

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
Held on Monday 24th January 2022 at 7:02 pm in the Corn Exchange



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
Cllr E Bray

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk

Operations Manager

IN ATTENDANCE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Cllr C Jacques

Nicci Brown – Press

116. PUBLIC SESSION

116.1 Declaration of Acceptance of Office to be signed by the successful candidate following the Old Town Ward by-election scheduled for Thursday 20th January 2022

The Chairman congratulated Emily Rose Bray on winning the by-election for the Old Town ward on Thursday 20th January 2022. Cllr Bray read out and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which was witnessed by the Town Clerk.

116.2 Audrey Burch – Blandford Welcome Group

Mrs Burch explained to councillors about the local efforts being made for the resettlement of refugees. The Group is raising funds to help support the refugees and the funding from the Dorset Council has run out. Cllr White suggested getting in touch with the William Williams Charity to find out if there will be funding available.

117. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS

Report given by Cllr Quayle this month.

117.1 New Town Councillor – Cllr Quayle welcomed Cllr Bray to the council.

117.2 Precept – Dorset Council proposes a 3% increase in council tax, which amounts to an extra £1.02 a week.

117.3 Hospitality & Leisure Grant – There is a grant available and businesses will hopefully be contacted by Dorset Council.

117.4 New Grant – There is an additional grant for not for profit, community and cultural organisations to help fund projects including village halls, car parks, play areas, etc.

117.5 Digital Exclusion – Cllr Quayle asked councillors to reach out to residents who may require help with a device or IT support as there is currently a scheme available from Dorset Council.

117.6 Paving – Dorset Council is waiting on a new timetable from the utility companies.

117.7 Fishers Close – The Rangers have replaced the felled tree with four trees as they are now replacing a fallen tree with two trees and are due to remove another one from that area.

117. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS (cont)

- 117.8 Local Transport – There is funding available for improving local transport and a consultation will be received in due course.
- 117.9 TIC Update – Cllr Quayle contacted the Dorset Council officer who was dealing with the TIC asset that belongs to Dorset Council. A meeting was held with the officer, Cllr Quayle and the Town Clerk on Friday morning to discuss the options available.
- 117.10 Sovereign – Both Dorset Council councillors have received a lot of complaints from Sovereign Housing residents and are taking this further.

118. APOLOGIES

Cllr P Osborne

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

7:37pm – Cllr White left the meeting.

Cllr Quayle declared a personal interest in the venue hire charges as his wife is a regular hirer.

120. MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 20TH DECEMBER 2021

7:39pm – Cllr White returned to the meeting.

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

121. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

- 121.1 Blandford Massachusetts – Barry Barnett wrote to the Town Clerk to gauge interest in producing a video for Blandford Massachusetts where the Blandford Historical Society will be celebrating the 200th anniversary of their church in September 2022. The Town Clerk has written to local organisations and received positive responses to date. The Town Museum has offered to contact a pupil who may be able to help with the video.
- 121.2 Welcome Back Fund – As part of the work under the Welcome Back Fund, Dorset Council is working with Blandford Forum Town Council. As part of this work, the Welcome Back Fund is paying for automated footfall monitoring at one location in the town centre, which is opposite the Town Hall. The accessible picnic benches were received just before Christmas and located at the rugby, football, cricket clubs and the cemetery. New planters are also being purchased with the funding, which is money from the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) provided by HM Government.
- 121.3 BRFC Lease – A meeting has been held with the Town Council's solicitor to discuss the introduction of a long-term lease for the Rugby Club at Larksmead. This will be referred back to the Recreation Amenities Committee.
- 121.4 Service Level Agreements – All the organisations who applied for a continuation of, or a new, agreement have written to thank the Town Council for its ongoing support by extending the agreements.
- 121.5 Corn Exchange Gantry – A caretaker has reported that people have been accessing the gantry and this has been reported to the PCSO who advised that we should put measures in place to prevent access. This is particularly difficult on the roof area, partly because of the Grade I listing.

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

However, the Operations Manager has changed the angle of the CCTV that covers the back of the office, arranged for temporary lighting to be installed and the anti-vandal paint and associated signage to be added. IPA has also been approached for their views.

121.6 Woodhouse Gardens Access – An issue was raised with the access to the pavilion due to the difficulty mobility scooters are experiencing. The DAG offered to meet the Town Clerk on site to discuss the matter, thanks to Nicci Brown, and it was agreed that the new access was suitable but the existing door with the ramp was not. Hence, signage has been added to direct people with mobility issues to the smoother entrance when accessing and exiting the building.

121.7 Defibrillator – An email was received from one of the regular hirers due to a fully unresponsive woman outside the Town Hall on Saturday and the lack of immediate defibrillator facilities and the emergency services did not have the access code to the unit located at the Masonic Lodge. A response was sent to explain the Grade I listed status of the Town Hall, and therefore the difficulty of attaching anything to it. The Town Council displays a sign in its notice boards showing where the units are, as well as information on its website, and the Town Clerk suggested that this is a future agenda item should Councillors wish to consider this.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

122. CIVIC REPORT

There is no civic report this month.

123. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES

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

123.1.1 Recommendations

BLANDFORD FOOD BANK

The recommendation was as follows and Cllr S Hitchings asked that this item is deferred to the February full council meeting.

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

The principle of an SLA is agreed to with Blandford Food Bank, subject to further discussions and receipt of supporting information.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

123.1.2 The Minutes were RECEIVED.

124. TO APPROVE THE COUNCIL DIARY FOR 2022/2023

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

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

The Town Council approves the Council Diary for 2022/2023 with the Mayor Making dates being held on 20th May 2022 and 19th May 2023.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

125. TO CONSIDER A GRANT APPLICATION FROM CREATIVE EXPRESSION

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

125. TO CONSIDER A GRANT APPLICATION FROM CREATIVE EXPRESSION (cont)

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke and AGREED unanimously that

The Town Council approves a grant of £250 for Creative Expression (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

126. TO CONSIDER THE TOWN COUNCIL'S POSITION WITH THE PAYMENT FOR USE OF THE SPORTS PAVILIONS OCTOBER 2021 – DECEMBER 2021 AND JANUARY 2022 – MARCH 2022

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

Cllr Lacey-Clarke suggested the clubs should pay the reduced rate for the October-December period, as per the previous resolution, but it was clarified that the resolution covered the April-June period and 'the next quarter', which was the July-September period.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Cross, SECONDED by Cllr Mievile and AGREED (12 in favour, 2 against) that

The Town Council approves that the sports clubs revert to paying the full amount for rent and utilities from the October – December 2021 quarter, and the same going forward into 2022.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

127. RECREATION & AMENITIES MATTERS:

127.1 To review and agree the hire charges for 2022/2023

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

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

The Town Council agrees the proposed fees and hire charges for 2022/2023 as per Appendix E for Cemetery Fees, Sports Clubs and the Markets.

8:13pm – Cllr Quayle left the meeting during discussion and voting and Cllr White left the meeting.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr R Carter and AGREED (12 in favour, 2 non-votes)

The Town Council agrees the proposed fees and hire charges for 2022/2023 as per Appendix E for Town Council Venues and Items for Hire.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

8:14pm – Cllr Quayle returned to the meeting.

A discussion was held about the lack of demand for the beacons as an item for hire, storage issues and the cost of replacing batteries.

8:15pm – Cllr White returned to the meeting.

8:17pm – Cllr Lindsay left the meeting.

127. RECREATION & AMENITIES MATTERS: (cont)

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED (13 in favour, 1 non-vote)

The beacons are no longer stored and kept as an item for hire and are offered to the local group who uses them.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

127.2 To note the Report by the Operations Manager November 2021 – January 2022

The report was noted (see Appendix F) and the Chairman thanked the Operations Manager.

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

128.1 Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Group – Blandford +

8:20pm – Cllr Lindsay returned to the meeting.

The minutes were distributed prior to the meeting and there were no questions raised.

128.2 BFTC Commemoration Group

Cllr Carter advised that the group is working with the Jubilee working group.

128.3 Climate Change & Biodiversity

Cllr Mieville advised that there is an online working group meeting scheduled for Thursday 3rd February at 7pm and he is prepared to chair if Cllr Osborne is unavailable. Cllr Lacey-Clarke asked if he was the Vice Chair for that working group. The Town Clerk will check and confirm.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Post Meeting Note: This has been checked by the Town Clerk and Cllr Lacey-Clarke was vice chairman of the Public Art working group, not the Climate Change & Biodiversity working group. The meeting link has been sent to the Climate Change & Biodiversity working group.

128.4 Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project

Cllr Stevens asked that the paving is completed as soon as possible to help improve the Market Place.

128.5 The Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2nd - 5th June 2022

A location has been agreed at the Marsh & Ham by the river, to replace a bench that requires removal. Regular meetings are being held about the events planned and Cllr Stevens would still like to plant trees.

129. REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

129.1 Blandford Leisure Centre – Cllr Carter provided an update and noted that swimming numbers are on the increase.

129.2 To fill the positions left vacant by a Councillor resignation in November 2021

The report was noted (see Appendix F).

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

129. **REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS (cont)**

The Town Council agrees that the newly elected Town Councillor, Cllr Bray fills the vacancy on the Recreation & Amenities Committee.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

It was also agreed that the following community and local organisations on behalf of the Town Council;

- TIC Observer – Cllr Bray
- Preetz Twinning Association – Cllr Bray
- Age Concern Blandford – Cllr Stevens joins Cllr Herbert.
- Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr Carter stated that three councillors is ample now the plan has been approved.
- Blandford Forum Charities – Cllr Holmes
- Blandford Opportunity Group – only one is required.
- Blandford Business Group – Cllr Mieville added as Chairman of the Town & General Purposes Committee.
- Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils (DAPTC) – Cllr White felt that two representatives (him and Cllr Stevens) was ample representation.
- The Heritage Group (UNESCO World Heritage Site) – remove due to no meetings.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

130. **TO CONSIDER FORMING A WORKING GROUP TO FORMULATE A RESPONSE TO THE PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT PIMPERNE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN, TO BE BROUGHT BACK TO THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING 7TH FEBRUARY 2022 (INFORMATION DISTRIBUTED TO COUNCILLORS)**

Cllr L Hitchings and Cllr Cross declared a personal interest as residents of Pimperne.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr White, SECONDED by Cllr Holmes but NOT AGREED (3 in favour, 5 against, 4 abstentions, 2 non-votes) that the Town Council does not respond to the consultation.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED, with an amendment from Cllr Carter to include members of the B+ Group in the compilation of his response on behalf of BFTC (8 in favour, 3 against, 1 abstention, 2 non-votes) that

Cllr Carter has delegated authority to respond to the consultation, seeking the views of councillors and B+ members via email.

ACTION: CLLR CARTER

The meeting closed at 8:50 pm.

SIGNED

DATED