

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town & General Purposes Committee
Held on Monday 8th March 2021 at 7.00pm online using Microsoft Teams



PRESENT

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Cllr H Mieville – Chairman | Cllr R Holmes – Vice Chairman |
| Cllr L Lindsay – Chairman of Council | Cllr L Hitchings – Vice Chairman of Council |
| Cllr A Cross | Cllr C Stevens |
| Cllr B Quayle | Cllr P Osborne |
| Cllr P Clark | |

IN ATTENDANCE

| | |
|--|---|
| Town Clerk | Assistant Town Clerk |
| Nicci Brown – Press | Roland Skeats – Dorset Council Highways |
| Catherine Chapman – Blandford Business Support Group | |

SITTING IN

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Cllr H White | Cllr S Hitchings |
| Cllr C Jacques – arrived at 7.12pm, left at 8pm | |

32. PUBLIC SESSION

No members of the public were in attendance.

33. APOLOGIES

None

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

None had been submitted.

35. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16TH NOVEMBER 2020

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED unanimously that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED. The minutes will be signed at the earliest opportunity.

36. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE

36.1 Dorset Council Car Parking Charges – The Dorset Council confirmed that notices will be displayed in their car parks from Monday 8th March advertising the changes from 1st April. The change affecting Blandford Forum will be the charging on a Sunday.

37. GENERAL UPDATES FROM:

37.1 Blandford Business Support Group

Mrs Chapman spoke about the last meeting of the Business Support Group, which talked about the budget and how retailers are going to open up again. They spoke about the potential of a Christmas Fayre in the car park behind M&Co and maybe a fayre by the meadows/Marsh and Ham car park. This would entice shoppers back into Blandford. Mrs Chapman told Councillors that CBA Business Services won an award and by doing so have put Blandford Forum on the map. The Business Support Group has been in conversation with the Bryanston School about the potential of business awards, to bring the business

37.1 Blandford Business Support Group (cont)

community together. Funding has not been sourced yet, but it is hoped that the Bryanston School can be used as a free venue.

Mrs Chapman asked if there could be free parking day on a day near Small Business Saturday.

A discussion was held with Cllr S Hitchings if the plans for a Christmas Fayre would conflict with the Yuletide Festival. Mrs Chapman confirmed that they would like to work together. It was agreed that Mrs Chapman will attend the next meeting of the Yuletide Committee on 8th April at 7.30pm.

37.2 Blandford Police

No representative was in attendance, but the Police have provided the following report.

- *This report refers to the month of February. During the month of February 2021 police dealt with 151 incidents in the Blandford Town and Old Town Area. 29 incidents were recorded as crimes a decrease of 22 on February last year.*
- *Anti-social behaviour continues to be very low although an increase on February 2020.*
- *Pleasingly there was only one reported burglary during February, which was a break to the Crown Hotel.*
- *The investigation continues, but one suspect has been arrested and is currently back in prison.*
- *We have tried to increase our visible presence in the Town. Your PCSOs, Jamie & Ken along with PC Laura PROWES and our patrol teams have all been out on patrols. They are targeting the areas we have been told that have had groups of people engaged in Anti-Social Behaviour or breaching the current COVID restrictions.*
- *We will continue to work closely with our local young people particularly those who ordinarily by now may have found employment but due to the lockdown are in neither education nor employment. It is fair to say that a number of our local youths are frustrated by the situation they find themselves in. Some who had jobs have either been furloughed or have been told they are no longer required. Their lives literally are on hold.*
- *Whilst this month we have seen a rise in ASB at locations such as Morrison's and the Skate park we are working in collaboration with our partner agencies to identify the people involved to find solutions and to encourage more positive engagement and understanding from all parties.*
- *Blandford NPT and Patrol Officers to try and strike the appropriate balance when dealing with COVID restriction breaches.*
- *We will continue to:*
 - 1) *ENGAGE with our community via all safe methods available to us to inform, educate and reassure.*
 - 2) *EXPLAIN the Government guidance and the Law.*
 - 3) *ENCOURAGE voluntary compliance with the guidelines and the Law.*
 - 4) *ENFORCE the law as a last resort.*

We will apply the law in a system that is flexible, discretionary and pragmatic. This will enable us to make sensible decisions and employ our judgement where necessary.

37.2 Blandford Police (cont.)

| <i>Blandford Old Town and Town</i> | <i>Feb 2020</i> | <i>Feb 2021</i> |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Total Crimes</i> | 51 | 29 |
| <i>Total ASB</i> | 5 | 13 |
| | | |
| <i>Suspicious Circumstances</i> | 8 | 17 |
| <i>Public Safety</i> | 16 | 37 |
| <i>Road Related</i> | 15 | 9 |
| <i>Alarms</i> | 3 | 4 |
| <i>Criminal Damage</i> | 9 | 2 |
| <i>Theft</i> | 7 | 3 |
| <i>Burglary</i> | 3 | 1 |
| <i>Fraud</i> | 5 | 1 |
| <i>Violence or threat</i> | 21 | 14 |
| <i>Drugs</i> | 3 | 3 |
| <i>Vehicle Crime</i> | 1 | 1 |
| <i>Missing persons</i> | 5 | 1 |
| <i>Sexual offences</i> | 2 | 1 |
| <i>Other misc. crime</i> | 0 | 3 |

Cllr L Hitchings would like a letter of thanks to be sent to the police for all their hard work. The Committee Chairman echoed this.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Cllr S Hitchings wanted to know how many people attended the funeral on Monday 8th March as apparently 300 people were in attendance. Cllr Lindsay reported that around 150 people were at the cemetery and an altercation took place, however the police were not in attendance.

37.3 Market Manager

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

The Chairman congratulated the Market Manager for keeping the market open and thanked him for all his hard work during these difficult times.

DORSET COUNCIL HIGHWAYS

38.1 To consider a resident's request for a disabled parking space in Langton Road

The paper was noted (see Appendix B).

Mr Skeats explained that it needs to be established if the applicant has use of the housing association car park behind the property. If they do have exclusive use Dorset Council Highways would not be able to install a disabled parking space. If the house is privately owned and therefore the applicant does not have use of the car park, then a bay could be installed at the front of the property, which is 36m away including the steps, or at the back on the public highway with the nearest possibility 55m away from the back gate. No 2 Langton Road has double yellow lines outside and therefore a space could not be installed directly outside. The resident needs to be reminded that they would not have exclusive use of the bay, despite having to pay for the installation.

An amendment was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED unanimously that

38.1 To consider a resident's request for a disabled parking space in Langton Road (cont.)

The Committee writes to the resident explaining the options available and requests for the resident to contact the housing association to establish if they have use of the car park behind the property. If the resident still seeks the Town Council's support in requesting a disabled bay from the Dorset Council Highways the proposal should be brought back to the Committee.

An amendment was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville but Cllr L Hitchings WITHDREW the proposal that the Committee clarifies with the resident if they have access to the car park at the back of their property. If the resident does not have access, the Committee will support a request to the Dorset Council for a disabled parking bay but highlights the distances outlines by the Highways department.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Stevens, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville but NO VOTE took place that the Committee notes the request and wishes to clarify if the applicant has use of the housing estate car park at the back before making a recommendation to the Dorset Council.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Cllr Holmes asked for the potholes in Holland Way to be looked at. Mr Skeats confirmed that Holland Way doesn't reach the intervention level, but he will arrange for it to be looked at.

39. **TO CONSIDER EXPENDITURE AUTHORITY FOR THE LIGHTING UP OF WOODHOUSE GARDENS FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER**

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

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

The Committee approves the proposal to light up Woodhouse Gardens with additional features, for the period of 5 weeks at a cost of £1,552.78 + VAT using budget line 1025 Christmas Town Decorations (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

40. **TO CONSIDER PRODUCING A CALENDAR FOR 2022 WITH PROCEEDS GOING TO THE MAYOR'S CHARITIES**

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED (5 in favour, 4 against) that

The Committee agrees to produce a calendar for 2022 and wishes to use Company B for the production of 200 calendars at a cost of £349+VAT, taking funds from budget line 1030 Tourism (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

It was then PROPOSED by Cllr R Holmes, SECONDED by Cllr Lindsay but NOT AGREED (4 in favour, 5 against) that the Committee agrees to produce a calendar again and wishes to use Company B for the production of 150 calendars.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

41. TO CONSIDER A RESIDENT'S REQUEST TO PURCHASE A WASTE BIN FOR JUBILEE WAY, AT THE BRIDGE OVER THE TRAILWAY

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Holmes, SECONDED by Cllr Cross, but Cllr Holmes WITHDREW the proposal, that the Committee agrees to purchase a litter bin at a total cost of £210.08 + VAT and agrees that it should be emptied weekly at a cost of £5.10 per collection, using funds from budget line 1040 Town Improvements.

It was then PROPOSED by Cllr Cross, BUT NOT SECONDED that the Committee agrees to purchase a litter bin at a total cost of £210.08 + VAT and agrees that it should be emptied weekly at a cost of £5.10 per collection, using funds from budget line 1040 Town Improvements.

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

The Committee writes to the Dorset Council to explain the need for a bin in that location and requests for the Dorset Council to purchase a bin on their land and pay for the regular emptying of it.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

42. TO CONSIDER A RESIDENT'S REQUEST TO PLACE ADDITIONAL LITTER BINS AT THE STOUR MEADOWS FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL, MAY AND JUNE

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

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

The Committee agrees to refer this request to Blandford St Mary Parish Council as this falls within their parish boundary.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

43. TO RECONSIDER THE SIX FREE PARKING DAYS FOR ALL DORSET COUNCIL CAR PARKS IN BLANDFORD FORUM FOR 2021, IN LIGHT OF THE NEW DORSET COUNCIL PARKING POLICY

The paper was noted (see Appendix G).

Cllr Mieville spoke about the letter he sent in response to the changes to the Dorset Council parking policy. He feels that the comments have not been taken into consideration and he would like to send a follow up letter.

Cllr Cross left the meeting at 8.38pm.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Mieville, SECONDED by Cllr Lindsay and AGREED that

The Committee requests the following free parking days for 2021.

- **Saturday 17th April (contingency date Saturday 24th April if the notice is too short). This date will be cancelled if lockdown restrictions are not eased. – to support businesses reopening their shops**
- **Saturday 26th June – to support businesses reopening their shops.**

43. TO RECONSIDER THE SIX FREE PARKING DAYS FOR ALL DORSET COUNCIL CAR PARKS IN BLANDFORD FORUM FOR 2021, IN LIGHT OF THE NEW DORSET COUNCIL PARKING POLICY (CONT.)

- **Friday 27th August – to assist with ‘going back to school’ shopping.**
- **Saturday 28th August – to assist with ‘going back to school’ shopping.**
- **Saturday 4th December – Small Business Saturday**
- **Friday 3rd December – Yuletide**

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The meeting closed at 8:41pm.

SIGNED: **DATED:**