

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of Town Council Planning Meeting
Held on Monday 3rd April 2023 at 7:00pm in the Corn Exchange



PRESENT

Cllr R Carter – Chairman
Cllr H Mieville – Vice Chairman of Council
Cllr E Bray
Cllr S Hitchings
Cllr R Holmes
Cllr L Hitchings
Cllr A Cross

Cllr K Herbert – Vice Chairman
Cllr C Stevens – Chairman of Council
Cllr L Lindsay
Cllr H White
Cllr N Lacey-Clarke
Cllr P Clark
Cllr P Osborne

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk

Committee Clerk

103. PUBLIC SESSION

Cllr Holmes expressed her sadness that The Sapling and Superbook are both closing down and is concerned that we're losing two businesses. Cllr Carter agrees that trade is diminishing in town. Cllr Clark feels that the town's population is expanding but the businesses aren't. Cllr Lacey-Clarke said that we were 'bucking the trend' but now with the announcements of the bank closures we are below average. With regards to the trial pedestrianisation, there will be lots of opportunities for small independents - we need to advertise this and encourage people in. Cllr Jacques referred to the potential Travelodge hotel and asked if there had been any updates as this would bring people and jobs into the town. Cllr Stevens has received a letter from Travelodge, which asks if the Town Council will be interested in investing in a Travelodge. This will be shared with Councillors. Cllr Mieville referred to comments on social media about the Town Council not doing enough to prevent shops closing and felt that we need to point out that there's nothing we can do, just encourage new businesses and we are not alone; it's a national problem. A discussion was held on rents and business rates and Cllr Lacey-Clarke explained that he had opened his business here because rents are lower here than in other areas. Cllr Cross talked about the need for a development plan for that side of town and suggested a café would work well in the old book shop. Cllr Lacey-Clarke and Cllr Quayle are negotiating partial pedestrianisation for 6 months trial and as soon as this is likely they will present it to council. Cllr Carter asked Cllr Lacey-Clarke to liaise with Cllr Stevens and the Town Centre team on this. Cllr Lindsay asked if we should still be paying for the market rent as the meter has been out of action for a long time. Cllr Lacey-Clarke feels this will encourage them to fix it.

Cllr Holmes asked if we can request that the Dorset Council conservation officer comes to have a look at the buildings as they are becoming quite dilapidated. Cllr Lacey-Clarke advised that the conservation team would only step in if there was a danger to the building falling down and the area around it.

104. APOLOGIES

None

105. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke and AGREED (14 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention) that, as Vice Chairman, Cllr Herbert will chair the item regarding the Barnes Homes planning application due to Councillors' involvement.

105. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION (cont)

Cllr Lindsay, Cllr S Hitchings, Cllr White, Cllr Stevens and Cllr Quayle declared a non-pecuniary interest and it was agreed that they would leave the room. It was also agreed that the Council Representatives on Blandford Forum Almshouse Charities, Cllr Carter, Cllr Holmes, and Cllr Clark would stay in the meeting and take part in the discussion and vote, because there is not considered to be any pecuniary interest.

106. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 6th MARCH 2023

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Cross, SECONDED by Cllr Mievile and AGREED (14 in favour, against, 2 abstentions) that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

107. APPENDIX A – NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

107.1 P/LBC/2023/01137 – 19 Flat 1 Salisbury Street, Blandford Forum DT11 7AU

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

The Town Council has no objection to the application as there is no visible harm to the conservation area (B+ NP policy B11 applies).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

107.2 P/FUL/2022/07581 – 7 Salisbury Street, Blandford Forum DT11 7AU

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

The Town Council has no objection to the application as there is no visible harm to the conservation area (B+ NP policies B8 and B11 apply. B8 allows for flat development above retail).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

107.3 P/HOU/2023/01212 – 21 Downside Close, Blandford Forum DT11 7SD

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

The Town Council has no objection to the application as there does not appear to be any loss of amenity to neighbouring properties.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

107.4 P/FUL/2023/00882 – Barnes Homes, Salisbury Road, Blandford Forum DT11 7HU

Vice Chairman, Cllr Herbert chaired this item.

7:32pm - Cllr Lindsay, Cllr White, Cllr S Hitchings, Cllr Stevens and Cllr Quayle left the room during discussion and voting as Trustees and a Town Council representative to Barnes Homes.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr L Hitchings and AGREED (11 in favour, 5 non-votes) that

The Town Council has no objection to the application (B+ NP Policies B1 and B11 apply).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

107. APPENDIX A – NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS (CONT)

107.5 P/FUL/2022/07272 – 3 Stevens Close, Blandford Forum DT11 7NA

The Town Council has already submitted an objection and a discussion was held on possible attendance at the Dorset Council planning meeting, but no resolution was made.

108. APPENDIX B – DORSET COUNCIL DECISIONS ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS AWAITING DECISIONS

The paper had been emailed to Councillors prior to the meeting.

Cllr Lacey-Clarke didn't agree with the Town Council's objection to planning application - P/FUL/2022/07272 – 3 Stevens Close, Blandford Forum. The objection was put forward to the chair of planning which Cllr Lacey-Clarke supported. He would recommend that someone does go along and speak.

It is contrary to three sections of the new design code, which was carried out as part of the modification review of the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Carter suggests that we send these in addition for their consideration, although it won't have a huge amount of strength as it's not embedded in the policy yet. Cllr Carter feels that the planning officer and planning committee should be able to decide with what we've already said. Cllr Lacey-Clarke said there is a small number of applications that go to committee so it would be good to show that we see it all the way through. Cllr Cross agrees with Cllr Lacey-Clarke and is willing to go and speak. Cllr Carter will help Cllr Cross with the objection and pass on details from the B+ NP proposed modifications draft design code.

109. SITE VISITS/DORSET COUNCIL PLANNING MEETINGS

None

Cllr Carter took the opportunity to advise that a representative from Wyatt Homes would like to attend a planning meeting and update Councillors on the 'tweaked' plans. There are now fewer buildings (490 and more trees). He asked that the Town Clerk invite Wyatt Homes to the next available meeting.

Cllr Mieville asked for confirmation that a school is included in the plans. Cllr Carter wrote to Dorset Council's officer to query this and has not yet had a response. We need an update if there are still plans to include a school and Cllr Quayle said he will chase up if Cllr Carter can send him an email. Cllr Quayle confirms that numbers are dropping but the land is there if there is a requirement. It was felt that we need an email confirming whether pupil numbers are the same or have changed and that it is important that we are aware of this information. Space will be left for the primary school, which Cllr Quayle confirmed. Cllr White said as Blandford has affordable housing it encourages families to move here.

Cllr Holmes is concerned about the GP Surgeries as they are struggling now and with more houses coming we have not got the infrastructure to cope. Cllr Lacey-Clarke advised that GP surgeries are private businesses so we can't ask them to expand.

110. CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE

Nothing to report.

The meeting closed at 7.57pm.

SIGNED: DATED: