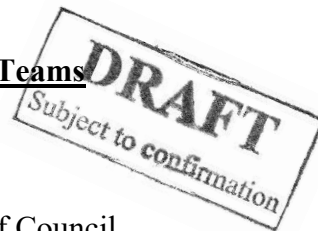


BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town & General Purposes Committee
Held on Monday 12th October 2020 at 7.00pm online using Microsoft Teams



PRESENT

Cllr H Mieville – Chairman
Cllr L Lindsay – Chairman of Council
Cllr A Cross
Cllr P Clark
Cllr P Osborne

Cllr R Holmes – Vice Chairman
Cllr L Hitchings – Vice Chairman of Council
Cllr C Stevens
Cllr B Quayle

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk
Nicci Brown – Press
Nic Nicol – Town Team
Catherine Chapman – Business Support Group – arrived at 7.15pm

Assistant Town Clerk
PCSO Jamie Burt – Blandford Police

SITTING IN

Cllr S Hitchings
Cllr H White

9. PUBLIC SESSION

There were no other members of the public in attendance.

10. APOLOGIES

None

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

None had been submitted.

12. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29TH JUNE 2020

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

13. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

13.1 Mobile CCTV Camera – The contractor, who initially supplied the Town Council's mobile camera, currently at Larksmead play park, is coming to look at the system on 14th October to see if the camera can be moved to the lighting column 10W107 in West Street to assist the police with the Boxing Day hunt. Permissions from the Dorset Council and SSE have already been sought. The Christmas lights installed at that column will be moved to the lighting column in Marsh & Ham car park, opposite the toilets.

13.2 Town Pump – The contractor confirmed that, although there has been a delay with the project, the works should be completed by 16th October.

13.3 Pharmacy Provision – A letter has been received from the Director of Primary Care and Public Health in response to the letter from Cllr Mieville. The letter has been shared with all Councillors.

14. GENERAL UPDATES FROM:

14.1 Blandford Business Support Group

Catherine Chapman spoke about a Christmas scheme that Wareham introduced in 2019 to entice visitors into the town. She is hoping that this can be replicated in Blandford Forum.

14.1.1 To consider supporting and promoting the Kickstart Scheme for local businesses <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/kickstart-scheme>

Nicci Brown confirmed that they will be promoting this scheme in the Forum Focus.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Mieville, SECONDED by Cllr Holmes and AGREED (8 in favour, 1 abstention) that

The Committee supports the scheme, and the Town Council will promote it on the Town Council website.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Catherine Chapman spoke about the scheme, which is aimed at 16-24-year olds and has to offer 30 people a place, on minimum wage, for 25 hours a week. Currently they have secured between 20-25 places.

14.2 Blandford Police

The paper was noted (see Appendix B).

PCSO Burt talked about the report and reminded everyone to use the online system to report an incident, to ease the burden on the control room.

From a Policing perspective it has been a challenging time, not least with keeping up to speed with the ever-changing Covid-19 legislation, but also keeping up with summer demand and the mass influx of visitors Dorset experienced this year.

As a neighbourhood team we have had to devote considerable time in backing up our response colleagues due to the demand, which has at times pulled us away from various projects we had planned – but such is the way with the dynamic nature of Policing!

The Government re-opened the Public houses on 04/06/2020. We have experienced some minor disorder in Blandford Town and a few serious incidents involving members of the Army camp. PC 560 LEWIS has put his previous service in the Army to excellent use. We have notionally set aside a few dates for the M.O.D Police to assist us in some high visibility patrols in the town at peak night time economy periods. Pubs closing at 22:00 will help to reduce late night street drinking we hope! Our hope is it delivers a message of reassurance to the locality but helps to reduce some of the drink related harm and ASB experienced. We have always had a great working relationship with the Army camp and PC Ian Titley and this helps reinforce these links further.

We have seen a drastic drop in dwelling burglaries in Blandford. Particularly in the month leading from June to July (actually the lowest it has been seen in 5 years!). Compared to the last 4 years the last few months show an average of a 67% decrease in burglaries overall. This is no doubt bolstered by proactive night-time patrols by our response colleagues.

Anti-Social Behaviour has increased when compared to the 2018-2019 year by 4.1%. This isn't a huge jump, but we are tackling a few key repeat offenders by working closely with the Dorset Council ASB team. One male is being issued a community protection notice (CPN), which will graduate to a community behaviour order (CBO) if he breaches the restrictions in place. Two other un-related persons are also in the same position regarding them being subjected to a CPN.

14.2 Blandford Police (cont.)

Recent ASB spikes we partially correlate with school holidays and the relaxation of the lockdown situation. Some of these complaints involve street arguments and flouting of Covid-19 legislation on the meadows. We saw the Park Road recreation ground and the old railway arch behind Marks and Spencer be used for a “local hang out” for youths. On some occasions drugs and alcohol were seized by Police and contact made with their parents who have supported Police action accordingly. Police have responded to these areas becoming hotspots for ASB by regularly conducting proactive foot patrols and obtaining names of people located to help build an overall picture of repeat nuisance individuals.

In the last update provided we highlighted an emerging ASB/Neighbourhood issue on DIAMOND WAY. This began coming to Police notice in May and generally involved alleged COVID-19 breaches and street parties. However, there were also a couple of Public Order matters, one of which an ongoing criminal investigation is in progress. We now are seeking advice with the CPS on a charging decision.

Within the locality of Blandford Town we have had some notable drug related warrants/arrests. One of which in Blandford ST Mary involved the seizure of a large quantity of cash, cannabis and associated paraphernalia. This has given Police valuable intelligence that can be utilised in further operations. They were great examples of some of the drug related disruption efforts NPT have been conducting.

We have had a number of complaints regarding speeding vehicles all over North Dorset. We will continue to enforce using hand held speed detection devices. The Dorset Police road safety team will also enforce any areas of note and review anywhere that new complaints geographically are made. We always encourage the use of Dash-cameras with road users as they prove invaluable in tackling careless driving and speeding - but also for overall capturing of evidential footage if in the unfortunate position of being involved in a collision.

We recently had the annual fair in Blandford – this was good natured and did not cause any problems for Police.

A further 2 drivers have been charged for drug driving since the last meeting and numerous drink drivers apprehended and disqualified over the summer period.

Please direct any enquiries to the North Dorset Neighbourhood Policing Team. There is a shortcut on the Dorset Police website which enables quick and easy access to reporting non-emergency matters to us. Often this is a very effective and time-efficient way, rather than ringing 101 as if a non-emergency, it can alleviate some of the demand on the Force control room and save unwanted time waiting to be connected.

Cllr Quayle reported that he has received quite a few enquiries regarding Balmer Road play area and asked if that area is being patrolled. PCSO Burt confirmed that he is aware and the area is being patrolled.

The Chairman thanked the police for their extensive report and for attending the meeting.

14.2.1 To consider engaging with the Blandford Police regarding the Boxing Day Hunt

Cllr Osborne reported that, due to the pandemic, the Boxing Day Hunt has been cancelled.

The Chairman moved back to agenda item 14.1 as Catherine Chapman joined the meeting.

14.3 Market Manager

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

14.3 Market Manager (cont.)

The Town Clerk reported that a complaint had been received from a resident about people not wearing face masks whilst visiting the Thursday indoor market and café. The lady also complained to Cllr Lacey-Clarke that people buying food from the cafe don't use the table service but go to the counter. Signage is in place as well as the QR codes and track/trace slips.

14.3.1 Loss of Income Charges – The Dorset Council agreed to take 50% off the Saturday charges from 1st July 2020 to 31st March 2021. For the period 1st July 2020 to 30th September 2020 the income that we took for the Thursday street market was £2,822 and we have been charged £1,447.55 loss of income. The Saturday street markets income was £813.50 and we have been charged £723.77 loss of income. Therefore, the reduced charges for Saturday's loss of income is a huge help on the burden of the overall cost.

14.4 Town Team

14.4.1 Covid-19 Town Centre Recovery Survey – A small group is looking at putting an action plan together to be presented to the Town Council in November.

14.4.2 Bike Ride – Dilys Gartside has suggested a socially distanced fancy dress bike ride. Permissions are currently being sought.

14.4.3 Christmas Lights Display – Nic Nicol is looking at a Christmas lights display at the Corn Exchange and is getting costings. He is looking for the 'wow' factor for people coming into the town. The Chairman asked if this has been discussed with the Town Council yet, and Mr Nicol said he is raising it with the Yuletide Committee in the first instance, which is meeting on Thursday.

14.5 Parking Review Working Group

Cllr Quayle confirmed that there is nothing to report at present.

15. DORSET COUNCIL HIGHWAYS

15.1 To consider a resident's request for blue badge parking in Damory Street

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Lindsay and AGREED (6 in favour, 3 abstentions) that

The Committee supports, and puts forward to the Dorset Council, the installation of a disabled parking space along the bottom of Damory Street for this resident. The Dorset Council should decide where the best location for the disabled parking space is and any time limit should be removed.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

15.2 To consider a resident's request for a reduced speed limit in Damory Street

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

Cllr Quayle reported that both Dorset Council Councillors are looking to move various zones in Blandford Forum to 20mph zone, and Damory Street is part of this.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Quayle, SECONDED by Cllr Osborne and AGREED (8 in favour, 1 abstention) that

- 15.2 To consider a resident's request for a reduced speed limit in Damory Street (cont.)

The Committee supports the request of 20mph and puts forward to the Dorset Council the request of traffic calming measures in Damory Street.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

16. REVIEW OF TOWN & GENERAL PURPOSES BUDGETS TO 7TH SEPTEMBER 2020

16.1 Analytical Review of Revenue Budget

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

16.2 Review of Earmarked Reserves

The paper was noted (see Appendix G).

16.3 Reserve Accounts

The paper was noted (see Appendix H).

17. TO RETROSPECTIVELY APPROVE EXPENDITURE FOR INSTALLATION OF THE TREES AND COLUMN LIGHTS

The paper was noted (see Appendix I).

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

The Committee approves retrospective expenditure of £7,050.00 for the installation/removal of the trees and column lights and the purchase of the replacement trees at £845.55, using funds from the Christmas light budget line 1025 (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

18. TO APPROVE A NEWSLETTER TO ALL BUSINESSES REGARDING THE SMALL CHRISTMAS TREES

The paper was noted (see Appendix J).

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

The Committee approves the newsletter to be sent to all businesses in the Town Centre and to the businesses in the surrounding industrial estates who contributed in 2019.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

19. CHRISTMAS WINDOW COMPETITION

The paper was noted (see Appendix K).

The Chairman decided to take agenda item 11.1 and 11.2 together.

19.1 To consider Christmas Window Competition details, expenditure approval for proposed prize money and to appoint the judges

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

- 19.1 To consider Christmas Window Competition details, expenditure approval for proposed prize money and to appoint the judges (cont.)

The Committee approves details of the Christmas Window Competition and expenditure for a total of £350 to use for the prize money using funds from the Christmas Town Decorations budget line 1025 (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

The Committee approves the appointment of the judging panel, consisting of Chairman of Council, the T&GP Chairman and the editor of the Forum Focus and agree that certificates will be presented to the shopkeepers at their premises week commencing 7th December.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

20. **TO AGREE THE FIVE FREE PARKING DAYS FOR ALL DORSET COUNCIL CAR PARKS IN BLANDFORD FORUM FOR 2021**

The paper was noted (see Appendix L).

This item was deferred to the meeting on 16th November 2020.

21. **TO CONSIDER RECEIVING DOG BIN SPONSORSHIP FROM FRIAR MOOR VETS**

The paper was noted (see Appendix M).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr Holmes and AGREED (4 in favour, 4 against, 1 abstention) with the Chairman using his casting vote to vote in favour of the proposal that

The Committee supports this sponsorship request at £20per bin/per year.

An amendment was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens but NOT AGREED (4 in favour, 4 against, 1 abstention) with the Chairman using his casting vote to vote against the proposal, that the Committee supports this request, but requests £40 per bin/per year with a review period after two years.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The meeting closed at 8:44pm.

SIGNED: **DATED:**