



## NEWSLETTER

### Chairman of Blandford Forum Town Council Annual Report 2022/23

Cllr Colin Stevens, the outgoing Chairman and Mayor of Blandford Forum, delivered his annual report at the Town Assembly meeting held in the Corn Exchange on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023, which has been summarised in this newsletter.

In May, I was elected Mayor for 2022/23 at the annual meeting of the Town Council and nominated the Blandford Opportunity Group and Marie Curie as my chosen charities. I invited the Reverend Chris Beaumont of Blandford Forum Parish Church to be my chaplain and Cllr Hugo Mieville was elected Deputy Mayor. Service level agreements totalling £18,500 were agreed and approved by the Town Council for local organisations and a service provision agreement was agreed with the Blandford Stour Valley Band contributing £1,500 per year to offset the cost of the band's rehearsal and storage space. In return the band will perform in the town at various events throughout the year. In addition, the Council agreed to make a financial contribution to the Blandford Boxing Club of £15,000 for the year 2022/23 to help with start up costs. This has gone well and the Club is going from strength to strength. The Blandford Arts Hub opened their workshops in Nightingale Court. Blandford Forum Camera Club held its 64<sup>th</sup> exhibition where I had the privilege of presenting prizes.

June started with a weekend of celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee including live music, the beacon lighting and an open air church service at Langton Meadows by the Railway Arches (pictured). The Town Council approved a budget of £8,000 to cover all the events and celebrations, which included a new seat by the river to commemorate the Jubilee (pictured with local designer, Mary Armitage) and external funding was secured to reduce the costs.



I was pleased to attend the opening of the new orienteering course around the Marsh and Ham and Stour Meadows.

A grant was approved for £150 for Life Education Wessex and The Thames Valley for work within local schools.



£3,482 was spent on essential remedial work at Langton Play Area.

Armed Forces Day was marked with an open air service at Blandford Legion and the flag was raised from the Town Hall.

A garden party was held in Woodhouse Gardens to celebrate the 109<sup>th</sup> birthday party of Dorset's oldest resident, Mrs Dennett.

In July, we contracted Tidy Gardens to build planters to enhance the area of Dorset Council land at Badger Cross, and the daffodils and tulips that bloomed this year looked lovely! Additional festive lighting was purchased for the lamp posts in East Street and West Street. We couldn't put the East Street ones up in December, due to the works at Langton Road crossroads, but they will be ready this year instead. It was agreed to support the Ocean Recovery and we became the first inland council to declare a Motion for the Ocean. We started work on the 'Only Rain Down the Drain' project and local artist, Annabelle Valentine is working on the artwork. We look forward to seeing the results later this year!



In August, Jamie Jigsaw entertained the children in Woodhouse Gardens again with a free show, including circus skills and balloon modelling. The annual Skatefest event was also held at the skate park and a charity jazz night was held in Woodhouse Gardens; the perfect venue on a summer's evening!

The death of HM Queen Elizabeth II was announced on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and the Corn Exchange was opened up to the public the following morning with Books of Condolence in place, which recorded 735 messages in total. I would like to thank the Town Museum for agreeing to store the books, along with a photobook of the events that followed. I went to Dorchester to witness the Reading of the Proclamation of His Majesty the King by the Lord Lieutenant, before returning to Blandford Forum to announce the proclamation outside the Corn Exchange.



The community expo event was held in the Corn Exchange. These are really popular events held twice a year and are an excellent opportunity to network and find out what local organisations do. A grant of £300 was made to the Blandford Environmental Trust. Works were carried out to the equipment at the skate park and expenditure of £8,000 was approved for a Legionella risk assessment to cover all Town Council venues.

The updated plans for the Town Hall/Corn Exchange project were approved.

In October, I attended the Nepalese Communities Dashain celebrations at Blandford Camp and I also presented the prize to the winner of the tree photography competition, Charlotte Barnes.

I raised funds for the Mayor's charities by holding a talent show in the Corn Exchange (pictured), which was kindly hosted by Sam James. Mr Merlin also came to provide free entertainment for children during the half term break.



I enjoyed attending the Blandford Business Group's awards evening and the Town Council sponsored one of the categories.

In November, Acts of Remembrance took place at the cemetery, the churchyard - with local schools planting crosses in the Field of Remembrance - and in the town centre on Remembrance Sunday. Prizes were presented for the best decorated poppy window, which is a competition run by the Legion.

Two new electric vehicle charging points were introduced in Park Road recreation ground car park, following the extension of the car park. We were pleased to learn that the redundant windows from Woodhouse Gardens pavilion were put to good use as a gatehouse, thanks to a local resident who claimed them for use by the charity 'Future Pillars Zambia'.



Work continued on the modification review of the Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan with Blandford St Mary and Bryanston, with a public consultation.

The Blandford Yuletide Festival was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, with a lantern parade into the town by school children, followed by the lighting of the Christmas tree in the Market Place.

The festive lighting in Woodhouse Gardens was continued throughout the month of December and this is always popular.

With funding provided by Sovereign Housing Association, the Town Council hosted a children's party and disco in the Corn Exchange.

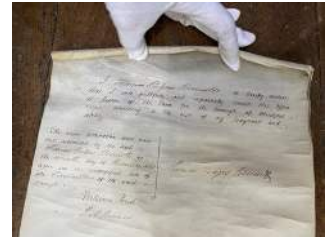
I held a charity concert in the Corn Exchange, with a performance by The Ambassadors Big Band, as well as a Bingo night!

The Christmas window competition was judged and all of the displays looked amazing, as always.





In January 2023, staff took the opportunity to carefully unroll the Mayoral Scroll back to the first entry, because this had not been done in recent years and nobody knew the full history of it. The first entry (pictured) was dated 9th November 1843. This was for the signing in of a Justice of the Peace for the Borough of Blandford Forum named Councillor Thomas Hodges Bennett and witnessed by Councillor Pond and Councillor Barnes.



Councillor Hodges would have been a Justice of the Peace by virtue of his office as Mayor. A weekend of tree and shrub planting took place with Dorset Council's extension to The Milldown nature reserve. The Town Council supported this project, led by the Dorset Council Countryside Rangers, with a donation of almost £20,000 and offered residents the opportunity to sponsor one of the 70 trees being planted. This is a really positive addition to the existing open space for everyone to make use of and enjoy.

In February a Mayor's charity concert was held with the Stour Valley Band, Dorset Rural Music School choir, The Blandford School soloists and the group Late September which took place in the week of the Turkey/Syria earthquake and raised £880 and this was sent to the disaster appeal.



A memorial seat that will be sited in the Town Museum's Victorian garden in memory of Freeman of the Town, Dr Michael Le Bas has been ordered and will soon be installed. A successful civic day was held with Mayors, Mayoresses and guests from 15 Dorset towns attending the Community Fridge, local businesses - Bristol Maid and Iracraft (pictured) - and Legion House before a visit to the Town Museum.



A minute's silence was observed in the Market Place to mark the 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine. We were honoured to be joined by a number of Ukrainian people who spoke to thank the people of Blandford Forum for their welcome.

Expenditure was approved for the summer planters throughout the town, as well as the toilet cleaning contract and works to move the IT system from a server to the Cloud.



In March, the Commonwealth Day flag was raised on the Town Hall façade and an event was held in the Corn Exchange. The Town Hall urns were inspected (pictured). Expenditure of £5,100 was approved for new CCTV equipment, which has provided the town with two new camera locations at the junction of Salisbury Street/Bryanston Street and just past Nelson's Ale House on Salisbury Street (pictured).



Insurance costs of £14,236.36 were approved for 2023/24 to cover the Town Council's activities and responsibilities. A grant of £750 was awarded to the Blandford Information Centre for the creation of a professional website and £200 was awarded to 'Creating Musical Participation - Singing Together' for a second weekly session for people with dementia.

The annual Easter Egg Hunt was held in Woodhouse Gardens during the school holidays and we enjoyed welcoming lots of families to join in for free, thanks to Sarunds who provided a chocolate treat for every child. I also attended the opening of the second orienteering course in Blandford Forum, located at The Milldown nature reserve. These are fantastic, free courses for people to enjoy.

I held the Mayor's Thanksgiving Service in the Parish Church and it was wonderful to see lots of residents, groups and organisations present, with excellent performances by the choirs from Archbishop Wake Primary School and the Dorset Rural Music School.



May was such a busy and productive month! Two new benches were introduced outside the Town Hall – one to commemorate the late Queen Elizabeth II and one to mark the Coronation of HM King Charles III. The refurbishment project for the Town Hall/Corn Exchange complex is on track. The planning application is with Dorset Council for approval. A great deal of exploratory work has been carried out so that when they are approved a start can be made. Please complete the consultation that is included in this newsletter.

I am grateful to all the people who have helped me raise money for my charities at varied events throughout the year. The last charity event was a craft fair in April, arranged by Freeman Jackie Vacher, which was very well supported. These events have raised in the region of £6,000 for my chosen charities; Blandford Opportunity Group & Marie Curie and this includes the money sent to the Turkey/Syria Earthquake Appeal.

The highlight of my Mayoral year was the invitation to the Garden Party at Buckingham Palace (pictured), thanks to the ballot conducted by the Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils. It was a really enjoyable and unforgettable day and it was the first Garden Party of 2023, which then led into a special weekend of Coronation events! The Town Council enjoyed marking the Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla and approved a budget of £2,500 for associated events. The National Lottery funding of £2,260 and Sovereign Housing Association of £300 were successfully obtained, meaning less impact on the budget. A traditional Proms night was held in the Corn Exchange on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> May with the Blandford Stour Valley Band and the Dorset Rural Music School Choir and compère, Sam James. On the Sunday, a Big Community Lunch was held in the Corn Exchange with hundreds of people enjoying free food together, whilst being entertained by local magicians 'Art of the Impossible'. The Blandford Evening WI volunteers supported the event. Face painting and fancy dress took place as well as live music and stalls outside in the Market Place, which was organised by the Blandford Yuletide Festival.



Coronation gifts were made available to purchase at affordable prices, subsidised by the Town Council, and 200 Coronation teddy bears were purchased and 300 bags!

The Monday saw a treasure hunt take place in the Shambles and Corn Exchange, answering questions about the Royal Family, with each child receiving a coronation gift for their efforts. A community litter pick was held outside, which was managed by Blandford War on Waste / Clean-Up Blandford. In the Corn Exchange, the Mace Bearers displayed the Town's silver and local groups/organisations attended the Big Help Out Volunteering Expo. This was an opportunity for them to show people what they do, recruit volunteers and network with others. Volunteers are essential to the work of so many services and these roles can be very rewarding. The bunting in the Corn Exchange consists of 1,995 flags designed by local schoolchildren especially for the Coronation.



I am proud of the accessible events and activities Blandford Forum Town Council has provided this year, and have seen the impact they have had; bringing the community together and making memories to cherish forever. This has been a wonderful Mayoral year and certainly one to remember!

Councillor Colin Stevens  
Chairman of Council and Town Mayor 2022/23

The incoming Chairman of Council and Mayor of Blandford Forum for the year 2023/2024 is Cllr Hugo Mieville (pictured right, seated). His chosen charities are Blandford Town Museum and Blandford Food Bank. The Mayor's Chaplain is Reverend Chris Beaumont from the Blandford Forum Parish Church. The Vice Chairman of Council and Deputy Mayor is Cllr Nocturin Lacey-Clarke (pictured right, standing).





# Town Hall / Corn Exchange Refurbishment

## Update and Public Consultation

The planning application for making changes that will breathe new life into the Corn Exchange was submitted in January and is being assessed by Dorset Council. The historic community building and home of the Town Council has long been recognised as in need of repairs and updating. Important parts of the building such as the main Corn Exchange space don't perform as they should and users are put off by poor access, heating, lighting, acoustics, and a lack of back of house facilities. In addition, the first floor of the building which contains some of the most historically significant and beautiful spaces such as the Town Hall room, does not have equal access which effectively cuts them off from a whole section of the local community. More recently the building has been subject to vandalism and parts of the roof coverings have started to fail leading to instances of water ingress. The project, which is the subject of the planning application, will restore and revive the Grade I Listed Building and – in so doing – breathe new life into the historic town centre for generations to come. Responding to community feedback, the project will provide equal access to the exquisite first floor rooms for the first time in the building's 300-year history and the project will transform the complex into a warm, functional, flexible community venue. Responding to a recent condition report, the Corn Exchange will be sensitively repaired to reveal the beautiful historic building that lies beneath and restore a sense of pride to the main civic building in Blandford. The project will re-model the lobby area to provide new WCs including an accessible WC and provide a light, airy stairwell that welcomes people into the building. Environmental improvements are at the heart of the scheme which will incorporate PV cells where it can as well as upgrading insulation and thermal performance throughout.

The scheme hopes to give the Corn Exchange a new lease of life for the next 100 years. You can view the plans by visiting <https://planning.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/> and entering planning application number P/FUL/2022/06707 and P/LBC/2022/06710 respectively. Further updates on progress will be posted on the webpage: <https://blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk/corn-exchange>. Whilst we await the outcome of the planning application, the Town Council is carrying out another public consultation to gauge how residents feel about usage of the building, the condition it is in and financing the project. We would really appreciate you taking the time to complete it by typing the following into your search bar: <https://forms.office.com/e/5zA6HYarQb>, or scanning the QR code pictured, by 10th July 2023. Hard copies are also available from the office.



### Charity Calendar 2024

For the 6th year running, the Town Council is creating a calendar to raise money for the Mayor's charities.




Theme: Beautiful open spaces of Blandford Forum

If you have any photos that fit the theme and could be included in the calendar please email them to [admin@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk](mailto:admin@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk) by 31st August 2023

**BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL**

### Annual Tree Photography Competition



*Celebrating trees in and around Blandford Forum*

To enter, please email a photo of your favourite, or a particularly interesting tree within the DT11 postal area to:

[Mayor@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk](mailto:Mayor@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk) including your full name and phone number, by 31st August 2023.

Three entries can be submitted per person. Town Councillors will pick the winning photo. The winner will be presented with the trophy, sponsored by Cllr Lacey-Clarke.

Picture taken by resident, Charlotte Barnes (winner of 2022 competition).

**BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL**

## Contact Your Councillors

The Town Clerk for Blandford Forum Town Council is Linda Scott-Giles, who can be contacted using the details overleaf.

<b>WARD</b>	<b>TOWN COUNCILLOR</b>	<b>ADDRESS</b>	<b>TEL NO</b>	<b>DORSET CLLR TEL NO</b>
<b>CENTRAL</b>	Roger Carter	2 Greenhill, DT11 7TX	07805 242691	Nocturin Lacey-Clarke 07815 951095  Byron Quayle 07843 616343
	Steve G Hitchings	27 Kings Road, DT11 7LD	01258 455840	
	Lynn Lindsay	31 Barnes Close, DT11 7NG	01258 456209	
	Rosemary Holmes	16 Liddington Crescent, DT11 7RP	01258 480451	
	Pat Osborne	3 Sharp Close, DT11 7FY	07917 831009	
	Byron Quayle	16 Alexandra Street, DT11 7QP	07843 616343	
	Alan Cross	15 Manor Farm Close, Pimperne, DT11 8XL	01258 452849	
<b>HILLTOP</b>	Haydn White	79 Salisbury Road, DT11 7LP	01258 453666	
	Hugo Mieville	4 Albert Street, DT11 7HY	01258 480366	
<b>LANGTON ST LEONARDS</b>	Cathy Jacques	64 Diamond Way, DT11 7WD	07756 856018	
	Colin R Stevens	16 Andrew Close, DT11 7PG	01258 453955	
	Kaylee Herbert	Please contact the office	07745 673631	
	Peter Clark	7 River Mews, DT11 7AX	01258 480303	
<b>OLD TOWN</b>	Nocturin Lacey-Clarke	5 Dorset Street, DT11 7RG	07815 951095	
	Vacancy	Please contact the office for details	-	
<b>BADBURY HEIGHTS</b>	Lee S Hitchings	12 Staverton Walk, DT11 7TN	07917 863531	



# BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

Town Clerk's Office, Church Lane, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 7AD

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admin@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk • www.blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk



## Councillor Attendance at Meetings May 2022 – April 2023

Occasionally, Councillors are required to attend other events/meetings on behalf of the Town Council in place of council meetings. When Councillors join meetings online, due to their circumstances, it is not recorded that they have 'attended' the meeting, because they are not able to vote via online attendance.

Councillor	Meetings Attended	Expected Attendance	Councillor	Meetings Attended	Expected Attendance
Haydn White	38	39	Noc Lacey-Clarke	35	40
Lynn Lindsay	39	39	Pat Osborne	29	36
Steve Hitchings	38	39	Byron Quayle	25	37
Roger Carter	29	36	Alan Cross	35	40
Hugo Mieville	40	43	Rosemary Holmes	34	37
Peter Clark	27	37	Cathy Jacques	13	37
Lee Hitchings	34	39	Kaylee Herbert	25	37
Colin Stevens	42	43	Emily Bray	27	39

## TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL RETURN (ACCOUNTS) 2022/23

The Internal Auditor to the Town Council has confirmed the accounts as correct.

		31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023
		£	
1	Balances Brought Forward	1,233,643	1,397,541
2	(+) Annual Precept	792,183	803,241
3	(+) Total Receipts (income)	170,587	1,237,010
4	Staff Costs	461,022	451,355
5	Loan Interest Repayments	0	0
6	(-) Total Other Payments	337,850	1,544,116
7	(=) Balance Carried Forward*	1,397,541	1,442,321
8	Total Cash & Investments	1,425,325	1,422,077
9	Total Fixed Assets**	5,707,535	5,748,440
10	Total Borrowing	Nil	Nil
11	Acts as sole Trustee For Managing Trust Funds	Yes	Yes

\* Of the balances held at 31 March 2023 over £945,733.08 was held for Capital projects, which includes £930,571.68 for the refurbishment of the Corn Exchange.

\*\* Fixed assets of £4,642,602 is the value of the properties and equipment owned by the council at approximate cost value (for example the Corn Exchange and the Skate Park). This also includes £682,985 Long Term Asset which for smaller bodies accounting purposes should and has been excluded from box 7 and is instead shown as part of box 9.

**The Town Council has confirmed the precept for 2023/24 is £825,250.**

## TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS

Local groups, charitable and voluntary organisations can apply for a grant (including a green grant), subject to meeting the criteria.

The forms are available from the office or on our website:

[www.blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk/services/grants](http://www.blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk/services/grants) and applications are now considered by councillors at full council meetings, which are held every month apart from August. Please contact us for more information.





# ARMED FORCES DAY EXPO

An event uniting the Armed Forces and civilian communities



## Saturday 24 June 2023

### 10am - 1pm

## Corn Exchange, Market Place

Join us at Legion House at 9:30am for the raising of the Armed Forces Day flag with Standards, a piper and trumpeter!



Nepalese  
food

Rt. Hon.  
Tobias  
Ellwood  
MP

Face  
painting,  
uniform  
dress-up and  
quiz trail!

Café  
provided  
by  
SSAFA



BLANDFORD FORUM  
TOWN COUNCIL



BLANDFORD FORUM  
TOWN COUNCIL

**FREE**  
Basic CPR and Automated External  
Defibrillator (AED)  
Demonstration



Saturday 29th July 2023  
10am-11am

Corn Exchange, Market Place, Blandford Forum

To book tickets please  
scan the QR code or  
call the Town Clerk's  
Office 01258 454500



**FREE SUMMER HOLIDAY  
ENTERTAINMENT**

**JAMIE JIGSAW**

**4TH AUGUST  
10AM - 1PM**

**WOODHOUSE GARDENS  
BLANDFORD FORUM  
DT11 7DN**

CIRCUS WORKSHOP | MAGIC & JUGGLING | BALLOON MODELLING

BLANDFORD FORUM  
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<https://blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk>