



# BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

To: All Members of the Finance & Staffing Committee  
(Cllr S Hitchings, Cllr P Osborne, Cllr L Lindsay, Cllr L Hitchings, Cllr H Mieville, Cllr H White, Cllr R Carter, Cllr A Cross and Cllr C Stevens)

All other Members of the Town Council  
Members of the Public & the Press

Dorset Council Councillors

Dear Member

## **FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE**

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Finance & Staffing Committee to be held **online** using Microsoft Teams on **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 7.00pm** to consider the following items.

Linda Scott-Giles  
Town Clerk  
8<sup>th</sup> March 2021

## **A G E N D A**

This meeting will be held in accordance with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the 2020 Regulations") which came in to force on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2020. The 2020 Regulations enable local councils to hold remote meetings (including by video and telephone conferencing) for a specified period until May 2021. The 2020 Regulations apply to local council meetings, committee and sub-committee meetings in England.

Members of the public are invited to join the meeting by using [Microsoft Teams](#). If, as a member of the public, you wish to speak in the Public Session, please notify the Town Clerk prior to the meeting via [admin@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk](mailto:admin@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk) or 01258 454500.

Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, belief or disability), Crime & Disorder, Health and Safety and Human Rights.

All in attendance should be aware that filming, recording, photography or otherwise may occur during the meeting.

1. Public Session
2. Apologies
3. To receive any Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations
4. [Minutes of the Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020](#)
5. [Town Clerk's Report & Correspondence](#)

6. Analytical Review of Expenditure against Budget for the following:
  - 6.1 [Administration Budget for the year to 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021](#)
  - 6.2 [Overall Revenue Budget for the year to 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021](#)
  - 6.3 [General Reserves](#)
7. Review of Finance Documentation
  - 7.1 There are no cheque payments to retrospectively approve
  - 7.2 To receive and retrospectively approve direct debit payments for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 (Sheets 177 – 180) totalling £115,050.28
  - 7.3 To receive and retrospectively approve BACS payments BACS 284 to BACS 288 totalling £43,480.20
  - 7.4 To receive and retrospectively approve Online Faster Payments FP026 to FP033 totalling £459,033.36 (which includes payments to other Town Council bank accounts)
  - 7.5 There were no CHAPS payments to retrospectively approve (the next CHAPS payment is scheduled for 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021 and will appear on the June agenda)
  - 7.6 [Retrospective approval of the Investment Account for the period 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021](#)
  - 7.7 Report by Chairman on Bank Reconciliation and Petty Cash checks
  - 7.8 [Bank Reconciliation to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021](#)
8. [Review of Variable Direct Debits](#)
9. [To receive the Internal Auditor's Report](#)
10. [Insurance Risk Assessment relating to the Town Council's Insurance Cover and Approval of Insurance Premiums for 2021/22](#)
11. [Review of the Risk Assessment Management Policy \(including Financial\) Arrangements for 2021/22](#)
12. [Review of Asset Register](#)
13. To review the Finance & Staffing [Committee Remit](#) and the [Financial Regulations](#) (there are no proposed amendments from staff to either the Remit or the Financial Regulations – last updated December 2020 – however Councillors may have proposals they wish to put forward)
14. [To receive an update report on the CCLA Property Fund](#)
15. [To receive a report on the free venue hire requests received for 2020/21](#)

**Minutes of the Town Council and Committee meetings are available from the Town Clerk's Office and at [www.blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk](http://www.blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk)**

Twinned with Preetz, Germany



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



Twinned with Mortain, France



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## Town Clerk's Report & Correspondence

**Payments and Investments** – Thank you to Councillors White, L Hitchings, Carter and Clark who have helped the Town Clerk with the checking and approving of payments in the absence of the RFO. Thanks are also extended to Cllr S Hitchings for overseeing the cashflow and investments. This has been incredibly helpful.

**Office Cover** – The office is still closed to the public but is staffed each day to ensure the smooth running of receiving/distributing post, deliveries, filing, finance cover, etc.

**RFO Cover** – An agency has provided the council with a book keeper to assist with the year end and the accountant that has been assisting since December continues to come in every other week.

**Sports Clubs** – The sports clubs were most grateful for the rent relief for the January to March period and the utilities relief for the October to March period. Invoices have been sent by the town clerk for audit trail purposes.

**Community Fridge** – Nominal codes have been created to keep the funding for the fridge separate to other council funds, as a grant from the Dorset Council is being held until a bank account can be opened and the volunteers are being reimbursed for their training/DBS checks from this budget line.

**Census Training** – Four members of staff volunteered to do the Census training in order to fulfil the town council's service provision for the Census 2021. This was carried out outside of their contracted hours and overtime was paid using the funds provided by the Census agreement. The accountant, who has been supporting the council since December, has reflected this in the budgets/Sage.

**Staff Training** – This year's record shows that staff training attendance has again increased, to a total of 35 courses, with most training sessions attended online. At the beginning of 2020 staff that couldn't take part in 2019 took part in Fire Warden training. The Town Clerk attended a webinar for creating accessible documents assisting website accessibility, Operation London Bridge, Cyber Security, sexism in the workplace, dealing with challenging people and various trainings based on the Coronavirus crisis (video presentation skills, holding remote meetings, optimising home working, managing your council's social media presence throughout the coronavirus, Microsoft 365). The Town Clerk also attended the SLCC Conference and SLCC sessions Microsoft 365 and Thinking Fast. Both the Town Clerk and Operations Manager took part in a counter terrorism workshop. The Assistant Town Clerk attended training courses around Cloud computing for the modern council and website training based on website accessibility, optimising home working, a Dorset Local Plan workshop, Affordable Housing training and NALC Planning for the future. The RFO attended CCLA and Sage sessions throughout the year and the Market Manager took part in NABMA training sessions.

**Councillor Training** – Councillors attended four training courses in total. Due to Covid-19 three courses were cancelled. Cllr Carter attended the Dorset Council Local Plan workshop as well as NALC Planning for the Future. Cllr Osborne attended training Finance for Councillors and Cllr Stayt took part in Budgets & Precepts.

**Grant Applications** – None have been received for this period and the Blandford Opportunity Group has withdrawn its request for a service level agreement due to their current financial position.

### Administration Budget for the year to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021

ADMINISTRATION COSTS    £

N/L code		2020/21 Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual to Date	Budget Variance	
4010	Advertising	1,500	1,375	118	(1,256)	
4012	Audit	3,399	3,116	3,039	(77)	Timing
4014	Bank Charges	824	755	71	(685)	Card Merchant Service Fees
4015	Property Fund Admin Charge	3,388	3,105	2,911	(195)	
4018	Equipment Maintenance/Hire	515	472	329	(143)	Timing
4028	New Equipment	500	459	606	148	£500 Conference system for council meetings (T/C 08/06/20 Min 16)
4039	IT New Equip	155	142	289	147	£250 - 2 x new outlets in community room
4040	IT Maintenance/Software	9,548	8,752	4,952	(3,800)	Sage software 2019/20 price freeze
4041	IT Consumables	200	183	108	(76)	
4042	Professional Services	3,605	3,305	3,892	588	Timing £2,396.10 Annual Employment Services / £875 Barrister Fees for Allotments / £192
4050	Newsletter	3,090	2,833	2,088	(745)	50% cost of survey monkey used for Persimmon & C/Exch consultations. Insurance
4052	Publications	100	92	120	28	valuations £250
4053	Photocopier Charges	1,538	1,409	343	(1,066)	
4054	Stationery & Printing	2,050	1,879	850	(1,029)	
4057	Subscriptions	1,958	1,795	1,865	70	Timing- DAPTC Annual Subs, SLCC Annual subs
4060	Postage	800	733	449	(284)	
4064	Town Council Web Site		0		0	
4065	Telephones	1,560	1,430	976	(454)	
4094	Staff Training & Travel Exps	3,605	3,305	1,106	(2,198)	
4095	Staff Travel & Expenses	4,350	3,988	1,393	(2,595)	
4096	Cllrs Training & Travel Exps	6,663	6,107	2,267	(3,840)	
4097	Cllrs Welfare/Meeting Exps	528	484	616	132	£528 Conference system for council meetings (T/C 08/06/20 Min 16)
4099	Staff Welfare	300	275	79	(196)	
4301	Health & Safety Staffing	1,538	1,409	50	(1,360)	
	<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>51,711</i>	<i>47,402</i>	<i>28,515</i>	<i>(18,887)</i>	<i>Sub Total</i>
4701	Insurance	15,375	14,094	13,854	(240)	Timing - Annual Insurance
	<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>15,375</i>	<i>14,094</i>	<i>13,854</i>	<i>(240)</i>	

PTO

4800	Mayoral Expenses	2,676	446	36	(410)	Transfer 75% £2007 to general reserves F&S 14/12 pt 38
4802	Civic Expenses	5,550	5,088	4,151	(937)	
4805	Civic Twinning	1,000	917	0	(917)	
4806	Civic - Freedom	500	459	0	(459)	
4803	Honorarium - Town Crier	300	275	150	(125)	
	Honorarium - Deputy Town Crier					
4807		200	183	100	(83)	
4804	Honorarium - Mace Bearer	400	367	200	(167)	
	Honorarium - Deputy Mace Bearer					
4808		300	275	150	(125)	
4809	Membership to Guild of Mace Bearers and Town Criers	100	92	35	(57)	
	Reserves Grant Monies	0	0	714	714	£714 Grant Income received for N/Plan
	<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>11,027</i>	<i>8,101</i>	<i>5,536</i>	<i>(2,565)</i>	
	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>78,113</b>	<b>69,597</b>	<b>47,904</b>	<b>(21,693)</b>	
INCOME						
2025	Interest	1,030	944	228	(717)	
3894	Misc Income	1,600	1,467	7,125	5,659	£1,629 cricket club donation towards kitchen & appliances / £300 & £200 compensation Santander and £100 compensation from lloyds. Lidl grant £4800 for town pump restoration
3893	Grant				0	£714 Groundwork UK for N/Plan / £2,000 community fridge
3897	Overtime Charges	528	484	51	(433)	No Venues Open
3899	Photocopying	169	155	8	(147)	Office Closed
3920	Admin Chg- Barnes for Rec	5,563	5,099	4,173	(926)	includes Oct to Dec to post to ledger
	Salary Charge out Barnes for a Recreation					
3925		25,098	23,007	12,103	(10,904)	No Pension costs
	<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>33,988</b>	<b>31,156</b>	<b>23,687</b>	<b>(7,468)</b>	
	<b>NET COST/ (INCOME)</b>	<b>44,125</b>	<b>38,441</b>	<b>24,217</b>	<b>(14,224)</b>	

## Overall Revenue Budget for the year to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021

2020/21

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual to Date	Budget Variance	Status	Comments
<b>INCOME</b>						
Admin	33,988	31,156	23,687	(7,468)	Under-budget	Venues and Office closed - Barnes Salary lower than budgeted due to no pay increase
<b>Admin Total</b>	<b>33,988</b>	<b>31,156</b>	<b>23,687</b>	<b>(7,468)</b>	Under-budget	
Corn Exchange	14,744	13,515	9,311	(4,204)	Under-budget	Venue Closed from 20/03/20 - re-opens in August (included £150 advance payment for M Boon - refunded through shambles) - Closed from 03/11/20
Woodhouse Gardens	6,150	5,638	1,357	(4,280)	Under-budget	Venue closed No rental income during April - June - 50% for July to Sept - Invoice to be raised in September
Larksmead	1,814	1,663	366	(1,297)	Under-budget	Reduced Activity
Cemetery	12,300	11,275	10,597	(678)	Under-budget	Timing - Annual NDDC Grass Cutting. Tree survey £375
Sundries	3,359	3,079	3,263	184	Over-Budget	
Skate park	0	0	0	0	Under-budget	
<b>R &amp; A Income</b>	<b>38,367</b>	<b>35,169</b>	<b>24,895</b>	<b>(10,275)</b>	Under-budget	
CCTV, Planters & Markets	26,779	24,547	11,209	(13,339)	Under-budget	Planter Sponsorship - Timing - Shambles £2,955 under budget re-opened 30/07 / Indoor market £2,089 under budget, re-opened 02/07/20 / Street Market £3,522 under budget, re-opened 04/06/20
Marsh & Ham Toilets	800	733	1,000	267	Over-Budget	£500 Charlton Marshall PC Toilet donation / £100 South Tarrant Valley Toilet donation / £200 Tarrant Monkton & Launceston toilet donation, Stourpaine donation £200
Tabernacle Toilets	0	0	0	0	Under-budget	
<b>T &amp; GP Totals</b>	<b>27,579</b>	<b>25,281</b>	<b>12,209</b>	<b>(13,072)</b>	Under-budget	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>99,934</b>	<b>91,606</b>	<b>60,790</b>	<b>(30,815)</b>	Under Budgeted Income	

## EXPENDITURE

Admin	78,113	69,597	47,904	(21,693)	Under-budget	Timing due to Annual insurance and annual employment services / Lower Staff Travel Costs, Stationery costs, Printing costs and IT Price freeze on annual subs
Corn Exchange Project Officer / Consultant	20,000	18,333	0	(18,333)	Under-budget	
Salaries	460,230	402,373	404,474	2,102	Over-Budget	F&S 14/12 pt 38 trsfer salaries underspend to general reserves
<b>Admin &amp; Payroll</b>	<b>558,343</b>	<b>490,303</b>	<b>452,378</b>	<b>(37,925)</b>	Under-budget	
Vehicles	12,634	11,581	7,305	(4,276)	Under-budget	
Corn Exchange	45,375	41,593	31,234	(10,360)	Under-budget	Utilities lower due to venues closure / PPL licence lower due to venue closure
Woodhouse Gardens	3,652	3,348	2,569	(778)	Under-budget	
Larksmead	2,626	2,407	835	(1,573)	Under-budget	
Recreation Ground (Trust)	35,123	32,196	14,000	(18,196)	Under-budget	
Glenmore Workshop	7,453	6,832	6,722	(109)	Under-budget	
Cemetery	6,625	6,073	5,552	(521)	Under-budget	Timing
Langton	336	308	80	(229)	Under-budget	
Skatepark	1,473	1,350	200	(1,151)	Under-budget	
Sundries	21,365	19,585	13,390	(6,195)	Under-budget	
<b>R &amp; A Totals</b>	<b>136,661</b>	<b>125,273</b>	<b>81,886</b>	<b>(43,387)</b>	Under-budget	
CCTV, Planters & Markets	25,049	22,962	7,937	(15,024)	Under-budget	
Marsh & Ham Toilets	16,927	15,516	8,885	(6,631)	Under-budget	
Tabernacle Toilets	3,696	3,388	1,969	(1,419)	Under-budget	
<b>T &amp; GP Totals</b>	<b>45,672</b>	<b>41,866</b>	<b>18,791</b>	<b>(23,075)</b>	Under-budget	
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>740,677</b>	<b>657,442</b>	<b>553,055</b>	<b>(104,387)</b>	Under-budget	
<b>TOTAL (NET COST)</b>	<b>640,743</b>	<b>565,836</b>	<b>492,265</b>	<b>(73,571)</b>	Within Budget	

Note  
 Over budget figure  
 positive variance  
 Under budget negative  
 variance ( )

### General Reserves

Nominal Code	<u>Standard Asset Replacement Accruals</u>	Responsible Committee	Balances £	Committed Funds £	Description of Committed Funds
1300	IT	F & S	16,719.49		
1305	Skate park	R & A	93,065.58		
1310	General Play Equipment	R & A	69,503.06		
1315	Maintenance Equipment Replacement	R & A	9,544.94		
1320	Vehicle Replacement	R & A	13,668.00		
1325	Tractor Replacement	R & A	16,701.20		
1330	Mower Replacement	R & A	31,915.27		
1340	CCTV / ANPR	T & GP	34,908.44	- 12,852.20	£12,852.20 CCTV Cameras
1345	Benches	T/C	12,516.65		
1350	Glenmore Depot	R & A	8,373.10		
1351	B/Heights Play Equipment	R & A	9,568.00		
1352	B/Heights Maintenance Equipment Replacement	R & A	1,879.74		
				<b>305,511.27</b>	
	<u>Earmarked Accounts</u>				
	Recreation & Amenities Funds	R & A	961,084.46	- 34,458.83	B/Heights Public Arts Works / £10000 WHG Roof / Tree works
	Town & General Purposes Committee	T & GP	38,663.91	- 591.00	£250 Interpretation board:Langton & Marsh / £341 TIC Out & About Booklet
				<b>964,698.54</b>	



**Other Earmarked Accounts**

1001	Earmarked Interest	F & S	70.61	-	380.00	£380 Pointing work of WHG wall
1002	Property Fund Dividend	F & S	8,856.75	-	1,392.00	£1392 - Path around Cricket Club
1004						
1005	Election Costs	T/C	7,683.70			
1006	Youth Services	T/C	10,726.03	-	15,000.00	F&S 14/12/20 virement agreed
1007	Woodhouse Gardens Wall Rebuild (Moved to R & A)	R & A	-			
1008	High Street Clean Up	F & S	-			
1009	BFTC Commemoration Group	T/C	310.50			
1010	Capital Interest	F & S	2,313.35			
1011	Land North of Bypass / Sport & Recreation	T/C	5,772.98	-	5,770.98	£4.11 Cricket Club Refurb S106 Monies / £4,608 Path around Cricket Club / £1,157.87 Cricket Club refurb
1012	The Blandford Events Group	T/C	442.17			
1013	Neighbourhood Plan	T/C	7,414.39	-	300.39	Consultancy Fees
1015	Support for Essential Services ( Earmarked)	T/C	28,049.00			
1017	Woodhouse Garden Re-build	T/C	19,981.67			
1019	Old Bath House / St Peter & St Paul's Churchyard (Listed Wall & Town Pump	T & GP	52,964.49		-	
1335	Civic Regalia	F & S	18,949.84			
1185	Pension Deficit	F & S	20,000.00		-	
1195	Improvements to Market Place	T/C	70,000.00		-	

						£1,221.25 C/Exch Maintenance / £1,597.80 Payroll /£2,932.22 Underspend from Grant Budget 2019/20 / £452 Underspend from Grant Budget 2018/19 / £18,699 Underspend from Project Manager Salary 2019/20 / £10,000 Demolition of Toilet Block / £4,300 Supply & Installation of fencing at Park Road / £2,275 Supply & Install Table Tennis Table at Larksmead / F&S 14/12/20 underspend virements
1500	General Reserves	T/C	233,165.76	-	60,053.87	
					<b>403,662.78</b>	
	<b><u>Capital Projects</u></b>					
1104	Corn Exchange S106 Funds	T/C	82,909.40			
						£6,997.77 committed for Lift Installation - Donation from FOTF / £3,665.70 Replacement Lantern Lights / £39,696.60 Architect Fees / £1609.60 Corn Exchange Roof / £19,402 Underspend of Salaries 2017/18 for project manager / £17,354.17 Underspend of Salaries for 2018/19 for Project Manager / £12,981.60 Underspend Corn Exch Maint 2019/20 Replacement of external notice boards
1105	Corn Exchange	T/C	406,391.79	-	103,124.89	
1110	Corn Exchange Promotions Group	T/C	3,091.93			
1115	Corn Exchange Project Development	T/C	29,528.83			
1116	Corn Exchange HLF Stage 1 Matchfunding Corn Exchange & Venues Refurbishment Project	T/C	77,379.97			
1120		T/C	79,000.00		-	
1122	Corn Exchange Community Hall S106 Funds	T/C	103,292.81			
1125	Cemetery Field Project	R & A	1,000.00	-	1,000.00	£1000 Maintenance contingency
1135	Railway Arches	T & GP	2,365.56			

1175	CCTV / ANPR - New Equipment	T & GP	12,161.40		
				692,996.80	
		<b>Total Reserves</b>		<u>2,366,869.39</u>	
	Surplus from 2019/20 as at 31/03/2020			113,175.81	Due to grants & S106 funds received in 2019/20
		<b>Total Available in Reserves</b>		<u>2,480,045.20</u>	

## Retrospective approval of the Investment Account for the period to 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021

### Fixed Term Investments & Corporate Notice Accounts

In line with the Town Council's Investment Policy, the Chairman of Finance & Staffing and the Town Clerk have made the following investments on behalf of the council, seeking the highest possible interest rates and financial security.

Date	Amount £	Period	Rate Gross	Bank
11 <sup>th</sup> January 2021	101,103.01	1 year business bond	0.75%	Hampshire Trust Bank
26 <sup>th</sup> January 2021	280,590.00	31 days	0.30%	Santander 31 Day Notice
25 <sup>th</sup> February 2021	105,042.49	30 days	0.12%	Santander Business Reserve

### CCLA – Property Fund Investment Dividend – Period 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 (see also report at [Agenda Item No. 14](#))

No. of Units	Price per Unit As of 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2013 £	Price per Unit (BID) As of 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2020 £	Dividend Amount As of 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2020 £	Management Expenses (For Oct-Dec 2020) £	Net Amount Received Dec 2020 £	Total Amount of Dividends Received Net of Management Expenses £	Net Asset Value of Fund as at 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2020 £
164508	2.4315	283.05p	6,885.48	729.27	6,156.21	154,140	466,742

## Bank Reconciliation to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021

<u>Bank Statement as at</u>	31st January 2021		
Current Account		£24,194.11	
Less Unpresented Cheques		£0.00	
Plus uncleared receipts		-	
		£24,194.11	£24,194.11

<u>Hampshire Trust Bank - A/c No:</u> <u>10364802</u>	31st January 2021		
From	To		
24/01/2020	10/01/2023	£411,500.00	
22/06/2020	22/06/2021	£420,000.00	
			£831,500.00

<u>Santander 95 Day Notice</u> <u>A/C10555310</u>	31st January 2021	£159,884.18	
Less			£159,884.18

<u>Santander 31 Day Notice</u> <u>A/C10555349</u>	31st January 2021	£281,307.52	
			£281,307.52

<u>Santander Business Reserve A/c</u> <u>10138119</u>	31st January 2021	£100,479.61	
			£100,479.61

<u>Lloyds PLC Fixed Term Deposits as</u> <u>at</u>	31st January 2021		
From	To		
06/01/2020	06/01/2021	£100,000.00	
20/02/2020	22/02/2021 S106	£103,942.13	
26/02/2020	26/02/2021	£120,000.00	
27/02/2020	26/02/2021	£50,000.00	
09/04/2020	09/04/2021 S106	£651,479.00	
09/04/2020	09/04/2021 S106	£179,185.49	
07/05/2020	07/05/2021	£89,000.00	
		-	
06/01/2021	06/01/2021	Mature bond repaid	£101,103.01

£1,192,503.61

Hampshire Trust Bank - 1 Yr Fund  
06/01/2021

101103.01

£101,103.01

CCLA Property Fund Account

31st January 2021

Purchased

£400,000.00

Less Un-reconciled Item  
30/10/2013 Switched to Long Term Asset

£400,000.00

£0.00

Petty Cash as at

31st January 2021

£250.00

Less Un-reconciled Item

£250.00

£2,691,222.04

Fidelity Guarantee £5,000,000

	
CHECKED BY.....	Date...5th March 2021.....
Town Clerk	
	
CHECKED BY.....	Date...5th March 2021
Chairman of Finance	(approved by email to insert electronic signature)

## Review of Variable Direct Debits

Company	Service/Supply	Frequency
Allstar Business Solutions Ltd	Fuel Card	Variable
American Express	Card Payment Processing Charge	Variable
Card Saver Ltd	Merchant Card Terminal	Monthly
Data Protection Register	Subscription	Annually
Dorset Council	Bin Rental & Waste Collections	Quarterly
Dorset Council	Bin Emptying at Elizabeth Road Allotments	Quarterly
Dorset Council	Loss of Revenue of Car Parking due to Market	Quarterly
Dorset Council	Rates	10 Monthly
EE Ltd	Grd & Property Mgers & Charge-hand Mobile Phone	Monthly
EVO Payments	Transaction Charges for Card Receipts	Monthly
Kcom	Web Hosting and Broadband to Woodhouse Gardens	Quarterly
Environment Agency	Water extraction from bore hole	Annually
Fuel Card Services Ltd	Fuel Card	Monthly
ITEC	Photocopy charges	Monthly
Lloyds	Charge Card / Service Charge	Monthly
Glenmore Holdings Ltd	Quarterly Management Charge for Glenmore Depot	Quarterly
Information Commission	Info Commission	Yearly
L.A.M.I.T	CCLA Property Fund Management Fee	Quarterly
Quadient (was Neopost Ltd)	Franking re-fill	Variable
Sage	Payroll Cover	Annually
Sage	Accounts Cover	Annually
Total Gas & Power	Electric - Corn Exchange	Monthly
Total Gas & Power	Electric - Park Road	Monthly
Total Gas & Power	Electric - Woodhouse Garden	Monthly
Total Gas & Power	Electric - Cemetery Workshop	Monthly
Total Gas & Power	Electric - Marsh & Ham Toilets	Monthly
Total Gas & Power	Electric - Cemetery Chapel	Monthly
Total Gas & Power	Electric - Larksmead Pavilion	Monthly
Total Gas & Power	Electric - Larksmead Floodlights	Monthly
Total Gas & Power	Electric -Tabernacle Toilet	Monthly
Total Gas & Power	Electric - Glenmore Depot	Monthly
	Sanitary Disposal, Needle Disposal, hand dryers,fresheners	Annually
PHS Group		
Rentokil	Quarterly Pest Control	Quarterly
SW Comms	Telephone Lines & Calls	Monthly
Southern Electric	CCTV Electric	Quarterly
Gazprom Energy	Gas - Corn Exchange	Monthly
Gazprom Energy	Gas- Larksmead	Monthly
Gazprom Energy	Gas- Woodhouse Gardens	Monthly
water2business	Water Bill - Pavilion/ Cemetery	Half Yearly
water2business	Water Corn Exchange	Half Yearly
water2business	Water Park Road Recreation Ground - Pavilion	Half Yearly
water2business	Water Park Road - Old Public Toilets	Half Yearly
water2business	Water -Toilets Ham & Marsh Car Park	Half Yearly
water2business	Water Woodhouse Garden/ Tabernacle Toilet	Half Yearly
water2business	Water Glenmore Workshop	Half Yearly

## To receive the Internal Auditor's Report

### Introduction

This report contains a note of the audit recommendations made to Blandford Forum Town Council following the carrying out of internal audit testing on site on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021.

The audit work has been carried out in accordance with Appendix 9 of the 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioners' Guide', as amended by the additional requirements of the 2018/19 AGAR.

An internal audit covers the review of the operation of the Council's internal control environment. It is not designed to review and give full assurance over every transaction carried out by the Council. Instead it enables the auditor, following the sample testing of a number of different types of transaction, to give an opinion as to whether or not the control objectives are being achieved across a range of financial and governance systems.

### Audit Opinion

As this audit report is an interim one, no audit opinion is offered at this stage.

The report issued after the final visit for 2020/21 (which will be in May or June 2021) will contain the audit opinion.

The following areas were reviewed during this audit visit:

1. Payments
2. Risk Management
3. Budgetary Control
4. Payroll

### Audit Recommendations

Recommendations made during the audit are shown in appendix one to this report.

Recommendations are graded as follows:

Rating	Significance
High	Either a critical business risk is not being adequately addressed or there is substantial non-conformity with regulations and accepted standards.
Medium	Either a key business risk is not being adequately addressed or there is a degree of non-conformity with regulations and accepted standards.
Low	Either minor non-conformity with procedure or opportunity to improve working practices further.



The number of recommendations made at this audit visit and their priority are summarised in the following table:

Rating	Number
High	2
Medium	0
Low	1
Info	2
TOTAL	5

I would like to thank Linda Scott-Giles, Town Clerk for her assistance during this audit.

#### Auditor Note

At the date of the audit visit in February, the Responsible Finance Officer had been absent for just over two months. The RFO carries out a significant amount of work to process purchase and sales invoices, bank payments and receipts, run the Council's payroll, and carry out all necessary reconciliations. During the officer's absence, the Town Clerk and Operations Manager have covered the key elements of payments and payroll (to ensure those owed money by the Council were paid on time), but the absence of this key officer has inevitably had an impact on the timely processing of all aspects of the Council's finances.

### INTERNAL AUDIT OF BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL FINAL REPORT VISIT 2 OF 3: 2<sup>nd</sup> MARCH 2021

#### Appendix 1 – Recommendations and Action Plan

Recommendation number	Detail	Priority (Low/Medium/High)	Management Response	Responsible Officer	Due Date
2.2 – Reclaim VAT on inspection contract	I checked to see that VAT on a sample of payments had been identified, recorded and reclaimed. I found that VAT on the boiler inspection element of the insurance contract paid in April 2020 had not been reclaimed. The total VAT was £157.18. The Interim Finance Officer has agreed to make the correction.  This has now been corrected on Sage.	Info	This will be corrected on Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> February 2021.	TC	12/2/2021
5.1 – Additional resource and streamlining of tasks	I completed the testing on income collection which was carried out at the first visit. I found that three of the debtors paid after 30 days (one at 53, another at 68 days, and a third at 5 months), but that all debts were recovered. Given the impact of the pandemic, this performance is reasonable.  I did note at the time of the second audit visit, however, that the Finance Officer had been absent for some time, with no return date set. The Clerk had been covering the most urgent work (paying payments and payroll) in addition to her own work, but other key financial controls such as bank reconciliation and debt management have not been completed for	H	Noted  The Interim Finance Officer has now brought the bank reconciliation up to date. Cashflow, investments, invoicing (apart from Barnes), and updating the expenditure over £500 spreadsheet for the website have also been brought up to date, and the Town Clerk has reviewed the aged debt report and chased outstanding debt.	TC	ASAP

	<p>several weeks (albeit it is noted that with venues closed and no room hire invoices raised, the risk of non-payment of debt is significantly lower than in a normal year). The Council's year end is approaching, and there will be a number of year-end tasks that need to be completed including running the year-end on Sage accounts and Sage payroll, and preparing and filing statutory and other returns.</p> <p>The Clerk has sought additional resources to carry out the essential tasks in the absence of the Finance Officer. I recommend that this work continues, and that the Council considers whether any of the regular tasks of the Clerk or Finance Officer could be temporarily suspended to make the combined workload manageable pending the officer's return.</p>				
5.2 – Temporary RFO designation	I further recommend that the Council makes the Clerk temporary Responsible Finance Officer in order to ensure that the statutory duties under s.151 LGA 1972 can be properly exercised.	H	<p>The following statement has been added to the TC's Report for the full council meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021:</p> <p><i>During the Internal Auditor's visit on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021, the auditor recommended that the council formally notes that the responsibility of the RFO role is being</i></p>	TC	<b>ASAP</b>
			<p><i>covered by the Town Clerk, as line manager of the RFO. To date, it was only noted at the Finance &amp; Staffing committee meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020, Minute No. 32.5 that 'the RFO has been signed off work for two weeks, with four weeks to follow and cover is required for this role. The Committee Chairman suggested the Salaries budget is used for the cover of this period.' Councillors have been kept up to date with efforts to provide adequate cover for the role.</i></p>		
7.1 – Employee pension contribution rate	<p>I checked to see that pension contributions had been correctly calculated and paid over. I found that the employee contributions for one employee appeared to be £25 over the threshold for the next contribution rate to be applied.</p> <p>I recommend that the Interim Finance Officer confirm the correct course of action with Dorset Pension Fund.</p>	L	An email was sent to the Dorset County Pension Fund on Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2021 advising them of the IA's find and a response is awaited.	TC	<b>Awaiting a reply</b>
7.2 – Payroll reporting and journals	<p>I checked to see that all payments and deductions were correctly coded and that suspense accounts were promptly cleared. I found that the net payment for the November payroll was coded in error to the salaries expense code (it should be coded against the net pay balance sheet control account), and that the December payroll bank payment had not been posted. On investigation, the Interim Finance Officer identified that, whilst the January payroll was properly run and staff and other payroll creditors paid, the payroll process within Sage had not been fully completed with the HMRC report not filed, and related journal not posted.</p> <p>The Interim Finance Officer has since completed the process.</p>	Info	The HMRC payment for January was raised by the TC following a lack of data for the P32 and the interim finance officer ran the salaries again and the HMRC was paid on time. This procedure will be carefully followed for February payroll and coded correctly.	TC	<b>Monthly</b>

## **Insurance Risk Assessment relating to the Town Council's Insurance Cover and Approval of Insurance Premiums for 2021/2022**

### **Background**

At the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2018, the committee made the following resolution:

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr Robinson and AGREED unanimously that a **RECOMMENDATION is made to full Council that**

**The Committee confirms that there are no further aspects of insurance cover they wish to amend. The Committee also confirms approval to enter into a further 3-year long term agreement until 18<sup>th</sup> April 2021 with Company A at a cost of £13,056.88 for 2018/19, subject to any changes decided above and any revised insurance values.**

### **Introduction**

The Town Council's insurance policy renewal is due in April 2021 and a further 3 year long term deal is being offered for consideration by our existing provider (Company A). A meeting was held with the client manager, Cllr S Hitchings, the Town Clerk and Operations Manager in February and the following amendments were made after discussions:

- Clarification of civic regalia items that do and do not require cover beyond the council premises and their value
- Town Pump should be listed as a monument and not for contents cover
- Inclusion of Railway Arches, beyond public liability (quote sought, not yet received)
- Updated building sums valuation, which has been provided by the valuation team at Chaffers Estate Agents (attached at [Appendix A](#), which has then been compared by Company A to illustrate the difference in the previous and updated costings).
- Removal of Business Interruption Cover – At present the council has insurance covering the loss of gross revenue which has increased from the sum of £100,000 for a 12 month period to £180,000 for a 24 month period. However, recent events have shown us that this does not always apply to the situation and, for example, staff are now able to work from home when required with little additional cost, which is a large part of business interruption. This has therefore been removed from the policy quotation and should the council wish to reinstate it the costs will be as follows:

#### On a three year agreement:

Loss of Revenue over 24month 88.46 Plus IPT

Additional Expenses over 24 months 49.15 plus IPT

#### On a one year agreement:

Loss of Revenue over 24month 98.29 Plus IPT

Additional Expenses over 24 months 54.61 plus IPT

The premium offered by Company A for entering into a further 3 year long term deal (including all applicable taxes) is **£13,749.25** per annum or **£14,636.78** for a 1 year agreement and these documents have been shared with Councillors.

The Town Council has been with Company A for several years and has built up a good working relationship with them. Due to the lack of claims the council has made, or had made against them, there is limited experience of how the company responds to claims.

## **Comparative Quotations**

The Town Clerk has been in contact with Company B who is a broker who provided quotations for the last renewal period. All the updated information was sent to them and they sought three like-for-like quotations. The following response has since been received and a reply has been sent to thank them for the amount of time that has been spent on this process:

*Following our previous email correspondence, I have had initial responses from our insurers and unfortunately I will need to withdraw from the quote process as we are not going to be able to improve on your premium.*

Indications were:

*£18,500 inc IPT (excluding motor and engineering sections)*

Motor Insurance – as a separate policy

*£2,185.15 inclusive of Insurance Premium Tax (IPT).*

*If your intention as a council is mainly to reduce the premium spend then I am not going to be able to help you, but if you want to work with us to receive in return a broking service of advice and fast responses to your questions, please call me and we can discuss this further. Thank you again for considering us for a quotation and please keep my details as I will always be happy to offer you an alternative view if you want it at some point in the future even if you are not a client of ours.*

## **Additional Information**

When assessing the Council's risks the following insurance cover it should be noted that it was agreed in 2011 that the Council would not insure the following:

- Larksmead palisade fencing
- Fencing at the Lamperd's Field compound
- Park Road play area fencing
- Railway Arches fencing
- Grit Bins

The revised premium for 2021/22 includes insurance tax.

A small part of this charge will be charged onto the Barnes for a Recreation Ground Trust.

The Insurance budget for 2021/22 has been set at £15,606, which is based on the insurance premium being increased in line with inflation and with an additional £1,500 for other insurance costs. The advantage of selecting Company A is that they are cheaper and have been dealing with the Council for many years. The benefit with choosing Company B is that they are a broker, they do have a wider portfolio of insurance companies to choose from therefore able to offer a bespoke insurance policy, although they are not in a position to be competitive this year.

## **Recommendation**

The Council is requested to make a **recommendation to full council** to:

1. Note the removal of business interruption cover or reinstate it.
2. Confirm that there are no other aspects of insurance cover that they wish to amend.
3. Confirm approval to enter into a further 3 year long term agreement until 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024 with Company A at a cost of £13,803.52 for 2021/2022, subject to any changes decided above and any revised insurance values.

Linda Scott-Giles  
Town Clerk  
24<sup>th</sup> February 2021

### Building Sums Valuation (carried out in February 2021)

Property Address	Comments	Insurance Valuation
Pavilion Larksmead		£330,000.00
Lamperds Field Allotments		£250,000.00
Cemetery Chapel		£485,000.00
Retaining wall St Peters		£250,000.00
Cemetery Workshop		£480,000.00
Cricket Pavilion Park Road	Extended since last valuation	£320,000.00
Bowls Pavilion	Extended since Savills valuation	£290,000.00
Football Pavilion Recreation Ground	Extended since last valuation	£410,000.00
Woodhouse Gardens Store		£5,000.00
Pavilion Woodhouse Gardens	Extended since last valuation	£320,000.00
Corn Exchange Complex		£4,200,000.00
Tractor Shed Larksmead		£6,000.00
Marsh and Ham TIC and Toilet Block		£275,000.00
Tabernacle Toilet Block		£75,000.00
Unit 18 Glenmore Park		£210,000.00
Langton Arches	Improved and access to top constructed	£600,000.00
Town Pump Market Place	Recently refurbished	£450,000.00
Total Sum Insured		£8,956,000.00

## Comparison by Company A

	New Valuation 2021	Previous Valuation 2020
Pavilion Larksmead		
	£330,000.00	323,665.98
Lamperds Field Allotments		
	£250,000.00	205,707.69
Cemetery Chapel		
	£485,000.00	486,021.68
Retaining wall St Peters		
	£250,000.00	241,600.66
Cemetery Workshop		
	£480,000.00	486,021.68
Cricket Pavilion Park Road		
Extended since last valuation		
	£320,000.00	145,289.90
Bowls Pavilion		
Extended since Savills valuation		
	£290,000.00	163,990.96
Football Pavilion Recreation Ground		
Extended since last valuation		
	£410,000.00	148,167.20
Woodhouse Gardens Store		
	£5,000.00	4,887.94
Pavilion Woodhouse Gardens		
Extended since last valuation		
	£320,000.00	155,548.95
Corn Exchange Complex		
	£4,200,000.00	4,037,905.35
Tractor Shed Larksmead		
	£6,000.00	5,586.47
Marsh and Ham TIC and Toilet Block		
	£275,000.00	271,880.06
Tabernacle Toilet Block		
	£75,000.00	74,084.27
Unit 18 Glenmore Park		
	£210,000.00	182,327.30
Town Pump Market Place		
Recently refurbished		
	£450,000.00	
Total Sum Insured		
	£8,356,000.00	6,932,686.09

**Review of the Risk Assessment Management Policy (including Financial)  
Arrangements for 2021/22**

This paper has been sent to Councillors separately due to the size of the document.

It has been updated but it should be noted that if business interruption cover is no longer included in the town council's insurance policy, this management policy needs to be amended accordingly.

Linda Scott-Giles  
Town Clerk  
26<sup>th</sup> February 2021

## Review of Asset Register

Value as at 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 (Excluding Trust Assets) Revised to Cost of Asset or Estimate of value using Insurance Value if needed

All Risks		Total					
		c/fwd	Acquisition	Disposal	Total c/fwd		
		2019/20	2020/21	2020/21	2020/21		
TOWN HALL							
	Corn Exchange	26,801	20,921	5,880	26,801		
	Chamber	14,325	14,325		14,325		
	Community Room	1,719	1,719		1,719		
	Offices	26,471	26,471		26,471		
	Outside Front	1,828	1,828		1,828		
	Shambles	1,510	1,110	400	1,510		
	Robes Cupboard	9,840	9,840		9,840		
	Store	28,728	28,728		28,728		
	Storeroom	6,325	6,325		6,325		
	Under stage	10,910	10,910		10,910		
	Town Hall	31,546	31,546		31,546		
		160,004	160,004	153,724	6,280	0	160,003
	Badbury Heights	42,808	42,808		42,808		
	Chapel	6,704	6,704		6,704		
	Cemetery Workshop	9,301	9,301		9,301		
	Cemetery	4,994	4,994		4,994		
	CCTV	53,062	53,062		53,062		
	Civic	278,702	278,702		278,702		
	Elizabeth Road Allotments	522	522		522		
	Football club	4,275	4,275		4,275		
	Allotment Compound	163	163		163		
	Glenmore Workshop	43,063	43,063		43,063		
	Lambert Field Allotments	17,222	17,222		17,222		
	Langton	42,328	42,328		42,328		
	Larksmead Pav	627	627		627		
	Larksmead Tractor Garage	840	840		840		
	Larksmead Playground	63,641	63,641		63,641		
	Old Bath House	268	268		268		
	Park Road Container	13,634	13,634		13,634		
	Park Road Play Area	24,407	24,407		24,407		
	Skate Park	132,223	132,223		132,223		
	Tabernacle	978	978		978		
	WHG Pav	4,556	4,556		4,556		
	WHG Shed	2,895	2,895		2,895		
		747,211	747,211	747,211	0	0	747,211
Material Damage Insurance							
	Street Furniture	117,117	114,938	2,179	117,117		
		117,117	117,117	114,938	2,179	0	117,117



<b>Not Insured</b>	<b>72,651</b>	<b>72,651</b>		<b>72,651</b>	
<b>Properties (Excluding Trust Properties)</b>	<b>2,848,411</b>	<b>2,848,411</b>		<b>2,848,411</b>	
<b>Motor Vehicles</b>	<b>64,230</b>	<b>64,230</b>		<b>64,230</b>	
<b>Long Term Investment</b>	<b>406,154</b>	<b>406,154</b>		<b>406,154</b>	
	<b>4,415,780</b>	<b>4,407,320</b>	<b>8,459</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,415,779</b>

**Value as at 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 (Excluding Trust Assets)**  
**INSURANCE VALUE**

<b>All Risks</b>								Total
TOWN HALL								
<b>Corn Exchange</b>	18,956	0	1,428	11,925				32,309
<b>Chamber</b>	16,414	4,340						20,754
<b>Community Room</b>	1,801		704	0				2,505
<b>Offices</b>	7,950	271	23,774	0	0	0		31,994
<b>Outside Front</b>	1,284			1,012				2,296
<b>Robes Cupboard</b>		13,276						13,276
<b>Shambles</b>	1,625							1,625
<b>Store</b>	4,711	29,700	3,186	2,073				39,670
<b>Storeroom</b>	1,472	594	3,384	2,162				7,612
<b>Under stage</b>		12,590	313	0				12,903
<b>Town Hall</b>	14,346	30,956		0				45,302
	68,559	91,727	32,789	17,172	0	0	0	210,247
<b>Badbury Heights</b>	44,510			931				45,442
<b>Chapel</b>	8,032	1,423						9,454
<b>Cemetery Workshop</b>	135	4,277	4,585	2,064				11,061
<b>Cemetery</b>	5,814	0		0				5,814
<b>CCTV</b>				58,475		592		59,067
<b>Civic (+Town Pump)</b>							355,090	355,090
<b>Elizabeth Road Allotments</b>				576				576
<b>Football Club</b>	2,726			2,105				4,831
<b>Allotment Compound</b>	180							180
<b>Glenmore Workshop</b>	0	0	0	46,202	0	0		46,202
<b>Lambert Field Allotments</b>	25,696			76				25,772
<b>Langton Road</b>	50,909							50,909
<b>Larksmead Pav</b>	687	0		258				945
<b>Larksmead Rec Gr</b>	84,081							84,081
<b>Larksmead Tractor</b>				1,152				1,152

<b>Old Bath House</b>									295			295		
<b>Park Road Shed</b>		2,940							16,179			19,119		
<b>Park Road Play Area</b>		31,978										31,978		
<b>Skate Park</b>		202,785										202,785		
<b>Street Furniture (Impact Damage)</b>		139,703										139,703		
<b>Tabernacle</b>		242							898			1,139		
<b>WHG Pav</b>		3,930		138					1,597			5,665		
<b>WHG Shed</b>				195					3,271			3,466		
Less Park Road As Trust Property (Barnes for Recreation Charity)	-31,978											-31,046	-904	-31,950
	<b>640,928</b>	<b>97,760</b>	<b>37,373</b>	<b>151,251</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>355,090</b>	<b>1,282,995</b>	<b>1,243,557</b>		<b>5,880</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,283,021</b>	
<b>Not Insured</b>								<b>72,651</b>	<b>72,001</b>		<b>650</b>			72,651
<b>Properties (Excluding Trust Properties)</b>								<b>6,067,441</b>	5,890,727	176,714				6,067,441
<b>Motor Vehicles</b>								<b>60,530</b>	56,715	1,888	34,950	29,323		64,230
								<b>TOTAL</b>	<u><u>7,483,617</u></u>	<u><u>7,014,034</u></u>	<u><u>41,480</u></u>	<u><u>29,323</u></u>	<u><u>7,487,343</u></u>	

## Update on CCLA Report

### **Background**

At the Finance & Staffing Committee meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2019 Councillors asked that a report on the property fund be reviewed immediately after Brexit.

### **Details of Report**

As of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021, the Net Asset Value of the fund was £2.8819 per unit giving a value of £474,096. For information, and as a comparison, as of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020, the Net Asset Value of the fund was £3.0155 per unit giving a value of £496,073.87.

There was a steady decline from November 2018 where the Net Asset Value was £503,098. Valuations have improved slightly since November 2020.

The Council holds 164,508 units which were purchased at £400,000 in October 2013.

As at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 the Bid price was £2.8372 per unit. If the Council sold all 164,508 units the return would be £466,742.

The last dividend that the Council received was on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 for the period October – December 2020 with a value of £6,156.21.

In total, as of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021, the Council has received £154,140 in Dividends net of Management Expenses since January 2014.

During 2020, the Council received £20,353.72 in Dividends net of Management Expenses. The Yield on Dividends remains to be healthy at around 5%.

### **Current Status of the Fund**

The stability of the fund as at the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021, reported by the CCLA, advised that conditions remained difficult in the sector in the final months of 2020 as fresh restrictions limited mobility and forced shop closures. Despite this unhelpful background valuations stabilised before rising in November, the first increase for two years. Values rose broadly. Industrial assets were once again the best performers but there were improvements in parts of the retail sector where only shopping centres remained friendless.

Transaction volumes were below the long- term average but showed a welcome increase in the final months of the year. There was one transaction contracted in the period, the sale of a distribution facility in Warrington at a price comfortably above valuation. Completion is scheduled for January.

There were a number of positive lettings and rental increases including on the asset in Aberdeen and a retail warehouse in Grimsby, let to the Range. In the Becton retail park there were some important changes to tenants and leases which align better the lease profiles with our long term plans for this asset. Strong efforts to protect the income flow of the Fund resulted in a 93% collection rate, despite a number of persistent 'wont payers' who are taking advantage of current but temporary tenant protection regulations.

The latest period of 'lock-down' has added a fresh layer of near- term uncertainty to the sector, but the underlying trend remains one of increasing stability. Individual asset risks remain high, but we expect positive returns in the year ahead, due mainly to the support to total returns from income. Within the portfolio we expect to maintain the relatively high weighting to industrial assets and to offices. Within the retail sector, retail warehouses are preferred.

Asset allocation at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020:

- Offices 33.33%
- Industrial & Warehouses 38.53%
- Other 13.59%
- Retail Warehouses 9.63%
- Shops 2.43%
- Cash 2.49%

**Additional information**

At the council Planning meeting held on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021, Councillors approved the following investment into the CCLA Property Fund:

£103,942.13 plus interest £1100.36

£120,000.00 plus interest £1263.45

£50,000 plus Interest £525.00

**Total** £276,830.94

**Recommendation**

Councillors are asked to consider if they wish to keep all the units or sell all or part of the units or to review the fund at a future F & S Committee Meeting.

Linda Scott-Giles  
Town Clerk  
2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021

### Free Venue Hire Update

Applications were received from Artsreach, Poachers Moon and Free Expression Arts Festival, in accordance with the new scheme, and they were approved for the 2020/2021 financial year.

Over the last two years, Artsreach has had free venue hire and held sold out events in the Corn Exchange. During this financial year, the total cost of their two bookings was £167 + VAT. They have been awarded free venue hire for two events. This will enable them to secure performances they think will be popular in the town when they become available.

Poacher's Moon requested to hold an event in the Corn Exchange on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2020, which totalled £127 + VAT in booking fees.

The Free Expression Arts Festival requested free venue hire for the annual event totalling £225.

Sadly, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all three of the applicants were unable to hold their scheduled events.

Also, Blandford Town Team's meetings have taken place online instead of meeting in person.

"Oh No It Isn't" were sadly unable to proceed with their annual pantomime, where they receive free hire of up to 60% of the total bookings.

Sarah Rampton from "In Jolly Good Company" was awarded £320 in total of bookings made for Woodhouse Gardens pavilion. These were due to start in March 2021 and Sarah has made a request to start in April/May 2021 if they are able to by then.

Sarah was keen that the group could help in the gardens, so the Town Clerk suggested they could help with the sensory garden area within Woodhouse Gardens, where they would be welcome to carry out maintenance. The group could also plant up the soiled area, or scatter wildflower seeds. The group might also want to paint some rocks to go in the "kindness box". Sarah was thrilled with this offer.

They would be forming a new Dementia Friendly group, working together with Blandford Dementia Action Alliance, Blandford Surgery Wellbeing Team, Blandford Community Mental Health Team and Alzheimer's Society. This would help to make up for the closing of the Memory Cafe based at the URC, which was being run by Alzheimer's Society before Covid-19. They would be a dementia friendly group, but also open to other people who can benefit from their services.

Sarah is currently running the 'Step Outside' allotment group at Kingston Lacy all day on a Tuesday and on a Friday afternoon.

### **Recommendation**

Councillors are asked to note the report and continue their commitment to the free venue hire applicants for when they are able to hold their events in accordance with government guidance.

Linda Scott-Giles  
Town Clerk  
24<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Rachael Harding  
Bookings Receptionist