



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 23rd November 2020 at 7.00 pm** to consider the following items.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
16th November 2020

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 by [clicking here](#). 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.

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

1. Public Session
 - 1.1 Mark Williams – TREADS
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 26th October 2020](#)
6. [Town Clerk's Report & Correspondence](#)
7. Civic Report (paper to follow)

8. Recommendations and Receipt of Minutes
 - 8.1 Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting held on Monday 9th November 2020
 - 8.1.1 To Receive the Minutes
 - 8.2 Town & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Monday 16th November 2020
 - 8.2.1 To Receive the Minutes
9. [Appendix A – New Planning Applications](#) (Wyatt Homes – land north of the bypass)
10. [To consider the Town Council's position with the payment for use of the sports pavilions October – December](#)
11. [To receive the approved External Auditor's Report for 2019/20 and to note the recommendations](#)
12. [To consider expenditure approval for replacement laptops for office staff](#)
13. [To consider expenditure authority for the introduction of raised beds for wildflower areas at Jubilee Way](#)
14. [To receive the recommendation from the Working Group and respond to the NALC consultation Standards Matter 2](#)
15. To consider forming a working group with delegated authority to respond to the Shoppers Parking Permit consultation ([viewable by clicking here](#))
16. To receive an update and consider any requests from the:
 - 16.1 Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – Blandford +
 - 16.2 Public Art Plan
 - 16.3 Climate Change & Biodiversity
 - 16.3.1 To consider responding to the Dorset Council Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy consultation ([viewable by clicking here](#))
 - 16.4 Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project
 - 16.4.1 [To receive an update/consider any recommendations from the town centre recovery survey meeting](#)
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

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 30 th November | Corn Exchange |
| 7 th December | Planning Meeting |
| 14 th December | Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting |
| 21 st December | Town Council Meeting |
| 23 rd December | Office closes at 12.30pm |

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



Tel: 01258 454500 • Fax: 01258 454432
Email: admin@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk
www.blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk

Town Clerk's Report and Correspondence

Public Conveniences – The Town Council has received a £200 donation from Stourpaine Parish Council for the upkeep of the toilets.

Park Road Toilet Block – An asbestos survey has been carried out since the authority to proceed was given at the last council meeting. SSE is compiling a quote to relocate the electricity supply.

Calendars – The calendars for 2021, raising funds for the Mayor's Charity – The Community Kitchen, have now sold out.

Town Centre Recovery Survey – As requested by the Dorset Council, in town centre recovery meetings, the survey results were shared with Dorset Council officers John Sellgren, Michael Westwood, James Potten and Matthew Piles.

Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022 – The Nation will come together over a four-day Bank Holiday weekend to celebrate The Queen's 70 year reign. The May Bank Holiday Weekend will be moved to Thursday 2nd June 2022 and an additional Bank Holiday on Friday 3rd June 2022 will see a four-day weekend to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee - the first time any British monarch has reached this historic milestone. The Town Clerk is awaiting guidance from the Pageant Master as to how the government expects town and parish councils to be involved. Terence Dear has already advised that Gordon Irving is arranging for a concern to be held in the church on the Sunday afternoon.

Skate Park Lease – The Dorset Council has now sent a draft lease, which has been passed to the town council's solicitor to consider.

Centenary of War Memorials – The Cross of Sacrifice at the cemetery and the plaques on the Town Hall in Blandford Forum were erected in 1921, so next year is the centenary of that event. Various groups/individuals are trying to research the background and details of the introduction of the Cross and the plaques and haven't got very far because all the borough council minutes from 1918-21 would be at the Dorset History Centre. The Town Clerk has written to the History Centre to ask if it is possible for us to cover the costs of someone going back through these minutes or if we could collect them and go through them and then return them once we are finished.

Mayor's Christmas Card – There will be more recipients this year, but less paper usage and cost, with the majority of cards being sent out via email. The Blandford Opportunity Group designed the card and the Mayor's Secretary has added a moving background.

Corn Exchange – The consultants have prepared a consultation to run in December and January and this has been submitted to the Forum Focus for the December edition. They are also meeting with other stakeholders via Zoom in the coming weeks – Tony Horrocks & Sam James (panto), Terence Dear & Nicci Brown (Civic Society), Pat Pryor (ArtsReach), James Henshaw (Coade Hall), Clive Newall (comedy nights) and Andy Reynolds (re markets).

PLANNING APPENDIX A – NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS
Deferred from the Planning Meeting held on Monday 2nd November 2020

| | Application & Date | Application Details | Comments/ Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2033 |
|---|--|--|--|
| 1 | P/OUT/2020/00026 Lewis Wyatt (Construction) Ltd 22nd October 2020 | <p><u>Land At E 389445 N 108065 North and East of the Blandford Bypass Blandford</u></p> <p>Hybrid planning application for the phased development for up to 600 No. dwellings and non-residential uses comprising: Outline planning application (to determine access) to develop land by the erection of up to 433 No. dwellings (Use Class C3), local centre with flexible floorspace including Commercial, Business and Services (Use Class E), Drinking Establishments and hot food takeaways (Use Class Sui Generis) and Local Community (Use Class F2); land for a three-form entry primary school and associated playing pitches (Use Class F1 Learning and non-residential institutions); form public open space, replacement allotments including allotment building, new sports pitches, parking, access, infrastructure, landscaping, and carry out ancillary and site preparation works, including demolition of existing buildings and removal of existing allotments. Full planning application to erect 167 No. dwellings (Use Class C3), form public open space, attenuation basins, parking, access, infrastructure, landscaping, and carry out ancillary and site preparation works.</p> | B2 - Land North & East of Blandford Forum |

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

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.

Report

The sports clubs had all thanked the Town Council for the payment relief for the 1st quarter of the financial year and were appreciative of the extension.

It was agreed that this would be reviewed again at the end of the invoicing period to see how things had progressed.

The RFO approached the Chairman of the Finance & Staffing Committee regarding the distribution of invoices for October – December and Cllr S Hitchings asked that it be considered by full council. Cllr S Hitchings noted that *'this is a difficult balancing act as we have made two previous decisions about the rent. During the last lock down, we supported the clubs with a zero charge and then 50% charge whilst they were able to operate. This quarter has both situations.'*

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 |

The RFO has advised that as of today, Barnes (bowls, cricket and football) has 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.

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 October to December 2020, possibly removing November due to the second lockdown, and reviewed again at the end of this period.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
16th November 2020

To receive the approved External Auditor’s Report for 2019/20 and to note the recommendations

Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2019/20

In respect of **BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL – DO0010**

1 Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2020; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

Our responsibility is to review Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with guidance issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (see note below). Our work **does not** constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would do.

2 External auditor report 2019/20

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with *Proper Practices* and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

Regulation 12 (3) of the Accounts and Audit Regs 2015 (signing and approval of the statement of accounts for Category 2 authorities) requires the Responsible Financial Officer as soon as practicable after the date on which the authority complies with regulation 12 (2c) (re. accounts approved and signed following meeting) to do the following on behalf of the smaller authority:

- (a) commence the period for the exercise of public rights in accordance with regulation 14 and regulation 15; and
- (b) notify the local auditor of the date on which that period was so commenced.

We note that Section 1, the Annual Governance Statement was approved on 08/06/2020 and Section 2, the Accounting Statements were approved on 08/06/2020, however the public rights period did not commence until 27/07/2020. We fully appreciate the difficulties arising as a result of coronavirus restrictions; however, please consider the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, when setting the date for the approval of the AGAR in relation to the public rights period in future years.

3 External auditor certificate 2019/20

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2020.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature



Date

02/10/2020

* Note: the NAO issued guidance applicable to external auditors' work on limited assurance reviews for 2019/20 in Auditor Guidance Note AGN/02. The AGN is available from the NAO website (www.nao.org.uk)

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Town Council receives and notes the External Auditor’s report in a formal resolution.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
27th October 2020

To consider expenditure approval for replacement laptops for office staff

Background

In October 2016 the Town Council migrated from IT support provided by the then Dorset County Council to a private company. As part of the move the Town Council purchased seven laptops for all office staff. These had a predicted life span of four to five years.

Further Information

The current IT provider offers quarterly maintenance visits, system monitoring and are always available for any issues, both for office staff and Councillors.

As the laptops are now four years old the Town Clerk has asked all office staff if they think they require a new laptop and only two members have confirmed that their laptop requires replacing.

The IT provider has quoted the following for the replacement laptops.

HP G7 Laptop with 2.1GHz Processor, 8GB of RAM and 256GB SSD, 15.6" and Windows 10 Pro at a cost of **£635 per laptop excl VAT**. There is also a £15 delivery charge which covers the cost paid to the supplier.

It is estimated that 2-3hours per machine are needed to complete the build and installation, which will be taken from our pre-purchased hours.

Following the purchase of 75 hours in April 2019 we still have 23.25 hours left on our account.

Additional Information

The two old laptops can either be used for the Census support or for selling on but the hard drive would need replacing and it is recommended that £200 is included to cover this cost.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Councillors approve the purchase of two new laptops at a cost of £1,270+ VAT, using funds from the IT replacement accrual budget line, which has a balance of £18,004.49 plus £200 to replace the hard drives (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

Sybille Maddock
Assistant Town Clerk
9th November 2020

To consider expenditure authority for the introduction of raised beds for wildflower areas at Jubilee Way

In 2019, the Town Council resolved to introduce a wildflower area at Jubilee Way, following the felling of a tree there and a public consultation.

This was added to the list of additional projects for the grounds staff to carry out. This is an extensive list on top of their daily routines and workload. However, discussions were carried out during the lockdown earlier this year on how we could progress it. The Grounds & Property Supervisor advised that the grounds staff do not have experience in this area and are employed to maintain areas and are not landscape gardeners. It was felt that, to ensure it is a success and also looks as good as possible, it would be worth enlisting the expertise of a local contractor.

A site meeting was held and it was agreed that the best way forward for ongoing maintenance was to introduce raised beds. This would look fantastic and be enjoyed by both residents and people visiting the hospital.

A quote obtained, which is detailed as follows:

Supply and construct 3 raised planters made out of new style, pine pressure treated sleepers. They will each measure approximately 2.4 metres by 2.4 metres. As the ground is sloped in places, they will be dug in and levelled and be two courses in height from the lowest adjacent ground. Each sleeper is 200mm in height so will give a finish height of 400mm from the lowest adjacent ground. If you feel you would like them higher then there would be an additional cost of £200 fitted per extra course of sleepers per planter. Once constructed the inside will be lined with a damp proof membrane. The inside will then be filled with supplied topsoil. Bulbs will be supplied and planted in each planter along with a wild flower seed mix, which is best put down between April and June, so if planters are constructed over this winter we will return in the spring to sow the wild flower seed mix.

Price includes all labour, materials, delivery and waste disposal costs. This is for 3 planters at two courses high. As above, if extra courses are required, this will incur the additional cost.

The contractor has a Palm Tree and Mediterranean Plant Nursery based in Blandford as part of his business and has offered to donate and plant some of his plants into these planters (i.e. phorniums, dwarf palms, ornate grasses) and is happy to discuss this once planters are constructed and then agree a planting scheme. If agreed, he would like to have a small sign in place, advertising his business and that plants were donated to the town.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Councillors approve expenditure for the introduction of three raised beds for bulbs, wildflowers and a planting scheme at £1,600, using funds from the budget line 6200 Containers Planting & Signs (due to the underspend from not having three tier planters this year (COVID-19)) (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
10th November 2020

To receive the recommendation from the Working Group and respond to the NALC consultation Standards Matter 2

The working group's responses to the questions posed in the consultation, which can be found at this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/standards-matter-2-public-consultation-and-public-sector-survey>, are in italics. They also take into account the Seven Principles of Public Life: integrity; objectivity; selflessness; accountability; openness; honesty and leadership.

Question 1: Standards of Conduct in the UK

A. How well do you think ethical standards - as enshrined by the Seven Principles of Public Life - are upheld in public life today?

The Government/Cabinet needs to set an example of ethical standards such as integrity, morality and openness. Recent events such as government advisors not following their own advice over Covid don't help.

B. Do you believe that there have there been any notable shifts in approaches or attitudes to ethical standards in public life in recent years?

Public attitudes towards ethical standards in public life have deteriorated, and the public has become more cynical. This results from a lack of democracy and accountability.

C. What do you see as the most significant threats to ethical standards in public life today?

The abolition of the Standards Boards for England has been a big threat to ethical standards in local government.

Question 2: The Seven Principles of Public Life

A. Do the Seven Principles of Public Life accurately describe the appropriate ethical responsibilities for those in public roles, including both political and non-political office-holders?

The 7 Standards are good but unenforceable: they look good on paper, but they are rarely maintained. Elections are the only way of holding authority to account at times.

B. Would you amend or replace any of the principles or their descriptors? If so, how?

We would add Inclusion and Diversity as new standards.

Question 3: The UK's arrangements for regulating standards

A. Are you confident that the UK's arrangements for regulating ethical standards are robust and effective?

Parliamentary Standards Authority and the Ministerial Code are self-regulating and unaccountable. Lack of a written constitution a problem. The loss of the Standards Boards leaves only the criminal law to refer to as a last resort - although it is admitted that sometimes the Boards went too far.

B. Are there any areas of public life where regulation on issues of ethical standards is not strong enough?

Local authorities need something with powers which are between the Standards Board, and the criminal law. The Local Government Ombudsman is also lacking in teeth and acts far too slowly in most cases. Most sanctions are imposed by political parties - this doesn't work at a local level.

Question 4: Best practice in standards regulation

A. What makes an effective standards regulator?

Independence and accountability are needed in regulators.

B. Do the UK's standards regulators have the right powers and remit to act effectively?

Regulators have neither sufficient power nor wide enough remits.

C. Should the independence of standards regulators be enhanced and protected, and if so, how?

The 7 standards could be incorporated into law for parliamentarians - but there is a danger of criminalising councillors and officials at a local level. There is a danger of being the subject of malicious accusations, and so we are better served by other mechanisms at a local level.

Question 5: Creating ethical cultures

A. How can the Seven Principles best be embedded within a public sector organisation's working culture?

The 7 Principles need to become part of the Performance Review document for council officers; put into Council Standing Orders; and into 'Vision and Ethos' documents. Could they be added to the standing legislation under which local authorities operate?

B. What are the most significant obstacles to embedding high ethical standards in a public sector organisation?

The most significant obstacles to embedding high ethical standards are the lack of accountability and the lack of independent oversight.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Town Council submits the working group's responses to the consultation. Submissions must be emailed to public@public-standards.gov.uk by 18th December 2020.

Cllr H Mieville
15th November 2020

To consider the recommendations from the town centre recovery survey

The working group have now been meeting monthly for over a year, and because of Covid-19 we now hope to help with regeneration as well as enhancement. With the help of Nic Nicol, Town Team and Nicci Brown from the Civic Society, a successful town survey was conducted, with 18% of the residents and 50% of town business's responding. The results are below in order of preference.

- Pedestrianisation of the markets area
- Wider pavements
- Less motor traffic
- More outdoor seating & greenery
- More public toilets
- Cleaner streets & less litter
- Greater use of riverside & meadows area
- Free parking
- Support for local shops
- Activities for families, live music etc., in town centre

We have now had a meeting with 2 councillors from Shaftesbury who report that since road closure has been in place the footfall and shop sales until the 2nd lockdown had increased, and shop takings during July/August were higher than last summer. Public transport also reports more people travelling into Shaftesbury.

We have also met with Roland Skeats to discuss ways in which traffic can be reduced through the town. A 20mph zone was mentioned but because of the volume the average speed is lower than 20mph. It was agreed that a Through Traffic sign with arrow towards Wimborne Road is added at the bottom of Damory Street, and the Blandford direction sign is removed from the junction off the A350 and Milldown Road at the end of bypass to discourage traffic from entering the town past the schools and hospital. This will be done within the next week so that traffic can be monitored.

Thanks to Hugh de longh for attending all our daytime and evening meetings and for all his help and guidance. Councillors have been sent the notes he has produced from the last meeting, along with the action plan.

Recommendations

The working group would like to recommend that councillors consider a 3 month trial temporary pedestrianisation of half of the Market Place using funding from the available S106 money from Lidl for town centre enhancement. This would hopefully be carried out in the Spring.

The group would also like to recommend that the council considers appointing one of their councillors to be responsible as a key liaison with town businesses.

Next meeting: Monday 30th November 2020 at 10:30 am.

Colin Stevens
Chair of the working group
16th November 2020