

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
Held on Monday 25th July 2022 at 7:05pm in the Corn Exchange

DRAFT
Subject to confirmation

PRESENT

Cllr C Stevens – Chairman of Council
Cllr S Hitchings
Cllr N Lacey-Clarke
Cllr H White
Cllr L Lindsay
Cllr K Herbert
Cllr E Bray

Cllr H Mieville – Vice Chairman of Council
Cllr P Clark
Cllr R Holmes
Cllr R Carter
Cllr P Osborne
Cllr C Jacques
Cllr L Hitchings

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk
Members of public

Operations Manager

IN ATTENDANCE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Cllr B Quayle

Nicci Brown

The Chairman noted the late start time and welcomed members of the public to the meeting, advising them of the housekeeping for the meeting and venue.

42. PUBLIC SESSION

- 42.1 Blandford Repair Café – Cllr Osborne encouraged attendees to attend the repair café and advised that there will be a hairdresser cutting hair for free at the next session.
- 42.2 Graham Stanley, Senior Ranger (North), Dorset Council – Graham spoke about an exciting project to extend the Milldown nature reserve.
- 42.3 Deer Park Farm – Resident, Dr Gary Nobles spoke about the planning application for Deer Park Farm, raising concerns about some of the statements made within the application. Dr Nobles also spoke about school capacity and the risk of residents of the proposed site feeling isolated.

43. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS

Cllr Lacey-Clarke reported that:

- 43.1 Public Spaces Protection Order – A PSPO came into force on 1st July 2022 against campfires, BBQs etc. on Dorset Council land and anyone breaking the restrictions will be liable for a £100 fine and items confiscated.
- 43.2 Dorset Council Meetings – The meetings will now be manned by security on a risk assessed basis at a cost of £7,000 a year. This is because of protestors entering the meeting and gluing themselves to a table.
- 43.3 Cost of Living Crisis – Dorset Council is working with Citizen’s Advice to specifically help with this major issue.
- 43.4 Widening Footpath – The consultation is being carried out on the widening of the footpath on Salisbury Street. Concerns were raised regarding loading bays and two have therefore been introduced on a temporary basis to trial for six months, to determine if they help mitigate the problem.

43. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS (cont)

- 43.5 Here to Hear Initiative – Dorset Council brought a sofa into the Market Place on Saturday and spoke to residents who had any concerns. The event was successful, and they are going to replicate it in other areas.
- 43.6 Planning Application – Cllr Lacey-Clarke read a statement on behalf of Cllr Quayle and questions he had posed to Dorset Council about the government's 'Homes for Ukrainians' policy, which aims to welcome people into their homes. Furthermore, he spoke to relevant charities, and they reiterated the need for integration.

44. APOLOGIES

Cllr B Quayle (online via Microsoft Teams) Cllr A Cross

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

Cllr Lacey-Clarke stated that he reserves the right, if new information suddenly comes to light, to change his views on any planning application at Dorset Council.

46. MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 27th June 2022

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr L Hitchings and AGREED (13 in favour, 1 abstention) that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

47. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

- 47.1 DAPTC Training – The DAPTC has written to congratulate the council on continuing to support the development and training of both elected members and employees... *Your commitment to training through DAPTC has propelled you into our 'Triple Star Award' category and a select group of parish and town councils – well done!*
Cllr Bray missed this training as she only became a councillor in January 2022, and she has therefore been booked onto the New Councillor and Code of Conduct sessions taking place online next week.
- 47.2 Pride Month – The lighting of the façade for the first time for Pride month on 1st June was very well received on Facebook. However, on 5th July an email was received that the Town Council didn't do enough considering it was the 50th anniversary, only lit the façade for one day, comparing it to Bryanston School's lighting scheme, asking for a flag to be purchased and for the Town Council to 'do better next year'. The Town Clerk responded, after some consultation, explaining that the photos didn't do the lighting justice and there were many other dates to mark in June, hence why 1st June was selected as the most significant, with it being the start of Pride month. The email thread was shared with the Chair and Vice Chair of Council.
- 47.3 Life Education Wessex & Thames Valley – John Clements has written to thank the council... *'so much for your wonderful donation of £300. Please accept this letter as our official receipt. Life Education Wessex aim to give every primary aged child in Somerset, Dorset, Devon, Hampshire and Thames Valley the opportunity to benefit from our programme of health and drug prevention education and equip them with the knowledge, skills and confidence to make healthy choices and to lead healthier lives. Your contribution will help us to continue this valuable work. With many thanks once again for your kind donation and valued support'*
- 47.4 Skatefest Parking – Dorset Council has agreed to the closure of the Stour Meadows car park – at no charge – on Sunday 21st August for the Skatefest and has also changed the free parking day of Sunday 28th to Saturday 27th August 2022.
- 47.5 Card from Nan Dennett – A thank you card has been received from Nan Dennett, she writes, *'Thank you so very much for such a lovely afternoon. I enjoyed it and it was far more than I expected. The choir, band and trumpeter were such a surprise. Everyone said they enjoyed*

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

themselves and I was made to feel like a queen! Please pass my thanks to everyone involved and special thanks to you for organising it so well. The cake from Bethelbridge was beautiful and again please pass on my thanks to them for their kindness. It truly was a wonderful afternoon, Nan Dennett.'

After the event, the Town Clerk wrote to the Blandford St Mary Clerk to thank her for Cllr Whitlock's attendance as Nan is a Blandford St Mary resident. Mrs Dennett turns 109 on 27th July 2022, which makes her the county's oldest resident!

- 47.6 Blandford, Massachusetts – The video message for The Blandford Historical Society in Blandford, Massachusetts is currently being compiled and the gifts – two framed pictures – have been posted to Andrew Stokoe (in Connecticut) who will be attending the event in September and speaking on behalf of the Town Council. Cllr Stevens has also sent a letter for Mr Stokoe to include in his speech.
- 47.7 Tour of Britain – After the council meeting held on 18th July, the Chairman and Town Clerk discussed this event coming through town on 10th September. Banners have been ordered, with images of well-known racers through the decades, to attach to the barriers that will be positioned around the market area, providing a safe space for spectators to stand. The stallholders were consulted, and they have decided not to attend that day, so the market has been cancelled. Mayors of other towns will be invited, and refreshments will be available in the Corn Exchange.
- 47.8 Loft Hatch – The office has received confirmation that the loft hatch planning application has been registered (to form loft hatch above Council Chamber to provide safe loft & roof access, removing all temporary and permanent external access arrangements) and is out to consultation. A notice has been displayed on the Town Hall notice boards, being the most prominent location, to notify members of the public of the application, and this has been sent to Dorset Council. The reference is P/LBC/2022/04366 and can be [viewed here](#).
- 47.9 Defibrillator Installation – The defibrillator for the Town Hall complex has been received and installed in the lobby area. The unit has been registered with The Circuit and the Operations Manager has introduced checks that staff will carry out, as well as reminders to replace the pads, which have expiry dates.
- 47.10 Application P/PACD/2022/04461 – 7A Salisbury Street Blandford Forum Dorset DT11 7AU – Change of use from Commercial, Business and Service to 4 No. residential flats (Class C3) – This was received on 22nd July 2022 and shared with Councillors.
- 47.11 Drop-in Session – The Children's Directorate at Dorset Council has invited two representatives from the council to an in-person drop-in session at the North Dorset Locality Offices at Blandford Children's Centre on Thursday 18 August, 10am – 1pm. Cllr Bray has offered to attend to meet with frontline staff and members of the locality management team.

It was agreed to bring the planning applications forward for discussion, with members of the public in attendance awaiting to hear the outcome.

48. PLANNING MATTERS – New Planning Applications

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

- 48.1 P/FUL/2022/03963 – 11th July – Bryanston (RFE) Ltd and The Rothermere Foundation – Land at E3882210 N106645 Deer Park Road

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

The Town Council objects to the application and submits the following statement:

48. PLANNING MATTERS (CONT)

1. From Blandford CA appraisal 2019 (NDDC/DC)
3.8.3.' *The Crown Meadows (and Bryanston Park) are of vital importance in preserving the undeveloped setting of the town of Blandford and for enabling understanding its historic development. It forms part of the green undeveloped edge to the west of the town and lies within the Blandford, Blandford St Mary and Bryanston Conservation Area. It has two levels of interest; the first is its historical development and interest in its own right, the second in terms of its quality and role in providing a setting for the adjacent historic town of Blandford, Blandford St. Mary and a series of other grouped and individual heritage assets.'*

From Heritage assessment (NDDC 2014 concerning an application extant at that time but still, we believe, relevant in this case)

7.200' , *although 20th century development has left the group less isolated than when constructed during the 19th century, the buildings still maintain a degree of isolation from the historic town and depict the 19th century development of the Deer Park and town generally. The group still relies upon the open Deer Park landscape for their setting and reinforcement of their role within the landscape and town's history.*

BFTC also refers to policies 7.202 and 7.205, which further expand on this.

From the NPPF 2021: the following policies have relevance in this case:

189. '*Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance... These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.*'⁷.

190. *Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats.*

The NPPF encourages good design as part of the wider remit for sustainable development. It states that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve (paragraph 126) and seeks to ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and are visually attractive (paragraphs 127).

Paragraph 127 seeks to ensure that developments, among others: "***are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change***".

Paragraph 130 further discusses the importance of developments being visually attractive:

"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development; (BFTC notes that there is no reference to the longevity or otherwise of the developments in question, relevant in this case)

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, (and) layout

48. **PLANNING MATTERS (CONT)**

NDDC LP 2016 Policy 24 Design: [states that]‘...all developments improve the character and quality of the area in which they are located’ and... A place with character exhibits positive, special and unique qualities that people can easily appreciate, giving it its own identity. In places that already have a positive image or character, the design of new development should respond to and reinforce locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture. In places where positive elements are lacking, proposals should seek to create a distinctive and coherent sense of place through the use of intelligent and imaginative design solutions.

These national and county policies are reflected locally in the B+ NP (2021) Policy B14 – (The River Stour Meadows) States that:

‘...development proposals will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that they will sustain and enhance the character and appearance of the River Stour Meadow and they will secure an opportunity for public access and enjoyment to the River Stour Meadows or where they are intended to replace a detrimental feature. ‘Proposals including proposed changes of use that are likely to have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of the meadows or harm views towards or from Blandford Forum or ‘The Cliff’ will not be supported.’

The site is within the Bryanston and Blandford St. Mary conservation areas and in very close proximity to the Blandford Conservation area, therefore the design policies of B+ NP (2021) B11, B12 and B13 also apply. Relevant elements of these are:

‘Proposals within or affecting the setting of the Conservation Area, must sustain and enhance its character and appearance and should demonstrate:
i. consistently high standard of design and detailing reflecting the scale and character, [of the area]
ii. the use of building materials and finishes which are sympathetic to the area, (B12)
iii. no harmful impact on the townscape and roofscape’ (again, the longevity of the development is not in question).

BFTC does not accept the applicant’s contention from the *Planning statement* (4.2 and 4.3) that the permission given in 2/2016/0892/OUT for two partially subterranean eco homes to the east of the proposed site is relevant to the current application. In particular BFTC does not agree that: [the] *‘guiding principle [for these two buildings] has been recognised in the design process of the proposed development at Deer Park Farm, with the design ensuring the proposal’s scale, siting and location minimises its effect on the landscape.’* There is little comparison to be made between 40 mobile homes and two eco houses in a less visible part of the site.

In summary, the proposed placement of up to 40 mobile homes would form an unsightly and unwelcome intrusion in this environmentally and historically sensitive site, even on a temporary, basis and would do significant harm to the setting and character of all three conservation areas, and therefore runs contrary to all of the above policies.

2. BFTC is also opposed to the application on grounds of exception to meet an urgent National and Local need.

The site is outside of the settlement boundary of Blandford Forum, and is therefore classed as the *‘countryside’*, defined in the adopted Local Plan as: *“Land outside of the settlement boundaries for the towns and larger villages identified in Local Plan Part 1”*. (NDDC LP 2016)

48. **PLANNING MATTERS (CONT)**

The relevant Local Plan Policy is '20. Countryside'; the overriding thrust of which is restraint.

Policy 20 states: Development in the countryside outside defined settlement boundaries will only be permitted if:

- a. it is of a type appropriate in the countryside, as set out in the relevant policies of the Local Plan, summarised in Figure 8.5; or*
- b. for any other type of development, it can be demonstrated that there is an 'overriding need' for it to be located in the countryside.*

Other than quoting national refugee statistics, supposition and at best, and anecdotal evidence of need for this type of development, the applicant has not demonstrated that there is an 'overriding need' locally, nor does this application demonstrate a local need for rural exception affordable housing; in any event, it is not applicable on this site adjacent to Blandford Forum's settlement boundary (Policy 9 of the adopted Local Plan is engaged and applies).

It is therefore the contention of BFTC that none of these types of development are relevant to this application and therefore the test of exception is not met with this proposal.

3. Another NP policy engaged and of relevance and concern to BFTC and local residents is Policy B7 Health and the applicant has not demonstrated how this will be achieved:
'all residential proposals will only be permitted where they provide...the delivery of essential health and or wellbeing facilities and services required to serve the scale of the development proposed'.
4. Finally, whilst accepting the possible need for more temporary accommodation for refugees in the local area, BFTC is opposed to the development on the grounds of appropriateness of this type of development, which we believe is a material consideration in this, for the identified group of refugees, or indeed any refugees. The applicant offers no evidence other than, again, supposition or anecdotal, that this type of development would be acceptable to the identified group. Whilst we welcome the desire of the applicant to provide accommodation for refugees, the creation of a semi-isolated and self-contained mobile home park on the fringe of Blandford, would possibly lead to an increased sense of isolation and alienation of the identified group.

Furthermore, as confirmed by the Leader of Dorset Council and the portfolio holder for Culture, Customer & Community on 14th July 2022, stated that such a policy supporting this kind of development does not exist within Dorset Council and is not part of the government's plan to bring Ukrainians into communities.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

48.2 P/FUL/2022/04056 – 6TH July – Mr Sheldon Young – Whitecliffe House 38-40 White Cliff Mill Street

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke and AGREED (13 in favour, 1 against) that

The Town Council has no objections to the application, subject to the Conservation Officer's approval.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

48. PLANNING MATTERS (CONT)

48.3 P/CLP/2022/04134 – 7TH July – The Trustees of the Holland Estates – Unit A Holland Way

The Town Council notes the application.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

48.4 P/VOC/2022/03896 – 12th July – Ebell Ltd – 15 Orchard Street

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

The Town Council objects to the retrospective application due to concerns that the fire escape removes a substantial amount of sunlight and amenity to the surrounding gardens, there is overlooking and visual harm to the conservation area (B+ B11 applies).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

48.5 P/HOU/2022/04308 – 12TH July – Millbrook Healthcare – 4 Hunt Road

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

The Town Council has no objections to the application (NDDC Local Plan Policy 24 applies).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

48.6 P/LBC/2022/04173 – 13th July – Mrs Viv Phillips – 63A Salisbury Street

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

The Town Council has no objections to the application (B+ B11 applies).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

48.7 P/FUL/2022/04238 – 14th July – Woodlands Dairy – Unit 4a Sunrise Business Park

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

The Town Council has no objections to the application.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

48.8 P/HOU/2022/04353 0 18th July – Dr Laura Tompsett – 1 Cobham Road

Dorset Council advised that there is a change to the description of the application detailed above. The two rooflights to the rear extension have been removed from the proposal. The proposal should now read 'Erect single storey rear extension. Extend garage to create a garage/bedroom.'

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Holmes, SECONDED by Cllr Clark and AGREED (13 in favour, 1 against) that

The Town Council has no objections to the application.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

48.9 To consider responding to a new Tree Preservation Order for the former Priory Hospital, Fairfield Bungalows.

The paper was noted (see Appendix B) and the Town Council noted the application.

48. PLANNING MATTERS (CONT)

48.10 To consider a proposal to widen the footway at the bottom of Salisbury Street

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Holmes, SECONDED by Cllr Carter and AGREED (7 in favour, 7 abstentions) that

The Town Council has no objections to the proposals.

Cllr Holmes asked for unloading to be considered at the next Town & General Purposes committee meeting.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

49. TO CONSIDER CONTRIBUTING TO A DORSET COUNCIL PROJECT TO INCREASE LAND FOR PUBLIC ACCESS BIODIVERSITY

The paper noted (see Appendix D).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr White to defer the item to the Finance & Staffing Committee and invite the Rangers to apply for a grant, but this was not seconded.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Osborne and AGREED (11 in favour, 3 abstentions) that

The Town Council agrees to contribute funds to Dorset Council's Milldown extension project, funding the wildflower seed at £2,840, the hedge planting at £11,600, the fencing at £2,950 and the tree planting at £2,450 – a total of £19,840 – using funds from General Reserves (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Carter and AGREED (11 in favour, 1 against, 2 abstentions) that

Subject to approval from the Rangers, the Town Council offers residents and businesses the opportunity to sponsor the trees at £40 each with a plaque.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

50. CIVIC REPORT

The paper was sent to Councillors via email.

51. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES

51.1 Town & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 4th July 2022

51.1.1 Recommendations

There were no recommendations.

51.1.2 The minutes were RECEIVED.

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

52.1 Neighbourhood Plan – Blandford + Monitoring Group

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

Cllr Carter updated attendees on the progress made by the monitoring group.

52. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE AND CONSIDER ANY REQUESTS FROM THE: (CONT)

52.2 BFTC Commemoration Group

Cllr Carter provided an update on the working group.

52.3 Climate Change & Biodiversity

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

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

The Town Council adopts the Motion for the Ocean.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

52.4 Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project

There was no update on this item.

53. TO CONSIDER BECOMING A SPONSOR OF THE BLANDFORD BUSINESS AWARDS 2022

The paper was noted (see Appendix G).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Herbert, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED (12 in favour, 2 abstentions) that

The Town Council donates £250 to sponsor the Entrepreneur category with delegated authority given to the Chairman of the Finance & Staffing committee to select the most appropriate budget line (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

54. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON STRATEGIC PLAN PROJECTS (DISTRIBUTED BY EMAIL)

The paper was noted (see Appendix H).

55. REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

55.1 BLCCG – Cllr Carter had distributed the minutes from the last BLCCG meeting to Councillors.

The Chairman asked Councillors if they could help for the Skatefest on Sunday 21st August and the jazz event he is hosting at Woodhouse Gardens on Saturday 27th August.

The meeting closed at 9:08 pm.

SIGNED

DATED