

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Finance & Staffing Committee
held on Monday 21st March 2022 at 7:00 pm held in the Corn Exchange

DRAFT
Subject to confirmation

PRESENT

Cllr S Hitchings – Committee Chairman
Cllr L Hitchings – Chairman of Council
Cllr H Mieville – Chairman of T&GP
Cllr H White

Cllr P Osborne – Committee Vice Chairman
Cllr C Stevens – Vice Chairman of Council
Cllr R Carter

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Cllr L Lindsay – Chairman of R&A

Nicci Brown – Press

SITTING IN

Cllr R Holmes

Cllr E Bray

38. PUBLIC SESSION

Cllr L Hitchings reminded Councillors of his charity event on Saturday evening with the Blandford Stour Valley Band in the Corn Exchange.

39. APOLOGIES

Cllr A Cross

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

None had been submitted.

41. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13TH DECEMBER 2021

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Mieville, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED (6 in favour, 1 abstention) that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

See also Minute No. 47 regarding an amendment.

42. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

42.1 Staff Training – Staff attended 44 training courses in 2021. The Town Clerk completed her FiLCA qualification, attended the SLCC Practitioners Conference and Virtual Regional Training Seminar SW, as well as the SLCC International Women's Day President's Lunch. The Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk, Bookings Receptionist and Market Manager attended various training courses to assist with the Census 2021.

The Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk, Mayor's Secretary and Bookings Receptionist took part in a social media workshop. The Mayor's Secretary also attended a Canva webinar and along with the Assistant Town Clerk and Bookings Receptionist took part in a WordPress training.

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

Both the Town Clerk and Operations Manager attended the Right Tree in the Right Place for the Right Reason seminar as well as the IOSH Directing Safely training, which the Grounds & Properties Supervisor also attended.

The Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk attended the Code of Conduct training. The Assistant Town Clerk attended the Planning and Power training. The interim Finance officer took part in a course about the Year-End accounts and audit. The Market Manager attended a NABMA webinar management training and the NABMA conference. All three Caretakers and two of the outdoor staff took part in a scaffold tower training. All staff took part in a Manual Handling course.

42.2 Councillor Training – In 2021 Councillors attended 23 training courses in total. In March Cllrs Stevens and Mievile attended the Welcome Back Fund webinar. Cllr Stayt attended Planning and Power. Cllrs Carter and Holmes took part in NALC The Future of High Streets and Town Centres in September. In October Cllrs Cross and White went to the DAPTC Role of Local Councils in Planning training. The DAPTC Important Planning Concepts training was held in November, which Cllr Cross attended. In November Cllr Herbert attended DAPTC New Cllr Induction course and both Cllrs White and Stevens attended the DAPTC AGM. All Councillors, bar Cllr Lacey-Clarke and Quayle, attended the Code of Conduct training.

42.3 Pay Award – The pay award for all staff from 1st April 2021 has been agreed, at a national level, at 1.75%, which is being applied as back pay in the March salaries.

43. ANALYTICAL REVIEW OF EXPENDITURE AGAINST BUDGET FOR THE FOLLOWING:

43.1 Administration Budget for the year to 28th February 2022

The paper was noted (see Appendix B).

43.2 Overall Revenue Budget for the year to 28th February 2022

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

43.3 General Reserves

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

44. REVIEW OF FINANCE DOCUMENTATION

44.1 To receive and retrospectively approve the cheque payment 011128 (Sheet 870) totalling £122.85

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

The cheque payment 011128 (Sheet 870) totalling £122.85 is received and retrospectively approved.

44.2 To receive and retrospectively approve direct debit payments for the period 1st November 2021 to 31st January 2022 (sheets 190-192) totalling £90,358.17

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

The direct debit payments for the period 1st November 2021 to 31st January 2022 (sheets 190-192) totalling £90,358.17 are received and retrospectively approved.

44. REVIEW OF FINANCE DOCUMENTATION (CONT)

44.3 To receive and retrospectively approve Online Faster Payments FP070 to FP080 totalling £163,899.93

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

Online Faster Payments FP070 to FP080 totalling £163,899.93 are approved retrospectively.

44.4 There are no BACS payments to retrospectively approve

44.5 There are no CHAPS payments to retrospectively approve

44.6 Retrospective approval of the Investment Account for the period 1st November 2021 to 31st January 2022

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

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

The Investment Account for the period 1st November 2021 to 31st January 2022 is approved retrospectively.

45.7 Report by Chairman on Bank Reconciliation and Petty Cash check

Cllr S Hitchings carried out a petty cash check, which was correct, and confirmed that the monthly bank reconciliation had been undertaken during the period and everything was found to be in order.

45.8 Bank Reconciliation to 31st January 2022

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

46. REVIEW OF VARIABLE DIRECT DEBITS

The paper was noted (see Appendix G).

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

The variable direct debits are approved.

47. TO RECEIVE THE INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT

The paper was noted (see Appendix H).

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

The Town Council retrospectively approves the following payments:

- **Direct Debit payment of £16 on 25th June 2021 (Sheet 185a)**
- **Direct Debit payments for the period 1st May 2021 to 31st July 2021 (Sheets 184 – 186) totalling £96,008.86 (previously approved at September F&S meeting at £82,702.10)**
- **Faster Payments sheets FP034 to FP050 totalling £1,004,114.49 (previously approved at June F&S meeting at £1,044,114.30)**

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

47. **TO RECEIVE THE INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT (cont)**

It was PROPOSED by Cllr S Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED unanimously that a **RECOMMENDATION is made to full council that** the wording is clarified and amended accordingly that

The Town Council approves the budget and confirms the precept for 2022/2023 at £803,241.

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

48. **INSURANCE RISK ASSESSMENT RELATING TO THE TOWN COUNCIL'S INSURANCE COVER AND APPROVAL OF INSURANCE PREMIUMS FOR 2022/23**

The paper was noted (see Appendix I).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Carter and AGREED unanimously that a **RECOMMENDATION is made to full council that**

The Town Council confirms there are no other aspects of insurance that they wish to amend, apart from the removal of the Old Bath House.

The Town Council agrees the insurance premium for 2022/23 and approves expenditure of £13,622.28 (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

49. **REVIEW OF THE RISK ASSESSMENT MANAGEMENT POLICY (INCLUDING FINANCIAL) ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2022/23**

The paper was sent to Councillors separately due to the size of the document.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED unanimously that a **RECOMMENDATION is made to full council that**

The Town Council approves the Risk Management Policy (including Financial) arrangements for 2022/23 and has no amendments.

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

50. **REVIEW OF ASSET REGISTER**

The paper was noted (see Appendix J).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED unanimously that a **RECOMMENDATION is made to full council that**

The Asset Register is approved.

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

51. **TO CONSIDER THE CURRENT STATUS OF BAD DEBTS WITH THE TOWN COUNCIL**

The paper was noted (see Appendix K) and the Clerk advised that the ex-employee has since been due back pay of £49.29, which reduces the total amount owed to £455.63.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr White and AGREED unanimously that a **RECOMMENDATION is made to full council that**

51. **TO CONSIDER THE CURRENT STATUS OF BAD DEBTS WITH THE TOWN COUNCIL (CONT)**

The sum of £880.63 is written off to bad debts.

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Clerk is also asked to seek advice from BUFC on procedures within the league regarding the away club and the vandalised door.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

52. **TO REVIEW THE FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE REMIT AND THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS (NO PROPOSED AMENDMENTS FROM STAFF TO EITHER DOCUMENT – LAST UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2021)**

It was noted that there were no proposed amendments.

53. **TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE FREE VENUE HIRE REQUESTS RECEIVED FOR 2021/22**

The paper was noted (see Appendix L).

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

The Free Venue Hire policy is continued.

54. **TO CONSIDER GRANT APPLICATIONS**

54.1 **Blandford Cricket Club**

The paper was noted (see Appendix M).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr White and AGREED unanimously that a **RECOMMENDATION is made to full council that**

A grant of £833 is approved for the purchase of items for Blandford Cricket Club's junior players (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

54.2 **Blandford & District Branch, Royal British Legion**

The paper was noted (see Appendix N).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Mieville, SECONDED by Cllr Carter and AGREED (6 in favour, 1 abstention) that a **RECOMMENDATION is made to full council that**

A grant of £150 is approved towards the purchase of two gazebos for events in the town (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

54.3 **Blandford Literary Festival**

The paper was noted (see Appendix O).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Osborne, SECONDED by Cllr White and AGREED unanimously that a **RECOMMENDATION is made to full council that**

A grant of £100 is approved for printing materials for the Blandford Literary Festival (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

54. TO CONSIDER GRANT APPLICATIONS (cont)

54.4 Knees Up Healthy Living

The paper was noted (see Appendix P).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Osborne, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED unanimously that a **RECOMMENDATION is made to full council that**

A grant of £1,500 is approved for Knees Up, towards the cost of a defibrillator, and the organisation is asked to consider an external unit accessible for all and is advised of a grant that may support them further (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

8:19pm – Cllr White left the meeting.

55. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS

8:21pm – Cllr White returned to the meeting.

55.1 To consider entering into a new SLA with Blandford Youth & Community Centre

The paper was noted (see Appendix Q).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr S Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Carter and AGREED unanimously that a **RECOMMENDATION is made to full council that**

The Town Council is not in a position to consider entering into a new service level agreement with the Youth & Community Centre at this stage, due to insufficient information received to date. The fully costed business plan is still awaited but, in the meantime, the council agrees to ring fence the unclaimed funding from 21-22 (April-June and July-August) from Grants budget line and carries it forward, making it available for the next six months up to the end of July 2022. If the information that is normally requested from the SLA is submitted the funds will be released.

It was noted that the October-December and January-March quarters have not yet been claimed at this stage.

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

55.2 To approve the SLA with Blandford Food Bank

The paper was noted (see Appendix R).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED unanimously that a **RECOMMENDATION is made to full council that**

The Town Council approves the SLA with the Blandford Food Bank for a period of three years from 1st April 2022 subject to the following amendment at 10.4:

In cases where there is an agreed reduction of service or termination, then after all legal commitments have been met, the Council is entitled to repayment of the grant.

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

56. **TO CONSIDER INTRODUCING A CYCLE TO WORK SCHEME AND THE INTRODUCTION OF A BIKE FOR ROUNDS**

The paper was noted (see Appendix S).

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

The Operations Manager continues to consult with staff regarding the use of pushbikes and brings costs for the Cycle to Work Scheme to budget setting in October/November 2022 for Councillors to consider.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The Meeting closed at 9:02 pm.

SIGNED: **DATED:**