



BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

Town Clerk's Office, Church Lane, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 7AD

Tel: 01258 454500 • Fax: 01258 454432

admin@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk • www.blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk



NEWSLETTER

Chairman of Blandford Forum Town Council

Annual Report 2019/20

My name is Lynn Lindsay. I am a Town Councillor and the Mayor of Blandford Forum. Ordinarily, this report would have been delivered in the Corn Exchange with members of the public present. However, this was not possible this year and I have therefore summarised the key points from each month over the last year to provide you with an update of what the Town Council has been doing.

May 2019:

- I was appointed Mayor for 2019/20 with The Community Kitchen as my Charity for the year.
- The extension works to Woodhouse Gardens Pavilion started.
- A new Deputy Mace Bearer was appointed.
- The Town Council approved expenditure of £2,700 for essential works to the Skate Park.

June 2019:

- A grant of £1,000 to 'Oh No it Isn't' for room hire for three pantomime performances was approved and dates secured for future pantomime performances up to 2023.
- A grant of £500 to Blandford Home Start was approved.
- Online ticket sales for Town Council events was set up.
- High level cleaning carried out in the Corn Exchange.
- Tree photography competition launched by Cllr Russell (the winning photograph is pictured right, taken by Ian Fox).
- Community Payback Scheme introduced at Elizabeth Road allotments for one day.
- The Town Council supported the Dorset Council in its new environmental approach and formed a working group to formulate actions in order to address the climate emergency.



July 2019:

- Two new Councillor robes were made by a local seamstress.
- Unveiling of new plaque at Dr Davies garden (pictured).
- I enjoyed drawing the winners of 100 free tickets for the Great Dorset Steam Fair, which was our first live video shown on Facebook!
- A grant of £281.40 for free room hire for the Free Expression Festival was approved.
- Consultation with Damory Down estate residents carried out to seek views on what tree species and location they would like to replace the seven trees that were felled due to being dead, dying or diseased, and if they would like wildflower meadow areas.
- VE75 Planning Group formed to organise events for the town on Friday 8th May 2020.
- The Town Council approved expenditure of £2,339 for the purchase and installation of a new boiler for Woodhouse Gardens Pavilion.
- The Town Council created a Public Art Plan, went to tender for designs for the Badbury Heights development and approved a submission due to be installed later in 2020.
- The first Town Council organised Skatefest was held and it was a great success!



August 2019:

- The Town Council hosted a free summer holiday entertainment show and circus workshop with Jamie Jigsaw.
- The Woodhouse Gardens pavilion extension was completed and reopened to the public. I held my civic day there, with Mayors from across Dorset in attendance and performances by the Blandford Stour Valley Band (pictured right).



September 2019:

- A bustling Community Expo was held, along with the first Picnic in the Park for Blandford.
- The Town Council was part of the Dorset Architectural Heritage Week again, with the cemetery chapel, Town Hall and Council Chamber included in the list of venues to visit.
- Work started preparing the budgets for the 2020/21 financial year.

October 2019:

- Africa Trust – The Town Council purchased two hot water boilers, one for Woodhouse Gardens Pavilion and one for the Corn Exchange kitchen. The company these were purchased from donates on behalf of their customers to the Africa Trust. These funds are used to directly build fresh drinking water wells in areas in Africa where it is needed the most, like in schools and villages. They selected the Town Council to aid the project that they are running which involves installing additional water wells (which are referred to as Elephant Pumps) in Africa. The pump has been inscribed with the Town Council's name and a photo, a certificate and letter of thanks from the villagers / pupils will be presented to us in due course.
- The Town Council agreed to nominate the buildings of the Methodist Church, RBL, Knees Up Hall, the Post Office, Nordon and the Library on the Community Right to Bid register because these community buildings are an asset to the town, are important architecturally and offer services to the town.
- A Website Accessibility Statement was adopted to improve access for everyone.
- A Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Plan was approved and has been regularly updated since.



November 2019:

- The great-great-grandson of Charles Dickens, Gerald Dickens entertained a full house in the Corn Exchange with A Christmas Carol.
- Remembrance events were held in the town, including the local schools and the community.
- Expenditure of £1,375.80 was approved for essential work to the Skate Park.
- Free hire was approved for the foreseeable future for the Tea Dances held in the Corn Exchange.
- Expenditure of £300 was approved for temporary traffic monitoring in Edward Street and Black Lane, due to complaints of speeding in these areas. However, as it didn't meet the criteria for Speed Indicator Devices these will not be installed.
- Free parking days for 2020 were set in conjunction with the Dorset Council, which is the organisation that owns the parking areas.
- Additional expenditure of £1,614 was approved for the Railway Arches.
- The renewal of the four-year agreement with MVS Blandford Ltd was approved.

December 2019:

- The Christmas Window Competition was held (winner pictured).
- The Tree Lighting & Carol Service were held.
- Shops and businesses of Blandford Forum contributed to the small Christmas trees and were very supportive. Thank you again to everyone that contributed to this!
- A grant of £2,300 was awarded to Age Concern Blandford.
- Free venue hire was approved for the Town Team meetings 2020/21.
- Expenditure of up to £3,500 was approved for the purchase of a new van, bringing the number of council vehicles up to three.
- Expenditure of £306.50 was approved for the services of a sound technician for the outdoor Remembrance Sunday service.
- Expenditure of £175 was approved to commission a survey at a specific site along Black Lane to monitor the speed.
- Expenditure of £1,420 was approved for safety railings at the Railway Arches to assist the public when accessing the top of the arches.

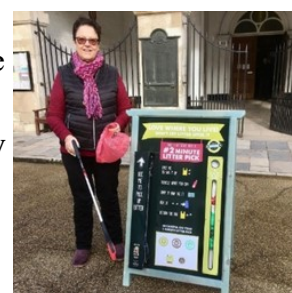


January 2020

- The Town Council confirmed the precept for 2020/2021 at £801,180 which is an increase of 1.11% and equates to £2.49 per Band D property.
- Expenditure of up to £6,600.00 was approved for essential tree/hedge works.
- The Town Council agreed to sign up to the Tree Charter.

February 2020

- Expenditure of £13,117.66 was approved for essential works to be carried out on the Cricket Pavilion.
- Expenditure of £4,793 was approved for structural works to the railway arches.
- The Neighbourhood Plan referendum was announced for 7th May 2020; however this has since been cancelled due to COVID-19 and postponed until May 2021.
- Ingham Pinnock Associates were appointed to assist in progressing the Corn Exchange project.
- Expenditure and a design were approved for a VE Day 75th anniversary bench.
- A 2-minute litter pick board was introduced to the Market Place (pictured).



March 2020

- Grants awarded to Blandford Police, Blandford Scout Group, St John Ambulance and free venue hire for 60% of the bookings for Oh No It Isn't, Poacher's Moon, Artsreach and Free Expression Arts Festival. The T&GP Committee supported the Dorset Council Councillors in working towards a 20mph speed limit across Blandford Forum.
- Four three-tiered planters were purchased costing £2,216.12 and although they may not be on display this year, due to the virus, we look forward to when they will be out and full of flowers!
- A total of 57 Planning Applications were considered by the Town Council between May 2019 and March 2020, which are dealt with by the Planning department at the Dorset Council.

Coronavirus COVID-19:

- Week commencing 16th March bookings, events and meetings were all cancelled.
- Office staff were set up to work from home and to continue with their functions.
- Town Council staff have also been able to carry out vital community support work.

- Grounds and caretaking staff were set up on a rota basis to minimise contact with each other, but still ensure areas continue to be maintained.
- All hirers have been refunded, contrary to our booking conditions.
- Sports Clubs (cricket, rugby, football and bowls) have been given a payment break for April to June because they are unable to use the facilities or make any income.
- The free hire of tables and chairs was offered to people working from home and children requiring a desk space.
- Staff directly contacted elderly and vulnerable people the Town Council was aware of, offering them our support.
- Staff have since been assisting elderly and vulnerable people by taking their telephone calls and arranging for them to have shopping and prescriptions collected, gardens looked after or just to have a chat.
- Grants of £1,000 were awarded to both Age UK (North, South & West Dorset) and the Blandford Forum Food Bank in March to support them in the essential work they are doing.
- A webpage was set up with useful information and contact details. This was displayed on posters in notice boards throughout the town from the middle of March and has been updated whenever additional support streams arise: <https://blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- Large banners were printed and displayed around the town reminding people to follow the government guidance.
- The Town Council has been prioritising payments to small businesses and the self-employed.
- I recorded a video message to residents, which has been shown via our social media channels and is on the Coronavirus webpage mentioned above.

April

- The Town Council started meeting online using Microsoft Teams and will continue to do so until we can meet again in person.

May

- Legislation was amended, removing the need to hold an annual meeting in May 2020. A survey was carried out among the Councillors and it was agreed to postpone the annual meeting until May 2021. I will be continuing in my role as Mayor/Chairman and Cllr Lee Hitchings will continue as my Deputy Mayor/Vice Chairman. The Committee Chairmen/Vice Chairmen and the representatives to local organisations will also continue until the next annual meeting of the council.
- VE Day events were posted on our social media channels and a dedicated webpage has been set up if you missed them or would like to watch them again: <https://blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk/ve-day-75>

I would like to thank residents, businesses, volunteers, community groups, Town Council staff and Councillors for all their support to our wonderful town throughout a challenging, and unprecedented, time.

Lindsay

Councillor Lynn Lindsay

Chairman of Council and Town Mayor 2019/20



Cllr Lindsay raised £3,320 for her chosen charity; The Blandford Community Kitchen, during the 2019/20 Mayoral year.

The following feedback is from just some of the organisations in receipt of a Town Council Grant during the financial year 2019/2020, explaining how it has helped their work:

Blandford Fashion Museum

As always, the Blandford Fashion Museum is extremely grateful to the Town Council for the provision of the SLA grant. Last year the Museum's focus was on the following items, for which the grant has made a significant contribution

- Continuation of our carpet renewal programme
- The installation of a panelled glass door into the tearoom to ensure it demonstrates a welcoming appearance (rather than visitors being face with a closed door)
- The ongoing restoration and conservation of some of our costumes.

Blandford Museum, Heritage and Arts Centre

The museum's refurbishment during the winter of 2018-19 was funded by an EU Leader grant, with additional funding from a Section 106 Lidl grant and Museum match funding. We re-opened in April 2019 and have remained open since, with a brief period of closure for cleaning during January and subsequently closed on 15th March due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of our volunteers are in the 'at risk' category and soon after the government announced closure of all spaces where people gather. It was a part of the conditions for the Leader Grant Funding to open for a longer period of time with the aim of increasing our visitor numbers. Of course that meant a restructuring on times for opening and staffing. Thankfully our volunteer stewards have risen to the challenge and offered their services, when and where they can.

From April 2019 to 15 March 2020, our first full open year we increased visitor numbers by 2994. We had predicted an increase of 1500, so were very pleased. We can probably attribute this to several different factors – economic as we are free and there has possibly been a rise in staycations rather than going abroad (pre-Brexit). Our Art Exhibitions have also contributed to this increase and have not only brought an exciting range of local artists work to the only permanently open exhibition space in town, but the art was on sale and produced access to affordable, original art. Numbers were also increased by the different events, gatherings, social functions and activities that take place during holiday times as well as throughout the year. Access to the garden, which has become a haven for local people, provides colourful plants, vegetables, a resting space /pausing point for families, shoppers, students, workers, older and younger folks. Talks, organised by the Archaeology Group as well as the museum are an enrichment to our community.

The renovated space has definitely given the museum a more acceptable, accessible, comfortable floor space for all our events. Until the 'lockdown' there were a group of four year 12 students from the Blandford School working on two different projects, which could certainly have an impact on increasing the age range of visitor numbers for the future. This is a key objective for us. So, future planning and sustainability are important as we are a small institution aiming to fulfil a noticeable face within the town's community and beyond.

We have been accepted for a place on the South West Insights Programme for 2020 – with our focus on 'growing our audience' a key aim and concern for us as we prepare our new Forward Plan 2020-2025. We are also applying for the 'Small Grant, Big Improvement' scheme with another key focal point 'improving our volunteer base and succession'- two major and necessary topics to address.

As I write this I am acutely aware that as the community repairs itself from the Coronavirus, financial distribution may well be a greater concern for the Town Council. The museum has been dependent and thoroughly grateful for the annual sum that the Town Council has granted us for many years. We understand that it is not just 'a given' – but has to be weighed up against all the other demands on its purse. It does enable us to stay open. We are free to the public and our only other funding is from membership fees, donations, shop sales and all the other ways as outlined above. So, thank you Town Council we have been and are indebted to you for your support to keep us open!

Blandford Literary Festival

A small team had a vision to develop an idea for a community literary festival in Blandford. The vision was to highlight local talent and include as many buildings and businesses to showcase what the town had to offer. The funding for the hire of council venues took away the financial pressure of being able to include the Corn Exchange and Woodhouse Garden Pavilion, which were fantastic venues for some of the events held during literary festival week. It was very much appreciated. Thank you.

Treads

Treads Young Person advice and information centre has been providing services to young people in Blandford Forum and the surrounding area for over 22 years and is very proud of the relationship and the support that it has received from the Town Council. Over 760 young people used the services that we provided last year receiving either one to one support or taking part in one of the many workshops that we arranged. The reasons that young people choose to seek advice have changed over the past 10 years and so it is particularly important that we listen to what they need and adapt our services so that they stay relevant. Most of the interventions currently are around mental health, peer relationships, bullying and gender issues. To ensure that as much of our funding as possible is used to provide front line services rather than fund support costs, Treads relocated to the Youth Centre at the end of March. We are continuing to help young people on-line during the current lockdown and look forward to launching new workshops this summer

Oh No It Isn't

We are now approaching our third year's production, and even though these are challenging times for all of us, we are confident of continued success. The support of the Town Council has been a vital part of this success and we very much hope to maintain this partnership to enable us to continue to provide a high quality locally produced community and family-based pantomime for Blandford.

Tree Photography Competition

Celebrating trees in and around Blandford Forum

"Trees are poems the earth writes upon the sky."

Khalil Gibran



Blandford Forum Town Council invites you to take part in a tree photography competition, as part of your exercise or from photos you have taken in the past, to celebrate the trees in our area. This competition was introduced by the Town Council's Tree Warden, Cllr Doro Russell in 2019. Please e-mail a picture of your favourite, or a particularly interesting tree within the DT11 postal code area to admin@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk including your full name and a phone number, by 30th June 2020. Three entries can be submitted per person. Councillors will pick the winning photo and the winner will be presented with the trophy sponsored by Cllr Lacey-Clarke (once it is possible to do so). One of the entries from 2019, is pictured, taken by resident, Esme Ware.

Calendar 2021 Photography Competition

For the fourth year the Town Council would like to create a calendar showcasing the natural beauty of Blandford Forum.

The theme for 2021 is 'Wildlife in Blandford Forum' and we invite you to submit your pictures, which can be taken as part of your daily exercise or from photos you have taken in the past, to

admin@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk by 31st July 2020.

The proceeds of the calendar go to the Mayor's charity, which is The Community Kitchen. The calendars will be available to purchase from the Town Clerk's Office at £5 each later in the year.

The calendar from 2020 is pictured with the aerial photographs taken from the town video.



On our website, we have a Blandford crossword <https://blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/crossword.pdf> and a wordsearch: <https://blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Find-your-Blandford-Forum-Town-Councillor.pdf>. If you would like a paper copy of these, please contact us.

Contact Your Councillors

The Town Clerk for Blandford Forum Town Council is Mrs Linda Scott-Giles, who can be contacted using the details overleaf.

WARD	TOWN COUNCILLOR	ADDRESS	TEL NO	DORSET CLLR TEL NO
CENTRAL	Roger Carter	2 Greenhill, DT11 7TX	07805 242691	Nocturin Lacey-Clarke 07815 951095 Byron Quayle 07843 616343
	Steve G Hitchings	27 Kings Road, DT11 7LD	01258 455840	
	Lynn Lindsay	31 Barnes Close, DT11 7NG	01258 456209	
	Rosemary Holmes	16 Liddington Crescent, DT11 7RP	01258 480451	
	Pat Osborne	3 Sharp Close, DT11 7FY	07917 831009	
	Byron Quayle	16 Alexandra Street, DT11 7QP	07843 616343	
	Alan Cross	15 Manor Farm Close, Pimperne, DT11 8XL	01258 452849	
HILLTOP	Haydn White	79 Salisbury Road, DT11 7LP	01258 453666	
	Hugo Mievile	4 Albert Street, DT11 7HY	01258 480366	
LANGTON ST LEONARDS	Cathy Jacques	64 Diamond Way, DT11 7WD	07756 856018	
	Colin R Stevens	16 Andrew Close, DT11 7PG	01258 453955	
	Doro Russell	Ty Yr Wyddfa, 15 Salisbury Street, DT11 7AU	07842 145442	
OLD TOWN	Peter Clark	7 River Mews, DT11 7AX	01258 480303	
	Nocturin Lacey-Clarke	5 Dorset Street, DT11 7RG	07815 951095	
BADBURY HEIGHTS	John Stayt	29 Damory Street, DT11 7EU	01258 456999	
	Lee S Hitchings	9 Willow Park, Pimperne, DT11 8UB	01258 269077	



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Councillor Attendance at Meetings May 2019 – 16th March 2020

(meetings held in person were then cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic)

Councillor	Meetings Attended	Expected Attendance	Councillor	Meetings Attended	Expected Attendance
Roger Carter	32	35	Lynn Lindsay	34	35
Steve Hitchings	35	32	Byron Quayle	21	24
Rosemary Holmes	23	24	Hugo Mieville	26	31
Peter Clark	26	27	Pat Osborne	29	31
Alan Cross	29	31	Lee Hitchings	24	32
Haydn White	27	31	Cathy Jacques	27	28
John Stayt	23	31	Noc Lacey-Clarke	30	31
Colin Stevens	29	28	Doro Russell	28	28

TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL RETURN (ACCOUNTS) 2019/20

The Internal Auditors to the Town Council have confirmed the accounts as correct.

		31 st March 2019	31 st March 2020
		£	
1	Balances Brought Forward	2,297,572	2,414,290
2	(+) Annual Precept	757,881	794,744
3	(+) Total Receipts (income)	263,334	414,429
4	Staff Costs	392,767	415,231
5	Loan Interest Repayments	0	0
6	(-) Total Other Payments	511,730	774,802
7	(=) Balance Carried Forward*	2,414,290	2,433,430
8	Total Cash & Investments	2,433,168	2,411,245
9	Total Fixed Assets**	4,377,419	4,407,320
10	Total Borrowing	Nil	Nil
11	Acts as sole Trustee For Managing Trust Funds	Yes	Yes

* Of the balances held at 31 March 2020 over £915,825 was held for Capital projects, which includes £898,622 for the refurbishment of the Corn Exchange.

** Fixed assets of £4,407,320 is the value of the properties and equipment owned by the Council at approximate cost value (for example the Corn Exchange and the Skate Park). This also includes £400,000 Long Term Asset which for smaller bodies accounting purposes should and has been excluded from box 7 and is instead shown as part of box 9.

The Town Council confirms the precept for 2020/21 at £801,180, which equates to an increase of 1.11% on the Band D figure, which now amounts to £227.13 (an increase of £0.05 per week).

The Town Council will continue to send an annual newsletter to Blandford Forum households in June each year. However, the rest of the year, we will be using the Forum Focus to publicise news and events, which not only cuts down on the amount of paper we use but also supports the local community magazine. If you would like to receive updates from the Town Council in your inbox, please complete the form at: <https://blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk/contact>



TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS

Local groups, charitable and voluntary organisations can apply for a grant, subject to meeting the criteria.

The forms are available from the office or our website.

