

Minutes of the Meeting of the Amenities Committee of New Milton Town Council held on Monday 06 July 2026 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	p R Murrow
	p J Baker	p A D O'Sullivan
	p D Rice-Mundy	p V Schooling
	K Trehorn	

In attendance:

Councillors: S J Clarke

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

The Chairman welcomed Councillors, Officers, and 4 members of the public.

Mandy Hayes

Representing the Friends of New Milton Station and the Wombles, Mandy thanked the Estates & Facilities team for delivering replacement plants to the Train Station, in time for the Station in Bloom judging on 07 July. Mandy also thanked them for the watering of station plants and collection of waste from the Station Master's Garden and the Wombles litter picks.

Matt Wale

Representing New Milton Rugby Club, Matt began by thanking councillors who attended the recent Family Fun Day.

Matt provided an update on the Rugby Club's vision as presented at the previous committee meeting on 26 May. A draft timetable proposes completion by May 2027, allowing time for planning consent for two projects, submission of a CIL application to New Forest District Council (NFDC), pitch configuration discussions, and consideration of a pathway to assist disabled users.

Funding has been secured via grants and a loan, covering a large amount of the required £60k. In connection with the funding, a lease of at least 25 years is required, with the current lease expiring in six years, the Rugby Club wishes to discuss an extension with the Council.

They are also seeking Town Council endorsement of their CIL application, due 07 August, and a meeting with the Estates & Facilities Manager and team to discuss pitch configuration. Matt reported that NFDC has given positive feedback on possible fencing, provided the facility is not exclusive to rugby, for example with a gate allowing public access.

Julia Stamper

Julia queried the responsibility for a coastal path running down the side of Naish, which had been reported to her as being covered in undergrowth & brambles, making it difficult to walk.

Julia also requested updates on raising the profile of New Milton and its branding, including signposting and brand identity such as "Twixt Forest and Sea", and on the search for a Town Development Manager. She additionally endorsed New Milton Residents' Association in its support of New Milton Rugby Club's vision.

The meeting went into session at 6:40pm.

18. APOLOGIES

Cllr K Trehorn

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

NONE

20. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman responded to those who spoke under public participation:

Mandy Hayes: the Chairman thanked her for the kind words and confirmed that her appreciation would be passed on to the team, noting the importance of the Town Council working with local community groups.

Matt Wale: the Chairman thanked him for the update, noting that work was ongoing in the background and updates would be brought back to committee at the appropriate stage.

Julia Stamper: the Chairman advised he was unsure of the responsibility for the coastal path and would come back to her on this. He thanked Julia for the reminder on the other matters raised, noting that the appointment of a Town Development Manager would be picked up in due course, hopefully before too long.

21. MINUTES

The Chairman referred to the previous Committee minutes of 26 May 2026.

It was,

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2026, previously circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The minutes were duly signed.



22. MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman reviewed the action points from the Committee Meeting held on 26 May 2026.

Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
8	Meeting with Paul Lewis, SMT	28.05.26	Town Clerk/ Estates
10	Land Use Requests	ASAP	Comms Officer
11	Illuminate Rec Trees £11k	ASAP	Asst. Town Clerk
12	Arts Trail in New Milton	31.05.26	Mandy Hayes
13	Fencing on the Rec £12.5k	15.06.26	F&GP
14	Station Road Streetscene	06.07.26	Estates Manager
15	Street Trading Market	28.05.26	SMT

The Town Clerk advised, in relation to the Rugby Club proposals, that the Town Council's solicitor confirmed that in the lease the land is deemed public open space and not currently designated as a sports field. It may need to be so designated for planning permission purposes, if plans were progressed. He had also heard back from NFDC regarding Playing Pitch Strategies; Jamie Burton is happy to discuss matters relating to specific projects.

The Town Clerk further noted infrastructure concerns, including car parking and toilet provision for the additional visitors that the vision would attract. He emphasised the need for a pragmatic approach and careful consideration of the budgets required.

All remaining action points had either been addressed or were on the agenda.

23. CORRESPONDENCE

The Town Clerk referred to the following items of correspondence:

- a) An email from the Lions Club of New Milton & District advising that they have appointed a new President, Peter Bousfield, and long-standing stalwart John Evans as the Chairman of the Events, Entertainment & Hospitality Committee.

They have been in discussions with Paul Lewis of Southern Market Traders regarding the Christmas Market and stalls. Suggesting holding the Christmas Lights Switch-On on Sunday 29 November may allow for a larger market, although this has yet to be confirmed. The Town Clerk noted the current road closure is scheduled for Saturday 28 November.

The Town Clerk also advised a budget of £5k is available for events, including £3k towards the Christmas event and £1.5k for other events, eg. a Car Festival has been proposed by the Lions for 12 September.

The Chairman noted the Town Council's significant support for these events, highlighting the recent Lions Carnival incurred an additional operational cost of £4,195 to the Town Council, over and above the £3,200 grant aid provided.

- b) An email from a representative of the Community Garden noting that the RHS are coming to assess the garden on Tuesday 07 July at 12 Noon. Additionally requesting some chairs and tables for Artists' Trail tea on 15 August, noting that the Estates & Facilities Manager has this in hand.

24. LAND USE REQUESTS

The Town Clerk referred to Appendix 1, a request from the Friends of New Milton Station to hold a 'New Milton Artists of the Year' competition on the Recreation Ground on Saturday 08 August, from midday to 5pm. They wish to erect a small gazebo and have a coffee van and ice cream van in attendance, requiring either a generator or access to the site's electricity supply. The Town Clerk noted that the Estates & Facilities Manager would assist with this.

It was

RESOLVED:

That the Friends of New Milton Station be permitted to hold an Artists of the Year Competition on the Recreation Ground on Saturday 08 August, from midday to 5pm, with a small gazebo, a coffee van and an ice cream van, subject to the usual terms and conditions of use.

25. COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP

The Chairman referred to Appendix 2 regarding a Stakeholders' Event on 23 September, noting it as extremely worthwhile going forward, and asked if any Member would like to be involved with the project. Cllr A D O'Sullivan volunteered.

26. FENCING ON REC

The Chairman noted that the planning application had now been submitted, but that there were matters regarding procurement that would be dealt with in private session.

27. STATION ROAD STREETSCENE

The Estates & Facilities Manager provided Members with an update. He explained that a CapEx budget had been agreed in the 2026/27 financial year for a phased replacement of the existing benches in Station Road, which are now beyond economic repair, alongside plans to work with NFDC to fund the replacement of the existing green litter bins in Station Road.

A figure of £14k had been allocated for the first phase; however, CIL funding had recently been received from NFDC, resulting in a total budget of £45k, enabling the bins to be replaced and the benches upgraded in a single phase.

Working with NFDC, a black litter bin had been identified as suitable, with ease of emptying and maintenance in mind. The total cost of replacing the green bins would be £6k, of which £2k contributed by NFDC.

He then outlined three options for the Station Road Benches:

- a) A complete refurbishment of the 36 existing benches, totalling £46k.
- b) A Marshalls bench, with a choice of timber slats or recycled slats in a variety of colours, totalling £30K for timber or £26K for recycled.
- c) A stainless-steel seat with a coating to prevent it becoming hot in warm weather, easy to install and low maintenance, at £44k.

Members were shown images of the proposed benches on screen.

The Chairman noted that the timber and recycled benches potentially present ongoing maintenance issues and that the stainless-steel option may be the most appropriate.

One Member commented that it made sense to choose the option requiring the least maintenance; another commented that the stainless-steel benches would match the existing bus shelters and look smart and agreed with the comments regarding maintenance.

Following queries from Members, it was clarified that the New Milton Town Council crest would appear on the bins, and that existing nameplates may need to be replaced, with sufficient budget allocated to do so.

It was,

RECOMMENDED: That the black litter bins and Stainless-Steel seats be endorsed by F&GP for Town Council Approval in the sum of £45k.



28. STREET TRADING MARKET

The Chairman updated Members on the market, noting that reports received had been positive, with some teething issues as expected, and that it was hoped to return to the original arrangement with the bus stop outside the Walkers Arms.

He referred to the Town Clerk, who spoke about the amended licence, commencing from 17 June 2026 to 23 December 2026, with an option to review the licence after 3 months. The Town Council's solicitor had reviewed the agreement, which now just needed to be signed.

The Chairman reiterated that this was an initial trial, after which local businesses would be contacted for feedback, with the aim of supporting both the local shops and the market.

29. CIL PROJECTS

The Estates & Facilities Manager provided Members with an update on the CIL bids awarded in 2025, advising that the works were progressing well and were expected to be completed by the end of August. The only outstanding matter is agreement on the specification of the multi-play unit for Hollands Wood and the gathering of public feedback.

The Chairman then highlighted the proposed CIL Applications for 2026 with the closing date for these being 07 August:

- a) **Barton Common North:** New 2m wide gravel footpath between Barton Common Lane & Barton Common Road. The original application was submitted in 2025 but was unsuccessful. This will be a revised application with further information included. Costed at **£27,400**
- b) **Barton Common South:** New 2m wide gravel footpath 300m long running west from the Milford Road on the southern boundary and alongside Barton on Sea golf club. This again is a revised application with more detailing after the 2025 application was unsuccessful. Costed at **£38,880**
- c) **Fawcetts Field:**
 - i) Provision of outdoor fitness equipment adult and junior including balance beams. Costed at **£22,500**
 - ii) New goal end (mini MUGA) incorporating a basketball hoop. This proposal is similar to the successful CIL application for Ashley Recreation Ground awarded in early 2025. Costed at **£29,400**
- d) **Long Meadow:** Provision of outdoor fitness equipment adult and junior including balance beams. Costed at **£14,650**
- e) **Ashley Recreation Ground:** Provision of outdoor fitness equipment adult and junior including balance beams. Costed at **£22,500**
- f) **Ballard Nature Reserve:** Proposed new signage to reflect the nature reserve status (information and point of interest). Costed at **£12,750**

30. LGR

The Chairman referred to the Town Clerk, who noted that the matter had been referred to the Executive Committee, with a meeting to be held on 17 July 2026.

The Town Clerk noted that a realistic approach would be needed regarding the toilet blocks, were the Town Council to take them on, budgeting for them would need to begin, further noting the Town Council's solicitor had referred to them as liabilities rather than assets.

Initial indications are that running the toilets on the Recreation Ground could cost a 6-figure sum per annum, and it was suggested this may not account for vandalism.

Members exchanged initial views, with a range of perspectives expressed both for and against taking on the facilities, covering level of use, particularly at events, resident comfort, potential costs and ongoing liabilities.

The Chairman noted, for consideration, that if another authority were to take over the toilets, they may decide they do not want to keep them. It was suggested that a full appraisal of the potential costs would be needed (from NFDC).

31. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATES

The Chairman thanked the Estates & Facilities team for the excellent floral displays, including the wildflowers.

He also expressed his disappointment that the barrier opposite to Tesco Express, near the station, remained bent after nearly a year. Other Members noted that the matter is in hand with Hampshire County Council, and on the programme of works.

The Town Clerk will write to Tim Lawton, Assistant Director - Highways, Engineering & Transport, noting they were damaged over 10 months ago, and it adversely affects the look of the town.

It was pointed out previously this is the main gateway into the town from the north, and it also looks shoddy when leaving the town.

Not a good advert!

32. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 24 August 2026 at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, Ashley Road, New Milton.

The Chairman closed the public session of the meeting at 7.10pm going into private session with the agreement of members.

**PRIVATE SESSION*****PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS) Act 1960***

The Chairman moved that the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business pursuant to section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reasons of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

33. FENCING ON REC

The Chairman informed Members that planning permission would not be received before the end of the bowling season. The Estates & Facilities Manager advised that the works needed to progress as a matter of urgency due to the significant risk of missiles being thrown. He highlighted the increased risk during the summer holidays and reminded Members that, even where an object did not strike a person, the shock of it landing nearby could have serious consequences.

Members were presented with three options: a) to install the new fencing and seek retrospective planning permission; b) to install temporary fencing, as was done last year, at a cost of £5k; or c) to close the lower green.

A discussion followed, with several Members expressing opposition to seeking retrospective planning permission and querying whether the planning application could be expedited.

The Chairman suggested exploring the possibility of expediting the planning application and, if this proved unsuccessful, proceeding with the installation of temporary fencing. It was,

RESOLVED: That the possibility of expediting the planning application be explored and, if unsuccessful, that temporary fencing be installed.

[Post Meeting Note: The statutory target for standard applications is 8 weeks, following the time taken to validate the application. NFDC must notify neighbours and consult statutory bodies such as highways, tree team, open spaces or whoever they think is relevant to the application detail.]

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7:19pm.

CHAIRMAN _____ DATE _____

**SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS**

Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
23a)	Xmas Lights Switch-On	ASAP	Lions Club
24	Land Use Request Artists on the Rec	08.08.26	FONMS Estates Manager
25	Community Rail Partnership	23.09.26	Cllr O'Sullivan
27	Station Road Streetscene	25.07.26	F&GP
28	Sign Market Agreement	ASAP	Town Clerk /Chairman
29	CIL Projects of £168k	07.08.26	Estates Manager
30	LGR/ Public Toilets	17.07.26	Execs/ Town Clerk

Distribution:

Town Councillors

Estates & Facilities Manager

Officers

District Councillor J L Cleary

County Councillors J Vigor, D Poole, and F Carpenter

New Milton Police

Press

NMRA