

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
Held on Monday 27th March 2023 at 7.01pm in the Corn Exchange

DRAFT
Subject to confirmation

PRESENT

Cllr Stevens – Chairman of Council
Cllr A Cross
Cllr S Hitchings
Cllr R Holmes
Cllr L Lindsay
Cllr R Carter
Cllr C Jacques

Cllr H Mieville – Vice Chairman of Council
Cllr L Hitchings
Cllr K Herbert
Cllr H White
Cllr E Bray
Cllr N Lacey-Clarke
Cllr P Osborne

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk
Two members of the public

Committee Clerk

148. PUBLIC SESSION

Cllr Holmes is concerned about the problem with litter in the town, especially cigarette butts and asked how we can deter this and encourage businesses to provide cigarette bins. Cllr Mieville said that Clean-up Blandford provides stub packets for businesses and individuals and that businesses would be encouraged to install bins at their own cost. Cllr Cross pointed out that there is a bin outside the Greyhound pub but people don't use it, which he discovered when he litter-picked that area.

Cllr Holmes queried the 50mph limit on the bypass on the edge of Blandford St Mary as she felt the signage wasn't clear due to it being in position prior to the roundabout. Cllr Lacey-Clarke confirmed that the 50mph limit is to slow traffic down as it approaches the new development.

149. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCILLORS

- Cllr Lacey Clarke was pleased to report that Dorset Council is closing the gender pay gap, in fact many women are paid more than the men in DC.
- There is help available for residents struggling to pay their fuel bills, including park homes.
- Cllr Mieville asked Cllr Lacey-Clarke who is responsible for the blue (Mortain) bridge as his wife was approached by resident upset by the state of it. Cllr Carter asked if the black bridge could be included as it also needs repainting and Cllr Lacey-Clarke agreed to investigate both.

150. APOLOGIES

Cllr Quayle

Cllr Clark

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

None

152. MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 20th FEBRUARY 2023

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter SECONDED by Cllr Holmes and AGREED (12 in favour, 2 abstentions) that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

153. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

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

Cllr. Carter asked what the hold up is with regards to the Corn Exchange planning application. The Town Clerk explained that it is a complex application and Cllr Lacey Clarke added that as it requires major input from the conservation team it will take time and the deadline may well be extended.

154. CIVIC REPORT

The paper was distributed to Councillors prior to the meeting (see Appendix B).

155. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES

155.1 Town and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Monday 13th March 2023

155.1.1 Recommendations
None

155.1.2 The Minutes were RECEIVED

155.2 Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting held on Monday 20th March 2023

155.2.1 Recommendations

Minute No. 35 Insurance risk assessment relating to the Town Council's insurance cover and approval of insurance premiums for 2023/24

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

The Town Council confirms there are no other aspects of insurance that they wish to amend, apart from the inclusion of the Community Fridge. It agrees to the insurance premium of 2023/24 of £14,236.36 including taxes, subject to any changes the Council decides to make (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Minute No. 36 – REVIEW THE RISK ASSESSMENT MANAGEMENT POLICY (INCLUDING FINANCIAL) ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2023/24

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

The Town Council approves the Risk Management Policy (including financial) arrangements for 2023/24 and has no amendments.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Minute No. 39 – TO REVIEW THE FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE REMIT AND THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS (NO PROPOSED AMENDMENTS FROM STAFF TO EITHER DOCUMENT LAST REVIEWED SEPTEMBER 2022)

Cllr Lindsay proposed that all Councillors become members of F & S so there is only one committee. Cllr Mieville asked the Town Clerk if council would have to change the Standing Orders and Remits and she confirmed we would. It was therefore PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay and SECONDED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke and AGREED (10 in favour, 3 against and 1 abstention) that

The Town Council would like all Councillors to be members of the Finance & Staffing Committee and a report is therefore prepared for the next council meeting to put forward considerations for the F&S committee to adopt the same format as Planning meetings.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

155. **RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES (cont)**

Minute No. 41 – TO CONSIDER ADOPTING A MENOPAUSE POLICY

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

The Menopause Policy is adopted.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Minute No. 42.1 – HOME-START BLACKMORE VALE

It was PROPOSED by Cllr White, SECONDED by Cllr Osborne and AGREED (13 in favour, 4 against and 1 abstention) that

A grant is not awarded on this occasion, but the families residing within Blandford Forum are advised to apply directly to The Charity of William Williams.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Minute No. 42.2 – BLANDFORD INFORMATION CENTRE

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED (10 in favour, 3 against, 1 abstention) that

A grant of £750 is awarded to the Blandford Information Centre for the creation of a professional website (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Minute No. 42.3 – CREATING MUSICAL PARTICIPATION – SING TOGETHER

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED (13 in favour, 1 abstention) that

A grant of £200 is awarded to Creating Musical Participation – Sing Together for the introduction of a second weekly session for people living with dementia (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Minute No. 43 – TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FROM THE TOWN MUSEUM TO INCREASE THE FUNDING FOR THE SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

It was PROPOSED by Cllr S Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr White and AGREED (6 in favour, 1 abstention) that

The request is deferred until the full accounts are received.

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

Minute No. 45 – TO CONSIDER CARRYING OVER UNDERSPEND FROM VARIOUS BUDGETS

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Lindsay and AGREED (12 in favour, 2 abstentions) that

The underspend from the Mayoral Allowance, Civic budget and Grants / SLA budget is rolled over into the 23/24 financial year. The underspend from the Salaries and Corn Exchange Project Manager budget is transferred to 1105 Corn Exchange reserves (due to a previous resolution that the consultants are paid by the Project Manager budget in lieu of recruiting a member of staff).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

155. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES (cont)

155.2.2 The Minutes were RECEIVED.

156. TO CONSIDER REPONDING TO DORSET COUNCIL'S CONSULTATION ON THE LOADING BAYS

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

It was agreed that there has been an improvement since the loading bays have been installed but residents need to be educated on how they should be used correctly.

The Town Council has agreed to feedback views to Dorset Council as follows:

The Market Manager noted that drivers are still parking in the loading bays and delivery vehicles are having to park on double yellow lines to unload. There also seems to be an opinion that they can be used by Blue badge holders who often use them. When the bays are free they are still well used by appropriate vehicles.

Councillors noted that businesses receiving deliveries felt the situation had improved since the introduction of the loading bays. One Councillor felt the signage was too small and another suggested an additional bay is introduced on East Street (near Florabunda).

In addition, it was PROPOSED by Cllr S Hitchings and SECONDED by Cllr L Hitchings and AGREED unanimously that

The Town Council provides feedback to the Dorset Council and also suggests that the loading bay in the Market Place is extended – if possible – to assist with lorries needing to reverse and facilitate access to the bay.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

157. TO RETROSPECTIVELY APPROVE EXPENDITURE FOR FIRE RISK/STRATEGY ADVICE FOR THE CORN EXCHANGE PROJECT

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

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

The Town Council retrospectively approves the expenditure for the fire risk assessment for the Corn Exchange of £1,700 + VAT using funds from the Corn Exchange budget line (1105) (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

158. REVIEW OF ASSET REGISTER

The paper was noted (see Appendix E) and Councillors thanked the Town Clerk for all her hard work on it.

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

The Town Council approves the Asset Register.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

159. TO CONSIDER THE ARCHIVE OF THE MAYORAL SCROLL

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

Cllr Bray left the meeting at 7.50pm.

159. TO CONSIDER THE ARCHIVE OF THE MAYORAL SCROLL (CONT)

Councillors would like further clarification regarding the best conditions and location for the scroll. It was agreed that it would be good to have it kept locally, although Cllr White felt that if we have digital copies then it does not matter where it is kept, as long as it is conserved correctly.

Cllr Lindsay left the meeting at 7.55pm.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Holmes, SECONDED by Cllr L Hitchings and AGREED (11 in favour, 1 against, 2 non-votes) that

The Town Council will reconsider the matter at a full council meeting after the Mayor Making ceremony when the Town Clerk has obtained more information from the Dorset History Centre about how easy it would be to gain access to the scroll once it's in storage and if it can be added to on an annual basis. Councillors also asked if it would remain in the Town Council's ownership and if it could display the scroll at some point in the future.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Cllr Bray and Cllr Lindsay returned to the meeting at 8.03pm.

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

160.1 Neighbourhood plan working group – Blandford + – Cllr Carter confirmed that all the documents have been submitted to Dorset Council and thanked the Committee Clerk for all her hard work.

160.2 BFTC commemoration group – Nothing to report.

160.3 Climate change & Biodiversity – A meeting was not held this month but members were encouraged to attend the litter pick instead and Cllr Osborne thanked Cllr Mieville and his wife, Yvonne for all their efforts in organising the litter picking sessions.

160.4 Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project – Cllr Cross said that Mr Woodhouse had expressed an interest in talking to the group and Cllr Stevens will contact him.

160.5 King's Coronation Working Group – to receive an update on the planned events

The paper was noted (see Appendix G) and Cllr S Hitchings confirmed that everything is coming together for the outdoor event on 7th May, and all the planning for all events is on track.

161. REPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS (COUNCILLORS ARE REQUESTED TO ADVISE THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OR THE TOWN CLERK IF THEY WISH TO MAKE A REPORT UNDER THIS HEADING

161.1 Age Concern – Cllr Stevens reported that Age Concern will be closing down as they haven't got enough people coming to the group. They will hold on to the assets until another organisation can take them on. Cllr Stevens will be arranging a meeting with the Food Bank to discuss this.

161.2 Blandford Mortain Twinning Association – Cllr Carter reported that, due to the dwindling number of volunteers since COVID, the group now needs an injection of new enthusiastic/young volunteers. The group in France also has the same problem. The French group has said they are keen to keep it going, however, and would like to arrange for young people from Mortain to meet with young people in Blandford to go climbing. Cllr Carter is waiting to hear more about this. The Councillors agreed unanimously that this is something they would like to see continue and the Council should continue sending cards, calendars and letters to the Mayors of the Twin Towns and see what opportunities arise.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

162. CONFIDENTIAL

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Holmes, SECONDED by Cllr Carter 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.

162.1 To consider a nomination for Freeman of Blandford Forum (Stage 1) (papers distributed to Councillors on 9th and 17th March 2023 by email)

The paper was noted (see Appendix H).

A nomination for Freeman of Blandford Forum has been received, which was presented by two members of the public. Following a presentation by the nominator, the members of public left the meeting, and a discussion was held.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke and seconded by Cllr Cross and AGREED (13 in favour, 1 abstention) that

The Town Council issues a Certificate of Appreciation to the nominee to recognise their efforts and contribution.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

SIGNED

DATED