

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
Held on Monday 21st December 2020 at 7:00pm Online using Microsoft Teams



PRESENT

Cllr Lindsay – Chairman
Cllr P Clark
Cllr S Hitchings
Cllr B Quayle
Cllr P Osborne
Cllr N Lacey-Clarke
Cllr C Stevens

Cllr L Hitchings – Vice Chairman
Cllr H Mieville
Cllr H White
Cllr J Stayt
Cllr R Holmes
Cllr A Cross

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk
Assistant Town Clerk
Hugh de longh – Dorset Council
Joanne Hutson – Blandford Youth and Community Centre

Operations Manager
Nicci Brown – Press

101. PUBLIC SESSION

101.1 Joanne Hutson – Blandford Youth and Community Centre

Mrs Hutson explained that, despite Covid-19, they have been busy at the youth centre. They coordinated food parcels, prescription pickups etc. Alongside this they carried on with 1 to 1 and online work. Once restrictions were lifted, up to 15 young people returned to the centre. The youth centre also offered outreach work once a week, working with the police to remind young people to adhere to the social distancing rules. The young people that were able to come into the youth centre re-decorated the upstairs of the centre, with paint donated by local stores. Mrs Hutson explained that they are in the process of setting up a new website and are looking for, and recruiting, new trustees. One of their hirers has offered the youth centre help with their bookkeeping and they have been able to secure a new volunteer. Mrs Hutson said that they are still looking for further trustees and volunteers.

Cllr White reiterated that the bookkeeping of the business is very important, and due to the policies of the town council it cannot fulfil its side of the SLA without it.

The Chairman thanked Jo Hutson for her report.

101.2 Cllr Quayle said that the work of the youth centre is vital for Blandford and he and Cllr Lacey-Clarke thanked Jo Hutson and DC Cllr Kerby for their hard work.

102. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCILLORS

Cllr Lacey-Clarke gave the report this month.

102.1 Dorset Carers Support Card – Provides discount and free entry for certain services, details are on the Dorset Council website.

102.2 Nordon – Planning permission has been granted and he expressed his disappointment.

102. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCILLORS (cont.)

- 102.3 Food Vouchers – These are available from the Dorset Council, for families to receive food vouchers during the Christmas holiday and February half term. Families will receive details from their school.
- 102.4 Waste Collection – The dates change during the Bank Holidays and residents are asked to check online for the different collection dates.
- 102.5 Paving Slabs – Cllr Lacey-Clarke reported that overwhelming support to change all the slabs and for the test patch has been received. The feedback is that people would like actual slabs similar to what there is currently. New slabs have been found but they are more expensive. The new slabs are non-slip and have a long lifetime.
- 102.6 Reporting Issues – Over the Christmas period Cllr Lacey-Clarke requested that any issues, i.e. Highways or resident issues, are reported to him and Cllr Quayle as soon as possible.
- 102.7 Youth Centre – Cllr Lacey-Clarke thanked the youth centre for all their hard work.
- 102.8 Christmas Period – Cllr Lacey-Clarke reminded people to stay safe, well and responsible.

Cllr S Hitchings thanked both Dorset Councillors for their support with the Nordon planning application. He reported that potholes are starting to form in the Marsh & Ham car park. Cllr Lacey-Clarke confirmed that he will look into it.

103. APOLOGIES

Cllr R Carter

Cllr C Jacques

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

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr A 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.

Agenda Item No. 8.1.1 – Blandford Opportunity Group

Cllr S Hitchings and Cllr Stevens declared a prejudicial interest as the President and Chairman, respectively, of the Blandford Opportunity Group and will be leaving the meeting during discussion and voting. Cllr L Hitchings declared a personal interest as his son is a user of the Group but will remain for discussion and voting.

Agenda Item No. 8.1.1 – Blandford Railway Club

Cllr Cross declared a prejudicial interest as a member of The Blandford Railway Club and will leave the meeting during discussion and voting.

105. MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 23RD NOVEMBER 2020

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Mieville, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED (12 in favour, 1 non-vote) that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED. The minutes will be signed at the earliest opportunity.

106. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

- 106.1 Working Groups – The Shoppers Parking Permit working group meeting was due to meet on Wednesday 2nd December, however, only Cllrs Cross and Osborne were in attendance. It was therefore agreed that Councillors would submit individual comments to the consultation. The working group scheduled to meet on Tuesday 8th December, to respond to the DC Climate consultation, only had two members in attendance (Cllrs Lindsay and Osborne) who didn't feel comfortable formulating a response on behalf of the Council when there is a fair bit of scope for differing opinion. They therefore responded as individuals.
- 106.2 Reusable Cups – Litter Free Dorset have been working with Sarah Wise at Wimborne War on Waste to try to tackle the recent increase in number of single-use takeaway cups littering streets and causing public bins to overflow. They are hoping to contact local cafes across Dorset about this issue, as they've recently been sent some pictures of bins in Dorset overflowing with disposable hot drink cups. They've created a generic poster that can be shared with cafes, for them to display if they are currently accepting reusable cups, to encourage their customers to start using their reusable cups again. They hope this will help to reduce the number of single-use cups we're seeing littering the streets. They were also hoping to contact some cafes in Blandford, and have asked Blandford War on Waste and the Town Council if we are able to help with this. I have offered to print the posters and Blandford War on Waste has said they will speak to the cafes and offer the posters to them.
- Cllr Mieville reported that three cafés refused to put up notices, two on environmental health grounds and one national chain does not put up any notices. Overall impression was that cafés were pleased to put up the notices and happy to use reusable cups.
- 106.3 Bin Your Butt Campaign – Following a request from the working group re the market area enhancement, the Town Clerk approached Sophie Colley (Litter Free Dorset Coordinator) about the takeaway litter and Sophie has kindly arranged a meeting to discuss this in January. Sophie was then asked about cigarette litter, which is also an issue, and she suggested tackling them separately as they will need different approaches. Sophie advised that the 'Bin Your Butt' campaign is ready to go, so if there are some enthusiastic volunteers this can be easily implemented and posters are available as well as portable ashtrays (stubby packs): <http://www.litterfreedorset.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Bin-Your-Butt-Poster-2020-A4-1.pdf> and <http://www.litterfreedorset.co.uk/current-projects-and-campaigns/binyourbutt/>. Both issues will be discussed at the January meeting.
- 106.4 Application for inclusion in a pharmaceutical list at 25 Salisbury Street, Blandford Forum, Dorset, DT11 7AU in respect of distance selling premises by P & D Cards Ltd – NHS England has considered the above application and has written to confirm that it has been granted. On balance the Committee concluded it was satisfied the application should be GRANTED because the Committee is satisfied that: the proposed premises were not adjacent to or in close proximity to other chemist premises; the premises of the applicant are not on the same site or in the same building as the premises of a provider of primary medical services with a patient list; all essential services are likely to be secured without interruption during the opening hours; all essential services are likely to be secured for persons anywhere in England; all essential services are likely to be secured without face to face contact; all essential services are likely to be secured in a safe and effective manner because it had sufficient information to be satisfied that the procedures adopted by the applicant would be likely to secure the safe and effective provision of essential services.

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

- 106.5 Woodhouse Gardens – A resident has written to the Mayor thanking the Town Council for *the excellent Christmas lighting in the town this year...the Woodhouse Gardens at night are a total delight and I am sure they have been extremely well visited and appreciated by the townsfolk.* These lights were vandalised at the weekend but reinstated by staff and a local contractor on Monday. The company who installed the lights has been asked to provide a quote for 2021 with some additions and improvements.
- 106.6 X8A Bus Service – The X8A service contract with DC expires 31st December 2020 and the last service run will be in February 2021. DC has asked if the town council would consider funding this service and costs and user numbers have therefore been sought for consideration at the January town council meeting.

Cllr Quayle spoke about this service and reported that it was always clear that this service would struggle if it operates as a circular in Blandford Forum. If the town council would support this route it will need to provide a better service. Cllr Lacey-Clarke was told that there is no commercial viability for this route and Blandford Forum has the most funded routes in Dorset from Blandford to Dorchester and Blandford to Salisbury. The people of Blandford Forum need to be encouraged to use the bus service more.

- 106.7 Dorset Council Car Parks – The town council objected to the proposed changes to car parking arrangements across the county. At the DC Cabinet meeting held on Tuesday 8th December it was agreed to proceed with Sunday charging but the original recommendation to extend evening charges to 8pm has been withdrawn. Councillors expressed their relief at this revision.

107. CIVIC REPORT

The paper was sent to Councillors via email.

108. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES

- 108.1 Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting dated 14th December 2020 (includes the budget for 2021/22)

- 108.1.1 Minute 36 - To consider adopting a General Reserves Policy

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

The Town Council agrees that the General Reserves policy is included in the financial regulations as well as reporting to Finance & Staffing in December and March.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

- 108.1.1 Minute 37 - To receive a report regarding Virement from General Reserves to cover expenditure in 2020/21

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

The Town Council vires £9,865 from the Interest Earnt on Earmarked Investments budget line (Code 1001), and £6,213 from Interest Earnt on the Property Fund budget line (Code 1002) to General Reserves (Code 1500).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

108. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES (cont.)

108.1.3 Minute 38 - To receive a report regarding Virement from underspend of various budgets in 2020/21

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

The Town Council vires the underspend from the remaining 75% of the Mayoral Allowance to General Reserves (Code 1500), vires the £15,000 2019/20 underspend of the Blandford Youth Centre grant and the £50,000 from the Blandford Leisure Centre SLA to Skatepark Accrual (Code 1305), and vires the £19,505 underspend of the salaries budget to General Reserves (Code 1500).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

108.1.4 To consider grant applications – (current available balance is £11,234.22 which includes £3,384.22 from 2019/20 underspend)

Cllrs S Hitchings and Stevens were removed from the meeting at 7.42pm during discussion and voting, due to their declaration of interest in this agenda item.

Minute 39.1 - Blandford Opportunity Group (awarded £1,000 in 2017/18 for a support grant)

It was PROPOSED by Cllr White, SECONDED by Cllr L Hitchings and AGREED (11 in favour, 2 non-votes) that

A grant of £2,500 is approved (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Cllrs S Hitchings and Stevens returned to the meeting at 7.44pm.

Minute 39.2 - Panda Pre-school

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

A grant of £1,758 is approved (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Cllr A Cross was removed from the meeting at 7.46pm during discussion and voting, due to his declaration of interest in this agenda item.

Minute 39.3 - Blandford Railway Club

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED (11 in favour, 1 abstention, 1 non-vote) that

A grant of £951 is approved to cover costs for storage (£465) and insurance (£486) incurred this year (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Cllrs A Cross returned to the meeting at 7.48pm.

Cllr S Hitchings spoke about the budget and the potential impact of the X8A bus route funding. A discussion was held if the budget should be voted on tonight or in January, due to the X8A bus service and it was agreed to proceed with the item due to the anticipated costs of the bus service (with it being £250,957 for three years). Cllr S Hitchings thanked officers for their work on the budget.

108. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES (cont.)

The Chairman thanked Cllr S Hitchings and officers for their hard work on the budget.

108.1.5 Consideration of the overall budget for the year 2020/21 and recommendation of the precept for 2021/22

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

The draft budget of £792,183 is approved for the 2021/2022 financial year (-0.48% less than the 2020/2021 budget).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

108.2 The Minutes were received.

The F&S Committee Chairman noted that a change has to be made to minute no. 39.2 as it should read Cllr L Hitchings instead of Cllr Hitchings. The Action box for Minute 40.1 needs to be changed to read Cllr S Hitchings, instead of Town Council. This will be actioned at the next F&S meeting on 15th March 2021.

109. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE AND CONSIDER ANY REQUESTS FROM THE:

109.1 Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – Blandford +

The Assistant Town Clerk informed Councillors that communication with the Dorset Council regarding a determination date for the Decision Statement is ongoing and that the decision from the legal challenge has been deferred to the new year.

109.2 Public Art Plan

Cllr Osborne informed Councillors that the groundworkers are now off until the 4th January. They have been to the site twice in the recent weeks but, due to the amount of rainfall, it has been impossible to lay the kerb edging which does require at least some reasonably dry days. In the new year, once we hopefully have less rain, they can return again, pump out the water from the concrete base and cement in the edging. Once this is done, the follow up work of laying the tarmac surfacing would not be too affected by the weather conditions.

109.3 Climate Change & Biodiversity

Cllr Osborne reported that there is no update this month.

109.4 Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project

109.4.1 To receive an update/consider any recommendations from the town centre recovery survey meeting

The paper was noted (see Appendix B).

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

The Town Council supports in principle a 3-month temporary trial of pedestrianisation of half of the Market Place using funding from the available s106 money from Lidl for town centre enhancement, subject to sufficient relaxation of the Covid-19 rules to allow this trial to be taken to its full potential.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

109.4.1 To receive an update/consider any recommendations from the town centre recovery survey meeting (cont.)

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Mieville, SECONDED by Cllr White and AGREED (12 in favour, 1 abstention) that

Cllr Stevens is appointed as a key liaison with town businesses to determine if there is support for the market area pedestrianisation.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

As Cllr Lacey-Clarke is unable to attend the next Working Group meeting on 14th January 2021 a new Doodle Poll will be sent to arrange the meeting for the following week.

Cllr Stayt left the meeting at 8.15pm.

110. TO APPROVE THE COUNCIL DIARY FOR 2021/2022

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

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

The Town Council approves the Council Diary for 2021/2022 with the following changes:

- **Delete 30th May 2022 as the Bank Holiday has been moved to June**
- **Change the Annual Meeting to Tuesday 3rd May 2022**
- **Change the Mayor Making ceremony to Friday 13th May 2022**

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

111. TO CONSIDER AUTHORITY AND EXPENDITURE APPROVAL TO PROCEED WITH AN EVENT TO MARK THE CENTENARY OF THE CROSS OF SACRIFICE AT THE CEMETERY AND THE WAR MEMORIAL PLACQUES ON THE TOWN HALL

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

In addition to the report, the Assistant Town Clerk reported that members of the Commemoration Group and the Chairman of the Blandford & District branch of the RBL met to discuss the re-commemoration of the Corn Exchange plaques and the Cross of Sacrifice in 2021. The celebrations were planned for March next year, however due to Covid-19 they agreed in principle (subject to Town Council and RBL approval) to propose three ceremonies on the morning of Sunday 7th November 2021.

- a re-dedication of the plaques in the Corn Exchange followed by two ceremonies at the cemetery:
- the 'normal' RBL Commonwealth war graves ceremony and
- a re-dedication of the Cross of Sacrifice
- refreshments to follow at the RBL

The next meeting will be held at the end of January to discuss the next steps.

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

111. TO CONSIDER AUTHORITY AND EXPENDITURE APPROVAL TO PROCEED WITH AN EVENT TO MARK THE CENTENARY OF THE CROSS OF SACRIFICE AT THE CEMETERY AND THE WAR MEMORIAL PLACQUES ON THE TOWN HALL (cont.)

The Town Council approves the proposal to hold an event with associated expenditure of up to £200 from the civic budget (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

112. TO CONSIDER FORMING A WORKING GROUP TO RESPOND, WITH DELEGATED AUTHORITY, TO THE GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON NEW PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (RESPONSE DEADLINE IS 28TH JANUARY 2021, AN EMAIL WAS SENT TO ALL COUNCILLORS ON 8TH DECEMBER 2020, CLLRS CARTER AND STAYT WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE WG)

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

The Town Council forms a working group, consisting of Cllrs Carter, Stayt, Mieville and Holmes to respond to the consultation with delegated authority.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

113. REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

None were received.

The Chairman wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

The meeting closed at 8:37pm.

SIGNED

DATED