

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town & General Purposes Committee
Held on Monday 29th June 2020 at 7.00pm online using Microsoft Teams



PRESENT

Cllr H Mieville – Chairman
Cllr L Lindsay – Chairman of Council
Cllr A Cross
Cllr P Clark

Cllr R Holmes – Vice Chairman
Cllr L Hitchings – Vice Chairman of Council
Cllr C Stevens
Cllr B Quayle

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk
Nicci Brown – Press
Nic Nicol – Town Team

Assistant Town Clerk
Dilys Gartside – Town Team

SITTING IN

Cllr H White
Cllr D Russell

Cllr R Carter
Cllr S Hitchings

1. PUBLIC SESSION

1.1 Dilys Gartside – Proposed change in traffic flow in the Town Centre

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

Dilys Gartside spoke about her presentation, which was shared with Councillors and presented her view of the town's assets, the current problems, and her suggested solutions.

Nic Nicol spoke and requested for Councillors to look at this in the context of being part of the proposal of an environmentally creative situation needed in the town centre. Nic Nicol quoted Cllr Bryan, Dorset Council Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment who said before the lockdown that the Dorset Council is considering more and better public transport.

Cllr Quayle confirmed that the Parking Review is working on several of the suggestions mentioned in the presentation, i.e. improving access and the cycle network, a one-way system in The Plocks and a 20mph limit in the town. Cllr Quayle would also like to stress to Councillors that, moving forward, Dorset does need to be greener. However, it still needs to work for businesses, and they need to be supported. The infrastructure in Blandford Forum has not been built for some of the proposals put forward by Dilys Gartside. Some of these suggestions would not work with the Parking Review and other projects. Cllr Quayle sees the proposals as one aspect of a larger business case being put forward to the Dorset Council. There will have to be lengthy public consultations. Cllrs Lacey-Clarke and Quayle will be speaking to Dorset Council Highways regarding feasibility and costings for some of the ideas. He would like to see a direction from the Town Council so both Dorset Council Councillors can take the vision for the future forward.

Cllr Holmes would like to support the shared pedestrian and vehicle space and supports 20mph through the town.

Cllr Carter would like to see evidence of the impact of the traffic flow proposals that have been put forward. Disabled access will need to be considered.

Cllr White would like for this to be looked at in a more holistic approach.

The Chairman thanked Dilys Gartside and Nic Nicol for their presentation.

1.2 Hugo Mieville – Decision by the Pharmaceutical Services Regulation Committee on pharmacy provision in town

Cllr Mieville spoke about the decision to close one pharmacy and not to open another one. He does not agree with the decision and feels that Blandford Forum needs another pharmacy, or at least greatly increase capacity in the remaining pharmacies.

Cllr Holmes believes that the pharmacies are overwhelmed with workload due to prescriptions being sent electronically to the residents' chosen pharmacy.

Cllr Quayle confirmed that the local surgeries were comfortable with the decision and no official complaints were received by NHS England about the pharmaceutical infrastructure. Cllrs Quayle and Kerby took the decision up with the Health & Wellbeing Board, who also did not receive any complaints. Both Dorset Council Councillors would like to take this up again with the relevant committee. It has been raised with Simon Hoare MP who has taken this up with the Health Secretary. Cllr Quayle pointed out that the surgeries are a pharmacy in their own capacity.

It was agreed that this item will be added to Town Council agenda for 6th July for further discussion and to form a Working Group to write to the Pharmaceutical Services Regulation Committee.

2. **APOLOGIES**

Cllr P Osborne

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

Cllr S Hitchings declared an interest in agenda item 6.4.1 as a business owner.

4. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9TH MARCH 2020**

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Holmes, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED unanimously that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

The Chairman confirmed that the Minutes will be signed as soon as we are in a position to do so.

5. **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE**

Nothing to report.

6. **GENERAL UPDATES FROM:**

6.1 Blandford Business Support Group

Not in attendance.

6.2 Blandford Police

The paper was tabled.

It has been a rather strange year all round and as a Neighbourhood team we have had to adapt to the ever-changing conditions. For most of us, we have never policed during an epidemic and it has thrown up a number of unique challenges. We also saw some great acts of kindness from the community, both in support for the NHS and key workers, but also in community morale.

- *We had the BLM protest on 20/06/2020 at 1200 hours at Ham Marsh. From our perspective it was very well-natured and no reported issues of counter protests or anti-social behaviour to speak of.*

6.2 Blandford Police (cont.)

It afforded the neighbourhood team (NPT) a great opportunity to engage with residents and we have had great feedback regarding our presence at the demonstration.

- *The Government are seeking to re-open the Public houses on 04/07/2020. We plan to provide an increased presence in the town, but obviously need to manage other towns in North Dorset that are also opening up. This will be a combination of Response Police Officers and NPT resourced in dealing with this. I believe overtime is also being offered to boost Officer Numbers during what is expected to be a busy weekend.*
- *On a positive note, we are below the 4-year North Dorset Average statistically for Dwelling Burglary's in April, May and June. We had 50% less in May compared to the previous year and we are looking at a 50% reduction in Dwelling Burglaries overall this year, compared to last year!*
- *Antisocial Behaviour has reduced overall in the Town, but we have seen recent spikes which we partially correlate with closures of schools and the relaxation of the lockdown situation. Some of these complaints involve drug consumption on the trailway (Station Court, Stourpaine, Spetisbury/Charlton Marshall). We have repeatedly had ASB complaints from Assembly Place, which is a block of flats on West Street. We have been working very closely with Sovereign Housing Association and key residents have been issued with Acceptable Behaviour Agreements (ABA's) – this is proving successful and Sovereign are seeking to install CCTV in the building to assist our enquiries.*
- *There is an emerging ASB/Neighbourhood issue on Diamond Way, of which we are liaising with Aster Housing. This began coming to Police notice in May and generally involved alleged COVID-19 breaches and street parties. However, there were also a couple of Public Order matters, one of which an ongoing criminal investigation is in progress. There would appear to be an epicentre regarding problem-residents, which is useful as it can show Aster some of the main catalysts for ASB and allow them to direct their efforts in a precise way. We anticipate the effective use of ABA's in these instances, which will hopefully encourage the residents in question to adjust their conduct accordingly.*
- *Within the locality of Blandford Town, we have had some notable drug related stop searches and arrests. One of which located Class A controlled drugs in the form of crack cocaine and Heroin. Another involved the seizure of Amphetamine, cash and an offensive weapon. This has given Police valuable intelligence that can be utilised in further operations. They were great examples of some of the drug related disruption efforts NPT have been conducting.*
- *A notable distraction Burglar was arrested in May and is now in prison – This received endorsement from our section commander Inspector Perry and was extremely satisfying to identify them and have them arrested and charged within 24 hours.*
- *We have had a number of complaints regarding speeding vehicles all over North Dorset. We will continue to enforce using handheld speed detection devices. The Dorset Police road safety team will also enforce any areas of note and review anywhere that new complaints geographically are made. We always encourage the use of Dash-cameras with road users as they prove invaluable in tackling careless driving and speeding - but also for overall capturing of evidential footage if in the unfortunate position of being involved in a collision.*
- *There was recent communication regarding hot dogs and cars. We will continue to use our social media feed to encourage and educate regarding this.*
- *A Police Constable from Blandford Response organised a small-scale operation after being approached by members of the public regarding the parking on top of zig-zag markings on East Street and Salisbury Street. A number of Traffic offence reports (tickets) were issued during this time and we will continue doing so as and when we come across vehicles contravening these markings.*
- *We were also fortunate to have benefitted in May by the Roads Policing Unit (RPU) conducting a day of action in Blandford. This resulted in proactive targeting of known drink/drug drivers and those*

6.2 Blandford Police (cont.)

driving without insurance and or licences. I anticipate future operations with the RPU and continuing crime disruption from this angle. From an NPT standpoint, we made three arrests in May, in the Blandford area due to positive roadside drug wipes – one of which has been charged for exceeding the specified drug limit, the other two drivers are waiting back on the analysis of Blood samples obtained at Police custody. RPU also made arrests for similar circumstances in May.

Please direct any enquiries to the North Dorset Neighbourhood Policing Team. There is a shortcut on the Dorset Police website which enables quick and easy access to reporting non-emergency matters to us. Often this is a very effective and time-efficient way, rather than ringing 101 as if a non-emergency, can alleviate some of the demand on the Force control room and save unwanted time waiting to be connected.

Cllr L Hitchings thanked the Police for the detailed report and all Councillors appreciated the effort.

6.3 Market Manager

The paper was noted (see Appendix B).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Mieville, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED (6 in favour, 2 against) **that a RECOMMENDATION is made to Full Council that**

Delegated authority is given to the Chairman of Council, the Chairman of the R&A committee, Town Clerk and Market Manager to reduce the rents for the stallholders to increase take-up and support the traders after they have suffered losses over the last three months.

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

Cllr Mieville thanked the Market Manager for his report and for his efforts to get the market started up again.

6.4 Town Team

6.4.1 To respond to the presentation received and consider supporting the Town Team in their bid to improve cycling and pedestrian access

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Cross, SECONDED by Cllr L Hitchings and AGREED (7 in favour, 1 against) that

The Committee thanks Dilys Gartside for the comprehensive report and recommends that the Market Area Enhancement Group review the suggestions and report back to a Town Council meeting.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

6.5 Parking Review Working Group

Nothing to report.

7. **DORSET COUNCIL HIGHWAYS**

7.1 To consider the remaining two free parking days

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

7.1 To consider the remaining two free parking days (Cont.)

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED (7 in favour, 1 abstention) that

The Committee sets the two remaining free parking days as 19th and 24th December 2020 and will request from Dorset Council to change the 4th December to 28th November.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

8. REVIEW OF TOWN & GENERAL PURPOSES BUDGETS TO 9TH JUNE 2020

8.1 Analytical Review of Revenue Budget

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

8.2 Review of Earmarked Reserves

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

8.3 Reserve Accounts

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

The meeting closed at 8:37pm.

SIGNED: **DATED:**