

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
Held on Monday 28th March 2022 at 7:01pm in the Corn Exchange



PRESENT

Cllr L Hitchings – Chairman, arrived at 7.03pm	Cllr C Stevens – Vice Chairman
Cllr A Cross	Cllr R Carter
Cllr S Hitchings	Cllr H White
Cllr B Quayle	Cllr H Mieville
Cllr R Holmes	Cllr E Bray
Cllr P Clark	Cllr L Lindsay
Cllr P Osborne	Cllr C Jacques
Cllr K Herbert	

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk	Operations Manager
Assistant Town Clerk	Nicci Brown – Press
Barrie Cooper – Youth Centre	

149. PUBLIC SESSION

- 149.1 Cllr Stevens thanked the Town Clerk and the Mayor's Secretary for their hard work at the Community Expo, which was excellent. He also thanked the Mayor for a great evening.
- 149.2 Cllr Holmes spoke about the delay in service at Boots East Street as the waiting time for receiving a prescription is too long and people are starting to use online services. Salisbury Street has started 'Click and Collect', which she believes is not the answer to get customers into the town. Nicci Brown reported that she has experienced the same issue, which seems to be due to staff shortages.
- 149.3 Barrie Cooper asked about the paving slabs programme and enquired if the Town Council has received a schedule of works from Dorset Council. Cllr Quayle will talk about this in his report.
- 149.4 Cllr Bray spoke about the increase in parking charges and that the decreased charge in Stour Meadows car park is not sufficient. With the removal of the free car park, people will start parking illegally. She is looking for Councillor's support for a peaceful protest.
- 149.5 Cllr Stevens reported crematoriums in Dorset have a very long waiting list.
- 149.5 The Chairman presented Cllr Herbert with a bouquet of flowers and a bottle of champagne, as agreed at the Town Council meeting in February, as she has been named as one of 100 of the UK's most inspiring female entrepreneurs by Small Business Britain.

150. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS

Report given by Cllr Quayle this month.

- 150.1 Stour Meadows Car Park and Parking Permits – Cllr Quayle thanked Cllr Carter for encouraging residents to speak to Dorset Council directly regarding the increased charges. Cllrs Quayle and Lacey-Clarke have lobbied Cllr Bryant to keep the car park free. Cllr Bryant has assured Cllr Quayle that this issue will be looked at again within the next three months, following actual data being received. He asked Town Councillors for support with obtaining this data. Cllr Bryant was keen to stress to the Town Council that parking charges are in line with similar towns in the county and he is aware that some areas, like Blandford, have been hit harder. Cllr Quayle outlined the various parking permits available. The income goes back into car parks and highways. New permits and charges have come into force today, Monday 28th March. Cllr Holmes enquired why Swanage and Boscombe have different charges. Cllr Quayle responded

150. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS (cont)

that Swanage charges have increased from today too. He cannot comment on BCP owned car parks.

Cllr Carter spoke about details in his submission to Dorset Council and how the new charges will affect different people. He thanked the Dorset Council Officer for the response to his submission, as well as Cllrs Lacey-Clarke and Quayle for their hard work on this, as well as residents for submitting their comments. Cllr Carter volunteered to collect data.

Cllr Mieville enquired if the environmental impacts have been considered. Cllr Quayle responded that he was told that increased charges will encourage people to cycle.

Cllr Cross disagrees with the charges in Stour Meadows car park and wondered if the Brewery staff have been given a permit.

Cllr Bray spoke about the danger to children if more cars are parked on side streets. Cllr Quayle will raise this with Cllr Bryan.

Cllr Herbert enquired if it is possible to receive more free parking days throughout the year. Cllr Quayle will enquire with Dorset Council.

Cllr Herbert left the meeting at 7.38pm and returned at 7.40pm.

Cllr L Hitchings enquired why there is no permit available for Marsh & Ham. Cllr Quayle will enquire at Dorset Council and report back.

ACTION: CLLR QUAYLE

- 150.2 Bins – The bin replacement programme has started, and the capacity throughout the town will be increased from 1000l to 3360l. Overflowing bins across the town are due to an influx in Covid cases at the Shaftesbury Lane depot. DWP policy is to work on household waste first, although this will be addressed.
- 150.3 Dorset Council Education Hotline – If parents/carers have any issues with their child/young person at school, they are asked to call 0800 1404041 for advice and support.
- 150.4 School Places - 98% of students have received their first choice of secondary school and just under 99% of students have received their requested upper school place.
- 150.5 Easter Floral Design at Thornicombe – All residents have been invited to a workshop at the Wood Nature Reserve.
- 150.6 Highways Patching Programme – This has been rolled out in the last few weeks. Some roads have been patched up already and the programme will continue to pick up areas highlighted.
- 150.7 Roadworks – Emergency road works are being undertaken in the town currently.
- 150.8 Slab Works – The works started again on 14th March and Cllr Quayle has been promoting the plan on social media. He outlined the plan to Councillors and will share it again. He also spoke about the consultations held with local shops and businesses.
- 150.9 Renewable Energy – Dorset Council is in the top 15% of over 400 local authority areas in the UK for renewable electricity generation. They have a strong track record in securing well planned schemes in often sensitive locations. This has aided an increase of 250% in renewable energy generation between 2014 and 2020.
- 150.10 Community and Voluntary Fund – The deadline of 1st April is approaching, and eligible organisations are encouraged to apply.
- 150.11 Help For Ukraine – Funding is being received from central government. Residents should contact Dorset Council customer services via email customerservices@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk or call on 01305 221000.
- 150.12 Parking Review Recommendations – A one way system was proposed for Orchard and Dorset Street to increase parking spaces. This is being looked at and could bring in 24 additional spaces. Cllr Holmes spoke about loading bays and requested for this to be looked at.

150. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS (cont)

150.13 Blandford Surgery – Cllrs Lacey-Clarke, Lindsay and Quayle are participating in 6-weekly meetings to discuss any issues that arise. Cllr Holmes spoke about the lack of appointments available.

151. APOLOGIES

Cllr N Lacey-Clarke

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

None had been submitted.

153. MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 28TH FEBRUARY 2022

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Mieville, SECONDED by Cllr Holmes and AGREED (12 in favour, 3 abstentions) that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

154. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

- 154.1 Footfall Monitoring Device – The contractor selected by Dorset Council has written to confirm that the engineer has been requested to attend the Market Place, Blandford Forum to install a new footfall camera and will be onsite Wednesday 23rd March through the night to install the device. Councillors will recall that this is from the government's Welcome Back Fund, via Dorset Council, and will be in place for a year and the Town Council can pay to extend this if it sees fit to do so.
- 154.2 Welcome Back – Blandford Forum Farmers and Makers Market – This was another incentive from the Welcome Back Fund and the Market Manager has worked with Dorset Council officers to present a street market on Mothering Sunday. Twenty local food producers, farmers and makers took part in the Blandford Forum Farmers and Makers Market on Sunday 27th March 2022 from 10am-3pm.
- 154.3 Spring Community Expo – This popular event took place on Saturday 26th April 2022 and it was also the Mayor's Civic Day, so Mayors from other towns visited the Corn Exchange to get a taste of what Blandford's local groups have to offer and they also visited the Fashion Museum. The Mayor is also hosting a Stour Valley Band event in the Corn Exchange that evening to raise funds for his chosen charity.
- 154.4 Blandford Around Guide – The Forum Focus has now ceased publication and Wimborne-based 'Around Guides' are coming in with their Around Blandford publication, which will be distributed within the Blandford area. At present, the cost to the council is the same for a half page submission and our first one will be in the April edition.
- 154.5 Groundsman Recruitment – An advert has gone out for a full-time groundsman to replace Jim Mitchell who retired in December 2021.
- 154.6 Remembrance – The road closure application has been submitted for this year's Remembrance Sunday parade. The same contractors as last year have been approached for their services this November with regards to the road closure and the sound system.
- 154.7 Service Level Agreements – The approved service level agreements have been sent to the recipients for signing and will come into effect from 1st April 2022 for a period of three years.
- 154.8 Flagpole Survey – This took place on Tuesday 22nd March 2022.
- 154.9 Dorchester Sports – At the Finance & Staffing Committee meeting held on Monday 21st March 2022, the Committee instructed the Town Clerk to investigate further penalties for the club that

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

did not pay the invoice for the door repairs at BUFC. Witness statements were sought, and the Dorset FA is currently considering the matter.

154.10 Election Costs – Dorset Council has written to inform the Town Council that they will be raising an invoice for £2,707.35 in the 2022/23 financial year, in respect of the election that held on 20th January 2022 for the Old Town Ward.

154.11 Wimborne Road Bus Shelter – Dorset Council confirmed that the shelter approved by the T&GP Committee for the new bench in Wimborne Road, donated by a Blandford Forum resident, is acceptable. It is classed as a shelter over a memorial bench, rather than a bus shelter. Passenger numbers at this stop are in the region of 4,000 per annum (pre Covid), therefore Dorset Council would not consider a Real Time Information Screen for this location at this time, although of course this does not mean it would not be considered in future.

155. CIVIC REPORT

The paper was sent to Councillors via email.

156. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES

156.1 Town & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Monday 14th March 2022

The minutes were RECEIVED.

156.2 Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting held on Monday 21st March 2022

156.2.1 Recommendations

MINUTE NO. 47 TO RECEIVE THE INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT

It was PROPOSED by Cllr S Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED (13 in favour, 2 abstentions) 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 CLERK

MINUTE NO. 48 INSURANCE RISK ASSESSMENT RELATING TO THE TOWN COUNCIL'S INSURANCE COVER AND APPROVAL OF INSURANCE PREMIUMS FOR 2022/23

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

MINUTE NO. 49 REVIEW OF THE RISK ASSESSMENT MANAGEMENT POLICY (INCLUDING FINANCIAL) ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2022/23

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

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

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

156.2 Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting held on Monday 21st March 2022 (cont)

MINUTE NO. 50 REVIEW OF ASSET REGISTER

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

The Asset Register is approved.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

MINUTE NO. 51 TO CONSIDER THE CURRENT STATUS OF BAD DEBTS WITH THE TOWN COUNCIL

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

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

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

MINUTE NO. 54 TO CONSIDER GRANT APPLICATIONS

54.1 Blandford Cricket Club

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

The Town Council approves a grant of £833 for the purchase of items for Blandford Cricket Club's junior players (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

54.2 Blandford & District Branch, Royal British Legion

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Mieville, SECONDED by Cllr Carter and AGREED (14 in favour, 1 abstention) that

The Town Council approves a grant of £150 towards the purchase of two gazebos for events in the town (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

54.3 Blandford Literary Festival

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

The Town Council approves a grant of £100 for printing materials for the Blandford Literary Festival (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

54.4 Knees Up Healthy Living

Cllr Lindsay left the meeting at 8.23pm.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Osborne, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED (13 in favour, against, 1 abstention, 1 non-vote) that

The Town Council approves a grant of £1,500 for Knees Up, towards the cost of a defibrillator, but 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).

156.2 Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting held on Monday 21st March 2022 (cont)

An AMENDMENT was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED (9 in favour, 4 against, 1 abstention, 1 non-vote) that

An additional £300, on production of receipt, is added to the grant to enable the group to put the defibrillator on the outside of the building, should this be possible.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Cllr Lindsay returned to the meeting at 8.27pm.

MINUTE NO. 55 SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS

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

It was PROPOSED by Cllr S Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Carter and AGREED (13 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention) 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 CLERK

55.2 To approve the SLA with Blandford Food Bank

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED (14 in favour, 1 abstention) 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 CLERK

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

The funds in budget lines Civic, Corn Exchange Project Manager, Corn Exchange Building Maintenance, Grants and Service Level Agreements are carried over from 2021/22 to the financial year 2022/23.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

156.2 The minutes were RECEIVED.

157. TO CONSIDER RENEWING THE HARDWARE SUPPORT CONTRACT FOR THE TOWN COUNCIL'S IT SERVER

The paper was noted (see Appendix B).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr L Hitchings and AGREED (14 in favour, 1 abstention) that

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

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Cllr White left the meeting at 8.33pm.

158. TO APPROVE THE REPAIR COSTS TO THE BADBURY HEIGHTS PUBLIC ART CANOPY

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr Osborne and AGREED (12 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention, 1 non-vote) that

The Town Council resolves to make a claim on the insurance for the replacement canopy at a cost of £2,988.42 + VAT (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:

Cllr White returned to the meeting at 8.35pm.

159.1 Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – Blandford +

Cllr Carter provided Councillors with an update on the Scoping Report received by Oneill Homer on the future of the NP. A report will be brought to the next Town Council meeting for a recommendation on how to proceed.

159.2 BFTC Commemoration Group (minutes sent separately to Councillors).

Cllr Carter requested for Councillors to share memories and photos of their life in Blandford Forum during the Queen's Reign, which can be used for the display during The Queen's Platinum Jubilee weekend.

159.3 Climate Change & Biodiversity

159.3.1 To receive a report and the updated Plan (plan sent separately to Councillors)

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

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

The Town Council notes the report and approves the updated Plan.

The Town Council agrees that £100 is spent on wildflower seeds, that can be given out from reception in return for photos of their wildflower areas once they have grown. This can be taken from the Grants budget line as not all the Green Grants have been awarded (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 cont):

159.4 Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project

Cllr Stevens commented that the Welcome Back Market on Sunday 27th March was a success.

159.5 The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Working Group

159.5.1 To receive an update on the planned events

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

Cllr Stevens reported that a lot of shops and businesses are keen to take part in the Spot the Oddity and Window Competition.

160. REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

160.1 Cllr Herbert attended the March meeting of Age Concern Blandford. They have moved their office to the Parish Centre. As the service isn't used extensively, they will monitor the phone and emails, and reevaluate their service in December.

160.2 Cllr Mieville reported about the newly formed Climate Action Network group. Both Cllrs Mieville and Cross attended the inaugural meeting, which was well attended. It acts as an umbrella group for green and environmentally concerned groups in Blandford, and will organise meetings, lectures and campaigns.

161. CONFIDENTIAL

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

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.

161.1 Recommendations and Receipt of Minutes

161.1.2 Special Confidential Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting held on Monday 21st March 2022

161.1.3 Recommendations

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Stevens, SECONDED by Cllr Osborne and AGREED (13 in favour, 2 abstentions) that

The Town Council approves the recommendation and associated expenditure as per the confidential minutes from the Special Confidential Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting held on Monday 21st March 2022 (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

161.1.4 The minutes were RECEIVED.

The meeting closed at 8:53 pm.

SIGNED

DATED