

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



PRESENT

Cllr L Lindsay – Chairman

Cllr P Clark

Cllr S Hitchings

Cllr B Quayle

Cllr R Carter

Cllr N Lacey-Clarke

Cllr C Stevens

Cllr C Jacques – late arrival and gave apologies for early departure

Cllr L Hitchings – Vice Chairman

Cllr H Mieville

Cllr H White

Cllr P Osborne

Cllr R Holmes

Cllr A Cross

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk

Operations Manager

Assistant Town Clerk

Nicci Brown – Press

147. PUBLIC SESSION

- 147.1 Cllr Clark spoke about a car park being built behind the houses of No 7, 8 and 9 River Mews, without planning permission. The road to the car park will be on parts of his land. Cllr Clark is unsure as to why this car park is being built and believes it might be the start of a service road to the new, suggested, development on Deer Park. He urged Councillors that if a planning application is submitted it should be looked at in great detail to future proof against any unwanted development. Cllr Lacey-Clarke confirmed that he spoke to the applicant and advised them to investigate the need for a planning application and to seek legal advice.
- 147.2 Cllr Carter thanked all Councillors for agreeing to submit the comments to the planned reforms to the NPPF directly to the government. He also thanked the Working Group members for their hard work and contributions.
- 147.3 Cllr Carter spoke about the drains in front of the Corn Exchange and at the bottom of Sheep Market Hill. He asked if the Dorset Council needed to be contacted or if an application needs to be submitted to Wessex Water. Cllr Lacey-Clarke confirmed that the Dorset Council are already aware and will clear these.

148. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS

Cllr Quayle gave the report this month.

- 148.1 Blandford Slabs – Three different colours were suggested to residents and there seems to be general agreement for a slab like looking replacement, instead of the asphalt imprint. It is the intention that the inscribed slabs and those containing fossils will be retained.
- 148.2 Climate Change Action Plan – This Plan will be discussed by the relevant Scrutiny Committee following changes from the public consultation.
- 148.3 Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy – The Dorset Council are looking for feedback on the pressures of homelessness and rough sleeping, the consultation opened on Monday 22nd March and runs until 30th April 2021. All Councillors are asked to provide their views on the strategy, available on the Dorset Council website.

148.4 EV Charge Points – The electric vehicle charge points are starting to be installed around various car parks in Dorset, including in Blandford Forum.

148.5 Bins – There has been a noticeable increase in overflowing bins, seemingly due to an internal issue at Dorset Waste Partnership, which should be resolved now. Cllr Quayle has been working with Dorset Councillor Kerby and the DWP on an increase in bin capacity at the Stour Meadows of at least 240l. He will bring this back to this council once the details have been confirmed.

Cllr Quayle reminded Councillors to raise issues to both Dorset Councillors as soon as possible so they can be resolved. He also reported that the potholes in Holland Way, initially reported by Cllr Holmes at the T&GP meeting on 8th March, have gone over the accepted depth and will be repaired.

Cllr S Hitchings asked if the colours of the slabs have been shown to town councillors. Cllr S Hitchings also said that he is not keen on the tarmac option. Cllr Quayle confirmed that they are not looking at the tarmac option anymore but at a standalone slab and he will send the details of the company producing them to Cllr S Hitchings. Cllr Holmes asked if these slabs would withstand cars being parked on them. Cllr Quayle confirmed that the proposed slabs are much thicker than the current ones. The Highways team will do extra work in the areas where there is high impact. Cllr Holmes also asked if the slabs with an inscription on will stay in place. Cllr Quayle confirmed that the plan is to keep them in place. Cllr Stevens spoke to Dorset Council Highways regarding the slabs. He was advised that they are looking at cost options for the old slabs to be taken away. The inscription ones are being looked at being moved to a safer place. The broken one outside the Corn Exchange will be replaced.

149. APOLOGIES

Cllr J Stayt

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

None had been submitted.

151. MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 22ND FEBRUARY 2021

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr Osborne and AGREED (11 in favour, 2 non-votes) that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED, subject to a change being made to minute no. 141, a space inserted between the words *retrospectively* and *approves* and the word *and* removed. The minutes will be signed at the earliest opportunity.

152. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

152.1 Online Meetings – Council meetings up to and including the statutory annual meeting scheduled for Tuesday 4th May 2021 have been set up online. We await further guidance from NALC/the government for meetings after that date.

152.2 FOI Act Request – Mr Saul Kelleher, Solicitor-Advocate (Higher Rights Civil Proceedings) & Director of Kernon Kelleher, has asked the council to provide the information, from 1 July 2015 to date, associated with proposals to pedestrianise part of Blandford Forum Town Centre. *From documents currently to hand it appears that the Council has been in discussions with third parties to close off all, or part of, Market Place and redirect traffic to adjoining roads since at least that date.*

The information requested includes, but is not limited to:

- (i) reports to Council committees;*
- (ii) internal Council records;*

- (iii) records of the Council's Working Groups;
- (iv) exchanges recorded with third parties including correspondence, notes of meetings, and telephone attendance notes;
- (v) surveys for the roads to be pedestrianised and affected by the consequential redirection of traffic.

For the avoidance of doubt:

- (i) this Fol request applies to all the information held on the subject by working groups and the like that operate under the aegis the Town Council such as, but not limited to, the Market Place Infrastructure Working Group and Blandford+;
- (ii) this Fol request applies to all the information held on the subject within the Town Council generated by groups in which it may participate such as, but not limited to, Blandford Forum High Streets Heritage Actions Zones Programme Project Board, the Town Team, DT11;
- (iii) the requested information includes where pedestrianisation is part of wider proposals – as examples: the 2019 application for High Streets Heritage Action Zone funding and applications to apply s.106 monies held by Dorset Council that included enabling pedestrianisation.

152.3 Allotment Relocation – An invoice has been received from Symonds and Sampson in relation to negotiations with landowners for Allotment relocation Heads of Terms, totalling £3,636 + VAT, and this has been paid in accordance with expenditure authority from minute 124 from the Town Council confidential allotment meeting held on 17th December 2018. An email has been sent to the Chairman of the Allotment Management Committee to provide the latest update regarding the Heads of Terms, detailing the key points.

152.4 Façade Lighting – Significant progress has been made on the Façade lighting and works will hopefully start in the next month so that Listed Building Consent does not expire for this project. The contractor and architectural technician have agreed with the town clerk and operations manager to remove/postpone the up-lighting from the ground under the arches in the Shambles as it may not be required but could be added at a later date. This is the only change from the initial scheme, it has also reduced the cost.

152.5 ANPR Camera – The Dorset Police Alliance ANPR Office, who monitor the ANPR cameras reported that the Wimborne Road ANPR camera had a fault and needed repairing. The contractor, who supplied the cameras, has been asked to fix the camera at a cost of £675.52.

152.6 Mayoral Chains – The Mayor's Secretary has arranged for the Mayoral Chains to go to be inspected by a local jeweller, as now is the ideal time for them to be looked at whilst they are not in use and before the changeover.

153.7 Museum Bond Doors – A request has been received from Sylvia Hixson-Andrews to hang these doors in the Shambles. The Town Clerk requested further information and will provide further updates to Councillors directly.

153. CIVIC REPORT

The paper was sent to Councillors via email.

The Chairman of Council is going to attend a meeting on 1st April organised by the Dorset Council, to discuss the banning of disposable BBQs during the summer season. The meeting will be attended by the fire service, supermarkets and other town councils.

154. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES

The paper was noted (see Appendix B).

154.1 Town & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Monday 8th March 2021

The Minutes were Received.

154.2 Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting held on Monday 15th March 2021

154.2.1 Minute 47.2 – Overall Revenue Budget for the year to 23rd February 2021

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

The Town Council approves the virement of the underspend from the following budget headings to General Reserves (1500) and carries them forward to the 2021/2022 financial year:

- **Civic Expenses (4802)**
- **Corn Exchange Project Manager / Consultant**
- **Grants (4400)**
- **Service Level Agreements**
- **Corn Exchange Building Maintenance (5206)**

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

154.2.2 Minute 51 – Insurance Risk Assessment relating to the Town Council's insurance cover and approval of insurance premiums for 2021/22

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

The Town Council:

- **Approves the removal of business interruption cover.**
- **Confirms that there are no other aspects of insurance cover that they wish to amend.**
- **Approves expenditure authority to enter into a further 3-year long term agreement with Company A until 18th April 2024 at a cost of £13,803.52 for 2021/2022 (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).**
- **Approves expenditure of up to £1,750 for the awaited additional amount for the Railway Arches cover and the clerk will report the amount back to council (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).**

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

154.2.3 Minute 52 – Review of the Risk Assessment Management Policy (including financial) arrangements for 2021/22

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

The Town Council approves the risk management policy (including financial) subject to the removal of business interruption cover, replacing it with 'prudent financial management'.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

154.2.4 Minute 55 – To receive an update report on the CCLA property fund

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

The Town Council wishes to keep all the units and continues to review the fund at future F&S Committee meetings.

Cllr S Hitchings reminded Councillors of the CCLA presentation on 13th April, which they can register to attend.

154.2.5 The Minutes were Received.

The Chairman of Council thanked the Town Clerk and Cllr S Hitchings for their hard work in the absence of the Responsible Financial Officer.

155. TO CONSIDER SUPPORTING AND TAKING PART IN THE NHS SOCIAL CARE & FRONTLINE WORKER DAY

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Mieville, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED (11 in favour, 2 abstentions) that

The Town Council agrees to not participate in this event at this time and a joint response is provided to the press, with the other councils mentioned in the report, should it be required.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

156. TO CONSIDER FORMING A WORKING GROUP TO CARRY OUT A COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

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

The Town Council agrees to form a working group to discuss options, consisting of Cllrs Mieville, White, Osborne, Lacey-Clarke, S Hitchings and Carter, which will report back to the Planning Meeting on 24th May.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

157. TO CONSIDER EXPENDITURE AUTHORITY FOR DRAINAGE WORKS AT PARK ROAD CAR PARK

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

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

The Town Council approves delegated authority for the Chairman of Council, the Chairman of the F&S Committee, the Town Clerk and the Operations Manager to select a quote for the works to be carried out with associated expenditure using funds from General Reserves(Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

158. IT SUPPORT

158.1 To consider entering into a hardware support contract for the Town Council's IT server

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

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

The Town Council wishes to take out the hardware support warranty for a year, with an 8hr response time, taking funds of £365 from budget line 4040 IT Maintenance/Software (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

158.2 To consider extending the current IT support contract

The paper was noted (see Appendix G).

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

The Town Council approves expenditure of £5,000 + VAT for IT support from the IT Maintenance & Software budget line 4040 (being ten days of engineering time at a cost of £500.00 per day) (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

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

159.1 Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – Blandford +

Cllr Carter read out the following statement to all Councillors.

You probably already know by now that Cllr Walsh issued a Decision Statement on 12th March to say that with some modifications, our Neighbourhood Plan could proceed to referendum on 6th May this year, obviously subject to Covid regulations and with a statutory moratorium of five working days, ending on Friday 19th March, in case anyone ‘called in’ (challenged the DS). To date we haven’t heard that anyone has called it in. The modifications were updating some of the wording and to reflect the variation to the changes of use classes – made by the Government last September. This was the change to Class E – business use, which affects our town centre and our business parks. With suggestions from our former NP advisor and the planning officer from Dorset Council, who has been involved with our NP from the beginning, we made the necessary changes to the document under the Class E classification.

Retrospective approval for these changes was passed by a meeting of the NP Steering Group on 15th March and I’ll be asking you to verify that retrospective approval at the planning meeting on 12th April.

At that meeting too, I’ll be giving a briefing on the NP and the lead up to referendum. The referendum version of the Plan and other supporting documents will be available to view on the Dorset Council website from the middle of this week. Before the 12th April meeting I’m hoping that we can send a copy of the referendum version of the plan to all Councillors in the NP area and the rules for campaigning towards the referendum. I’m aware that we have Councillors who have joined after the NP was well underway and may well not be as familiar with it as others – also quite a lot of water has flowed under the bridge and the NP and supporting documents are quite complex. I’ve produced a Q&A sheet for all Councillors but also for anyone in the community who would like to know what it’s all about.

The Steering Group have also been working on an information leaflet to send to all households in the NP area telling people about the referendum date and outlining the major policies in the plan. In the meantime, just so that you’re all aware of the law; any councillor, alone or with other councillors, and any member of the community, can campaign for a yes vote in the referendum but cannot use any Dorset or town council facilities or money to do so.

Cllr Mieville thanked Cllr Carter and the Steering Group for all their hard work. Cllr Carter thanked the Assistant Town Clerk and everyone that has been involved, including the town council, for their support over the years.

159.2 BFTC Commemoration Group

Cllr Carter reported that the planning is still underway but there is no further update.

159.3 Climate Change & Biodiversity

No update.

159.4 Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project

159.4.1 To receive the Action Plan

The paper was noted (see Appendix H).

Cllr Stevens reported that there is no update due to Covid-19 and the next meeting is on Tuesday 23rd March, and all Councillors are welcome to attend.

160. REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

None were received.

The meeting closed at 8:01pm.

SIGNED

DATED