



BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

To: All Town Councillors
Members of the Public & Press

Dorset Council Councillors

Dear Member

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Town Council which will be held **online** using Microsoft Teams on **Monday 22nd February 2021 at 7.00 pm** to consider the following items.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
15th February 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 4th 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 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 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.

1. Public Session
 - 1.1 JoJu Charging (regarding the introduction of EVCPs detailed at agenda item no. 9)
2. Report from Dorset Council Councillors
3. Apologies
4. To receive any Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations
5. [Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 25th January 2021](#)
6. [Town Clerk's Report & Correspondence](#)
7. Civic Report
8. Recommendations and Receipt of Minutes (None)

9. [To consider entering into an agreement with JoJu for the introduction of two electric vehicle charging points at Park Road Recreation Ground](#)
10. [To consider the Town Council's position with the payment for use of the sports pavilions January – March](#)
11. [To consider the carrying over of bookings due to Covid-19](#)
12. [To confirm that all documentation and information is in place for the Town Council's reaccreditation application for the Local Council Award Scheme for Quality Gold Status](#)
13. [To approve expenditure for the planters and bedding](#)
14. [To retrospectively approve expenditure for tree works](#)
15. [To approve expenditure for the toilet cleaning contract for 2021/2022](#)
16. To receive an update and consider any requests from the:
 - 16.1 Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – Blandford +
 - 16.2 BFTC Commemoration Group
 - 16.3 Public Art Plan
 - 16.4 Climate Change & Biodiversity
 - 16.5 Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project
17. Reports from Community and Local Organisations (Councillors are requested to advise the Chairman of Council or the Town Clerk if they wish to make a report under this heading)

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

1 st March	Planning Meeting
8 th March	Town & General Purposes Committee Meeting
15 th March	Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting
22 nd March	Town Council Meeting

Minutes of the Town Council and Committee meetings are available from Blandford Library, the Town Clerk's Office and at 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

Review of Policies – The annual meeting was not held in May 2020, due to the decision to retain existing positions during the pandemic. Hence the review of policies and procedures at this meeting did not take. However, Councillors are reassured that staff have reviewed these procedures and the standing orders and financial regulations have been considered at other meetings during the 2020/2021 year.

Grant to the Blandford Forum Railway Club – Robert Stephenson has written *‘on behalf of the members of the above club to thank you for the grant of £951 to cover our costs disbursed for insurance and rent at the Scout hut last year. During lockdown we are all staying cheerful and collectively there is a very strong appetite to return to club meetings as soon as this is safe and permitted by Government regulations. The club will return to a programme of meetings, talks, films and visits with modelling work ongoing. We are also committed to making visits to public locations and schools to display our work, again as soon as permitted. In the interim your generous award has removed any anxiety about survival of the club and we are most obliged for the generosity shown by your members.’*

Old Bath House – The transfer has been signed by the Chairman of Council and the Chairman of the Finance & Staffing Committee and returned to Blanchards Bailey. The buyer has paid the solicitor's costs, as agreed.

The Blandford School – Laptops – The headteacher, Mrs Wilson, has written to *‘thank the Mayor and the Town Council for kindly donating five laptops to the school for our students to use. This will enable some of our disadvantaged students who would not normally have access to a computer at home to engage in online learning. Please could you pass on our enormous appreciation for your support during Lockdown.’*

Responsible Financial Officer – During the Internal Auditor's visit on 2nd February 2021, the auditor recommended that the council formally notes that the responsibility of the RFO role is being covered by the Town Clerk, as line manager of the RFO. To date, it was only noted at the Finance & Staffing committee meeting held on 14th 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.

Dorset Traffic Regulation Order – The Dorset Council is proposing a new Traffic Management Order. The effect of the order will be to reintroduce all static parking, waiting, loading and stopping restrictions currently enforced within the County into a revised map-based format. There will be no material change to any of the operational specifications or dimensions of those restrictions. Comments can be submitted on the Dorset Council website until 26th February 2021.

Blandford Forum Almshouse/General Charities – administrators of the T E D George Charity – The Blandford Children's Fund/Registered Charity No: 230853-6 (Registered 31 August 1967) Governing Instrument: Will dated 30th September 1961 – The Trustees have written to ask the Town Council to display the Notice of Grants in a prominent position on the Town Council's Notice Boards and on its Facebook page. Parents of eligible children, who must live within the footprint of Blandford Forum only and not the periphery villages, are invited to apply for an application form by no later than 23rd February 2021. The administrators have said that there will be families in the town which might benefit from the small grants they are able to consider, and the council's assistance in raising awareness of this Fund would be greatly appreciated.

Marsh & Ham Toilets – Jackie Vacher (Freeman) has written to pass on her congratulations on how clean the toilets are and that they were open at 7.15am, whilst she was on a trip to the local shops. This has been shared with the contractor who cleans and opens the toilets in the mornings.

Community Fridge – At the meeting held on 26th October 2020, it was agreed unanimously that the Town Council awards a grant of £2,000 to the project. A grant to the same value is also being held from the Dorset Council. Due to the pandemic, it has not yet been possible to open a bank account for the group of volunteers to manage, and volunteers have been reimbursed for their training costs from the Dorset Council grant the Town Council has been holding on the group's behalf as a temporary measure. This has been made as transparent as possible by creating nominal codes for the Community Fridge income and the expenditure. In addition, a Facebook page and email has now been set up.

Co-Option – At the meeting held on 26th October 2020, following the departure of Cllr Russell, it was agreed that the *Town Council wishes to delay the co-option process until it can be held safely in person (May 2021)*. This decision was made on the assumption that the council would be able to meet in person in May. The advertisement and preparation for this process would need to start in March to allow for the staff time involved, advertisement notice required and for the public to consider the opportunity and apply for it. The deadline then needs to take into account that applications need to be received over a week before the meeting so they can be distributed to Councillors for consideration. Therefore, the preparations will be made but it may not be possible to meet in person in May to hold the co-option meetings.

To consider entering into an agreement with JoJu for the introduction of two electric vehicle charging points at Park Road Recreation Ground

Background

At the Town Council meeting held on 26th October 2020 Councillors resolved that:

The Town Council supports the Trust's recommendation to demolish the toilet block and extend the car park.

The Trust authorises expenditure of £10,000 from the legacy donation, and the Town Council authorises expenditure of £20,000 from the sale of the Old Bath House property, and £10,000 from General Reserves as a contingency (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8) for Company C to:

- **Demolish toilet block and chain link fencing (retain five bar gate for vehicular access for future use) and remove from site**
- **Resurface the new area shown within the blue line above and white line the whole car park area to ensure maximum occupancy**

A separate contractor is appointed to:

- **Relocate electricity supply / install cabinet (consider incorporating BUFC's future needs for floodlights)**
- **Erect green palisade fencing along the blue line to secure the site.**

At the same meeting Cllr. White asked for the inclusion of electric car charging points (EVCPs) as part of the project. This is line with the Town Council's Climate and Biodiversity Action Plan and will be of benefit to residents, particularly in the surrounding area where many do not have driveways or suitable spaces where they can connect a car to their power point.

Progress with JoJu, an ECVP company who are installing the charge points on behalf of the Dorset Council this year, has been very positive and they have attended two site meetings with the council and contractors. JoJu has provided advice and support with the project and are experienced and knowledgeable. Councillors have been supportive of the inclusion of the EVCPs and have been kept up to date.

Update

An asbestos survey and report have been completed on the toilet block.

SSE advised that three phase power is required for EVCPs and this has been ordered and paid for at a cost of £6,078.04.



The current layout of the car park is as pictured, which has been amended following the guidance provided by the local contractor, JoJu and SSE.

EVCPs

JoJu advised that there are two options for the funding of the charging points:

Option 1. The Town Council can choose to pay the full installation charge and would then receive the income generated.

Option 2. The contractor can fund the installation costs, but they would then take income from the EV Charge Points, with an energy rebate payable to Blandford Town Council each year. For example, if the EV Charge Point uses 2000 kWh's in the first year, the council would be reimbursed for the value of the electricity, plus 10%, which would act as its income.

JoJu has confirmed that, based on a 15-year agreement, it is proposing to fully fund two charging points, which would be funded by JoJu's funding partner the Charge Point Operator, Gronn Kontakt.

Financial Implications

Should Councillors support the fully funded scheme, there is no financial impact on the council.

The project requires an electrical contractor, who has been engaged and attended the most recent site meeting on 12th February 2021, but this cost is not yet known and will be brought back to a future meeting.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Councillors proceed with Option 2, the fully funded charging points provided by JoJu with a 15-year agreement, at Park Road recreation ground car park.

Linda Scott Giles
Town Clerk
15th February 2021

To consider the Town Council's position with the payment for use of the sports pavilions January – March

Background

It was agreed at the Town Council meeting held on 27th April 2020 that the sports clubs would receive payment relief for the period of April to June 2020. This was then further reviewed at the full council meeting held on 27th July 2020 and councillors agreed to extend the payment relief at half the rent fee for the period July to September 2020. This was in light of the ongoing situation with the pandemic and ongoing maintenance and costs incurred were taken into consideration.

It was most recently agreed at the Town Council meeting held on 23rd November 2020 that:

The Town Council extends the payment relief of 50% to the sports clubs during October and December 2020 and 100% payment relief for November 2020 and will review this again at the end of this period.

Report

Since the end of December 2020, the sports clubs have been closed and the pavilions are not being used due to the current lockdown.

It would seem unlikely that the clubs will be able to use the pavilions and pitches until mid-March at the earliest. Currently Town Council staff are carrying out limited grass cutting of the pitches we maintain, although works to the cricket square should resume in March. Health and safety inspections of the pavilions have continued and will continue to do so throughout the lockdown period.

It seems sensible to review the situation again for the January to March invoicing period and consider if further payment relief should be given.

Financial Impact

The quarterly rent expected for each quarter from the clubs is as follows:

Bowling club	£439.14
Football club	£379.68
Cricket club	£434.69
Rugby club	£439.14
Total:	£1,692.65

At the previous meeting when this matter was discussed, the RFO advised that *Barnes (bowls, cricket and football) had a net cost of £4,867, due to not charging the full amount of rent. However as of 31/03/2020 there was a surplus in the reserve of £9,000 which we were going to use instead of the full town council grant of £35,123 and therefore show a deficit in the accounts of £9,000 for 2020/21. If we therefore only charge the sports clubs either 50% of their rent or 2/3rds of their rent we will still be within the budgeted shortfall of £9,000 as we can draw down the town council grant monies to keep within the £9k deficit.*

In the RFO's absence, the Town Clerk has invoiced the sports clubs for the October to December period, but it should be noted that they have not been charged for their share of the utilities. This is because it has not been possible to clarify what these costs should be, but they are minimal due to the usage and the clubs have been advised that this will be charged at some point in the future.

Recommendation

Councillors are to decide if the sports clubs are to resume paying their quarterly rent or if payment relief is to be extended for the period January to March due to the national lockdown.

It should also be noted that the utilities have not been charged on to the sports clubs in the October to December 2020 period, nor will they be included in the January to March 2021 period when those invoices are prepared.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
20th January 2021

To consider the carrying over of bookings due to Covid-19

There are some bookings that had to be cancelled due to the lockdown and hirers have asked if they can be carried over into the next financial year instead of being refunded.

The Bookings Receptionist asked the internal auditor for guidance on this and she has advised that:

In terms of carrying over bookings – if the Council permits this to be done, then you are able to do it. There is nothing from an accountancy or audit point of view which prohibits you carrying forward income.

What you would need to do is to identify the affected hirers and the amount of income which has been taken this year and which you are going to carry forward. Your finance officer would then need to transfer an equivalent sum into rent in advance (a type of creditor) so the funds would be held on the balance sheet at the year end and would not count as part of the 20/21 income.

It's a simple journal adjustment on sage – Debit rental income £X (to reduce the income showing for this year), and Credit rent in advance (this code may need to be set up on sage, or you could use 'other creditors' or similar).

After the 20/21 accounts have been signed off and the finance officer has run the year end on Sage, you would then reverse the journal to bring the income that has been deferred from 20/21 into 21/22.

The affected hirers are:

Steve Hitchings	1 day WHG	Cllr discount 50%	£29.52
D145 Pearson Professional	1 session WHG		£26.60
D144 Dorset Italian	5 days WHG	42.56 with 20%	£212.80
Anna James	6 sessions WHG	21.29 with 20%	£127.74

Recommendation

It is recommended that council approves the carrying over of the income and the appropriate action after the 20/21 accounts have been signed off.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
5th February 2021

To confirm that all documentation and information is in place for the Town Council's reaccreditation application for the Local Council Award Scheme Quality Gold Status

Introduction

Councillors will be aware that the Town Council was accredited twice with Quality Council status up until the beginning of 2015 when the system was changed by NALC and as a result we immediately accepted Foundation status of the new Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS), which is the same level of the previous Quality Council award scheme. There were three stages to the new scheme; Foundation, Quality and Quality Gold.

The Town Council became the first council in Dorset to achieve Quality status in 2016 and went on to achieve Quality Gold status in 2017, which now requires reaccreditation in March 2021. This report asks that Councillors confirm that everything is in place to be reaccredited with this status.

Financial & Staffing Implications

It is a large piece of work, which has taken some time to put together in preparation for the assessment, which is carried out by an accreditation panel. It is worth working towards as it ensures that we continue to work to a high standard and, if/once reaccredited, it also tells the community that it has a responsible council with the best working practices in place. NALC has stated that LCAS exists to celebrate the successes of the very best local councils and to provide a framework to support all local councils to meet their full potential.

The Chairman of the Finance & Staffing committee, Cllr S Hitchings, has worked on the five year budget plan, which has been updated and included in the Town Council Plan.

Additional Information

The application form and associated documents were sent to Councillors on Thursday 4th February 2021 for consideration, but the accreditation scheme was amended by NALC from 8th February 2021 and amendments are therefore required. The documents sent were as follows:

- Application Form
- The following statements:
 - o Ensures that the council delivers value for money
 - o Meets its duties in relation to bio-diversity and crime & disorder
 - o Provides leadership in planning for the future of the community
 - o Manages the performance of the council as a corporate body
 - o Manages the performance of each individual staff member to achieve its business plan
- Town Council Plan (including the updated five year budget plan to include the recently agreed precept/budget for 2021/2022).

These documents are now being reviewed and added to in accordance with the changes implemented by NALC. However, members of the press/public are invited to [contact the council](#) should they wish to receive a copy of any of these documents.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Town Council:

- a) confirms by resolution that it has prepared statements to be presented to the accreditation panel showing how it fulfils the criteria of the LCAS Quality Gold Award
- b) retrospectively approves the associated expenditure for the registration fee of £50 and accreditation fee of £200 (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
6th January 2021

To approve expenditure for the planters and bedding

Background

The Town Council has been using the same supplier for our bedding and planter requirements for the last six years. It was therefore felt that quotes should be sought from local suppliers to ensure we were still getting good value. There have been some issues with communication and getting quotes promptly from our regular suppliers but I have been assured this has been dealt with.

Report

Usually this request would be taken to the Town and General Purposes Committee for consideration but the next meeting is on March 8th which would be too late to place the order for this year's planter and bedding requirements.

I contacted other local Town Councils to ask who they used and two of the companies used by other councils were approached during this process.

I approached five suppliers including our current ones and their quotes and responses are detailed below.

Company A: (current suppliers) £ 2885.40 exc. VAT

Company B: £3,246.19 exc. VAT

Company C: £ 4,050.00 exc. VAT.

Company D: Chose not to quote.

Company E: Chose not to quote.

It would therefore appear that we are still getting good value from our current supplier, there have been no issues with the quality of the plants and hopefully the communication issues are sorted.

The sponsorship for the planters by local businesses is running again this year and letters have been sent to the existing sponsors. The cost has been frozen and therefore will remain at £80 for existing and £100 for new sponsors. If existing sponsors do not wish to continue new ones will be sought.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Company A is used to supply this year's bedding and planter requirements using funds of £2885.40 + VAT from budget line 6200 Containers planting and signs which has a total of £4873.00 budgeted for 2021-22 (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8). Councillors are requested to note the sponsorship charges.

Jon Goodenough
Operations Manager
26th January 2021

To retrospectively approve expenditure for tree works

Report

Staff carried out the annual in-house tree survey and identified tree works required over the winter period. In addition, a professional tree survey was carried out at the Cemetery by a qualified arboriculturist.

Various tree works have been identified at several amenity areas and quotes have been sought.

The tree works identified during the survey at the Cemetery include the pollarding of four Limes alongside the boundary with Davis Gardens. Works to two of the trees at the Cemetery are of a more specialist nature and a different tree surgeon was approached who had previous knowledge of the trees in question to carry out these works. (Cedar and Black Pine). All the works at the cemetery required planning permission as all the trees are subject to preservation orders, this has now been obtained.

Whilst I always attempt to obtain more than one quote for the tree works occasionally this is not possible for the more specialist works.

Due to the time constraints for these works to be carried out before the trees are in leaf, I am asking for retrospective expenditure approval as the orders have been placed and works commenced. Had this not been done we would have run out of time to complete the works. This has been compounded by the delays in obtaining quotes and getting the surveys completed due to the current lockdown and the one in November.

Financial Implications

Quotes for tree works at amenity areas:

Company A: £3350.00 no VAT

Company B: £1600+VAT

Quote for specialist works to Black Pine and Cedar:

Lebanese Cedar crown lift to 6 m above ground level to reduce torsional load and clear from existing yew. Selectively reduce peripheral branches extending southwest towards existing yew by 2m to reduce load. £150.00

Black Pine inspect brace as requested by the survey. £45.00

If then required after inspection, install a single dynamic cobra 8 ton non-invasive brace in the same location as the highest cable, retain existing brace.

Reduce the length of the primary branch at 8-9m above ground level extending south west by 3-4m in length to reduce load on branch union if the existing brace is ok then a deduction of 370 can be made. £560.00

Total £755 + VAT

Quote for pollarding of four Limes at Cemetery:

Company A Did not submit a quote

Company B £4,800.00 + VAT

Total of all tree works £7,155.00 + VAT

It is suggested that the cost of the pollarding of the four Lime trees £4,800.00 is taken from the Cemetery wall budget as they are affecting the wall and the budget has a healthy £36,654.00 with a further £5,000 to be added for 21/22. This could be replaced in the 22/23 budget as no works are forecast for the wall in the near future, alternatively it could come from General Reserves as the work to these four trees is unexpected and would drain the tree works and tree survey budget.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Councillors approve the expenditure using Company B, and decide what budget line to use for the work to the Lime trees. It is further recommended that the cost of the other works is taken from the tree works budget line 7045 which has a balance of £1963.00 and the balance from the tree survey budget line 1075 which has a balance of £8713.00 (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

Jon Goodenough
Operations Manager
5th February 2021

To approve expenditure for the toilet cleaning contract for 2021/2022

The lease for the Marsh & Ham toilet block (including the Information Centre) with, originally, North Dorset District Council (now the Dorset Council) expired in 2016.

Since that time the toilet cleaning contract has only been offered on a one-year basis until such time as the future of the public toilets in the Marsh and Ham car park is confirmed. The developer for the site has not been in contact about any progress and with the current pandemic imminent progress seems unlikely.

The toilet cleaning contract expires on the 31st March 2021 and the current contractor has quoted for a 0% increase for 2021/2022, for the second year running this represents a 0% increase.

The financial regulations state that for expenditure below £25,000 but above £5,000 three quotations will be obtained, where possible. As we know from previous experience on tenders for this facility this local company provides a very competitive quote and a good service and have been particularly flexible during the pandemic. It is recommended that a one-year extension to the contract is approved in these unusual circumstances and that a full tendering process will be carried out once clarity on the future of the toilets is obtained.

The Town Clerk had been asked to seek an update from the DC officer who has taken on the NDDC officer's workload but a response has not been received. In light of this matter returning to the agenda, she has chased the officer.

It is also felt that changing cleaners in the middle of the Covid outbreak would not be ideal, due to the current contractor already being familiar with the Town Council's Covid procedures.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Town Council renews the cleaning contract with the existing contractor for a period of one year only, using funds of £7,439.96 from budget line 6650 (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

Jon Goodenough
Operations Manager
12th February 2021