

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
Held on Monday 27th April 2020 at 7:00pm online using Microsoft Teams



PRESENT

Cllr L Lindsay – Chairman
Cllr H White
Cllr S Hitchings
Cllr P Osborne
Cllr J Stayt
Cllr H Mieville
Cllr A Cross

Cllr L Hitchings – Vice Chairman
Cllr P Clark
Cllr B Quayle
Cllr N Lacey-Clarke
Cllr C Stevens
Cllr D Russell
Cllr R Carter – joined the meeting at 7.25pm

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk
Operations Manager
Tom Snape – Cricket Club
Antonio Piazza

Assistant Town Clerk
Nicci Brown – Press
Caroline White – Cricket Club

Cllr Lindsay welcomed everyone to the first online meeting of the Town Council.

167. PUBLIC SESSION

No members of the public requested to speak.

168. APOLOGIES

Cllr R Holmes (due to technical issues)

Cllr C Jacques

169. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Cllr S Hitchings confirmed that he personally knows the applicant for the St John Ambulance grant and Cllr L Hitchings declared a personal interest as the applicant is his mother-in-law and he is involved in the organisation.

Cllr Quayle declared an interest in agenda item 6.2.1 as his wife is a hirer of the Corn Exchange and he will not vote.

170. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

170.1 COVID-19 – Councillors have been kept up to date with the current situation through regular emails from the Town Clerk.

170.2 Home Working – Staff who are able to work from home have been doing so effectively and Teams meetings are taking place amongst the staff. They will not be claiming the home working allowance that is available to them.

170.3 Dorset Council – The Chief Executive of the Dorset Council, Matt Prosser, has kept Dorset Town Clerks updated via regular Skype meetings, which have been incredibly useful.

170.4 Thank You – Blandford Forum Food Bank and Age UK (North, South & West Dorset) have written to thank the Town Council for their respective grants. Poacher's Moon and Free Expression Arts Festival have written to express their gratitude for the free venue hire.

170.5 Public Conveniences – The Clerk to South Tarrant Valley Parish Council has written to confirm that Councillors have decided to give a contribution of £100 to the Town Council in respect of the public conveniences.

170. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE (CONT.)

- 170.6 Standing Orders – A report proposing to amend the Town Council's Standing Orders with regards to remote meetings has not been included because this is a temporary amendment, enabling meetings to be held in accordance with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the 2020 Regulations") which came in to force on 4th April 2020. The 2020 Regulations enable local councils to hold remote meetings (including by video and telephone conferencing) for a specified period until May 2021. The 2020 Regulations apply to local council meetings, committee and sub-committee meetings in England.
- 170.7 Annual Meeting of the Town Council – S.7 of Schedule 12 of LGA 1972 is now disapplied, which removes the need to hold an annual meeting in 2020. This does not mean that a council cannot hold an annual meeting hence why a survey was carried out amongst all Councillors and it was agreed to postpone the annual meeting until May 2021, as follows:
- Proceed on 4th May 2020 via a remote meeting – Cllrs S Hitchings, Mievilte and L Hitchings
Wait until we meet in person – Cllrs Osborne, Carter, Clark, Stevens and Jacques
Postpone till May 2021 carrying positions over until then – Cllrs Stayt, Lindsay, White, Lacey-Clarke, Quayle, Holmes, Cross and Russell.
- With councils not required to hold annual meetings under these regulations, current appointments will continue until the next annual meeting of the council.
- 170.8 Freedom Parade – The Camp has confirmed that the Freedom Parade scheduled for Sunday 28th June 2020 has been cancelled and this event has not been rescheduled.
- 170.9 Trees – There has been a query over the ownership of the beech trees along the Wimborne Road. Cllrs White and Holmes, who were Councillors in 1994 when the trees were planted, were asked if they recalled any involvement from the Town Council at the time. This is a result of a letter to the Forum Focus asking that someone carries out maintenance on them and a resident had thought they were the Town Council's responsibility. They are outside of the parish and Cllr White recalled that a tree organisation called Trees for Dorset had planted them and the Dorset Council has since been in touch with the organisation asking that they ensure these trees are maintained and do not encroach on the highway.

171. MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 24th FEBRUARY 2020

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr White and AGREED (10 in favour, 3 abstentions) that the Town Council Minutes be APPROVED.

The Chairman confirmed that these minutes will be signed once we are in a position to do so.

172. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES

172.1 Town & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Monday 9th March 2020

The Minutes were RECEIVED.

172.2 Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting held on Monday 16th March 2020

The paper was noted (see Appendix B).

172.2.1 Minute 51 - Insurance risk assessment relating to the Town Council's insurance cover and approval of insurance premiums for 2020/21

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

The Town Council confirms that there are no other aspects of insurance that they wish to amend and agrees the insurance premium for 2020/21 of £14,055.84 (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

172. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES (CONT.)

Cllr Carter joined the meeting at 7.25pm.

172.2.2 Minute 54 - To review the Finance & Staffing Committee remit and the Financial Regulations

Cllr S Hitchings explained that this was not minuted on 16th March 2020 as a recommendation, but it should be approved by full council as it involves amending the Town Council's Financial Regulations and should include the other extraordinary resolutions made that evening.

An amendment to the wording from *This delegated authority ceases when normal business and council meetings are resumed* to *This delegated authority ceases when normal business or council meetings are resumed* was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr S Hitchings and AGREED unanimously.

It was therefore PROPOSED by Cllr White, SECONDED by Cllr L Hitchings and AGREED (13 in favour, 1 non-vote) that

The Financial Regulations are updated at section 1.15 as follows:

"In exceptional and unprecedented circumstances (e.g. a pandemic), which lead to it not being possible to convene a meeting of the council in a reasonable time, the Clerk shall have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the council where such decision cannot reasonably be deferred and must be made in order to comply with a commercial or statutory deadline. This will be carried out where possible by consultation with members by electronic means or telephone. The clerk will further consult with the chairman and vice chairman of council and the chairman and vice chairman of the finance & staffing committee for guidance as necessary. The delegation does not extend to matters expressly reserved to the council in legislation or in its Standing Orders or these Financial Regulations. Any decisions made under this delegation must be recorded in writing and must be published in accordance with the relevant regulations. This delegated authority ceases when normal business or council meetings are resumed".

Hirers who cancel bookings will not be penalised and will receive a refund, which is not in keeping with the Town Council's booking conditions.

In addition, the Service Level Agreements will continue to be paid even if they are unable to open to the public as a result of the virus.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

172.2.3 Minute 56 - To consider grant applications

The Chairman took the vote for the following grants at agenda item 6.2.1 together:

Minute 56.1 – Blandford Police

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

A grant of £500 to the Blandford Police is approved retrospectively.

Minute 56.2 – Blandford Scout Group

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

A grant of £3,000 to the Blandford Scout Group is approved retrospectively.

172. **RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES (CONT.)**

Minute 56.4 - Oh No It Isn't

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Carter and AGREED unanimously that
60% of the current reserved venue hire costs for Oh No It Isn't is approved retrospectively as free venue hire, in accordance with the free venue hire criteria, hence there will be no cancellation of paid hirers.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

172.2.4 Minute 56.3 - St John Ambulance (£1,000 awarded in 2015-16 for purchase of defibrillator)

It was PROPOSED by Cllr White, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED (13 in favour, 1 non-vote) that

A grant of £820 is retrospectively approved.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

172.2.5 Minute 56.4 - In Jolly Good Company

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

A decision on this grant is deferred until In Jolly Good Company is able to meet again.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The Chairman took the decision to take the voting on agenda items 6.2.1 Minute 57, Minute 58 and Minute 59 together.

172.2.6 Minute 57 - To receive a report regarding Virement from General Reserves to cover expenditure in 2019/20, Minute 58 - To receive a report regarding committing funds from underspend of Project Manager budget, Minute 59 - To receive a report regarding funds from underspend of Corn Exchange maintenance budget and grants budget

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

To vire £4,120 from the Interest Earnt on Earmarked Investments budget line (Code 1001), £1,321 from the Interest Earnt on Capital investments budget line (Code 1010) and £284 from Interest Earnt on the Property Fund budget line (Code 1002) to General Reserves (Code 1500) and keeping the cost of £5,381 from the expenditure to the General Reserve to review in December 2020.

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

To vire underspend from the Project Manager Fee budget (Code 4400) to General Reserves (Code 1500) to assist with flexible working / Project Manager Fees, and to vire the underspend of the Payroll budget line (Code 4400) to General Reserves (Code 1500).

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

To vire underspend from the Corn Exchange Maintenance Budget (Code 5206) to Corn Exchange Regeneration Reserves (Code 1105) to assist with refurbishment costs, and to vire the underspend of the Grants budget line (Code 5505) to General Reserves (Code 1500) and to commit for Grants 2020/21.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

172.2.7 The Minutes were RECEIVED

173. TO RETROSPECTIVELY APPROVE:

173.1 Grants to Age UK and Blandford Forum Food Bank

The paper was noted (See Appendix C).

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

The Town Council retrospectively approves £2,000 from the Grants budget using the underspend from the 2018/19 financial year and the balance from the 2019/20 financial year.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

173.2 Payment relief to Sports Clubs for the period April to June 2020

The paper was noted (See Appendix D).

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

The Town Council retrospectively approves payment relief to the sports clubs for the April to June 2020 period and this will be reviewed again subject to how things progress.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

174. TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FROM THE CRICKET CLUB FOR A LOAN

The paper was noted (See Appendix E).

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

The Town Council approves a loan of £20,000 to the Cricket Club over a period of ten years, with interest of 2.14%, to be included as part of the annual agreement with the Town Council.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

175. TO CONSIDER EXPENDITURE AUTHORITY FOR SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS TO THE RECEPTION AREA

The paper was noted (See Appendix F).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Stayt, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED (12 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention) that

The Town Council approves expenditure authority of £2,774 + VAT (plus funds to cover any carpeting and decoration required) using funds from the Corn Exchange Buildings & Maintenance budget line, which has a current balance of £16,934 (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

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

176.1 Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – Blandford +

The paper was noted (See Appendix G) and Cllr Carter asked for Councillors to contact him directly should they have any questions.

176.2 Public Art Plan

The paper was noted (See Appendix H).

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

176.3 Corn Exchange

176.3.1 To retrospectively approve expenditure for essential maintenance works

The paper was noted (See Appendix I).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr Carter and AGREED (13 in favour, 1 abstention) that

The Town Council retrospectively approves expenditure of £2,151.00 using funds from the Corn Exchange Building Maintenance and Materials budget line 5206 which as at 21st February 2020 has a balance of £16,934.00 (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

176.4 Climate Change & Biodiversity

176.4.1 Update from the last working group meeting held on Monday 16th March 2020

The paper was noted (See Appendix J).

176.5 Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project

176.5.1 Update from the last working group meeting held on 2nd March 2020

The paper was noted (See Appendix K). A discussion was held on the current plan and Cllr Lacey-Clarke advised that he will be happy to attend future meetings once the group has a clear vision/plan to take forward.

The Chairman thanked Councillors, staff and members of the public for attending.

The meeting closed at 8:18pm.

SIGNED

DATED