

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town & General Purposes Committee
Held on Monday 1st October 2018 at 7.00pm

PRESENT

Cllr L Hitchings – Chairman
Cllr R Carter – Chairman of Council
Cllr P Osborne
Cllr D Robinson

Cllr H Mieville – Vice Chairman
Cllr N Lacey-Clarke – Vice Chairman of Council
Cllr B Quayle
Cllr P Clark

IN ATTENDANCE

Assistant Town Clerk
Nicci Brown – Press

Mr N Nicol – Town Team

SITTING IN

Cllr S Hitchings

Cllr H White

15. PUBLIC SESSION

15.1 To receive a presentation from the Town Team to outline their current strategy/plans and projects

Mr Nic Nicol explained that the previous DT11 Forum Partnership has transferred £3,500 to the Town Team with the condition that a Blandford Forum Community Interest Company is set up, which is nearly completed. There will be a new website and the sole purpose is to promote the town. These funds are sufficient to pay the solicitor and for the website, with ongoing fees. This time next year there will be a surplus of around £300. It is hoped to receive income from associate members, which will be minimal. Therefore, he is requesting for the Town Council to continue with the grant for the room hire of the Community Room.

Cllr Lacey-Clarke asked what current projects the Town Team is working on. Mr Nicol confirmed that Phase 1, the Tourism signs, is near completion. Phase 2, advanced warning signs with tourism symbols on the approach road to the bypass is his next project, where he will seek approval from this council and Blandford St Mary. Thanks to the Town Council, the bike racks are now installed, a project the DT11 and Town Team initiated. A Freedom of Information letter has been sent to North Dorset District Council regarding the Lidl S106 monies and the X8 bus. There is a Cranborne Chase tourist GPS app project which they will want to bring into town, so visitors can get information on various historic items. He may contact the Town Council regarding a possible grant for this project, if the Town Team cannot bid for a grant from a different organisation. They are working with the Stour Rotary on a Trailway project bidding for money from Dorset County Council, where signs and history boards are installed either side of the Trailway. The interest in becoming a CIC is the chance of getting some big projects underway.

Cllr Carter asked if he has made any contact with the local business community. Mr Nicol confirmed that he tried but did not get much engagement. Cllr Carter wanted to know what happened to the application of world heritage status. Unfortunately, this has not progressed, but it has brought about the conservation area appraisal and plan.

Cllr Mieville enquired how Mr Nicol would see the Town Council and the Town Team working together. Mr Nicol explained that there are certain grants the Town Council cannot apply for but a CIC can, and he very much hopes they can work with the Town Council on a Community Housing project or Community Hall. He would welcome the opportunity to talk to this committee regularly.

20. GENERAL UPDATES FROM: (cont)

20.2 Blandford Police

No representative was in attendance. PC Hammond provided statistics before the meeting and responded to Councillor questions.

20.2.1 111 calls to the Police took place in the period from 1st August 2018 to 28th September 2018 with 39 crimes recorded in Blandford town. Three were shoplifting, one dwelling burglary, two other thefts, one theft of a bicycle and one possession of drugs (cannabis). There have been a number of assaults (12) of which some are drug abuse related, as are a couple of other crimes in that total, including public order related. Blandford continues to be and have a low record of crimes reported and a safe place to go out and enjoy the night-time economy.

20.2.2 Cllr Quayle enquired if there has been a drop in frontline staff in Blandford (on the street) over the past year? PC Hammond responded that, although easy to answer it depends on what is meant by frontline staff. The NPT largely remains the same, one PC with two PCSO's. There have been more (four) but one has joined Wiltshire police and the other is now the area NEO (Neighbourhood Engagement Officer) for North/East Dorset, a role that centres around events and police involvement as well as media sharing. We have one NPT sergeant who covers all three NPT's (Gillingham/Shafesbury & Blandford), this has not changed. Officers that invariably cover calls (response) comprise of three squads each with a Sergeant, and these numbers fluctuate due to illness/courses/officers leaving but any shortfall is covered by officers from neighbouring sections and therefore it is pretty much business as usual to the area despite a marginal drop in staffing levels.

20.2.3 Cllr Osborne asked what the police take on is to the recent reports of open drug use in and around the Market Square, and whether there is anything the council can do to support them in policing this more effectively? PC Hammond advised that reports of open drugs use are common amongst town-folk and related social media. Some reports come through to the police by phone, but quite often these are filed out or sent to the NPT. They are aware of drug use in town, however knowing the few people that are drug users its highly unlikely, they are taking drugs in plain sight despite the Chinese whispers stating otherwise. Where possible they are in town on foot/vehicle to deter drugs misuse and work with their partners to ascertain locations where this Anti-Social Behaviour may take place and tie their patrols in to visit these locations. Where there is specific intelligence the police do use stop search powers to look for drugs. The reality is that those persons seen will have consumed the £30 hit prior to police arrival, the hit they use is taken out of sight, usually in a public toilet or bush but likely in or near the address to which it's bought (or taken to an address of a person they know) so they can feel the effects. Police powers of search for drugs only apply to constables, not PCSO's. What the council can do – continue passing information, 'fortify' public toilets after hours to prevent use by these persons and pass on any intelligence around persons meeting the known users in town, particularly locations and if applicable car registration numbers to your local team (PC Hammond).

20.3 Market Manager

A report has been tabled.

Cllr Lacey-Clarke thanked the Market Manager for his continuing improvements to the market and the hard work that went into the Charter Market. Cllr Carter would like to know if the Market Manager has any ideas on how to bring culture and tourism to the market place, in conjunction with what was discussed at the NABMA conference.

21. REPORT ON YULETIDE FESTIVAL – WEDNESDAY 12TH DECEMBER 2018

Cllr S Hitchings reported that they are busy planning. It is not going to be dissimilar to previous years. They are looking for volunteers to manage the road closure and Cllr S Hitchings asked Councillors to put themselves forward by the end of October. He will be using the whole of the budget and hopes that the Committee will replace the budget for next year.

Cllr S Hitchings expressed his disappointment that the Committee approved the purchase of the lights for the columns using S106 monies without consulting the Yuletide Committee volunteers. He reported that the trees and the column lights will not work and that there will be crossed wires between the two. He is not pleased that money will be spent every year for an electrician to install these. Cllr Robinson would like it minuted that Cllr S Hitchings has made it clear that, if there is an issue with the lights, the Yuletide Committee will not be responsible for them as they only install and insure the Christmas trees.

Post Meeting Note: The Town Clerk has confirmed that there has never been an expectation that the Blandford Yuletide Festival would take on responsibility for the Town Council's scheme. Several Councillors are involved in the BYF, all of whom have a voice on this Council and a full discussion was held at the July T&GP meeting. Emails regarding this scheme date back to June with the BYF Chairman, who was sent the colour scheme and was provided with the column reference numbers the lights will be attached to. Even though money has already been spent with SSE, due to the feedback at this meeting, Councillors will be given the opportunity to withdraw this scheme at a future meeting.

22. REVIEW OF TOWN & GENERAL PURPOSES BUDGETS TO 24TH SEPTEMBER 2018

22.1 Analytical Review of Revenue Budget

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

22.2 Review of Earmarked Reserves

The paper was noted (see Appendix B).

22.3 Reserve Accounts

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

23. DCC HIGHWAYS

23.1 To consider a request for double yellow lines along Black Lane

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr Carter and AGREED (7 in favour, 1 against) that

The Committee does not support the request for double yellow lines along Black Lane currently and waits for the Parking Review to present its findings. Councillors are to send their individual views to the Parking Review Group.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

23.2 To consider a request for double yellow or solid white lines at the entrance to Albert Place in Albert Street

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

Cllr L Hitchings provided some background to this request before leaving the meeting at 8.06pm.

23. DCC HIGHWAYS (CONT)

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Quayle, SECONDED by Cllr Osborne and AGREED (4 in favour, 1 abstentions, 3 non-vote) that

The Committee supports one solid white line at the entrance to Albert Place in Albert Street subject to DCC Highways investigation.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Cllr L Hitchings returned to the meeting at 8.16pm.

24. TO AGREE NDDC'S FREE PARKING DAYS IN THE TOWN

24.1 To confirm NDDC's support for free Christmas parking on Saturday 8th December 2018 or Saturday 15th December 2018 and Wednesday 12th December 2018 for Yuletide (as requested by the BYF Group)

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED (7 in favour, 1 against) that

The Committee agrees to have the free car parking day in all NDDC car parks on Wednesday 12th December 2018 and Saturday 8th and 15th December 2018.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

24.2 To confirm one day free parking from DCC on either Small Business Saturday 1st December 2018 or the chosen free Christmas Parking Date (Market Place and Sheepmarket Hill)

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

The Committee agrees to have the DCC free car parking day on Saturday 1st December 2018.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

25. CHRISTMAS WINDOW COMPETITION

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

25.1 To consider Christmas Window Competition details and expenditure approval for proposed prize money.

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

The Committee approves details of the Christmas Window Competition and approves expenditure for a total of £350 for the prize money using funds from the Christmas Town Decorations budget line (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

25.2 To appoint the judges for the Christmas Window Competition 2018

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

The Committee agrees to the addition of up to two youths, at the Mayor's choosing, along with the Chairman of Council, Chairman of T&GP Committee and the editor of the Forum Focus.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

25. CHRISTMAS WINDOW COMPETITION (CONT)

Cllr S Hitchings requested that the winners are not announced on Facebook before the Yuletide Festival, so it stays a surprise to the shop owners. The Assistant Town Clerk informed Councillors that officers did not publish it on Facebook before the Yuletide Festival in 2017.

26. TO CONSIDER THE PURCHASE AND MAINTENANCE OF SPEED INDICATOR DEVICES IN SALISBURY ROAD AND ST LEONARDS AVENUE (IN LIGHT OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION)

The paper was noted (see Appendix G).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED (7 in favour, 1 against) that

The Committee agrees to commission two surveys at the following locations, down Salisbury Road by Peel Close and down St Leonards Avenue at the junction of Queen's Road, of up to £500 using funds from budget line 1021 DCC Highways (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

27. TO CONSIDER SUGGESTING THE PURCHASE OF AN ADDITIONAL BIN AT STOUR MEADOWS (AS PROPOSED BY CLLR MIEVILLE)

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

The Committee agrees to write to Blandford St Mary to suggest the purchase of an additional bin at Stour Meadows.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

28. AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS TO SUGGEST ITEMS FOR POSSIBLE INCLUSIONS IN THE 2018/2019 BUDGET TO ENABLE TIME FOR OFFICERS TO INVESTIGATE COSTS THAT CAN BE BROUGHT BACK TO THE NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING IN NOVEMBER

28.1 Cleaning of Town Centre pavement (suggested by Cllr Quayle)

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Quayle, SECONDED by Cllr Carter and AGREED (5 in favour, 3 against) that

The Committee supports the idea of using the Town Council precept to pay DWP to hot wash clean the pavement subject to DWP providing a full cost break down.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The meeting closed at 9:13pm.

SIGNED: DATED: