NEW MILTON
TOWN COUNCIL

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PRESS RELEASE

CELEBRATING NEW MILTON'S COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

New Milton Town Council hosted the annual Community Champions Awards at Arnewood School. This year working closely with the school, showcasing an example of some of their amazing art projects, ensured it was a delightful evening of celebrating with some amazing young people and nominated community champions.

New Milton Town Clerk, Graham Flexman, was honoured to acknowledge Mrs Elizabeth Cook, presenting her with an outstanding service award for an incredible 50 plus years associated with Arnewood School.

Joining the Board of Governors in 1974, Elizabeth became Chair of Governors in 1978, leading on to becoming Chair of the Arnewood School Academy Trust, stepping down as Chair in 2019. However, her service to the school has continued as a highly respected ambassador and strong advocate for the performing arts and celebrating the achievements of former pupils.

Pictured L-R Graham Flexman, Cllr Alvin Reid, Elizabeth Cook, Cllr David Hawkins
Photo Credit Coolhat Photography

Mrs Cook said *"I am delighted to receive this award on behalf of the many people in our local school, indeed throughout the whole country, who voluntarily give of their time and expertise by being a Governor. For myself, it has been an honour and privilege to work with the staff and students of the Arnewood School over many years. We are so very fortunate to have such good schools in our community. It is by being a Governor that you experience the real heart of a school."*

Local senior schools and youth groups were invited to send in their nominations for young people to receive a Mayor's Commendation. The Mayor, Cllr Alvin Reid, wanted to celebrate young people who had achieved something admirable or exceptional within their peer groups, and was pleased to receive 22 worthy nominations.

Each young person was acknowledged and applauded for their personal and extra-curricular achievements, as they had persevered through various challenges to succeed in their endeavours.

The following young people were nominated, receiving a Mayor's Commendation Certificate and gift-voucher to spend as they wished.

The nominees were:
Kai Print, Liz Ricci Zambeli, Dee Lansbury, Bethany Crighton, Teddy Hope Thomson, Lilly-Mae Chrisp, Chloe Carroll, Adam Bates, Isabelle Rudge, Sophie West, Benjy Whitbread, Ruby Wellock, Lylah Buckman, Owen Furnell, William Gilby, Caitlin White, Elsie Smith, Ben Gambi, Charlie Garner, Madison Garner, Poppy Sergeant and Summer Sergeant.

Congratulations were extended to the 18 nominees received across the 3 award categories Community Champion, Community Group and Volunteer of the Year. All the nominees had demonstrated dedication and commitment to the local community and were given rapturous applause for their efforts.

Nick Saunders, Local Historian and Chairman of Milton Heritage Society was awarded New Milton Community Champion 2026 for his outstanding knowledge of local history and his continued research, including working with other local history groups and projects. He was presented with a personally engraved glass plaque and certificate.

After the event, Nick said *"The award of Community Champion of the year is a great honour for me. I am very grateful to the town for presenting this to me. It is nice to be recognised for my work in promoting the history of Milton Parish. Our local history and heritage is important to all of us. It helps to create a sense of belonging and civic pride in our hometown and the surrounding area. We live in an amazing part of the country. Studying and caring for our history and heritage will help to preserve the character and charm of our community for future generations."*

New Milton Neighbourcare team were chosen as New Milton Community Group of the Year 2026, also presented with a personally engraved glass plaque and certificate acknowledging their provision of a much-appreciated safe and reliable way for residents to attend medical appointments with their current Chairman, Marie Morgan, receiving the award on their behalf.

Linda Harland was chosen as New Milton Volunteer of the Year 2026, acknowledging her long-term commitment to the annually held New Milton Music Festival, working tirelessly to support the musicians throughout. She was presented with a personally engraved glass plaque and certificate.

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Pictured with New Milton Town Mayor: Winners of New Milton's Community Champions Awards
L-R Marie Morgan of Neigbourcare, Nick Saunders, Cllr Alvin Reid, Linda Harland
Photo credit Coolhat Photography

Arnewood School Choir provided an enthusiastic performance to the appreciative audience, and some of the students from the cast of the recent school production of "Shrek the Musical" were equally enthusiastic, as they performed an excerpt from the show.

Further information available from:
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