

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
Held on Monday 19th June 2023 at 7.03pm in the Corn Exchange



PRESENT

Cllr H Mieville –Chairman of Council
Cllr A Cross
Cllr C Jacques
Cllr S Hitchings
Cllr R Holmes
Cllr L Lindsay

Cllr N Lacey-Clarke – Vice Chairman of Council
Cllr P Osborne
Cllr R Carter
Cllr K Herbert
Cllr H White
Cllr L Hitchings

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk

Committee Clerk

38. PUBLIC SESSION

On behalf of the Town Council, the Chairman, Cllr Mieville welcomed Lynn back and expressed how pleased he was that she is now out of hospital.

Cllr Mieville also said how sad he was to hear that David Rose had passed away and he asked the office to arrange for a card to be sent.

39. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCILLORS

Cllr Lacey-Clarke reported that there is no news on Cllr Quayle's baby as yet and Councillors passed on their best wishes.

The overgrown parks and verges have all been reported and herbicide and cutting is due to be started in July. However, areas that are particularly bad have already been started.

The Household Support Fund reopens for applications on the 4th July. Low-income families can apply and if they need help with the application Cllr Lacey-Clarke said to contact him or Citizens Advice. He recommends that interested parties apply as soon as the fund opens as last time the fund closed within a day due to the number of applicants.

Foster carers have received an increase of 15% in April and will be receiving a further increase of 12.5%. Dorset Council is in desperate need of foster carers and to contact DC for further information.

So far Dorset Council has dismantled and recycled over 8,000 barbecues – over 7 tonnes of disposable barbecues have now been disposed of and it is hoped that the message gets out to the public that they shouldn't be used.

Dorset Council has been inundated with emails regarding Portland Barge with some Councillors receiving threatening emails. Cllr Lacey-Clarke asked Councillors to ensure everyone is aware that the Portland Barge is the responsibility of the Home Office and the port owners, not Dorset Council. However, Dorset Council wants the public to be reassured that they are doing everything they can to mitigate the impact.

Car parking machines are being replaced around Blandford Forum in carparks with one card only machine and one card and cash machine. They will all be at the correct height for wheelchair users.

Cllr Cross asked Cllr Lacey-Clarke if anything is being done about the parking issues in Heddington Drive. Cllr Lacey-Clarke confirmed that DC is aware of the problems but reiterated that data needs to be collected and evidence of near misses needs to be reported.

39. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCILLORS (cont.)

Cllr Holmes queried the signage advertising Bare Faced Brewery and said that although they've been asked to move it it's still there and asked if Dorset Council can ask the brewery to remove it. Cllr Lacey-Clarke agreed to investigate.

Cllr Mieville asked if there's any news on the partial pedestrianisation of the Market Place. Cllr Lacey-Clarke has spoken to Planning and Highways and asked them to put something in writing but has not had a response so he will chase. Cllr Carter asked if it could be chased as soon as possible as he has a meeting with Anthony Woodhouse on the 19th July and it would be helpful to have the information by then if possible.

40. APOLOGIES

Cllr Clark

Cllr Stevens

Cllr Quayle

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

None

42. MINUTES OF THE:

42.1 Statutory Annual Meeting of the Town Council held on 9th May 2023

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr Hitchings, and AGREED (11 in favour, 1 abstention) that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED, subject to amending Minute 9.4.1 because Cllr Stevens is not a member of the Finance & Staffing Committee.

42.2 Town Council meeting held on 9th May 2023

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Cross, SECONDED by Cllr Carter, and AGREED (11 in favour, 1 abstention) that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

43. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

Representatives to External Organisations – Joint Partnership Working Meetings – The Town Clerk wrote to PC Ian Titley (Garrison) and he confirmed that he wasn't aware of there being any planned meetings and assumed they had fallen by the wayside due to the prolonged Covid issues. He advised that staff logistics at Blandford Police Station, and with the military too, have altered dramatically over the last three years but agreed to speak to PC Harness about it. PC Titley confirmed that there is an appetite to re-start and asked the Town Clerk to arrange a date/venue. The Town Clerk has advised that it is best for the Blandford Police to continue with the management of the meetings, but a room can be made available. This item is on the agenda to appoint the representative to the meetings.

Flying the Union Flag – It appears that the MoD guidance has changed – research was taking place about another matter when this was discovered (and has been checked with ex-GSO Bob Brannigan) – and the Town Hall flags have been altered accordingly. Where UK government buildings only have one flagpole, the Union Flag should be flown every day except on certain occasions when you may wish to fly other flags, including but not limited to, the national flags of the constituent nations of the United Kingdom, the Armed Forces Day flag, the Commonwealth flag, county and other local flags, and other flags which may promote civic pride. DCMS may issue ad-hoc guidance encouraging UK government buildings to fly such flags throughout the year, alongside the Union Flag. Where UK government buildings have more than one flagpole, and two flags are being flown, the Union Flag must always be flown in the superior position which

43. **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE (cont.)**

is either the highest flagpole, the centre flagpole where there is an odd number of poles of the same height, or the left centre flagpole viewed from the front of the building, where there is an even number of poles of the same height. In England, it is now possible to fly more than one flag on the same flagpole if there is enough space.* If so, the Union Flag should always fly on top ('in the superior position'). UK government building flagpoles should not remain empty – the default should be flying the Union Flag if no other flag is being flown.

Notice of Vacancy in the Office of Councillor for Old Town Ward – The notice provided by Dorset Council on notification of Emily Bray's resignation, was displayed on the Town Council's social media platforms from 6th June, as well as council notice boards. If by 26th June 2023 a request for an election to fill the vacancy is made to the Returning Officer at Dorset Council, by ten electors who are registered in the Old Town Ward, an election will be held to fill the vacancy, otherwise the vacancy will be filled by co-option. If an election is called, it will take place not later than 29 August 2023.

Town Council Newsletter – A total of 4,500 copies of the newsletter were printed, which included the Chairman's Report and Councillors and staff are in the process of hand delivering them. Thanks to Cllr L Hitchings, Cllr Carter, Cllr Holmes, Cllr Cross and Cllr Mieville and staff for taking the time to deliver them in time for the Armed Forces Day Expo. Cllr Cross wanted to thank Cllr White for his help in delivering newsletters at the top of town and Cllr Herbert also agreed to deliver some.

Neighbourhood Plan – Efforts have been made to update the figures for the Memorandum of Understanding and Council had authorised this amendment, once the Census figures were confirmed because Dorset Council's statistics page shows much older figures and groups BFTC in with the parish of Langton Long. However, the [Census page](#) excludes some of Westbury Way, Diamond Way and Downside Close. The Committee Clerk has asked the DC Officer if they can provide figures excluding Langton Long, so we can ensure our numbers are accurate, but this is not possible. The Elections Team assisted with figures, but they are for electorate and not population. The revised figures distributed to the B+ group have therefore been sent with an explanation and will be considered prior to being adopted by the group. In addition, the consultation responses to the Reg 16 consultation on the Blandford + NP Review are now available to view on Dorset Council's [website](#) and the DC Planning Officer will inform Intelligent Plans and Examinations (IPE) so they can inform the examiner.

Corn Exchange planning application – The application was submitted in November 2022 but not registered until January 2023. An early meeting was held with the planners, Historic England and the Georgian Group (22.02.2023). Historic England and the Georgian Group both responded positively as attached, Historic England commenting that "Historic England has no objection to the set of proposals presented, which appear to be well considered, respectful of the building's character and historic development and to be aligned to the recommendations we offered in our pre-application advice." The Georgian Group noting that they will "deliver significant conservation benefits to the Grade I listed building with minimal harm." There has been no feedback from the LPA until earlier this month. This requested considerable additional detail in some areas, some of which has been answered by some limited opening up (by agreement with the LPA), the remainder will be picked up as part of the detail information package to be issued at the beginning of July. However the email concluded by stating that , with reference to the impact of the proposals that;

Ultimately the scheme seeks to realise improvements to accessibility, circulation, thermal performance, appearance, capacity and the overall, year-round public use of an important community space. Any loss of historic fabric is perceived minimal and proposed works reflect acceptable interventions that are deemed respectful of the special architectural character of the building. It should be noted that in the limited areas where minimal loss of historic fabric is

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

perceived or formally identified, that associated works would result in less than substantial harm to the designated heritage asset and therefore NPPF para. 202 is engaged. However, on balance with the schemes sensitive approach, reflecting a realistic and genuine intention for improvement to realise a safe, operational community space, any harm is considered to be outweighed by the perceived degree of public benefit. On this basis, overall, the proposed scheme is considered to embrace an opportunity to promote the positive enhancement of the asset whilst responsibly addressing the requirement for securing the sustainable, long-term, optimal viable use of the building.

No objections were raised to the application and comments are now (as of 16.05.2023) closed. Whilst the delay in receiving feedback has overlapped with completing the tender package, once the requested additional information is submitted, we see no reason why the application should not be successfully determined.

Roller Disco – The Town Clerk reported that there had been a problem with children accessing the Corn Exchange toilets and causing damage during the event. Cllr Mieville said they also tried to steal some food. Cllr Lacey-Clarke said that it's important to report any instances of anti-social behaviour to the police as it helps to build up a picture and the police can target problem areas.

Police Report – The Town Clerk distributed a report from the Police on recent activity.

44. CIVIC REPORT

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

45. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES

FINANCE & STAFFING MEETING – RECOMMENDATIONS

45.1 TO APPROVE AMENDED ASSET TOTALS

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

The Town Council approves the updated Asset Register.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

45.2 INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT AND SIGNED ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT PAGE OF THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT OF THE ANNUAL RETURN

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

The Town Council notes the Internal Auditor's Report and the Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Return.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

45.3 TO APPROVE SECTION 1 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT OF THE ANNUAL RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2023

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

The Town Council approves Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Return for the year ending 31st March 2023.

45.4 TO APPROVE SECTION 2 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS OF THE ANNUAL RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2023

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

The Town Council approves Section 2 – Statement of Accounts of the Annual Return for the year ending 31st March 2023

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The Town Clerk has confirmed the dates of the Exercise of Public Rights as 21st June 2023 to 1st August 2023 and the required information and Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Review will be published on the Town Council's website from Tuesday 20th June 2023.

45.5 TO CONFIRM ANY CONFLICT OF INTERESTS WITH THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR BDO LLP

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

The Town Council confirms that it does not have any conflicts of interest with BDO LLP

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

45.6 REVIEW END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS 2022/23

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

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

The Town Council approves the Annual Accounts 2022/23.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

45.7 TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FROM THE BLANDFORD YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE FOR A NEW SLA (DISTRIBUTED TO COUNCILLORS BY EMAIL ON 31ST MAY 2023)

The paper was noted (see Appendix L).

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

The Town Council forms a working group of the whole committee and arrange a meeting with the Trustees of the Blandford Youth and Community Centre to discuss the possibility of a new SLA. In addition, the matter is subsequently referred to a full council meeting.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Cllr L Hitchings referred to the informal meeting with the Youth Centre Trustees held prior to the council meeting and confirmed that, once the additional information is received from the Trustees, a further working group meeting will be arranged before the matter is referred to a relevant council meeting. The Trustees will be invited to attend the additional working group meeting.

45.8 To RECEIVE the Minutes

The Minutes were RECEIVED.

46. TO CONSIDER EXPENDITURE FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CCTV SYSTEM

Cllr Cross asked for confirmation that we have applied for £2500 from Operation Relentless and asked if we could have applied for more to cover the additional expenditure. The Town Clerk explained that grants tend to be more successful with match funding and she has written to Dorset Council's Community Safety Team to enquire about financial assistance but hasn't heard back yet. Cllr L Hitchings noted that this will significantly improve the system at the police station.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Lacey Clarke, and AGREED (11 in favour, 1 abstention) that

The Town Council approves expenditure of up to £5,000 + VAT to relocate the CCTV system hardware to the Police Station (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

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

47.1 Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – Blandford +

Cllr Carter mentioned the proposed changes to percentages on the MOU and confirmed that a meeting will be held with the two other councils to agree new percentages based on the most recent CENSUS. He also confirmed that the modification statement has been referred to the Examiner.

Post meeting note: It is expected that the Examiner will produce a final report towards the end of August.

47.2 BFTC Commemoration Group – Nothing to report.

47.3 Climate Change & Biodiversity – Cllr Osborne gave his congratulations to Nicci Brown and Sylvia Hixson-Andrews for a fabulous Green week. They successfully held five events over seven days with the Mayor in attendance at the Sustainability Fair. Their focus over the coming months is to support War on Waste/Clean Up Blandford and plastic free Blandford. Members of the working group will be meeting with local stakeholders to look for support.

47.4 Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project – Cllr Carter confirmed that they are meeting Anthony Woodhouse on the 19th July to explore opportunities for working together on this project.

48. TO FILL THE VACANCIES ON THE FINANCE & STAFFING AND RECREATION & AMENITIES COMMITTEES AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS FOLLOWING THE RESIGNATION OF EMILY BRAY

Finance & Staffing Committee

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

Cllr Cross fills the vacancy on the Finance & Staffing Committee.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Recreation & Amenities Committee

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

The Town Council leaves a vacancy on the Recreation & Amenities Committee at this time.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

48. TO FILL THE VACANCIES ON THE FINANCE & STAFFING AND RECREATION & AMENITIES COMMITTEES AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS FOLLOWING THE RESIGNATION OF EMILY BRAY (cont.)

Blandford Information Centre

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

Cllr Osborne is appointed as the representative for Blandford Information Centre.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

It was felt that the other two groups are sufficiently represented at this time:

Blandford Area Youth Management Committee – Cllr Lacey-Clarke and Cllr Jacques
Remembrance Sunday Planning group – Cllr Lindsay Cllr Holmes and Cllr Carter

49. REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Cllr Carter is standing in as the interim chair on Mortain Twinning Association until the AGM. However, it is proving tricky to find a suitable date and venue for the AGM. Cllr Carter will update councillors once this has been agreed.

Cllr Mieville reported that the Blandford War on Waste/Clean up Blandford group had a very successful meeting Saturday morning. The river is very much cleaner now than it was when they started 4 years ago. Cllr Mieville gave his thanks to Blandford Canoe club who have helped and he is pleased that community awareness has improved. Cllr Osborne agreed with Cllr Mieville that the message seems to be getting out there and his children actually complained there wasn't enough rubbish to collect on the last litterpick!

Cllr S Hitchings confirmed that the Food Bank has distributed a report to councillors as part of the SLA.

49.1 To appoint a representative to the Joint Partnership Working Meetings

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

The Town Council agrees to nominate two representatives; Cllr S Hitchings and Cllr Lacey-Clarke.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

50. TO CONSIDER PLANNING APPLICATION P/FUL/2023/02302 & P/FUL/2023/02303 ALASKA HOUSE, 80 SALISBURY STREET, BLANDFORD FORUM, DORSET DT11 7PS

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

The Town Council has no objection to this planning application as it is an improvement to the Grade II listed property. The works are in harmony with the surrounding conservation area and there is no impact upon designated or undesignated heritage assets (Blandford + NP policies B1 and B11 apply).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The meeting closed at 8:10pm.

SIGNED

DATED