.

Good progress is being made on delivering affordable housing, the New Forest National Park Local Plan housing site allocations include the former Lyndhurst Park Hotel, land at Church Lane Sway and land at Whartons Lane, Ashurst. Between them these sites will deliver over 90 affordable dwellings for local people in housing need and helping to meet some of the needs arising in the New Forest National Park (where average house prices are over 12 times average annual earnings).

Finally, Cllr Adams mentioned the January 2026 NFNPA Biodiversity Duty Report that highlighted the incredible variety of plants and animals, including:

- Over 15,000 species of insect (two-thirds of the UK total)
- 44 species of mammal (including 13 of the 18 UK bat species)
- At least 12 species of reptile and amphibian
- A third of British wildflower species
- Over 70% of British dragonfly species breed here
- 46 nationally and internationally rare plant species
- The UK hotspot for rare breeding birds such as the Curlew and Dartford warbler

Cllr M Craze asked if the collars on the ponies are luminous, Cllr Adams advised that they are, but consideration is being given to making them more luminous and to painting the ponies' hooves with luminous paint.

Cllr D N Tungate had nothing to report.

Cllr G Blunden

Cllr Blunden provided an update in relation to the cliff face at the Becton Bunny. He said that agreement had been reached with the golf club to re-line the fence 10 metres further back from the cliff edge.

Cllr Blunden had provided the Men's Shed with last of his Cllr Community Grant.

Cllr S P Davies

Cllr Davies had visited the site behind the Old Barn in New Milton, which is being developed by VIVID, provided that goes ahead it should be completed by Easter next year.

The Becton Hub has been redeveloped and construction is now complete. He also mentioned a visit to Danes Park which is progressing well.

Cllr S Clarke

Cllr Clarke had chaired the Local Plan Task and Finish Group and attended the Local Plan consultation events including the one in New Milton last week, that was very well attended throughout the whole of the session with not only New Milton residents but several visitors from Milford and Downton.

Cllr A O' Sullivan

Cllr O' Sullivan had attended a number of meetings including the Audit Committee where the District Council had received very good reports. Cllr O'Sullivan also attended the Local Plan Task and Finish Group with Cllr Clarke and had been present at the consultation event at New Milton last Wednesday. Cllr O'Sullivan also attended St Mary Magdalene Church Hall when the Friends of New Milton Station had been officially presented with their plaque from South-Western Railway to celebrate their win in the South and South-East in Bloom 2025 competition beating more than one hundred other stations.

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

Cllr S Clarke, Chairman of the Planning Committee, submitted Minutes of Committee meetings held on 8 and 22 January and 5 February and moved their adoption.

RESOLVED:

That Minutes 165 to 195 inclusive of the meetings held on 8 & 22 January and 5 February 2026 be received.

b) Amenities Committee

Cllr G Blunden Chairman of the Amenities Committee submitted Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 19 January 2026 and moved their adoption.

RESOLVED:

That Minutes 74 to 89 inclusive of the meeting held on 19 January 2026 be received.

Cllr N Tungate asked about the progress on discussions of the Open Access Policy particularly in relation to mobility scooters and drones. His view is that the spaces should be as accessible as possible, and that drones are covered by other regulations, and provided that the owner of the drone has a licence (and insurance) they should be permitted to fly them from NMTC land.

Cllr G Blunden advised that the whole of the Open Access Policy is being looked at and would be further examined at a future Amenities Committee Meeting. Cllr Tungate said he would endeavour to attend.

c) Finance & General Purposes Committee

Cllr D N Tungate, Chairman of Finance & General Purposes Committee submitted Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 2 February 2026 and moved their adoption.

RESOLVED:

That Minutes 83 to 96 inclusive of the meeting held on 2 February 2026 be received.

104. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

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

RESOLVED: *That the Schedule of Payments No 08/09/25/26 in the sum of £276,997.83 for the period 1 November - 31 December 2025 be approved.*

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

105. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS SERVING ON EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Cllr R Murrow advised that 14 French Twinning Association will be visiting New Milton between Saturday 6th and Wednesday 10th June. Their visit has been slightly delayed as there are elections taking place in France.

106. REFERRED MATTER

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 1 being an item referred by F&GP.

Minute 79c) – Amenities Correspondence

Minute 82 c) of the Town Council meeting held on 05 January 2026, which was referred to the F&GP via Amenities meeting on 19 January 2026:

“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.”

RESOLVED: That this matter be referred to Anthony Harris to finalise.

107. NALC PRACTITIONERS GUIDE

The Town Clerk took members through important updates from the latest edition of the NALC Practitioners' Guide relating to changes for local authorities preparing Annual Governance and Accountability Returns (AGAR) for financial years starting on or after 1 April 2025, highlighting additional requirements:

- **Email management** - Every local council authority must now have a generic email account hosted on an authority-owned domain, eg clerk@newmiltontowncouncil.gov.uk
- **Web Content Accessibility** – Website must meet WCAG 2.2 AA and Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.
- **All websites** must include published documentation as specified in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Transparency code for smaller authorities.
- **All smaller authorities** must follow both the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018.
- **All smaller authorities** must process personal data with care and in line with the principles of data protection.
- **The Data Protection Act 2018** supplements the GDPR and classifies an authority as both a Data Controller and a Data Processor.
- **All smaller authorities** must also have an IT policy (or suite of policies).
- This above explains how everyone - clerks, members and other staff - should conduct authority business in a secure and legal way when using IT equipment and software.
- This also relates to the use of authority-owned and personal equipment.
- These updates streamline processes, enhance transparency, and improve overall governance standards to help ensure our authority is ready.

Members noted the additional requirements of new Assertion 10 on the AGAR.

108. CYBER SECURITY POLICIES

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 2 being the five IT policies previously endorsed by F&GP on 2 February 2026

With a unanimous vote in favour,

It was

RESOLVED:

That the five IT policies endorsed by F&GP on 2 February 2026 be formally approved and adopted by the Town Council.

109. TOWN DEVELOPMENT REPORT

The Chairman referred to Appendix 3 being the Town Development Manager's report previously circulated the contents of which were noted.

110. NEXT MEETING

Monday 30 March 2026 at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, New Milton.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and the meeting was closed at 7.18pm.

Chairman _____ Date _____

Distribution:

Town Councillors

District Councillors J L Cleary

County Councillors M Kendal, F Carpenter, K Mans

New Milton Police

Press

Alan Watson – NewMilton.net

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