



BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

To: All Town Councillors
Members of the Public & Press

Dorset Council Councillors

Dear Member

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Town Council which will be held [online using Microsoft Teams](#) on **Monday 26th April 2021 at 7.00 pm** to consider the following items.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
19th April 2021

A G E N D A

This meeting will be held in accordance with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the 2020 Regulations") which came in to force on 4th April 2020. The 2020 Regulations enable local councils to hold remote meetings (including by video and telephone conferencing) for a specified period until May 2021. The 2020 Regulations apply to local council meetings, committee and sub-committee meetings in England.

Members of the public are invited to join the meeting using [Microsoft Teams](#). If, as a member of the public, you wish to speak in the Public Session, please notify the Town Clerk prior to the meeting via admin@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk or 01258 454500.

Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, belief or disability), Crime & Disorder, Health and Safety and Human Rights.

All in attendance should be aware that filming, recording, photography or otherwise may occur during the meeting.

1. Public Session
2. Report from Dorset Council Councillors
3. Apologies
4. To receive any Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations
5. [Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 22nd March 2021](#)
6. [Town Clerk's Report & Correspondence](#)
7. Civic Report

8. Recommendations and Receipt of Minutes
None
9. [To consider how to proceed with meetings from 7th May 2021](#)
10. [To consider proceeding with the co-option process](#)
11. [To consider adopting the first stage of the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme](#)
12. [To consider entering into a support contract for the regular backing-up of the website](#)
13. [To approve expenditure authority for repairs to the skatepark](#)
14. [To consider changing the regulations regarding kerb sets at the cemetery](#)
15. To receive an update and consider any requests from the:
 - 15.1 Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – Blandford +
 - 15.2 BFTC Commemoration Group
 - 15.3 Climate Change & Biodiversity
 - 15.4 Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project
16. To receive an update on Strategic Plan projects (sent separately)
17. [To consider a request from the Allotment Society](#)
18. [To consider a request from Blandford United Football Club to install a storage unit](#)
19. [To consider renewing the Office 365 licenses](#)
20. Reports from Community and Local Organisations (Councillors are requested to advise the Chairman of Council or the Town Clerk if they wish to make a report under this heading)
21. Confidential

The public and press may be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity might be prejudicial to the public interest as per the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

 - 21.1 To consider nominations to present a certificate of appreciation to members of the community (sent to councillors separately)

There is a Barnes for a Recreation Trust meeting to follow this meeting.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

3rd May Bank Holiday
 4th May Annual Meeting of the Town Council (followed by Town Council meeting)

Minutes of the Town Council and Committee meetings are available from Blandford Library, the Town Clerk's Office and at www.blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk

Twinned with Preetz, Germany



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



Twinned with Mortain, France



Tel: 01258 454500 • Fax: 01258 454432
 Email: admin@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk
www.blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk

Town Clerk's Report

Lobby Glazing – Asbestos was discovered in the lobby glazing ridges during the works, but a local company was called out and they produced a very quick report to confirm it was asbestos and works to manage this were then put in place. It delayed the project by only a week and Historic England were informed due to the funding support. A completion meeting was held on site with the contractor on 9th April, with the scaffolding removed on 12th April ready for the hirers to return to the venue. The final claim will be made to Historic England once the invoices are received.

Re-opening Facilities – The outdoor gyms reopened on 29th March, and access to the arches reopened on 12th April, along with the office and some hirings (in accordance with the guidance).

Park Road – Works started w/c Monday 29th March and SSE were on site 6-7 April to install the new three phase supply. Letters were sent to residents facing the car park to let them know.

Public Conveniences – We have received a contribution of £100 towards the public conveniences from South Tarrant Valley Parish Council.

Letter from Colonel Commandant of The Rifles, General Sir Patrick Sanders KCB CBE

DSO ADC Gen – Following the recent announcement of the government's Integrated Review, General Sanders has written to outline how the Regiment will be affected: *The Integrated Review replaces what were, previously, separate reviews of security, defence, development, and foreign policy. It will deliver Armed Forces that are fit for the future with a focus on technological as well as traditional warfighting capability. A key output will be the restructuring of the Infantry. This will impact upon all regiments, but I am pleased to report that the success of the large regiment model, such as The Rifles, has been recognised. Within the project termed 'Future Soldier', the Infantry's structure will be adjusted to create four administrative divisions. This model is akin to that which The Rifles has in place today and the Regiment will not be losing any battalions. The 4th Battalion The Rifles will be one of four infantry battalions to form the new Ranger Regiment that will operate in high threat environments to train, advise and accompany partner nations. While we must wait for the other new roles and structures to be confirmed ahead of 'orders' being issued to the Army in the Autumn, my expectation is that we will continue in the vanguard with a full range of roles, from locations across the UK. I expect our RIFLES Reserves to become firmly embedded into the Regular structure. This includes a fully integrated warfighting role and a leading status in delivering the Army's contribution to national resilience in the UK. More details on the Reserve will be announced in May this year. Further details of the structure and roles of our Regular Battalions will emerge in due course.*

Thank you – A letter has been received from Betty Gillingham thanking the council for the Diamond Wedding Anniversary Flowers.

To consider how to proceed with meetings from 7th May 2021

The government made the following statements on 25th March 2021:

During the COVID-19 pandemic the government introduced the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 to enable all local authority meetings before 7th May 2021 to be held remotely.

The regulations were brought in specifically to help local authorities deal with the challenges of holding in-person meetings during the coronavirus pandemic. The regulations also require local authorities to allow members of the public to access meetings remotely, and they also removed the requirement for local authorities to hold an annual meeting in 2020.

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 do not apply to meetings on or after 7 May 2021.

The Government's roadmap proposes that organised indoor meetings (e.g. performances, conferences) are permitted from 17 May, subject to Covid secure guidelines and capacity rules. On this basis, councils should consider the extent to which their meetings can operate on the same basis as other local institutions in their area, taking into account their individual circumstances and requirements.

If your council is concerned about holding physical meetings you may want to consider resuming these after 17 May, at which point it is anticipated that a much greater range of indoor activity can resume in line with the Roadmap, such as allowing up to 1,000 people to attend performances or sporting events in indoor venues, or up to half-capacity (whichever is lower).

Finally, while you do have a legal obligation to ensure that the members of the public can access most of your meetings, I would encourage you to continue to provide remote access to minimise the need for the public to attend meetings physically until at least 21st June, at which point it is anticipated that all restrictions on indoor gatherings will have been lifted in line with the Roadmap. However, it is for individual local authorities to satisfy themselves that they have met the requirements for public access.

The Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO), Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) and Hertfordshire County Council have lodged a legal challenge in the High Court that seeks a continuation of local authority remote meetings beyond the 6th May 2021. The date for this challenge to be heard in the courts is not known, and the outcome not guaranteed and so the Council needs to consider how it wishes to move forward.

There is also still much uncertainty around how legislation or COVID-19 risks and restrictions may change over the coming weeks and months.

NALC's position remains that all local councils should continue to meet remotely while the regulations are in force. The guidance in [Annex 1](#) has been written to help local councils prepare for remote council meetings being unlawful from 7th May 2021.

The guidance has been considered and the council has the following options available to it:

1. Continue to meet virtually

Although, technically, not permitted this route is being suggested by some other Councils. Although the risk of legal challenge is low, decisions could be challenged in the courts as ultra-vires, which is not desirable.

The 1960 Admission to Meetings Act and the Local Government Act 1972 are understandably silent on the matter of online meetings. In the most recent correspondence from Government they have advised that public attendance at Council meetings should continue to happen online for the time being where possible. In other words, online openness to the public is neither prohibited nor enabled by the 1960 or 1972 Acts.

There is existing case law that says that "a valid meeting normally consist of people who can both see and hear each other" (Byng v London Life Association (1989) 1 All ER 560) and back in March 2012 the government acknowledged this in their advice to charities about attendance at meetings.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-and-meetings-cc48/charities-and-meetings#the-definition-and-forms-of-a-meeting>

This course of action is not recommended.

2. Temporary Scheme of Delegation to the Clerk

This would be backed up by the meetings plan as usual. This would mean that Committee and Full Council meetings could go ahead virtually and instead of making decisions, would recommend decisions to the Town Clerk, who would then enact those recommendations under the temporary delegation (draft Scheme of Delegation in [Annex 2](#).) The scheme would remain in place until Councillors decided that a return to face-to-face meetings was safe, or that the delegation should cease for any other reason.

The Annual Governance and Audit statements / AGAR cannot be delegated to an officer. This must be considered by full council by 30th June 2021 and is currently scheduled to be presented to councillors on 21st June 2021, which should coincide with restrictions being lifted.

3. Hold face-to-face meetings

This would be held in line with the advice from NALC, as detailed in [Annex 1](#).

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Steps) (England) Regulations 2021 includes an exception (exception 3) that a gathering is allowed where it is necessary for certain purposes which include "for work purposes or the provision of voluntary or charitable services." Members/officers attending a meeting would fall under this. Additionally, in the letter dated 25th March 2021, from Luke Hall MP (shared with councillors) recommendations are given on how to hold safe Council meetings, which infers that it would be legal to hold them.

However, provision should be made to enable to public to view the meeting via Microsoft Teams, which is possible to do although a trial has not yet been conducted.

Due to the size of the Corn Exchange, and the sound system purchased in 2020, we can accommodate a full council meeting. However, the Council will also need to take into

account the fears and concerns of both Councillors and Officers over returning to face-to-face meetings whilst restrictions are still in place. Particularly those who are unvaccinated, have been shielding, or have other health concerns. The Town Clerk will carry out a full risk assessment which will include the need for masks to be worn, sanitiser used upon entry, separate desks, no refreshments, etc.

If, for example, a committee member did not feel safe attending a meeting in person they could attend online along with the press/public and could contribute to the discussion, but would not have voting rights. They could still be marked as in attendance for the purpose of the annual newsletter informing the public of councillor attendance at meetings.

Lateral flow tests can be taken twice weekly, they can be collected or posted to any adult who wishes to have one, should staff/Councillors wish to have them.

Considering the above, and the government advice to hold meetings for critical business only during the aforementioned period, it is therefore recommended that councillors base their discussions on the following:

Scheduled Meetings:

4 th May	Annual Meeting	To be held online (legally)
17 th May	Corn Exchange Meeting	Could be held online, informally, however a resolution would be required at this meeting in order to progress the project. Therefore, it will need to be the scheme of delegation or meeting held in person with public access via Teams.
24 th May	Planning Meeting	Not essential – decisions can be made by email or an informal online meeting held, with public present, making it clear to Dorset Council that council considered the applications but that it was an informal meeting or scheme of delegation.
7 th June	Finance & Staffing	Required activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Receipt of budgets- Review of finance documentation- Internal Auditor's Report- Review of End of Year Accounts 2020/21- Grants As this is a committee of nine and only five are required in person, it is recommended that this is held in person in the Corn Exchange.
14 th June	Recreation & Amenities	Not essential – matters can either be brought forward to 26 th April 2021 or deferred until the 21 st June Council meeting (when it is anticipated all restrictions could be lifted).
21 st June	Town Council Meeting	In person in the Corn Exchange, subject to restrictions being lifted.

Recommendation

- That Full Council discusses the options and agrees a way forward for its meetings and critical business between 7th May and 21st June 2021.
- That the council considers forming a working group to respond to the consultation on the provision for remote meetings beyond the scope of the pandemic:
https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-authority-remote-meetings-call-for-evidence/local-authority-remote-meetings-call-for-evidence?fbclid=IwAR3EMOsPy63II_UNgKpb1HY4f6S0ZK0_I1xcJ1WqgZl-yVUvw_XCyZSDO4M.

Linda Scott-Giles

Town Clerk

31st March 2021

Annex 1 – NALC advice

To help local councils prepare for this possibility some advice and suggestions are below:

- Consider what council business can be conducted before May so that the council can dedicate time to those issues in remote meetings. The more discussion and decisions you can conduct in remote meetings means the council can aim to hold fewer and shorter face to face meetings after May.
- This may require more meeting time than is currently planned, so the council should look at the meeting schedule in the run-up to May and see if more time or more meetings are required. Where possible, consider holding the annual council meeting and the parish meeting while the current Regulations permit for them to be held remotely.
- Consider when the council does need to meet face to face, and whether meetings can be delayed to later in the year when the potential COVID-19 risk may be further reduced.
- The council might consider holding a remote meeting as late as possible in April so that councillors who are unable to attend face-to-face meetings will have as much time as possible before disqualification by virtue of s.85 of the Local Government Act 1972 becomes an issue.
- It may help the council's business continuity to implement (or review) a scheme of delegation. This would allow the clerk to make certain decisions for the council, which would be especially important if the council were unable to hold meetings due to COVID-19 risks. In reviewing/adopting a scheme of delegation the council should ensure there is clarity around which decisions are delegated and which are not, for how long the scheme of delegation is in place, and when the scheme of the delegation will end or be reviewed.

From May 2021, as face-to-face council meetings resume there will still be the risk to attendees of COVID-19 exposure. Councils should conduct a risk assessment in advance of a face to face meeting which should give consideration to what the council can do to reduce risk to councillors, staff and public including:

- Providing hand sanitiser to those entering the meeting room and making sure hand sanitiser is readily available in the room itself
- Staggering arrival and exit times for staff, councillors and members of the public
- Putting a one way system in place
- Placing seating at least 2-metres apart

- Ensuring everyone wears face masks
- Holding paperless meetings
- The sharing of papers should be discouraged and people should be asked to take the papers etc with them at the end of the meeting to minimise how many people handle them
- Arranging seating so people are not facing each other directly
- Choosing a venue with good ventilation, including opening windows and doors where possible
- Choosing a large enough venue to allow distancing
- The council (or venue owner/operator) will need to identify the venue's maximum capacity in their risk assessment, taking into account the need for social distancing. Consider how the council will ensure this capacity is not exceeded and how it will manage the situation if more people wish to attend than capacity allows. For example, could meetings be live-streamed or could members of the public submit questions via email?
- If the venue has an NHS QR code to support test and trace then all attendees should register using that app, for those without access to the app they should register attendance in line with the venue's test and trace procedure. NB all venues in hospitality, the tourism and leisure industry, close contact services, community centres and village halls must have a **test and trace procedure**
- Venues must conform with the government guidance for **multi-purpose community facilities** and for **council buildings**. If the venue is run by the council then the council must take responsibility for this, otherwise, the council can ask the venue to provide confirmation that they do conform to this guidance
- The council must understand and ensure it is acting in compliance with the latest government **safer workplaces guidance**

BFTC staff will carry out a full risk assessment if and when needed, the above is to demonstrate the complexities of holding a face-to-face meeting to Councillors and is not intended to be discussed in detail at this point.

Managing staff:

- It would be advisable to inform the clerk and any other staff whose role involves supporting or attending council meetings, as soon as possible that the council will need to prepare to return to face to face meetings from May onwards. This will allow them to make the necessary preparations as described above, and also to allow time to engage with staff to alleviate any concerns they may have related to attending physical meetings again.
- Councils should consult with staff (ask for and consider their views to try and reach an agreement) about returning to work as part of their preparations for face to face meetings.
- The council must make the workplace (including council meetings) as safe as possible for staff, this includes undertaking a risk assessment, taking reasonable steps to reduce risks identified in the risk assessment, and ensure it is acting in compliance with the latest Government **safer workplaces guidance**
- ACAS have produced useful **guidance for employers and employees** related to COVID-19, including advice on how to support staff to **return to the workplace** and how to manage situations where staff may be worried or not wish to return.

Government advice is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-council-buildings>

Annex 2 – Temporary Scheme of Delegation

Temporary Scheme of Delegation

1. Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides:
 - That a Council may delegate its powers (except those incapable of delegation) to a committee or an officer.
 - A Committee may delegate its powers to an officer.
2. Any delegation to a Committee or the Proper Officer shall be exercised in compliance with the Council's Standing Orders, any other policies or conditions imposed by the Council and within the law.
3. The Proper Officer may nominate another named Officer to carry out any powers and duties, which have been, delegated to that Officer.
4. In an emergency the Proper Officer is empowered to carry out any function of the Council
5. Where officers are contemplating any action under delegated powers, which is likely to have a significant impact in a particular area, they should also consult the Members, and must ensure that they obtain appropriate legal, financial and other specialist advice before action is taken.

Delegation to The Proper Officer

6. As a temporary measure, to allow for effective decision making whilst Covid-19 restrictions and considerations are in place, the Proper Officer may be empowered to take any and all decisions recommend to them by the relevant Committee or Full Council
7. This empowerment does not affect the delegations already in place via Standing Orders or Financial regulations.
8. The Proper Officer may not take additional decisions that would normally be taken by a Committee or Full Council unless that Committee or Full Council has met in a meeting suitably convened under the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972, and made available to the public to view (where not covered by confidentiality) and expressly agreed for that decision to be enacted via this temporary delegation.

Full Council matters

9. The following items are reserved for Full Council decision only and cannot be delegated to an Officer.
 - To appoint the Chairman and Vice-Chairman in May each year
 - To sign off the Governance Statement by 30 June each year
 - To set the Precept
 - To appoint the Head of Paid Service (Town Clerk)
 - To make byelaws
 - To borrow money
 - To consider any matter required by law to be considered by Council

To consider proceeding with the Co-option process

Background

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 have had 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.

A brief discussion was held at the Town Council meeting on 22nd February about the Co-Option and it was agreed to add it to this agenda to discuss if the council should pursue the Co-Option online if it is not possible to do so in person.

Information

If councillors would like to go ahead with the Co-Option for the councillor vacancy in the Langton St Leonards ward it is suggested to invite candidates to a Special Confidential Town Council meeting on Monday 12th July at 6pm, before the Town Council meeting at 7pm.

This would allow officers to start advertising for the vacancy from 27th April, with a closing date for applications of Friday 2nd July, by placing notices in the Town Council's noticeboards, advertising on social media and placing an advert in the June edition of the Forum Focus, which is distributed on 28th May (submission deadline 13th May).

The Town Council's Co-Option Policy is specified in the Standing Orders, section 28.

Recommendation

Councillors should decide if they wish to advertise for Co-option for the vacancy in the Langton St Leonards ward, with the confidential Co-Option meeting held on 12th July at 6pm.

Sybille Maddock
Assistant Town Clerk
9th March 2021

To consider adopting the first stage of the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme

Background

The Armed Forces Community includes all that are currently serving in the Armed Forces, Veterans, Reservists, Cadet Force Adult Volunteers, the wounded, injured and sick as well as spouse/partners and dependants.

Information

There are four military bases in Dorset:

Bovington (as a base includes the barracks of Allenby, Stanley and Lulworth)

Blandford

RM Poole

West Moors

In Dorset there are approximately 6,500 serving members of the Armed Forces, around 58,000 Veterans, and as of September 2019, 1,325 children from Armed Forces families attend school here.

Ministry of Defence definition for the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) Pledge is: 'The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the nation that those who serve or have served, and their families, are treated fairly and are not put at a disadvantage.'

What is the Dorset Armed Forces Covenant Programme?

- MOD funded Programme
- Managed by Programme Coordinator
- Armed Forces Covenant Programme Board
- New 5-year action plan for Dorset
- Linked to the Governments Veterans Strategy
- Legislative requirement from Spring 2021? (Had second reading in HoC)

The programme has six identified outcomes:

1. Covenant stakeholders will work more closely together to improve co-designed interventions and outcomes
2. The health and wellbeing of the Armed Forces Community will be improved
3. The demographics of the Armed Forces Community and the availability of third sector support available will be better understood and promoted
4. The Armed Forces Community will be better informed with improved access to information, services and support
5. The Armed Forces Community within the criminal justice system will be provided with the necessary support to enable them to reintegrate into civilian life
6. The Armed Forces Community (particularly Service leavers) will be better equipped to integrate into communities, enjoy cultural and leisure activities, and secure employment where appropriate

To achieve this there are eight themes that have actions assigned to them:

1. Community and relationships
2. Armed Forces community and the law
3. Schools and Children's Education
4. Employment, education and skills
5. Health and Wellbeing

6. Making a home in civilian society
7. Leisure and Culture
8. Recognition, Understanding and Communication

Who is involved in making the Covenant work?

- Central Government overseen by the Ministerial and Veterans Board
- Local Government, Town & Parish Councils and their communities
- Businesses of all sizes
- Charities
- Cadet Forces and their adult volunteers
- Single services: Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force

The Dorset Council are applying for Silver Employer Recognition Award, with the aim to go for Gold. The first step for Town & Parish Councils is to sign the Covenant and gain the Bronze Employer Recognition Award.

The Bronze Employer Recognition Award includes to:

- Take a positive stance towards existing or prospective employees who are members of the Armed Forces
- Seek to promote an Armed Forces friendly position
- Are open to employing reservists, service veterans (included wounded, injured and sick), cadet instructors and military spouses/partners
- Relevant web pages: www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/covenant-programme
<https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/>

An example covenant for local government organisations is attached as Appendix A.

Recommendation

Councillors are requested to consider the information provide and decide if they wish to sign the Armed Forces Covenant and nominate the Town Council for the Bronze Employer Recognition Award.

Sybille Maddock
Assistant Town Clerk
4th March 2021



AN ARMED FORCES COVENANT

BETWEEN

ABCD COUNTY COUNCIL, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHARITABLE AND
VOLUNTARY SECTORS,
THE CIVILIAN COMMUNITY OF *ABCD*

AND

THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY IN *ABCD LOCATION*

**We, the undersigned, agree to work and act together to honour
the Armed Forces Covenant.**

Signatories

(This page gives examples of the parties who may sign the Armed Forces Covenant. This is an example only and is not limited to the examples given)

Signed:

Signed:

Name:

Name:

Position Held:

Position Held:

**Signed on behalf of the Armed Forces
Community**

Signed on behalf of ABCD Council

Date:

Date:

Signed:

Signed:

Name:

Name:

Position Held:

Position Held:

**Signed on behalf of Armed Forces
Charities**

**Signed on behalf of the Voluntary
Sector**

Date:

Date:

Signed:

Signed:

Name:

Name:

Position Held:

Position Held:

**Signed on behalf of the Business
and Commercial Sector**

**Signed on behalf of the Primary
Care Trust/NHS Body**

Date:

Date:

SECTION 1: PARTICIPANTS

1.1 This Armed Forces Covenant is made between:

The serving and former members of the Armed Forces and their families working and residing in ABCD

And

ABCD County Council

And

The Charitable and Voluntary Sector

And

Other members of the civilian community

SECTION 2: PRINCIPLES OF THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

2.1 The Armed Forces Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. This Covenant encompasses the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces, at the local level.

2.1 The Armed Forces Covenant is based upon two key principles:

- The Armed Forces community should not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services.
- Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

2.3 The purpose of this Covenant is to encourage support for the Armed Forces Community working and residing in xxxx and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by members of this Armed Forces Community, particularly those who have given the most. This includes in-Service and ex-Service personnel their families and widow(er)s in ABCD.

2.4 For ABCD County Council and partner organisations, the Community Covenant presents an opportunity to bring their knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on the provision of help and advice to members of the Armed Forces Community. It also presents an opportunity to build upon existing good work on other initiatives such as the Welfare Pathway.

2.5 For the Armed Forces community, the Covenant encourages the integration of Service life into civilian life and encourages members of the Armed Forces community to help their local community.

SECTION 3: OBJECTIVES AND GENERAL INTENTIONS

Aims of the Covenant

3.1 The Armed Forces Covenant defines the enduring, general principles that should govern the relationship between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces community

3.2 It aims to encourage all parties within a community to offer support to the local Armed Forces community and make it easier for Service personnel, families and veterans to access the help and support available from the MOD, from statutory providers and from the Charitable and Voluntary Sector. These organisations already work together in partnership at local level.

3.3 The scheme is intended to be a two-way arrangement and the Armed Forces community are encouraged to do as much as they can to support their community and promote activity which integrates the Service community into civilian life.

SECTION 4: Measures

4.1 *Detail regarding specific measures to be put in place could be inserted here, e.g. Civil/Military Partnership Boards, Welfare Pathway, etc*

CONTACT PERSONNEL AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

MOD Armed Forces Covenant Team

Email address: covenant-mailbox@mod.gov.uk
Address: Armed Forces Covenant Team
Zone A, 6th Floor
Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HB

In-Service representative(s)

Contact Name:
Title:
Telephone:
Address:

ABCD Council

Contact Name:
Title:
Telephone:
Fax:
Address:

Charities
Contact Name:
Title:
Telephone:
Address:

THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

An Enduring Covenant Between

The People of the United Kingdom
Her Majesty's Government

– and –

All those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of
the Crown

And their Families

The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm. Our Armed Forces fulfil that responsibility on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and, sometimes, suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty. Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. In return, the whole nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families. They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment.

Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

This obligation involves the whole of society: it includes voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and the actions of individuals in supporting the Armed Forces. Recognising those who have performed military duty unites the country and demonstrates the value of their contribution. This has no greater expression than in upholding this Covenant.

**To consider entering into a support contract
for the regular backing-up of the website**

Background

When a local resident volunteered to redesign the website in 2018, they took on all maintenance and updates of the website thereafter. This support ceased in 2020 and the town council staff received support from the spouse of the receptionist.

Further Information

The current support provided by the spouse is not sustainable and the town council requires a company specialising in website support to maintain any back up and updates for the website. Town Council staff maintain the day-to-day updates and maintenance of the website but are unable to back up the website or perform major updates to the software. If the files are not backed up and an update is performed there might be the risk of losing the data from the website.

A local website support company has been contacted to help with a recent update and back up, and town council staff would like to enter into a support contract with this company to back up the website on a monthly basis. The backup files go to a Dropbox folder which only the company owner has access to.

Financial Implications

Monthly back up costs £24.00 + VAT.

Recommendation

Councillors are asked to approve the monthly backing up of the website files at a cost of £24 + VAT using funds from budget line 4040 IT Maintenance (General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

Sybille Maddock
Assistant Town Clerk
24th March 2021

To approve expenditure authority for repairs to the Skatepark

Background

At the Town Council meeting held on 16th December 2019 Councillors made the following resolutions:

TO CONSIDER HOW TO PROCEED WITH RECOMMENDED PHASED WORKS TO THE SKATE PARK

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

The Town Council agrees to go out to tender for the works on Contracts Finder, but requests that contractors recommend what they feel is required for the skate park and therefore quotations will not be like for like. A consultation will then be held with skatepark users, before a contract is awarded.

Cllr Lacey-Clarke asked when the lease expires, and the Town Clerk confirmed it is 2027.

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

The Town Council writes to the Dorset Council to request an extension of the lease. Cllrs Quayle and Lacey-Clarke will co-sign the letter to show support and suggested asking Cllr Kerby if he is also happy to support it.

Report

The Town Clerk contacted the Dorset Council to request an extension to the lease which expires in 2027. A positive response was eventually received along with a heads of terms document, which is currently with the Town Councils solicitors for review. As with most things over the last year this process has been delayed by the Covid pandemic.

The idea was to replace all the remaining old equipment with new, allowing interested contractors to put forward various designs which would then be put out to consultation with users of the skate park. However, since the time of the above resolution two things have come to light.

- Discussions have been held with users of the skate park both by the current company used to maintain the skatepark and by a survey sent in by a regular user to the office. Both appear to highlight that the general set up with the Skatepark is popular and well used with some users travelling significant distances to use it as it is becoming unique. This matches up with the consultation held with users carried out in 2019.
- Secondly that the ramp surfaces have deteriorated significantly over the last twelve months, (this was also highlighted within the user's survey mentioned above). In early March we received our inspection and maintenance report which stated that a number of the ramp surfaces were deteriorating to a point that they would be classed as dangerous within the next few months. The report also highlighted that the Jump Box would either need significant work or replacement as it is becoming high risk.

Photos are shown below.



The ramp surfaces that require replacement could be used in any future changes to the equipment if it is decided in future to change or replace the current equipment although this should prolong its life significantly. Likewise, the replacement Jump box could be used within any future design.

The quote received to replace the worn out riding surfaces from the contractor who we have our maintenance contract with is as follows:

Carry out priority riding surface replacement / maintenance on existing skate ramp units as identified during on-site inspection.

- * 11 units identified as med / high risk.
 - * Removal and disposal of existing riding surfaces
 - * Clean & prep existing sheet steel substrate
 - * Supply & cut to size on-site new riding surface sheets.
 - * Increase and upgrade riding surface fixings per sheet.
 - * Reset expansion joints.
 - * Supply & fit new extended toe-plates where applicable
- Remove and dispose existing Flat Bank mounted grind rail.
Remove and dispose existing Driveway unit.
Relocate existing Spine unit to improve user flow line.

For a cost of £20,003.25 +VAT

The quote to replace the Jump Box is as follows:

Dismantle, remove from site and dispose of existing jump box unit. identified as high risk and structurally unsound during on-site inspection.

Manufacture, deliver & install the following replacement unit, on the basis of 'like for like' (within the confines of current standards) onto existing hard standing base area.

Jump Box 980mm high 3660mm wide 7150mm long.

ENCLOSED Galvanised Steel Structure
18mm Phenolic Coated, Acoustic Substrate
7mm, 'Flexi - Bonded', Skatelite Pro 3000 (Black) Riding Surface
Tamper Resistant Stainless Steel Hardware
BSEN 14974: 2006 / BSEN 1176/1 Compliant

For a cost of £10,367.50 +VAT (this includes a 10% discount as existing customer).

There is the option of waiting until a complete renovation of the skatepark can be carried out although this is likely to take some time and sections of the skatepark would likely require closing in the meantime. As mentioned, if the proposed works are done promptly then any future redevelopment of the skate park could be put back as the urgent works would have been done, there is always the chance of different issues occurring but those described are what has been highlighted at this time.

Financial Implications

Whilst, ideally, we would have liked further quotes, the situation remains unchanged from previous works to the skatepark in that, this is specialist work and very few companies in the country still work with the materials used at the Town Council's skatepark. Those that do are not local and this would likely increase the cost and the difficulties of getting the work done in the very near future due to Covid. This is particularly important as the work on a number of the surfaces is urgent and getting the works done promptly will avoid having to close any sections of the skatepark whilst we await the remedial works to be carried out. Additionally, those I have contacted in the past have declined to quote due to the distance involved.

As below our financial regulations make exceptions for specialist work:

The financial regulations state at 11.1 b) that:

*Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £25,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or **specialist services** other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk shall invite tenders from at least three firms in line with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.*

Recommendation

It is recommended that Councillors decide if they wish to go ahead with the proposed works using funds of £30,370.75 +VAT from the Skate Park Accruals budget which has a current balance of £158,065.00.

Jon Goodenough
Operations Manager
14th April 2021

To consider changing the regulations regarding kerb sets at the cemetery

Background

When the Cemetery extension was opened it was decided by Councillors that no kerb sets would be allowed as it would be more aesthetically pleasing and could help with the maintenance of the Cemetery. However, since burials have taken place in the new section it has become clear that due to the common practice of adding flower containers and other items to the graves this has not been the case and the look and the maintenance of the two sections are the same.

Officers and Councillors have always tried to be sensitive and flexible over the different way people grieve for their loved ones and have only removed items which are either a health and safety issue or have encroached on surrounding plots. This has always seemed to be a popular way of running the cemetery and it continues to receive a large volume of compliments and very few complaints. In general kerb sets are allowed at other cemeteries with those that ban the practice being in the minority.

Report

Recently an administrative error was made which allowed a kerb set to be placed around a grave in the new section. Once the error was spotted it did not seem right to ask for the kerb set to be removed as it was an error by the Town Council and not that of the stonemason or of the relatives of the deceased. To have done so would have appeared extremely harsh and run the risk of being legally challenged and would no doubt have resulted in compensation being paid. This was a very easily made error and was always a possibility with having different regulations for the two sections.

Since this has happened, we have been approached by the relatives of a recent burial asking why there is a kerb set in the new section, as they would also like one there but were told this wasn't possible. They were advised to write to request that councillors considering amending the regulations but this has not yet been received although they have shared their experience with local media. There is now a precedent and in addition others have put other items on and around graves which in their opinion are not as neat as formal kerb sets. We do still get requests for kerbing in the new section which we have always declined but clearly that process will now be more complicated, and this will become more of an issue now we have used up nearly all of the plots in the old section.

I have asked for the views of the staff that maintain the cemetery in regards maintaining it and they feel that allowing kerb sets would not make it harder and, in some cases, easier and more attractive. Whilst the original idea of having the new section looking similar to a Commonwealth war graves areas with just headstones and nothing else was a fair one at the time it does not appear that this is the wishes of those who have interred loved ones in the area.

For that reason and others mentioned above the decision has been brought back to Council to be reviewed by Councillors in the light of the information in this report.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Councillors note the report and decide if they wish to amend the regulations to allow kerb sets in the new section of the cemetery.

Jon Goodenough
Operations Manager
8th April 2021

To consider a request from the Allotment Society

Report

The following request has been received from the Allotment Society:

As we will be losing our hazel coppice at Lamperd's field, which we use every year to cut pea sticks and bean poles for plot holders to use, It has been suggested we plant a new hazel coppice on the waste land on the end of Elizabeth road site. This will make a great site for wildlife as we can also plant some wood land flowers etc. With the Queens platinum jubilee next year it will be good to make it a jubilee project.

Councillors may recall that this was the parcel of land that had been subject to fly tipping and the Town Council had cleared it in 2019. It is owned by DC so there is always the chance they could ask for it back but they had no objections to us clearing and maintaining it as I believe it is of no practical use.

This could be an opportunity to reclaim this piece of land back from its unkempt state and to control both the fly tipping and potential for rodent problems.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Councillors consider the request and decide if they wish to allow the Allotment Society to use the land.

Jon Goodenough
Operations Manager
16th April 2021

To consider a request from Blandford United Football Club to install a storage unit

Report

The Town Council has received the following request from Blandford United Football Club:

“We would like to place a small storage unit alongside the garage, the unit would be 20ftx10ft similar to the one that the cricket use for storage, but not as big. We would use the unit to store the picnic benches that will be used to provide outdoor seating during current restrictions and potentially moving forward.”

As mentioned in the request the Cricket Club have a similar unit next to the pavilion which has been there for approx. 8 years. We do not envisage a need for planning for such a unit as it is temporary.

They want to buy and store some picnic benches which can be used to extend their seating capacity outside whilst restrictions last.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Councillors note the contents of the report and decide if they wish to allow the football club to place a storage unit next to the pavilion.

Jon Goodenough
Operations Manager
16th April 2021

To consider renewing the Office 365 licenses

Report

Town Council officers and members' Microsoft Office 365 account requires renewal on an annual basis.

We currently have seven Desktop Office with Cloud Service licenses for all office staff and 17 Cloud Services (email only) for members and the previous Project Administrator. The license for the Project Administrator is not required any longer.

The current license expires on 10th May 2021.

Financial Implications

The renewal costs are:

Office 365 Cloud Services for 1 year **£60 each**

Office 365 Desktop Office with Cloud Services for 1 year **£120 each**

Recommendation

It is recommended that town councillors approve the renewal of licenses at a cost of £1800 + VAT using budget line 4040 IT Maintenance & Software (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

Sybille Maddock
Assistant Town Clerk
19th April 2021