



Minutes of the Meeting of the Amenities Committee of New Milton Town Council held on Monday 24 August 2026 at 6.30pm at the Town Hall, Ashley Road, New Milton.

Present:

Chairman:	p	G R Blunden - Chairman	M Craze - Vice Chair
Councillors:	p	D E Hawkins	R Murrow
		J Baker	p A D O'Sullivan
		D Rice-Mundy	p V Schooling
	p	K Trehorn	

In attendance:

Councillors: R Maynard, S J Clarke

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

The Chairman welcomed Councillors, Officers, four Members of the public and a member of the press to the meeting.

Local Resident

A local resident noted that increased plant growth around Ballard Lake had obstructed views of the lake from footpaths and some seating areas.

Angela Jackson

The Chair of New Milton Community Garden asked about the late finishing times of the Christmas Extravaganza due to be held in December at Moore Close, Fawcetts Field, and whether adequate security would be in place.

Julia Stamper

- In relation to the toilet blocks on the Recreation Ground, noted negative comments received from residents and a suggested establishment of a working party to address issues, asking whether CIL funding could be used towards maintenance costs.
- Noted comments received regarding the proposed new benches and bins for the High Street and requested an update on the provision of a bin at Station Approach.
- Requested updates on the Town Development Manager (TDM) role and improvements to the entrance to Ballard Nature Reserve.

The meeting went into session at 6:41pm.

34. APOLOGIES

Cllr M Craze, Cllr J Baker, Cllr D Rice-Mundy, Cllr R Murrow

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

NONE

36. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman noted the resident comments regarding “pink thrift” plant growth at Ballard Lake, advising the vegetation is seasonal.

In regard to the Christmas Extravaganza, he advised that event organisers, Firefly, were talking with SAG (Safety Advisory Group), which deals with the necessary safety, licensing, and related requirements.

The Chairman explained the TDM role was still under discussion. He confirmed that any improvements to the entrance at Ballard Nature Reserve would be carried out alongside the updated signage and noted the bin for Station Approach. He added that toilets and street furniture were separate agenda items to be covered later in the meeting. Note: CIL Funding is for new infrastructure, not maintenance.

37. MINUTES

The Chairman referred to the previous Committee meeting minutes of 06 July 2026. It was,

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 06 July 2026, previously circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The minutes were duly signed.

38. MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman reviewed the action points from the Committee Meeting held on 06 July 2026.

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

The Town Clerk confirmed the Lions Club Christmas Lights Switch-on will take place on Sunday 29 November.

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



39. CORRESPONDENCE

The Town Clerk referred to the following item of correspondence:

A complimentary email received from a resident regarding the flowers throughout New Milton.

40. LAND USE REQUESTS

a) Lions Club of New Milton & District

The Lions New Milton Christmas Festival, Parade and Christmas Lights Switch-on will be held in the Town Centre on Sunday 29 November 2026, from noon until 5pm, with the Parade commencing at 3pm.

The Chairman noted that a request for free parking on that date, and for use of Osborne Road Car Park, would need to be made by the Lions Club directly with New Forest District Council (NFDC).

b) Firefly Events

An update to a request relating to Minute 10c) was received from Firefly Events for a Winter Event in conjunction with The Glad Rag Production Company at Moore Close, Fawcetts Field, featuring two or more performances daily. The dates for which the site is required have now been revised to 14 to 23 December 2026.

The Estates Manager noted the alcohol licence covered a period over 8 days, similar to the Sham Rocks Music Festival earlier in the year, and that a full risk assessment would be required from the event organisers addressing all relevant conditions, which would be examined carefully before permission to use the site was granted.

Members noted the above updates.

41. STATION ROAD STREETSCENE

The Chairman set the scene, explaining that following public feedback received on the project, it had been paused at the Town Council meeting held on 10 August 2026 so that the feedback could be addressed at this meeting.

The Chairman began by addressing the bins, a picture of which was displayed on screen for Members. He explained they were similar in size to the existing bins and remained accessible, they were black with a small dome on top and would carry the New Milton Town Council crest.



Regarding seating, he reiterated that the existing benches were at the end of their life, that parts could no longer be obtained, and that maintenance costs mounted year on year, noting this was not sustainable. A picture of the agreed bench was shown on screen, and Members were provided with a handout giving further information.

He referred to comments regarding how the benches might get hot in sunshine and to the shape of the armrests. He highlighted the benches were accessible and suitable for older people, citing the height, which allowed people to sit down and stand up more easily, and the armrests, which provided something to push up from. He acknowledged that west facing benches might get a little warmer, but not much different from the Jubilee benches in place at the Recreation Ground and highlighted the reflective qualities of stainless steel.

The Estates & Facilities Manager added the current benches were worn down and that operationally, the new benches were very low maintenance.

One Member noted a recent visit to another town where the council had similar benches, highlighting that people of all ages were using them. He had spoken with an elderly gentleman who was using them and who spoke positively of them, with the Member concluding that they were fit for purpose and very accessible.

Another Member emphasised the cost of maintaining the existing benches, paired with the inability to obtain new slats, which also could not be repaired. Explaining the change was needed and had to be cost effective, and that these would require very little maintenance.

Another Member asked what would happen with remembrance plaques. The Chairman clarified they would be transferred to a new seat at the same time if in good condition and if not, a new plaque would be provided.

(Post Meeting Note: Not all Metropolis existing benches have armrests.)

42. FENCING ON THE RECREATION GROUND

The Chairman referred to the Estates & Facilities Manager who explained that planning permission for a safety fence on the Recreation Ground was with NFDC planning and on their planning portal, with a target decision date of 06 October. There had been no comments to date, but it was early days. He added that, with the bowling season almost at an end, there would be some time to install the new fencing if permission were granted. Action Point: Planning Committee.



43. STREET MARKET

The Chairman provided an update on the Market and said that it was looking positive at the moment. A 3-month review meeting would be held on 17 September to sit down with the operator to discuss the way forward and any issues, taking on board comments from both parties, the outcome of which would be brought back to committee.

One Member noted that upon visiting local businesses, the majority were supportive of the market, citing the increased footfall it brought to the town.

Another Member brought up a recent social media post that had spoken on the footfall of New Milton and explained this painted a false picture of the High Street. He went on to say that New Milton High Street was thriving, vibrant and extremely busy, with a great range of shops. Other Members echoed these views. The Chairman added that if the Council tried to respond to every social media report, it would not be doing much else and went on to say that footfall data would be obtained and brought back to committee.

Another Member commented that the newly installed parcel box on the High Street was out of character and opposed it, asking who gave permission to install it and whether it came to planning. Cllr S J Clarke, the Chairman of the Planning Committee, clarified that it did not come to planning, that it was a replacement, and that post boxes were the responsibility of the Post Office. Action Point: Town Clerk to check that everything was in order in respect to its installation.

44. SIGNAGE WP

The Chairman referred to the Town Clerk, who explained the working party had not yet met, and highlighted an email received in regard to potential signs for The New Milton Hub aka Memorial Centre.

The Chairman acknowledged that some time had passed since signs were first discussed, noting that the meeting had been held back while staffing aspects were discussed, but this now needed to be taken forward. Action Point: Estates Manager.

45. CIL PROJECTS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 3, being a list of all bids received by NFDC August 2026.

The Town Clerk went through CIL bids totalling £136k submitted by New Milton Town Council:



- a) **Barton Common South:** Proposed Self Binding Gravel Footpath 2m Wide: £34,880
- b) **Barton Common North:** Proposed Self Binding Gravel Footpath 2m Wide: £27,400
- c) **Planting:** Sustainable Biodiversity Planting Phase 1: £12,000
- d) **Long Meadow:** Provision of Outdoor Fitness Equipment: £10,000
- e) **Ashley Recreation Ground:** Provision of Outdoor Fitness Equipment: £22,500
- f) **Fawcetts Field:** Provision of Outdoor Fitness Equipment: £22,500
- g) **Ballard Nature Reserve:** Information Boards: £6,750

46. LGR

The Chairman referred to the Town Clerk, who explained that figures relating to the maintenance of the toilets had been received and were handed out to Members, but further information was still needed to give a fuller picture to what was involved. He noted a figure previously reported in a newspaper had not included external costs associated with vandalism. Currently, if the Town Council were to take on the toilet block, there would be no business rates to pay.

A discussion was then held regarding vandalism, with the Chairman explaining that there was CCTV in place at the toilet blocks, and there was a multi-party agency involving the police, New Milton Town Council and NFDC, looking at what could be done and the way forward, with the Town Council pushing for action and working with the police and education to prevent it.

One Member asked if informative signs could be displayed highlighting the impact of vandalism. This idea was rejected, as it could instead incentivise more vandalism.

Another Member noted that the toilets had been vandalised for years and asked if a report could be provided on how many of those responsible had been caught. Action Point: Town Clerk to speak to the police and see if something could be brought back to committee.

One Member queried whether taking on the toilets was something the Town Council should be pursuing, given the drain on resources and the public money that would need to be spent on them. The Chairman explained the cost would ultimately end up with one authority, and the alternative was their closure. One Member highlighted the benefits the toilets provided for those within the town, and the Chairman concluded that having toilets locally was the right thing to do, citing the importance of retaining and maintaining them.

47. RUGBY CLUB WP

The Chairman referred to the Town Clerk, who confirmed membership of the working party includes the Town Clerk, Cllr G Blunden, Cllr R Maynard, Cllr S J Clarke, Matt Wale of New Milton Rugby Club, a representative of the Rugby Football Union, plus Jamie Burton, Health and Wellbeing Partnership Manager at NFDC. Mark Jeffries, Estates & Facilities Manager, and Louise Beardmore, Youth Services Manager, would be co-opted as and when required. A meeting date of 09 September was recently proposed. Action Point: Town Clerk.

48. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATES

The Chairman provided the following updates and Action Points:

- 1) Scrub and gorse clearance would be scheduled at Barton Common for September, with other works to be conducted at Ballard Nature Reserve at the same time.
- 2) Lighting for the uplighting of the Recreation Ground trees had been delivered and should be in place by the middle of October.
- 3) In regard to the accepted CIL bid for a Hollands Wood multi-play unit, the designs would be brought to committee in October for member and public feedback.
- 4) Speaking on the proposed BMX track at Moore Close, Fawcetts Field, the Chairman advised that this would be looked at shortly and considered in terms of the vision plan. He mentioned that members might want to look at tweaking the location in anticipation of the Gore Road development and the Youth & Family Centre.

The Chairman then read out an update provided by Cllr R Murrow on the Dementia Allotment:

"The volunteers at the Dementia Allotment have worked hard this summer, welcoming guests and keeping the plants watered during the drought.

It's been a busy summer with lots of visitors and happy faces!

The allotment will continue to open on a Tuesday morning until late September. If you are in the area do go along to say hello to our volunteers and visitors between 11am-1pm.

We'll be meeting up with our volunteers at the end of the season to review this year and to plan ahead looking forward to next year.

Thank you everyone for your continued support."



One Member highlighted a recent event at the Community Garden to celebrate the end of the Arts Trail, calling it a fantastic event with many town businesses taking part. He noted a strip of land on the Community Garden side of the fence which apparently belonged to NFDC was preventing the Community Garden from planting within it.

The Chairman said that these comments would be taken on board and he would get back to the Community Garden. The Estates & Facilities Manager confirmed that the strip did belong to NFDC, and he was talking with NFDC to see if the Town Council could assist them. He hoped to be able to provide an update by the next Amenities Committee meeting. Action Point: Estates Manager.

49. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 13 October 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 and closed the meeting at 7:30pm

CHAIRMAN _____ DATE _____

SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
42	Fencing on the Rec	06.10.26	Planning Committee
43	PO Parcel Box Size	ASAP	Town Clerk
44	Signage Working Party	ASAP	Estates Manager
46	LGR/ Public Toilets	ASAP	Town Clerk
37	Rugby Club WP Meeting	ASAP	Town Clerk
48	Operational Matters x4	13.10.26	Estates Manager
48	Community Garden Strip	13.10.26	Estates Manager

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