

**BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly**  
**Held on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at 6.00pm online using Microsoft Teams**

**DRAFT**  
Subject to confirmation

**PRESENT**

Cllr L Lindsay - Chairman  
Cllr S Hitchings  
Cllr J Stayt  
Cllr N Lacey-Clarke  
Cllr P Osborne  
Cllr H Mieville  
Cllr R Holmes

Cllr L Hitchings - Vice Chairman  
Cllr H White  
Cllr C Stevens  
Cllr P Clark  
Cllr B Quayle  
Cllr A Cross  
Cllr C Jacques

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Treads – Mark Williams  
Citizens Advice Bureau – Daniel Cadisch  
Blandford Opportunity Group – Niki Roper  
Town Clerk  
Assistant Town Clerk

Youth Centre – Jo Hutson  
In Jolly Good Company – Sarah Rampton  
Members of the public  
Operations Manager  
Nicci Brown – Press

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Cllr Lindsay welcomed everyone to the online Town Assembly.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Cllr R Carter	Panda Pre-School – Alison Morris
Fashion Museum – Kathryn Reed	BSVB – Bruce Harding
Blandford Museum – Sylvia Hixson-Andrews	TIC – Adam Forty

**3. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN ASSEMBLY HELD ON 15<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2019**

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr P Clark and AGREED unanimously that the Minutes from the Town Assembly held on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2019 are APPROVED and SIGNED at the earliest opportunity.

The Town Assembly did not take place in 2020, due to the pandemic, although the Chairman's report for 2019/2020 was shared on social media and in the newsletter circulated to all residents in 2020.

**4. CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL'S REPORT**

The Chairman of Council, Cllr Lindsay, read her annual report for the year 2020/2021. This will be viewable on the Town Council's website and social media channels.

**5. QUESTIONS**

**5.1 Christina Gibbons:**

Post covid to encourage people into town centre would the council consider letting cafes, such as Reeves place tables and chairs on the Market Place?

The Chairman responded that the Town Council Market Area Enhancement Working Group, consisting of Town Councillors, Dorset Council officers, members of the Town Team and Blandford Business Support Group are working on the possibility of pedestrianisation of the

## 5. QUESTIONS (cont.)

Market Place. The Market Place is owned by the Dorset Council and a business case and project plan is currently being developed to present to the Dorset Council.

The Town Clerk has spoken to the Dorset Council about sitting out licences and they have advised that the cafes should approach them for permission. The links will be shared with Reeve.

Joseph Carmichael:

Would like to know why the council does not use the waste ground at the side of the car park behind Morrisons for extra car parking? The council would then receive some money from the parking and it would make the area at the entrance to the town look tidier.

The Chairman responded that the piece of land referred to is privately owned and therefore cannot be used for car parking.

## 6. PRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

### 6.1 Treads – Mark Williams

Mark Williams thanked the Town Council for all the support and said that the past year has been challenging due to everything being online. He spoke about the projects they are working on and the funding they are seeking. He also spoke about a partnership with Bryanston School, with further news being announced shortly.

### 6.2 Railway Club – report read by Cllr A Cross

The officers, committee and members of the club express sincere thanks to Blandford Forum Town Council for a grant of £951 paid in January 2021 to defray the costs of club rent and insurance last year. The club has not been able to meet since March 2020, but are now hoping to re-open at the Scout Hut in summer 2021 as soon as government restrictions allow.

This year to date the club has paid the insurance fee for the year and the balance of the grant money has helped the club to remain financially secure. Members have continued to work at home on pieces for a large model of Bailey Gate (Sturminster Marshall) cheese factory and station and they hope to be able to exhibit this 22 foot long fully scenic model railway before the end of the year. When the club has re-convened the committee will also reinstate a series of weekly workshop meetings, talks, film shows and visits for members and guests.

### 6.3 BSVB – Bruce Harding

The Town Clerk played a video of the members performing 'Deep Harmony' online.

Post Meeting Note:

Mr Harding was unable to attend the meeting due to technical issues but sent an email which said that: *On the band's behalf I would like the Council to know how grateful we are for the support given to us. Last year (and for the best part of this year) we have outgoings of almost £1000 without even meeting as a band so the Councils support has been invaluable. We hope to be playing later this year with nine engagements already booked.*

### 6.4 Fashion Museum – Kathryn Reed

Post Meeting Note:

Kathryn Reed was unable to attend due to technical issues. She sent in the following report.

*Blandford Fashion Museum have been fortunate to be in receipt of the Blandford Town Council grant of £2000 per annum since 2015*

#### 6.4 Fashion Museum – Kathryn Reed (cont.)

*The grant was renewed in 2019 for another three years, for which the Museum expresses its sincere thanks.*

*In 2020 the grant contributed towards the following:*

- *Enabling the Museum to spend more on the restoration and conservation of various historical costumes. This includes contributing towards the professional services of a costume historian and a costume conservator.*
- *Disabled toilet refurbishment*
- *Enabling the re-opening of the Museum post the various Covid-19 lockdowns with items such as hand sanitiser, sanitising wipes, masks, gloves etc etc*

*Displays:*

*The Museum changes a number of exhibitions every year*

*In 2020 new displays included:*

- *Make Do and Mend (post WWII exhibition)*
- *Land Girls*
- *Georgian Day wear*

*25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

*Blandford Fashion Museum opened its doors to visitors in May 1996, so 2021 is our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, Covid restrictions permitting there will be some form of celebrations later in the year.*

#### 6.5 Citizens Advice Bureau – Daniel Cadisch

Mr Cadisch thanked the Town Council for all the financial support. He said that the CAB service has been maintained throughout the year and thanked his staff and volunteers for all their hard work and support from day one of home working. He is delighted to say that the face-to-face service has been reopened. It is great to see the Blandford response to Covid-19 has been so very kind. They have worked with the Food Bank and their support has been invaluable. The CAB has dealt with over 1000 issues and Mr Cadisch gave an outline of the issues to all attendees (unemployment, assisting with claiming benefits for the first time, rent arrears, domestic abuse).

#### 6.6 Youth Centre – Jo Hutson

Jo Hutson read out the following report:

Throughout this year Blandford Youth and Community Centre has carried on with our work, although our doors have often been closed to our large groups, we have managed to do a targeted group for 15 between the lockdowns and have remained behind social media for those that have needed support. We have carried on with 1-1 support for those who need additional support for their mental health. We have been present in the town talking to young people during our outreach work and have recently been awarded £500 by Dorset Council to complete some project work with a group we have been engaging with during outreach. We have used this time to update our policies, to make the most of online courses, get on top of paperwork and we have had a clean out and modernised by redecorating our upstairs space. A small group of our young volunteers planned and completed painting our upstairs area as a piece of project work. They wrote letters to Homebase and Dulux who gifted the paint and materials. We have a website that is almost ready to be launched as well as handing out laptops to those that have been in need. We have worked alongside the Town Council to accommodate the new Community Fridge and supplied families with school uniform vouchers from the Williams Williams Community Wardrobe scheme. We have given out sexual health advice and condoms both in the centre and in The Blandford School. We have really been working hard behind the scenes to ensure that we are

6.6 Youth Centre – Jo Hutson (cont.)

ready to do even more for the young people of Blandford and to ensure that we are able to reach out to as many people as possible within restrictions as soon as possible. We have endeavoured to be a one stop shop of support throughout this year. We have also been using this time to reach out to more people not only to advertise what we are doing and that we are here but to also try and bring new people into the trustee positions as well as encourage more people to give their time and get involved with our fantastic charity.

6.7 In Jolly Good Company – Sarah Rampton

Sarah Rampton explained that the group helps to alleviate isolation for older people. Usually, they meet in the countryside but have adapted during Covid. The group is thankful for the Town Council funding, which they have match funded thanks to Dementia Action Alliance and it will be used for meetings in Woodhouse Gardens, for a 6-month pilot. The group supports everyone with dementia, it is not aimed at older people. They will be recruiting a local volunteer group and hoping to replace the Alzheimer’s society and singing group.

6.8 Panda Pre-school – Alison Morris (report received prior to the meeting and read by Cllr Osborne)

Panda Pre-school has benefitted from the grant awarded by purchasing some weather shield curtains for our outdoor veranda. This has allowed the staff and children to use this area when the weather is poor, especially when it is raining, as before they were installed the rain would come across half the veranda limiting the amount of activities we could do with the children. This additional space has been so valuable for the children to be outdoors where, particularly with COVID restrictions, they can learn and play enabling our environment to be safer as the children can spread out and be in the fresh air.

6.9 Blandford Opportunity Group – Niki Roper

Niki Roper thanked the Town Council for the grant they have received which was spent on IT equipment. They only closed for 6 weeks and have managed to work from home.

6.10 St Peter & St Paul’s Church – Sara Loch

Sara updated that there is no Rector for St Peter and St Paul’s church currently, but it is hoped that there will be a placement by September.

The Chairman thanked all the groups for all their hard work during this difficult last year and appreciated that they still managed to reach out to the Community. She also thanked everyone for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 6:49pm.

**SIGNED** .....

**DATED** .....