

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
Held on Monday 22nd February 2021 at 7:00pm Online using Microsoft Teams



PRESENT

Cllr Lindsay – Chairman
Cllr P Osborne
Cllr S Hitchings
Cllr B Quayle
Cllr R Holmes
Cllr A Cross
Cllr C Jacques

Cllr L Hitchings – Vice Chairman
Cllr H Mieville
Cllr H White
Cllr J Stayt
Cllr N Lacey-Clarke
Cllr C Stevens
Cllr R Carter – arrived at 7.13pm

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk
Assistant Town Clerk
Graeme Patton - JoJu Charging

Operations Manager
Nicci Brown – Press
Chas Warlow – JoJu Charging, arrived at 7.27pm

130. PUBLIC SESSION

130.1 JoJu Charging (regarding the introduction of EVCPs detailed at agenda item no. 9)

Mr Patton spoke about the electric vehicle charge point proposed for Park Road recreation ground car park and explained Option 2, where the town council would enter into a 15-year contract with JoJu Charging.

Cllr L Hitchings asked if the contract would finish once the capital costs have been recovered. Mr Patton explained that the contract is for 15 years, irrespective of when the costs have been recuperated. Cllr L Hitchings also enquired about what KW are being put through the charge point. Mr Patton confirmed that it will be a three phased supply, which will also power the Cricket Pavilion, and therefore it will be 22KW.

Cllr Cross asked about the cost of the Town Council funding the charge point, as he is concerned making such a long-term decision. Mr Patton explained that he can obtain a cost and provide the Town Clerk with the details. He confirmed that they are following the same funding model with the charge points being installed by the Dorset Council. Cllr Cross asked about the maintenance of the charge point. Mr Patton explained that there will be annual maintenance of around £75 per socket/per year, but from experience the kit is reliable. There will also be back office costs.

Cllr Lacey-Clarke asked about the cost to the user and who sets the charge. Mr Patton explained that whoever owns the assets sets the charge. With Option 2 there would be a 20p connection fee and a charge of 30p per kw hour, which is average for what is available throughout the country.

131. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS

Cllr Lacey-Clarke gave the report this month.

131.1 Covid-19 Support Number – Cllr Lacey-Clarke reminded Councillors about the Dorset Council support number 01305 221000, which he asked for Councillors to share with residents.

131.2 Budget – The Dorset Council have now set the budget, with an increase of 1.997% with social care precept added of 2.995%. This will provide a balanced budget with no cuts to services.

131.3 Local Plan Consultation – The webinars are still online, and Cllr Lacey-Clarke would like to encourage residents to take part.

131. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS (cont.)

- 131.4 Additional Restriction Grant – This is available again for businesses to apply, the details are available on the Dorset Council website.
- 131.5 Funding – The Dorset Council was successful in securing a grant of £19m from central government towards achieving carbon neutrality. Both Dorset Councillors will campaign for some of this funding to benefit Blandford Forum.
- 131.6 Highways Issues – Cllr Lacey-Clarke reminded Councillors to report any Highways issues to either Dorset Councillor.

Cllr Carter asked for further information about the two issues he raised with the Dorset Councillors. Cllr Lacey-Clarke responded that they have been passed onto the correct departments. Cllr Carter also reported litter along the bypass. Cllr Lacey-Clarke will report it.

A brief discussion was held about the draft Dorset Plan and the use of CIL monies.

132. APOLOGIES

Cllr P Clark

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

Cllr S Hitchings declared an interest in agenda item no. 11 as he is one of the hirers. He will not take part in the vote.

Cllr Lacey-Clarke will abstain from voting on agenda item no. 13 as he is one of the sponsors.

134. MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 25TH JANUARY 2021

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Mieville, SECONDED by Cllr Carter and AGREED unanimously that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED. The minutes will be signed at the earliest opportunity.

135. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

- 135.1 Review of Policies – The annual meeting was not held in May 2020, due to the decision to retain existing positions during the pandemic. Hence the review of policies and procedures at this meeting did not take. However, Councillors are reassured that staff have reviewed these procedures and the standing orders and financial regulations have been considered at other meetings during the 2020/2021 year.
- 135.2 Grant to the Blandford Forum Railway Club – Robert Stephenson has written *'on behalf of the members of the above club to thank you for the grant of £951 to cover our costs disbursed for insurance and rent at the Scout hut last year. During lockdown we are all staying cheerful and collectively there is a very strong appetite to return to club meetings as soon as this is safe and permitted by Government regulations. The club will return to a programme of meetings, talks, films and visits with modelling work ongoing. We are also committed to making visits to public locations and schools to display our work, again as soon as permitted. In the interim your generous award has removed any anxiety about survival of the club and we are most obliged for the generosity shown by your members.'*
- 135.3 Old Bath House – The transfer has been signed by the Chairman of Council and the Chairman of the Finance & Staffing Committee and returned to Blanchards Bailey. The buyer has paid the solicitor's costs, as agreed.

135. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE (cont.)

- 135.4 The Blandford School – Laptops – The headteacher, Mrs Wilson, has written to *‘thank the Mayor and the Town Council for kindly donating five laptops to the school for our students to use. This will enable some of our disadvantaged students who would not normally have access to a computer at home to engage in online learning. Please could you pass on our enormous appreciation for your support during Lockdown.’*
- 135.5 Responsible Financial Officer – During the Internal Auditor’s visit on 2nd February 2021, the auditor recommended that the council formally notes that the responsibility of the RFO role is being covered by the Town Clerk, as line manager of the RFO. To date, it was only noted at the Finance & Staffing committee meeting held on 14th December 2020, Minute No. 32.5 that *‘the RFO has been signed off work for two weeks, with four weeks to follow and cover is required for this role. The Committee Chairman suggested the Salaries budget is used for the cover of this period.’* Councillors have been kept up to date with efforts to provide adequate cover for the role.
- 135.6 Dorset Traffic Regulation Order – The Dorset Council is proposing a new Traffic Management Order. The effect of the order will be to reintroduce all static parking, waiting, loading and stopping restrictions currently enforced within the County into a revised map-based format. There will be no material change to any of the operational specifications or dimensions of those restrictions. Comments can be submitted on the Dorset Council website until 26th February 2021.
- 135.7 Blandford Forum Almshouse/General Charities – administrators of the T E D George Charity – The Blandford Children’s Fund/Registered Charity No: 230853-6 (Registered 31 August 1967) Governing Instrument: Will dated 30th September 1961 – The Trustees have written to ask the Town Council to display the Notice of Grants in a prominent position on the Town Council’s Notice Boards and on its Facebook page. Parents of eligible children, who must live within the footprint of Blandford Forum only and not the periphery villages, are invited to apply for an application form by no later than 23rd February 2021. The administrators have said that there will be families in the town which might benefit from the small grants they are able to consider, and the council’s assistance in raising awareness of this Fund would be greatly appreciated.
- 135.8 Marsh & Ham Toilets – Jackie Vacher (Freeman) has written to pass on her congratulations on how clean the toilets are and that they were open at 7.15am, whilst she was on a trip to the local shops. This has been shared with the contractor who cleans and opens the toilets in the mornings.
- 135.9 Community Fridge – At the meeting held on 26th October 2020, it was agreed unanimously that the Town Council awards a grant of £2,000 to the project. A grant to the same value is also being held from the Dorset Council. Due to the pandemic, it has not yet been possible to open a bank account for the group of volunteers to manage, and volunteers have been reimbursed for their training costs from the Dorset Council grant the Town Council has been holding on the group’s behalf as a temporary measure. This has been made as transparent as possible by creating nominal codes for the Community Fridge income and the expenditure. In addition, a Facebook page and email has now been set up.
- 135.10 Co-Option – At the meeting held on 26th October 2020, following the departure of Cllr Russell, it was agreed that the *Town Council wishes to delay the co-option process until it can be held safely in person (May 2021)*. This decision was made on the assumption that the council would be able to meet in person in May. The advertisement and preparation for this process would need to start in March to allow for the staff time involved, advertisement notice required and for the public to consider the opportunity and apply for it. The deadline then needs to take into account that applications need to be received over a week before the meeting so they can be distributed

135. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE (cont.)

to Councillors for consideration. Therefore, the preparations will be made but it may not be possible to meet in person in May to hold the co-option meetings.

A brief discussion was held about the co-option and it was agreed to add it to the 26th April agenda to discuss if the council should pursue the co-option online if it is not possible to do so in person.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

135.11 Langton Play Area – The rocking horse springer at Langton Play area has been repaired by staff on several occasions but has now reached the end of its life and is being removed. The Operations Manager has contacted a reliable supplier to purchase a new red “Prince Horse springer” which is an upgrade on the previous one. The cost is £1,180.00 and will come from play area accruals. The price may reduce slightly as it includes for removal of the old one, which staff have been asked to do.

135.12 Overflowing Bins – Litter Free Dorset has been in touch regarding a campaign on overflowing bins that they will be trialling in Blandford, by attaching notices to some bins to ask people not to add to them if they are full.

136. CIVIC REPORT

There is no Civic Report this month.

137. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES

None.

138. TO CONSIDER ENTERING INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH JOJU FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF TWO ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS AT PARK ROAD RECREATION GROUND

The paper was noted (see Appendix B).

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

The Town Council agrees to proceed with Option 2, two fully funded charging points provided by JoJu with a 15-year agreement, at Park Road recreation ground car park which would be funded by JoJu's funding partner the Charge Point Operator, Gronn Kontakt (detailed below). The Town Council will put aside a nominal sum of £250-300 for the ongoing running costs to come out of an appropriate budget line.

The contractor can fund the installation costs, but they would then take income from the EV Charge Points, with an energy rebate payable to the Town Council each year. For example, if the EV Charge Point uses 2000 kWh's in the first year, the council would be reimbursed for the value of the electricity, plus 10%, which would act as its income.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

139. TO CONSIDER THE TOWN COUNCIL'S POSITION WITH THE PAYMENT FOR USE OF THE SPORTS PAVILIONS JANUARY-MARCH

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

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

139. TO CONSIDER THE TOWN COUNCIL'S POSITION WITH THE PAYMENT FOR USE OF THE SPORTS PAVILIONS JANUARY-MARCH (cont.)

The Town Council agrees that 100% payment relief is to be extended for the period January to March 2021 due to the national lockdown.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr Stayt and AGREED (11 in favour, 3 against, 1 abstention) that

The Town Council agrees to waive the utilities charges for the sports clubs, and sending a zero-charge invoice, for the period October 2020 to March 2021.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Cllr Lindsay left the meeting at 7.47pm and the Vice Chairman, Cllr L Hitchings continued to chair the meeting.

140. TO CONSIDER THE CARRYING OVER OF BOOKINGS DUE TO COVID-19

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Cross, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED (11 in favour, 1 against, 1 non-vote) that

The Town Council approves the carrying over of the income and the appropriate action after the 2020/2021 accounts have been signed off.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

141. TO CONFIRM THAT ALL DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION IS IN PLACE FOR THE TOWN COUNCIL'S REACCREDITATION APPLICATION FOR THE LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME FOR QUALITY GOLD STATUS

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

Councillors thanked the Town Clerk and her staff for the hard work that has gone into this application and Cllr S Hitchings for his financial input.

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

The Town Council confirms that it fulfils the criteria of the LCAS Quality Gold Award with the application form and associated statements, which are to be presented to the accreditation panel. It alsoand retrospectivelyapproves the associated expenditure for the registration fee of £50 and accreditation fee of £200 (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

142. TO APPROVE EXPENDITURE FOR THE PLANTERS AND BEDDING

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

Cllr Carter commented positively about the planters.

142. TO APPROVE EXPENDITURE FOR THE PLANTERS AND BEDDING (cont.)

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

The Town Council selects Company A to supply this year's bedding and planter requirements using funds of £2,885.40 + VAT from budget line 6200 Containers planting and signs which has a balance of £4873.00 budgeted for 2021-22 (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

143. TO RETROSPECTIVELY APPROVE EXPENDITURE FOR TREE WORKS

The paper was noted (see Appendix G).

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

The Town Council approves the expenditure using Company B, taking funds from the Cemetery wall budget line for the work to the Lime trees. The cost of the other works is to be taken from the tree works budget line 7045 which has a balance of £1963.00 and the balance from the tree survey budget line 1075 which has a balance of £8713.00 (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

144. TO APPROVE EXPENDITURE FOR THE TOILET CLEANING CONTRACT FOR 2021/2022

The paper was noted (see Appendix H).

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

Due to the circumstances, the Town Council agrees to renew the cleaning contract with the existing contractor for a period of one year only using funds of £7,439.96 from budget line 6650 (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

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

145.1 Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – Blandford +

Cllr Carter reported that the next Meeting of the Dorset Council and the legal counsel will be held on 2nd March. It is hoped that a decision will be received shortly after.

145.2 BFTC Commemoration Group

Cllr Carter reported that the Re-Commemoration event of the memorial plaques and the Cross of Sacrifice will be held in November.

145.3 Public Art Plan

Cllr Osborne reported that the installation has been completed and councillors thanked Cllr Osborne and the Assistant Town Clerk for their work towards the project.

This item will be removed from the agenda going forward.

145. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE AND CONSIDER ANY REQUESTS FROM THE (cont.):

Cllr Quayle left the meeting at 8.06pm

145.4 Climate Change & Biodiversity

No update.

145.5 Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project

Cllr Stevens reported that the group is waiting for local shops and businesses to open to be able to speak with them. All Councillors have received the latest action plan.

146. REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

None

The meeting closed at 8:07pm.

SIGNED

DATED