NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 10 AUGUST 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
		D Rice-Mundy - Chairman	p	D N Tungate
		M Craze	p	V Schooling
	p	S Davies	p	M Scott-Johns
	p	W Davies	p	K Trehorn
	p	D Hawkins	p	R Maynard – Vice-Chair

In Attendance:
G Flexman – Town Clerk
S Welch – Administration Officer

In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman took the chair. Cllr R Maynard welcomed Councillors, Officers, 4 members of the public and a member of the press to the meeting.

The Chairman asked whether any members of the public wished to speak under public participation.

A representative of the New Milton Residents' Association (NMRA) relayed residents' concerns regarding the proposed new benches and bins for the High Street, including objections to their appearance, concerns they are not suited to the area, the absence of an anti-heat coating on the benches, and the accessibility of the bins. They then expressed a personal view, separate from that of the NMRA, regarding existing nameplates and plaques.

A resident raised several comments and concerns relating to local amenities and maintenance matters, including a request to explore access to toilet facilities for the Pétanque club at Fawcetts Field. The resident also commented that the Town Council noticeboard in the Town Hall is now difficult to view from outside due to its position. They noted it was previously located nearer the window area - now occupied by Citizens Advice - where it was more visible.

Towards the end of the meeting, the Chairman thanked the resident for their many and varied comments and requested they be submitted in writing to enable them to be properly considered and addressed.

The Chairman then opened the meeting at 6:36pm.

32. APOLOGIES

Cllr D Rice-Mundy (Traffic) Cllr M Craze (Illness)

33. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

The Chairman reported on the Mayor's and his own activities as Deputy Mayor since the last Town Council meeting held on 29 June.

30 June 2026	Garden Opening at Eaglewood (Deputy Mayor)
04 July 2026	NMRA Networking Event (Deputy Mayor)
05 July 2026	Afternoon of Music – Late Starters
10 July 2026	Durlston School Speech Day
10 July 2026	Act of Remembrance at the Indian Soldiers' War Memorial
02 August 2026	Afternoon of Music – Cash Converted
07 August 2026	Opening by Cllr G Blunden of Long Meadow Play Park

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - None

35. MINUTES

The Chairman referred to the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 29 June 2026 and it was

RESOLVED:
That Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 29 June 2026, having been circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The minutes were duly signed.

36. CORRESPONDENCE

The Town Clerk referred to:

a) An email from the Arts Trail Team thanking the Town Council for their help and support with the Artists of the Year competition held on the Recreation Ground on Saturday 08 August, noting the success of the event which attracted around "35 artists of all ages".

b) An email from HCC Cllr F Carpenter conveying her apologies and submitting her report, as shown under Minute 37.

c) The Town Clerk informed Members that the new 25-year Cricket Club lease was now ready and in the process of being signed.

d) The Town Clerk informed Members of an email received by many regarding the replacement of benches and bins in the High Street, noting that the matter would be discussed later in the meeting under Committee Reports.

37. REPORTS BY COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Cllr F Carpenter - *HCC*

Cllr Fran Carpenter sent her apologies having sustained an injury but submitted the following report:

"*July saw the inaugural meeting of the Solent Combined County Authority Standing Committee, ahead of the election of a Mayor. Cllr Nick Adams-King is Chair. The new Combined Authority will bring Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight together to work strategically on areas including transport and infrastructure, skills and training, housing, economic development and attracting investment.*

It will also have access to long-term investment funding of £1.3 billion, intended to support growth and infrastructure across the region.

Hampshire County Council continues to pursue its Judicial Review regarding Local Government Reorganisation. The County Council is seeking a full and transparent explanation of the Government's decision to pursue the five-unitary model and the financial evidence underpinning it. Of particular concern is ensuring that any new structure is financially sustainable and capable of protecting essential services, including adult social care.

The Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan has now been formally adopted by the County Council.

Hampshire's country parks and attractions have been offering a wide range of activities over the summer. These include pond dipping, wildflower and butterfly walks and family trails at Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, cycling and other outdoor activities at Queen Elizabeth Country Park, Wildlife Wonders events at Lepe Country Park and family activities at Royal Victoria Country Park.

Locally, I am still awaiting a final date regarding the damaged barrier beyond the station bridge in New Milton. I have, however, been assured that the repair is due to take place shortly and will provide a date as soon as I have one."

The Town Clerk mentioned that Andy Harding, HCC Assistant Highway Manager South, subsequently *"confirmed that the materials for this job should hopefully be delivered by the courier tomorrow and I will see if we can arrange for a gang to complete (the works) in the next couple of weeks if road space can be granted."*

Cllr J Vigor - *HCC*

Cllr J Vigor provided an update on highways matters including discussions with HCC Highways regarding pothole repairs, noting that a revised system had been introduced to help address existing backlogs.

Members were advised that potholes were now being prioritised according to risk, and residents were encouraged to report potholes, including through the *OurHants* app.

Cllr J Vigor also provided an update on her involvement in the Judicial Review relating to Local Government Reorganisation.

Cllr J Vigor was happy to provide any further information, explaining progress is slow and preparations for LGR continue in parallel with the review process.

Cllr A Reid requested Cllr J Vigor provide a written briefing on the current position for inclusion with the minutes.

Cllr J Vigor also noted she had attended the recent Long Meadow Play Park opening and spoke positively on it.

Cllr S Davies - *NFDC Portfolio holder for Housing and Homelessness*

Cllr Davies reported on recent visits to new housing developments at Aubretia Place, Danes Park, the VIVID Homes development on land adjacent to Milton Barns along Gore Road, and at Montgomery View, Barton on Sea (previously The Becton Centre).

It was noted the developments would provide a range of housing options, including affordable rent, social rent and shared ownership.

He also reported on a recent tenant community event at the Nedderman Centre, which had been well attended and provided an opportunity to engage with residents and volunteers.

Cllr A D O' Sullivan - *NFDC*

Cllr A D O'Sullivan had accompanied Cllr S Davies on the visit to Montgomery View development site and was pleased with the high standard of build. He also attended the opening of Long Meadow Play Park and spoke positively on that.

As Chair of the Task and Finish Group at NFDC, he advised they are currently reviewing the Council's budget for next year and identifying potential savings.

Cllr S Clarke - *NFDC*

Cllr S Clarke advised he also attended the visit to the VIVID Homes development site on land adjacent to Milton Barns off Gore Road and the recent tenant community event at the Nedderman Centre.

Cllr S Clarke spoke on the Local Plan following discussions at a recent New Forest District Council Cabinet meeting, advising work on the plan was now on pause due to ongoing changes to the planning system at national level.

Cllr S Clarke opined housing numbers being proposed were unachievable and unsustainable. He also noted that work undertaken to date wouldn't be lost and would be used to inform future plan making, which was not expected until after local government reorganisation and the creation of unitary authorities.

Cllr G Blunden - *NFDC Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability*

Cllr G Blunden provided an update on waste collection services, acknowledging concerns regarding missed collections. He advised that staffing shortages, sickness absence, vehicle breakdowns, recent hot weather and road closures across the district had contributed to disruption.

He also provided an update on Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) projects, noting further work was required on the Milford scheme. He welcomed the allocation of £550k towards sea defence and coastal works, which remained.

He advised that drainage works at Barton on Sea also remained on the list for funding and was confident that the works would be able to proceed when funding next became available.

He informed members of a recent A35 anti-littering campaign, noting its effectiveness in encouraging discussion and raising awareness of littering.

Cllr K Trehorn noted that some residents experienced difficulties using larger bins and asked whether smaller bins could be considered.

Cllr D N Tungate - *NFDC*

Cllr D N Tungate had nothing to report but supported Cllr G Blunden's comments regarding waste collections, noting that a recent missed collection at his property was resolved after he followed NFDC guidance to leave the bin out for collection the next day.

Cllr J Adams - *NFDC*

Cllr J Adams had nothing to report.

38. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Planning Committee

Cllr S Clarke, Chairman of the Planning Committee, submitted the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 23 July 2026 and moved their adoption.

Cllr S Clarke referred to Minute 51 and advised that an Examiner had expressed an interest in reviewing our amended Neighbourhood Plan.

RESOLVED:
That Minutes 44 to 52 inclusive of the meetings held on 23 July 2026 be received.

b) Amenities Committee

Cllr G Blunden, Chairman of the Amenities Committee, submitted the minutes of the meeting held on 06 July 2026 and moved their adoption.

Cllr G Blunden referred to Minute 27 and advised that he had been made aware of comments and emails regarding the proposed replacement of benches and bins in the High Street, noting the matter would be discussed further at the Amenities Committee meeting on 24 August with the project to be put on pause for the time being in order to address some of the comments received.

He explained the existing benches do need replacement and that replacement parts for the 20-year-old French benches are no longer available. With 36 benches in total, the maintenance costs and time required to maintain them are significant and are no longer economically viable.

He also clarified that the bins proposed for the High Street are not the same style as the taller bins that can be seen at Barton on Sea.

He advised that the recommendation would remain, as funding provision needs to be in place.

RESOLVED:
That Minutes 18 to 33 inclusive of the meeting held on 06 July 2026 be received.

c) Finance & General Purposes Committee

Cllr D N Tungate, Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee submitted Minutes of the meetings held on 20 July 2026 and moved their adoption.

Cllr S Clarke referred to Minute 24a) and clarified that members could not interfere with the Post Office selection process. He noted that local businesses had submitted applications, but Councillors could not be seen to favour one applicant over another, given the commercial interests involved.

RESOLVED:
That minutes 19 to 34 inclusive of the meeting held on 20 July 2026 be received.

d) Executive Committee

Cllr R Maynard, Vice-Chair of the Council, submitted the minutes of the strategy meeting held on 17 July 2026 and moved their adoption.

RESOLVED:

That minutes 1 to 11 inclusive of the meeting held on 17 July 2026 be received.

39. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The Schedule of Payments covering 01 May - 30 June 2026 previously endorsed by F&GP, was submitted for Council approval.

The Chairman noted a slight amendment to the Schedule of Payments numbers shown on the agenda, advising the correct schedule numbers were 02 & 03, with the total amount being £347,109.13.

It was

RESOLVED:

That the Schedule of Payments No. 2&3/26/27 in the sum of £347,109.13 for the period 01 May to 30 June 2026 be approved.

The Schedule was duly signed by the Vice-Chair and Town Clerk.

40. INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Chairman referred to Appendix 1 being the revised Investment Strategy Report for 2026/27.

The Town Clerk drew attention to the highlighted areas on the report, which compared the annual returns from Quilter Cheviot showing annual growth of £27,609 (8.7%) to 31 March 2026, and CCLA reported average fund yield of 3.95% for the 12-month period to 31 March 2026, amounting to £9,875.

It was

***RESOLVED*:**
The revised Investment Strategy for 2026-27 be approved and adopted.

41. RISK STRATEGY

The Town Clerk guided members through Appendix 2, specifically highlighting sections relating to Local Government Reorganisation and the Youth Hub.

Cllr D Hawkins asked which “Hub” was being referred to, and the Town Clerk clarified the reference was specifically to the proposed Gore Road Hub.

Cllr S Clarke advised the Youth Trust was currently considering the most suitable name for the facility to reflect the services it will provide.

Members agreed that, in the meantime, it be referred to as the Youth and Family Centre, and references in the document will be amended accordingly.

It was then

RESOLVED:

The revised Risk Strategy for 2026/27 be approved and adopted.

42. DIGITAL & DATA COMPLIANCE

The Town Clerk guided members through Appendix 3, highlighting the Council’s Cyber Essentials certification and ICO registration as presented in the Internal Auditor’s report for 2025-26.

Members noted Appendix 3, being part of the Internal Auditor’s annual report.

43. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Chairman referred to Appendix 4 being the full Internal Audit Report for 2025/26.

The Town Clerk drew attention to the four recommendations and the proposed responses.

Cllr S Clarke in relation to R3 expressed the view that supplying all Council Members with preformatted smart tablets would be an unnecessary expense. He noted that many Members already have smart devices with secure access and those who also serve as Councillors at NFDC are provided equipment by them. Cllr D N Tungate echoed these views and suggested using Member allowances to purchase such equipment.

Cllr V Schooling noted that, for those who serve solely as Town Councillors and do not already have suitable equipment, the provision of equipment could be beneficial.

The Chairman suggested that the response be amended to reflect that provision of equipment could be considered on a case-by-case basis, rather than ruled out altogether.

Cllr A D O'Sullivan queried why the £346k Quilter Cheviot investment was not included within the investments listed on page 10. The Town Clerk clarified that it was treated differently as the Internal Auditor and Accountant regarded it differently from the Council's other investments.

Members expressed uncertainty as to why the investment was treated differently. The Town Clerk explained the Auditor and Accountant considered it to carry a higher level of risk due to its exposure to the stock market.

Cllr A D O'Sullivan requested the Town Clerk seek further clarification. The Town Clerk mentioned this had previously been addressed but advised an explanatory note issued would be included with the minutes.

Members also noted that the current Internal Auditor had been in place for a significant period and suggested that it may be time to appoint a new Auditor. (Note: The appointment of Internal Auditor is considered at September F&GP)

It was then

RESOLVED:

That, subject to amendment to Recommendation 3 response, the Internal Audit Report for 2025/26 be approved and its recommendations noted.

44. COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

The Chairman referred to Appendix 5, the Communications Officer's Report, covering two relevant items, as previously circulated. The Report was noted.

45. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

The Chairman referred to Appendix 6, an updated version of the Calendar of Meetings for 2026/27

The updated calendar was noted by members.

46. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS SERVING ON EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

The Chairman referred to Cllr R Murrow who gave an update on the Dementia Allotment:

"We've welcomed lots of visitors this year to the Dementia Allotment. They've enjoyed musical activities, ice-creams, socialising, and being able to relax in our lovely colourful allotment space.

Our next event is on Wednesday 12 August when the Coda Memory Band come along to engage with members of the New Milton Dementia Social Club. Do come along if you are available. It starts at 1:30pm to 3pm.

Thank you to our volunteer team for working together providing this facility, keeping the thirsty plants watered and weeded, and welcoming our visitors.

Our core group of volunteers are amazing – thanks"

Cllr V Schooling praised the work being undertaken by the team, noting that residents from local nursing homes were attending and benefiting from the experience. She thanked all those involved and suggested the initiative could benefit from more promotion.

Cllr G Blunden echoed Cllr V Schooling's comments and noted he had attended the last session, which he found rewarding. He commented that, while the initiative supports those living with dementia, it also benefits a wider range of people in the community. He suggested consideration be given to how it is described and promoted, to better reflect its broader appeal and encourage wider participation. He acknowledged the success of the initiative.

47. NEXT MEETING

Monday 28 September 2026 at 6.30 pm at the Town Hall in New Milton.

Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.44pm.

Chairman ____________________________ Date ______________________

Distribution:
Town Councillors
District Councillors J L Cleary
County Councillors F Carpenter, D Poole and J Vigor
New Milton Police
Press
Sue Larking - NMRA
Mark Jeffries – Estates & Facilities Manager
Editor - Focus