

**BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting**

Held on Monday 20th December 2021 at 7:05 pm in the Corn Exchange

DRAFT

Subject to confirmation

PRESENT

Cllr L Hitchings – Chairman
Cllr A Cross
Cllr S Hitchings
Cllr B Quayle
Cllr H Mieville
Cllr N Lacey-Clarke
Cllr K Herbert

Cllr C Stevens – Vice Chairman
Cllr R Carter
Cllr H White
Cllr P Clark
Cllr R Holmes
Cllr L Lindsay

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk
Nicci Brown – Press

Operations Manager

108. PUBLIC SESSION

David Pardoe and Les Benham were in attendance from Blandford Boxing Club to answer any questions from Councillors about the Club's application for an SLA. Mr Pardoe thanked the Finance & Staffing Committee for hearing their case at last week's meeting.

109. APOLOGIES

Cllr P Osborne

Cllr C Jacques

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

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

A dispensation is granted to all Councillors, except Cllr L Hitchings and Cllr Cross (as they do not live in Blandford Forum), to enable them to participate in discussion and vote on the setting of the precept.

Cllr Quayle declared an interest in the Blandford Environmental Trust, TREADS, the Town Museum and Fashion Museum and expressed an interest in the Blandford Boxing Club agenda item. Cllr Lacey-Clarke also declared an interest in the Town Museum, as a member. Although these are not pecuniary interests, Cllrs Quayle and Lacey-Clarke will not participate in voting on the respective items.

Cllr Holmes noted that she is a Trustee for the Fashion Museum.

111. MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 22ND NOVEMBER 2021

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED (12 in favour, 1 abstention) that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

112. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

112.1 Report from Dorset Council Councillors – Following a request from the Town Clerk for a written report prior to the meeting to help reduce the time spent at the meeting, Cllrs Lacey-Clarke and Quayle agreed to defer this item to the next full council meeting in January.

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

112.2 Civic Report – This month's report was distributed to Councillors.

112.3 To receive an update and consider any requests from the:

This monthly agenda item has been removed this month, as above, and recorded here in order to reduce the length of the meeting.

- Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Group – Blandford + – The meeting minutes were distributed to Councillors.
- BFTC Commemoration Group – The meeting minutes were distributed to Councillors.
- Climate Change & Biodiversity – Another poll was sent out and an online meeting has been arranged for Thursday 3rd February 2022.
- Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project – There is no update this month.
- The Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2nd-5th June 2022 – The meeting minutes were distributed to Councillors.

112.4 Allotment Relocation – A meeting was held with Wyatt Homes and the Allotment Society on Tuesday 7th December 2021, with Cllrs Stevens, Carter, S Hitchings and White, and BFTC officers in attendance. Attendees discussed the updated plans prior to the submission of a planning application.

112.5 Wessex Internet – An online update meeting was held with Wessex Internet on the evening of Tuesday 7th December with Cllrs L Hitchings, Stevens, Carter and S Hitchings in attendance with the Town Clerk.

112.6 Orienteering in Blandford – An online meeting was held on Tuesday 14th December organised by Laura Everett-Coles (HPA/ Link officer for North Dorset) with representatives from Dorset Council, Cllr L Hitchings, the Town Clerk and other interested parties, to discuss the possibility of an orienteering trail for the town and surrounding area. An example of a board at Sturminster Newton is pictured and this will be an agenda item in January, seeking expenditure authority to increase the offer to two trails due to the benefit to residents and visitors.

112.7 Blanchards Bailey LLP – An invoice has been received from Blanchards Bailey LLP in relation to negotiations with landowners for Allotment relocation Heads of Terms, totalling £9,500 + VAT, and this has been paid in accordance with expenditure authority from Minute 124 from the Town Council confidential allotment meeting held on 17th December 2018.

113. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES

113.1 Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting held on Monday 13th December 2021

113.1.1 Recommendations

MINUTE No. 27 – TO CONSIDER THE CONTINUATION OF EXISTING SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS AND THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW ONES

Citizens Advice Dorset

The resolution from the Finance & Staffing Committee meeting was as follows:

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr White and AGREED (7 in favour, 1 abstention) that the SLA with Citizens Advice Dorset is continued for a further three years from 1st April 2022 and the offer is increased to £3,500 per annum (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

113. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES (cont)

An amendment was PROPOSED by Cllr White to increase the SLA offer to £5,000, which was SECONDED by Cllr Cross, a recorded vote was requested by Cllr Lacey-Clarke (listed below) and it was AGREED (11 in favour, 2 abstentions) that

The SLA with Citizens Advice Dorset is continued for a further three years from 1st April 2022 and the offer is increased to £5,000 per annum (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

In favour

Cllr White
Cllr Stevens
Cllr Carter
Cllr Mieville
Cllr Herbert
Cllr Lindsay
Cllr S Hitchings
Cllr L Hitchings
Cllr Cross
Cllr Holmes
Cllr Clark

Abstention

Cllr Quayle
Cllr Lacey-Clarke

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Blandford Boxing Club

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Mieville, SECONDED by Cllr L Hitchings and AGREED (10 in favour, 2 abstentions and 1 non-vote) that

An SLA is introduced with the Blandford Boxing Club with funding of £15,000 in year one, £2,500 in year two and £2,500 in year three subject to meeting the criteria and membership targets stated in the Club's report (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

7:35pm – Cllr S Hitchings left the meeting due to a personal emergency.

Blandford Food Bank

The resolution from the Finance & Staffing Committee meeting was as follows:

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED (7 in favour, 1 against) that the principle of an SLA is agreed to with Blandford Food Bank, subject to further discussions and receipt of supporting information.

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

This agenda item is deferred until the January full council meeting.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

It was noted that, at the Finance & Staffing Committee meeting, a working group was set up to consider the content of all the service level agreements.

113. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES (cont)

Fashion Museum

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Cross, SECONDED by Cllr L Hitchings and AGREED (11 in favour, 1 non-vote) that

The SLA with the Fashion Museum is increased to £2,500 a year for a period of three years from 1st April 2022 (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Information Centre

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

The SLA with the Information Centre is continued at £2,000 a year for a period of three years from 1st April 2022 (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Town Museum

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr L Hitchings and AGREED (10 in favour, 2 non-votes) that

The SLA with the Town Museum is continued at £2,000 a year for a period of three years from 1st April 2022 (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

TREADS

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

The SLA with TREADS is continued and reduced – at their request – to £2,000 a year for a period of three years from 1st April 2022 (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Youth Centre

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr White and AGREED (7 in favour, 1 against) that the SLA is brought to an end at 31st March 2022, due to the lack of claims for the funds, and the Youth Centre is asked to submit a fully costed business plan in order to continue the SLA for a period of three years from 1st April 2022.

An amendment was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr White and AGREED (11 in favour, 1 non-vote) that the wording is amended to read as follows:

The SLA with the Youth Centre is brought to an end at 31st March 2022, due to the lack of claims for the funds.

The Youth Centre is asked to reapply, if they wish to enter into a new SLA, submitting a full, costed business plan for a period of three years from 1st April 2022.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

113. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES (cont)

8.01pm – Cllr White left the meeting during the discussion and voting.

Blandford Stour Valley Band

Cllr White declared an interest as a member of the Blandford Stour Valley Band and left the room during discussion and voting.

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

The Service Provision Agreement with the Blandford Stour Valley Band is continued at £1,500 a year for a period of three years from 1st April 2022 (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

MINUTE NO. 34 – TO CONSIDER GRANT APPLICATIONS

Blandford Environmental Trust

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Cross, SECONDED by Cllr Mievile and AGREED (10 in favour, 2 non-votes) that

A grant of £345 is approved (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

MINUTE NO. 35 – TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DORSET PARISH INDEPENDENT RENUMERATION PANEL

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

The Councillor allowance is not increased.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

MINUTE NO. 37.3 – To consider the inclusion of the Contingency budget lines for the T&GP and R&A Committees

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

The Committees do not budget for Contingency each year, or move it to PPM or Town Improvements, but the amount will remain in Contingency and is ring-fenced to avoid adding to it each year. As a result of this action, the Recreation & Amenities Committee Earmarked Reserves are reduced to £16,000 and the Town & General Purposes Committee Earmarked Reserves are reduced to £10,000. This will be reflected in the overall budget.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Minute No. 37.4 – Consideration of the overall budget for the year 2021/22 and recommendation of the precept for 2022/23

A discussion was held on the budget for 2022/2023 and Cllr Lacey-Clarke raised his concerns over spotting a discrepancy with the Barnes for a Recreation budget figure. He raised this with the Town Clerk prior to the meeting, hence this has been amended accordingly and the figures have been checked.

113. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES (cont)

The resolution from the Finance & Staffing Committee meeting was as follows:

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Lindsay and AGREED unanimously that the draft budget of £803,241 is approved for the 2022/2023 financial year (0% increase on the 2021/2022 budget). This will be finalised at the Town Council meeting scheduled for Monday 20th December 2021.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr White, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville, a recorded vote was requested by Cllr Lacey-Clarke (listed below), and it was AGREED (8 in favour, 3 against and 1 abstention) that

The budget of £803,241 is approved for the 2022/2023 financial year (0% increase on the 2021/2022 budget).

In Favour

Cllr Stevens
Cllr Carter
Cllr Herbert
Cllr Cross
Cllr Mieville
Cllr White
Cllr Holmes
Cllr Clark

Against

Cllr Quayle
Cllr Lacey-Clarke
Cllr L Lindsay

Abstentions

Cllr L Hitchings

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

113.1.2 The Minutes were not RECEIVED at this meeting and this item has been deferred to the full council meeting scheduled for Monday 24th January 2022.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

114. TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE EXPENDITURE FOR A MEMORIAL BENCH FOR HM THE QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE (2ND-5TH JUNE 2022)

The paper was noted (see Appendix B).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr Holmes and AGREED (10 in favour, 2 abstentions) that

The Town Council approves expenditure authority of £2,000 for a bespoke design and purchase of a memorial bench, plus the installation of the bench at the Marsh & Ham (subject to Dorset Council's approval) for HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee from budget line 1040 Town Improvements (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8). The working group will approve the final design for the bench.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

115. REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Blandford & Mortain Twinning Association – Cllr Carter and Cross attended the meeting held last Tuesday and were disappointed that so few people were in attendance to discuss future events.

The meeting closed at 8:45 pm.

SIGNED

DATED