

**BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Town Council Meeting**  
**Held on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at 7:03pm in the Corn Exchange**



**PRESENT**

Cllr L Lindsay – Chairman  
Cllr H White  
Cllr S Hitchings  
Cllr B Quayle  
Cllr C Jacques  
Cllr N Lacey-Clarke  
Cllr C Stevens

Cllr L Hitchings – Vice Chairman  
Cllr P Clark  
Cllr D Russell  
Cllr R Carter  
Cllr P Osborne  
Cllr A Cross  
Cllr H Mieville

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Town Clerk  
Operations Manager  
Nicci Brown – Press

Assistant Town Clerk  
Responsible Financial Officer  
Barrie Cooper

**137. PUBLIC SESSION**

137.1 Cllr Osborne updated Councillors on the Boxing Day hunt. Cllr Osborne reported that, on the day, opposers to the hunt spooked some horses and that supporters had a disagreement with an elderly lady. Cllr Osborne feels that it is unacceptable for families to be exposed to this behaviour, from both sides and public safety needs to be maintained. The Town Clerk has been in contact with the Inspector, who has confirmed that he will include the Town Council in a debrief of the day.

Post Meeting Note: This has been scheduled for 5<sup>th</sup> February via telephone.

**138. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS**

Cllr Quayle gave the report this month.

138.1 Dog Related Public Space Protection Order – The consultation from Dorset Council is currently open, until 19<sup>th</sup> April 2020. An email was sent by the Town Council to all Councillors and Cllr Quayle asked for all Councillors to respond.

138.2 Dorset Council Precept – The proposed precept is currently set at 3.996%, which includes a 2% increase for social care, which amounts to an extra £20m. The total precept is £305m for this coming year.

138.3 Paving Slabs – Cllrs Quayle and Lacey-Clarke have been able to secure funding for the replacement of the paving slabs in the town. With the support from Cllr Ray Bryan, the portfolio holder for Highways, Dorset Council will fully fund and fit the slabs. The works will start in the second quarter of this calendar year and will happen in three stages, with the view of completion in the next financial year. This project is a priority for the Dorset Council.

138.4 Parking Review – The steering group met on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January to discuss the recommendations. Dorset Council Highways, Parking and the Cabinet will look at the recommendations put forward. Cllr Quayle will give a presentation to the Town Council in the next few weeks, either before a planning or full council meeting. He is hoping to bring the review to a close in September this year. He thanked the Assistant Town Clerk for her assistance.

### **138. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS (CONT.)**

- 138.5 Voluntary Community Sector Grants Review – The Dorset Council is conducting a review of how to financially support the voluntary community sector beyond March 2021. The consultation is running until 11<sup>th</sup> March and Cllr Quayle requested that all Councillors respond.
- 138.6 Any Other Issues – Cllr Quayle requested that if any Councillors have any issues they should be getting in touch before the Town Council meeting, to give both Dorset Council Councillors a chance to find out the answer.
- 138.7 Climate Change Meeting – Simon Hoare MP is holding a meeting in The Crown Hotel on 8<sup>th</sup> February and Cllr Quayle requested for representation from the Town Council.

Post Meeting Note: Cllr Osborne has confirmed that he is able to attend.

- 138.8 Temporary Road Closure – Salisbury Street will be closed on 6<sup>th</sup> February. The closure has been requested for five days but is expected to be finished in one day.

Cllr Mieville sought information regarding the Dorset Council precept and enquired why there has been a raise. He was under the impression that the precept should be lower than before the Local Government Reorganisation. Cllr Quayle clarified the figures.

Cllr Mieville asked if recommendations for the Parking Review will be made available before the presentation to the Town Council. Cllr Quayle responded that he will not make them available as a few loose ends need to be tied up before the presentation and he would like to inform all Councillors at the same time.

Cllr Cross enquired if both Dorset Council Councillors approved the Dorset Council increase. Cllr Quayle explained that he does not support Town Councillors methodology in calculating the precept and that he raised the same issue with the Dorset Council. They provided a satisfactory response to him and he is happy to vote for the proposed precept. Cllr Lacey-Clarke explained that he had various enquiries about the precept. The vote hasn't happened yet, and he has not made up his mind yet but, as the increase for social care is necessary, he will most likely vote in favour.

### **139. APOLOGIES**

Cllr J Stayt

Cllr R Holmes

### **140. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED unanimously that

**A dispensation is granted to all Councillors, except Cllr L Hitchings and Cllr Cross (as they do not live in Blandford Forum), to enable them to participate in discussion and vote on the setting of the precept.**

### **141. MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 16<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2019**

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Cross, SECONDED by Cllr Carter and AGREED (13 in favour, 1 abstention) that the Town Council Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

### **142. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE**

- 142.1 Depot Update – A meeting has been held to look at the current market and the Town Clerk is looking into the Public Works Loan Board rates because there was a preference to purchase instead of renting.

## **142. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE (CONT.)**

- 142.2 Northern Area Meeting held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2020 – Clerks and Chairmen met with Cllr Pauline Batstone at Sturminster Newton Town Council to discuss what we could do to help our local economies and north Dorset in general. Attendees also discussed the precept / housing figures, and public toilets with an action for the Town Clerk to write to Simon Hoare MP to ask for his support in rates relief on public toilets.
- 142.3 YouTube – The video settings for the Town Council's YouTube page have been adjusted to 'not made for children'. They can only be categorised as 'made for children' if the video was specifically made for children, none of which were. The Town Council now has the four promotional videos, the White Helmets farewell and the Charter 400 film uploaded to its channel.
- 142.4 TED George Charity – The Blandford Forum Almshouse Charity has written to advise that applications from Blandford Forum residents are now open until 25<sup>th</sup> February 2020 for small grants. This notice has been displayed on our notice boards and added to the Facebook page.
- 142.5 Freedom of Interest – Another FOI request was received from a resident regarding the Corn Exchange expenditure since the appointment of the recent architect.
- 142.6 Skate Park – An email was sent to the Dorset Council's Interim Estates Surveying Manager for Assets, Estates and Property on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2019 regarding the Town Council's request for an extension of the lease and he confirmed it would be considered at the January meeting. A response is awaited and therefore the tender document has not yet been prepared or published. Blandford St Mary parish council has indicated that they are happy to contribute using S106 monies.
- 142.7 Pre-App – The Dorset Council has advised that, since going into the Unitary authority, it has been agreed that town/parish councils will now be charged for pre-app advice. The Dorset Council explained that 'as pre-applications are not formal planning applications we are free to charge for them, and the decision was taken that as most councils charged that was the way we would go.'
- 142.8 Assets of Community Value – Confirmation has been received from Dorset Council that the Knees up Hall and Legion House have been listed as Assets of Community Value. They are still working on the other applications.

Cllr Lacey-Clarke reported that Knees Up were pleased that the hall had been nominated again.

## **143. CIVIC REPORT**

The paper was sent to Councillors via email.

## **144. TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DORSET PARISH INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

The paper was noted (See Appendix A).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED unanimously that

**The Town Council agrees to retain the existing allowance.**

**ACTION: TOWN CLERK**

**145. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES**

**145.1 Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019**

**145.1.1 To confirm the overall budget and precept for the year 2020/21**

Cllr S Hitchings asked if anyone had any comments and the Town Clerk advised that nobody has raised any queries with officers.

The paper was noted (See Appendix B).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED (13 in favour, 1 against) that

**The Town Council confirms the precept for 2020/2021 at £801,180, which is an increase of 1.11%, and equates to £2.49 per Band D property.**

**ACTION: TOWN CLERK**

Cllr White enquired why Cllr Quayle voted against the budget. Cllr Quayle stated that he does not agree with the methodology used and referred to his concerns about the Leisure Centre funding.

Cllr Lacey-Clarke asked for it to be minuted that he is not happy about Cllr Quayle being put on the spot.

**145.2 Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020**

The minutes were RECEIVED.

The Responsible Financial Officer left the meeting.

**146. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE TOWN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN PROJECTS AND APPROVE AN UPDATED PLAN TO COINCIDE WITH THE NEW COUNCIL TERM**

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

Councillors suggested the following changes to the plan:

- In the introduction remove the reference to Tri-council area
- Change 'or' to 'of' in the 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph under Financial Summary
- Appendix B, CP01 should be divided into CP01A and CP01B to include the Market Area Enhancement
- Appendix B, IN05 should include a reference to the Working Group

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED unanimously that

**The Town Council approves the updated Plan, Appendix A, Appendix B and Appendix C, subject to the above amendments.**

**ACTION: TOWN CLERK**

**147. TO APPROVE THE AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL DIARY FOR 2020/21**

The paper was noted (See Appendix D).

Cllr L Hitchings left the room at 8.00pm.

Cllr L Hitchings returned to the room at 8.01pm.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr White, SECONDED by Cllr Carter and AGREED (13 in favour, 1 against) that

**147. TO APPROVE THE AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL DIARY FOR 2020/21 (CONT.)**

The Town Council approves the following amendments to the Council Diary 2020/21:

- At the request of the Blandford Yuletide Committee, the Tree Lighting event is merged with the Yuletide Festival, and the Committee will organise the Tree Lighting. The hire of the Corn Exchange will be free of charge.
- The Civic Carol service is to take place on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020, organised by the Town Council.
- The Fly the Flag for the Commonwealth is to stay the same as previous years.
- The date for the Community Expo and Dorset Architectural Heritage Week is confirmed as 19<sup>th</sup> September 2020.
- The Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and Mayor Making will be held on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

**ACTION: TOWN CLERK**

**148. TO APPROVE THE SUBSCRIPTION TO THE DORSET ASSOCIATION OF PARISH & TOWN COUNCILS FOR 2020/21**

The paper was noted (See Appendix E).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Carter and AGREED unanimously that

**The Town Council approves the subscription to the Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils for 2020/21.**

**ACTION: TOWN CLERK**

**149. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON TREE/HEDGE WORKS REQUIRED AND APPROVE EXPENDITURE**

The paper was noted (See Appendix F).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Lindsay and AGREED unanimously that

**The Town Council approves expenditure of up to £6,600.00 using funds from budget line 1075 Tree Survey & Works from R&A earmarked reserves which has a balance of £12,663.00. This is subject to a comparative quote being sought, permission from the Dorset Council Tree Officer and approval from the Chairman of Council and the Chairman of Finance & Staffing (once having seen both quotes) (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).**

**ACTION: TOWN CLERK**

**150. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE AND CONSIDER ANY REQUESTS FROM THE:**

**150.1 Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – Blandford +**

Cllr Carter reported that the ‘fact check’ document was sent back to the Examiner on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January.

**150.2 BFTC Commemoration Group**

Cllr Carter reported that they secured the attendance of the RBL and a small exhibition by the Freemasons in the Corn Exchange and also at the Masonic Lodge for their VE Day event.

**150. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE AND CONSIDER ANY REQUESTS FROM THE (CONT.):**

150.3 Public Art Plan

Cllr Osborne reported that the benches are in fabrication, the works on site will start in the middle of March and the Public Art is planned to be installed at the end of March 2020.

150.4 Corn Exchange

Cllr Clark reported that the historic condition survey has been received back. A working group meeting is scheduled for next week to discuss the results of the survey.

150.5 VE75 Planning Group

The Town Clerk reported that both Preetz and Mortain twinning towns have been invited to a reception on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at Woodhouse Gardens, after the Peal of Bells at 7pm.

150.6 Climate Change & Biodiversity

Cllr Osborne reported that he attended a low carbon seminar which was very good. He also met with the Town Clerk to discuss putting the Town Council's plan into a timeline. He would like to measure the current carbon footprint of the council. The future plans are to move away from fossil fuels and to create our own electricity. There is no budget for this working group, therefore every action or change this year has to be at no cost. We are looking at doing the right things in the right order for the right reasons. The Town Clerk reported that they discussed the two-minute litter pick and the possibility of having it outside the Corn Exchange. The Town Clerk spoke to Litter Free Dorset to discuss this further.

150.6.1 To consider signing up to the Tree Charter

The paper was noted (See Appendix G).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr Quayle and AGREED unanimously that

**The Town Council agrees to sign up to the Tree Charter and include this in the Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Plan.**

**ACTION: TOWN CLERK**

150.7 Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project

Cllr Stevens explained that the group would like to use the grant for the pedestrianisation to enhance half of the market area. A consultation will be sent to shops in town. The next meeting is arranged for 11<sup>th</sup> February.

Cllr Lacey-Clarke advised that the pavements will be a separate project which will not be delayed, regardless of the ideas of this project.

Cllr S Hitchings reported that they are looking for local support and how to overcome the issue of loss of parking income to Dorset Council.

Cllr Lacey-Clarke responded that, once both Dorset Council Councillors understand the vision of what should be done with the Market Place, they are potentially happy to support it and take it to Dorset Council. However, the problem will be that any policy change will be for the whole of Dorset, not just for Blandford Forum.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Stevens, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED unanimously that

**The Town Council approves the consultation to be sent to Market Place retailers.**

**ACTION: TOWN CLERK**

