



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 in the **Corn Exchange**, Market Place, Blandford Forum on **Monday 25th April 2022 at 7.00 pm** to consider the following items. This meeting will also be available to view online using Microsoft Teams [using this link](#).

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
18th April 2021

A G E N D A

Prior to consideration of the following Agenda, there will be a democratic quarter of an hour, which may be extended at the discretion of the Council, during which time members of the public may speak. During the course of the meeting, members of the public and our elected representatives from the Dorset Council may indicate they wish to speak, and, at the discretion of the Chairman, and with the approval of the Members, they may be allowed to do so on points of information only. The Council may on occasion invite members of the public to comment on specific issues where points of information or their particular knowledge on a subject might prove of benefit to the Council.

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. Disabled access is available.

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

1. Public Session
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 28th March 2022](#)
6. [Town Clerk's Report & Correspondence](#)
7. Civic Report
8. Recommendations and Receipt of Minutes
None

9. [To receive and consider the proposals from the working group for the Christmas lights in the town centre and Woodhouse Gardens](#)
10. [To consider the purchase of an app and associated devices for recording health and safety checks instead of the paperwork system](#)
11. [To consider expenditure authority for two laptops](#)
12. To receive an update and consider any requests from the:
 - 12.1 Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – Blandford +
 - 12.1.1 [To consider the Neighbourhood Plan modification project](#)
 - 12.2 BFTC Commemoration Group
 - 12.3 Climate Change & Biodiversity
 - 12.3.1 [To consider council support and involvement in the Highways for Hedgehogs campaign](#)
 - 12.4 Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project
 - 12.5 The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Working Group
13. To receive an update on Strategic Plan projects (to follow)
14. 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)
15. Confidential

The public and press may be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity might be prejudicial to the public interest as per the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

 - 15.1 To consider nominations to present a certificate of appreciation to members of the community (sent to councillors separately)

There is a Barnes for a Recreation Trust meeting to follow this meeting.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

2nd May Bank Holiday
3rd May Annual Meeting of the Town Council (followed by 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



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

Town Clerk's Report

Paving Slabs

In his capacity as a Dorset Councillor, Cllr. Quayle has asked if the Town Council can store the unique, inscribed paving stones which are installed at points throughout the town. The Operations Manager has said that they can be stored in the Allotment compound until they can be re-instated by Dorset Council.

Blandford Boxing Club – David Pardoe has written to update the council that they are still looking for a space to rent. They are waiting to hear back about a place they have been in communication about. They are finding it hard to find any appropriate empty spaces but are still looking.

Recruitment Update – At the time of writing, there has been little interest in the council's current vacancies. This will be updated at the meeting.

Badger Cross – When the council was distributing the wildflower seeds, a resident asked if they could scatter seeds on the area at Badger Cross that was part-concreted following the traffic light works. The office replied to say they would ask Dorset Council's permission, which was forthcoming. However, the ground is so heavily compacted, and mixed with concrete, that it will not take the seed. Because the area is an eyesore, and the Town Council's planter is located there, it was agreed that a site meeting would be held with the BFTC, Rangers and DC Cllr Lacey-Clarke to see what we can all do to improve it. This has been scheduled for 26th April 2022.



Archbishop Wake Primary School – Pupils from the school have sent letters to the council regarding single use plastic to help practice their persuasive skills. These have been shared with Councillors and a response has been sent to the school.

Corn Exchange – The Operations Manager arranged for the tiles behind the boarding in the Corn Exchange to be exposed, ready for the meeting with the consultants on 14th April 2022. Photos show the tiles, below, and IPA is preparing a press release.



Unfortunately, there is evidence of frequent visits to the Town Hall and Corn Exchange roofs and one piece of graffiti states that 'you will never catch us, c"£\$s', possibly in response to the anti-vandal paint that has been added. In addition, 80 tiles were recently replaced by a roofer.

Footfall Monitoring Device – The data for the week commencing 4th April 2022 is shown overleaf. These statistics will be saved and shared with Councillors on a regular basis. The data in the Headlines section has been queried and an updated report is expected.

Week 14, 2022. 04 Apr 2022 - 10 Apr 2022

Footfall Report for: Blandford Forum, Dorset

Weekly Footfall

	Year to date %		Year on year %		Week on week %	
	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021
Blandford Forum, Dorset					5.3%	
South West	149.8%	-54.0%	121.1%	133.3%	2.2%	-11.9%
UK	143.3%	-57.1%	115.0%	121.2%	1.0%	-10.5%

Benchmark calculations (Year on Year and Week on Week) have been calculated using like for like data sets (only those counters available in both comparison periods) to ensure statistical accuracy

Headlines

The total number of visitors to Blandford Forum, Dorset for the last 2 weeks is 31,549.

The total number of visitors for the year to date is 16,185.

The total number of visitors to Blandford Forum, Dorset in week commencing 4 April 2022 was 16,185.

The busiest day in week commencing 4 April 2022 was Saturday with 3,235 visitors.

The peak hour of the week was 12:00 on Saturday 9 April 2022 with footfall of 441.

Footfall by week

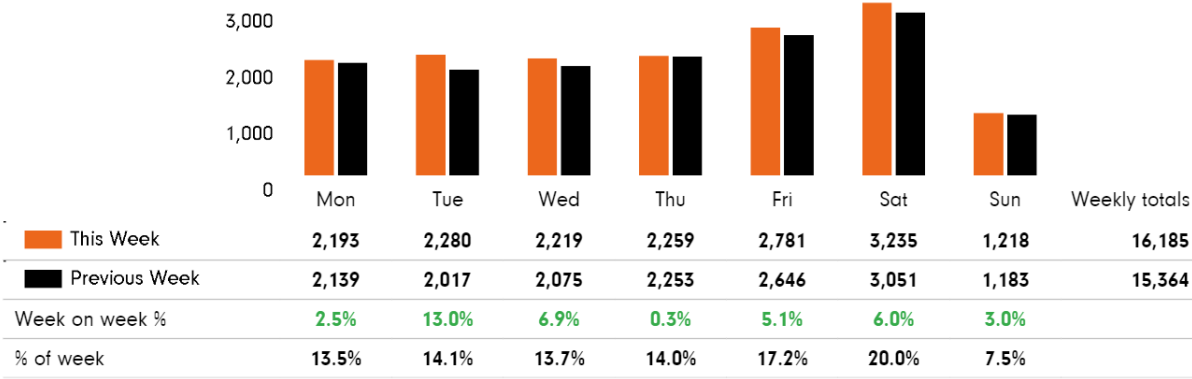


■ This Week ■ Previous Week

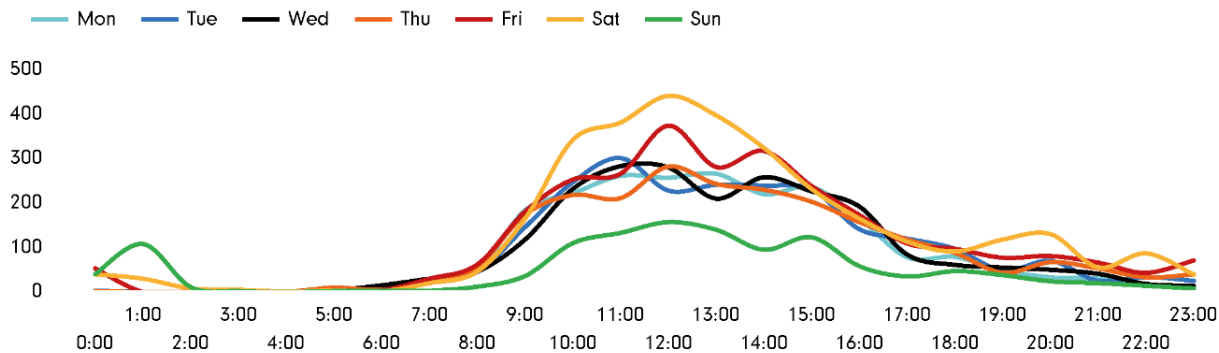
Weather

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
This week							
	15°	14°	13°	12°	11°	12°	12°
Previous week							
	18°	12°	13°	9°	9°	10°	10°

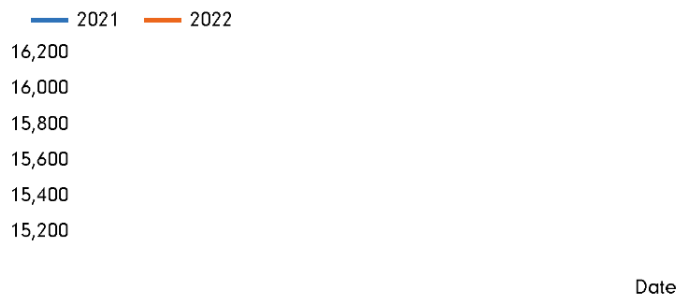
Footfall by day



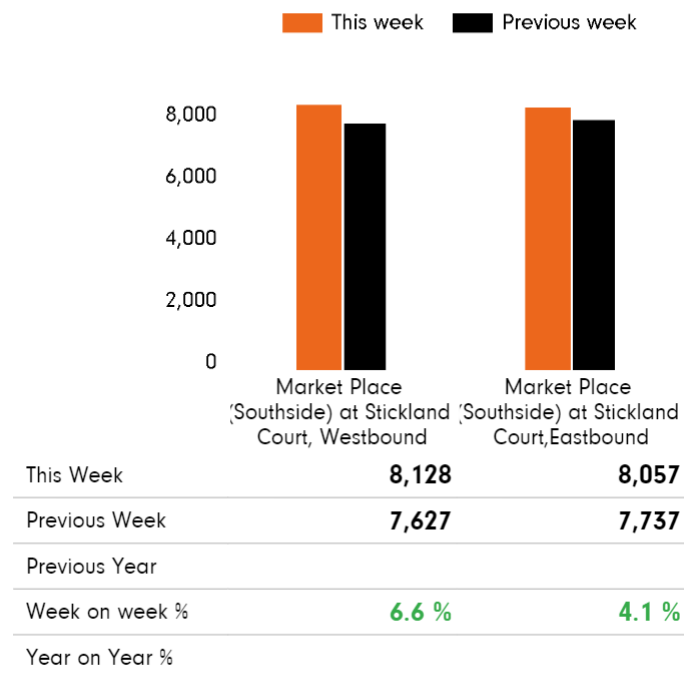
Footfall by hour



Footfall by week



Footfall by location



Notes

Year to Date % Change is the annual % change in footfall from January of this year compared to the same period last year. Week 1, 2022 to Week 14, 2022 Vs Week 1, 2021 to Week 14, 2021

Year on Year % Change is the % change in footfall for this week compared to the same week in the previous year. Week 14, 2022 Vs Week 14, 2021

Week on Week % Change is the % change in footfall for this week from the previous week. Week 14 2022 Vs Week 13 2022

To receive and consider the proposals from the working group for the Christmas lights in the town centre and Woodhouse Gardens

Background

At the Town & General Purposes Committee meeting on Monday 14th March 2022, Councillors resolved that

The Committee agrees to a public engagement/consultation at the Community Expo on 26th March, providing information on the lighting up of Woodhouse Gardens and the town centre, asking the public if they would like to see more / less / the same amount of Christmas lighting. The results of the consultation will be considered by a Working Group, consisting of Cllrs Stevens, Quayle, Mieville, Holmes and L Hitchings. The findings and proposals of the working group will be brought back to the Town Council meeting scheduled for 25th April 2022.

Further Information

Although the feedback was limited from the public engagement, the results indicated that the public would like to see additional Christmas lighting in the town.

Members of the working group and officers met online on Thursday 31st March to discuss the options available and proposed the following recommendations:

Recommendation to full council

Woodhouse Gardens

- £2,266.30 is spent on existing contractors to provide the lighting for a reduced period of hire 1/12/22 – 1/1/2023.
- That there is no further purchase or hire of expensive decorations for the gardens, but officers explore what is available either online or locally to purchase up to maximum of £500 to enhance the display (e.g., inflatable items to appeal to younger people).
- Proceed with hiring the lights for this year due to storage issues and then reassess the situation once works to the Corn Exchange are completed, and the storage situation is clearer. Councillors could then decide if they wish to purchase and store the lights and just pay for installation.

Town Centre

- Increase requested donation from local businesses to £15 + VAT (from £10 + VAT) to help pay for the increase in lighting and associated expenditure.
- Relocate blue & white column lights from footfall monitoring device column x 1 in the Market Place, West Street entrance x 2 (we have 5 before we The Crown) & East Street entrance x 2 to Tabernacle (4T86, 5T86, 2T86) and Church Lane (2C194, S2C194).
- Purchase or hire one of the designs below for the East and West Street entrances to the town (x2 at each entrance to replace the relocated blue and white column lights). This is subject to SSE approving their weight.
- Officers to seek quotes for crib scene, share with church for views and ask for storage space.

Venus H: 3m x W: 1m



Bannière Quadrille H:2.80m x W:0.80m



Expenditure

It was also recommended that any street lighting expenditure comes from the DC Highways budget line and other expenditure comes from Christmas Town Decorations and Town Improvements.

Linda Scott Giles
Town Clerk
6th March 2022

Sybille Maddock
Assistant Town Clerk

To consider the purchase of an app and associated devices for recording health and safety checks instead of the paperwork system

Background

All health and safety inspections are currently recorded on paper inspection checklists, which is currently approximately 17 per week, 52 weeks of the year. This is a huge amount of paper, and they then need to be kept for 10 years, which then presents storage issues.

As more sites are taken on, such as the new play areas at Badbury Heights then the number of checklists will increase.

Report

Officers felt it would be a good idea to explore the alternative of using an app and electronic pad to record the inspections. This is already being done elsewhere at Gillingham and Sturminster Newton town councils.

It would avoid the use of paper and mean that all the results are recorded electronically. It also enables the technology to upload photos when checks are being carried out, so the grounds and caretaking staff can send this to the office for viewing/action.

Two companies, used by the councils mentioned above, were contacted for quotes and one of them met with staff on Teams to explain how the app works.

During the writing of this report, we have become aware of another company used by town/parish councils and local authorities, and they have also been approached.

Financial implications

Councillors will be aware that this has not been budgeted for and the purpose of this report is therefore to provide some information on the product and determine if Councillors would be inclined to support it during this financial year or would prefer to include it in the budget from 1st April 2023. Should Councillors be willing to invest during this year, it is recommended that delegated authority is given to the R&A Committee, along with

Costs received to date from one company – based on the council's five play areas – are as follows, to give councillors an idea of the amount involved:

Item	Quantity	Price	Total
Annual Licence Fee (iOS or Android based operating system for tablets). £150 per playground.	5 Sites	£150.00	£750.00
Initial Set-up Training (free with full licence – approx. 4 hours).	1	£495.00	£495.00
Additional Training Day (approx. 4 hours) recommended after initial run-in period.	0	£495.00	£0.00
Android Wi-Fi Tablets (Samsung Galaxy Tab A) complete with robust cover, set up with programs loaded.	0	£225.00	£0.00
GPS Mapping	0	£500.00	£0.00
Total			£1,245.00

The council would require two tablets in the first instance – one for the caretaking team and one for the grounds team.

It is hoped that, in the future, the other areas can be added such as memorial testing, railway arches, venues and other sites. The companies all have the technology to do so, but it would cost extra.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Town Council considers committing to the expenditure this financial year, confirming a budget line and delegating the matter to the R&A Committee or includes an amount during budget setting to include from 1st April 2023.

Jon Goodenough
Operations Manager
April 2022

To consider expenditure authority for two laptops

Subject to a successful recruitment process, a new laptop will be required for the position of Business Support Officer.

In addition, the RFO's laptop has not been functioning well and has exceeded its anticipated life expectancy.

A quotation for two new laptops has therefore been sought from the council's IT provider, who will also set them both up ready to use.

It is recommended that the Town Council approves expenditure authority of £**TBC** for the purchase of one replacement laptop and one new laptop using IT equipment accruals budget line 1300 (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
14th April 2022

To consider the Neighbourhood Plan modification project

Background

The Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan (B+NP) was made in June 2021.

The Made Plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply in the Blandford + area. This protection only applies for two years from the date the plan was made and is therefore in place until 22nd June 2023, providing Dorset Council (DC) can demonstrate at least a 3-year supply of deliverable housing sites – currently 5 although this is being challenged – and its housing delivery was at least 45% of that required – currently 69%.

Developer interest in the Blandford + area remains high. The main purpose of pursuing modifications to the Made Plan is therefore to secure the benefit of the provisions of §14 of the NPPF after 22 June 2023.

Further Information

The B+ Monitoring Group (B+MG) met with their NP consultant Oneill Homer (ONH) for an initial discussion about the options available to B+NP.

ONH have set out the process of modifying a Made Plan:

The process is guided by the regulations as per the Made Plan with the main differences being:

- a. The publication of a Modification Proposal for the Regulation 14 consultation which the B+MG agreed would take the form of a tracked changes version of the Made Plan as per DC's advice. The Modified Plan (without tracked changes) is submitted to DC at Regulation 15.
- b. The publication of an additional formal document, a Modification Statement, which sets out the Council's position, and an indication of DC's position, on whether the modifications change the nature of the plan is needed for the Regulation 14 consultation. The Modification Statement is also submitted to DC at Regulation 15.
- c. The initial scope of the modifications project set out in this note indicates that the modifications are likely to be material and will therefore need to undergo an examination.
- d. The outcome of the change of nature test establishes whether the plan will need to undergo a referendum. The appointed examiner will determine whether the modifications change the nature of the plan taking into account the Council's and DC position before the examination starts.
- e. If the examiner establishes that the modifications do not change the nature of the plan, then the examination will proceed on the basis that no referendum will take place.
- f. If the examiner establishes that the modifications do change the nature of the plan, the Council will be offered the opportunity to withdraw the Modified Plan from examination or proceed on the basis that there will be a referendum.

Following the meeting, ONH presented B+MG with the options available for the Modifications Project. B+MG discussed the options and would like to proceed with Option 1:

Option 1 – Do something:

- The Made Plan may go through a modification process without making any new housing allocation proposals. As the Made Plan made allocations and DC has confirmed that the B+ area has met its housing target for the plan period to 2033, then

the Modified Plan will benefit from §14 of the NPPF for another two years from the date on which it is made, by which time DC may have recovered its housing supply and delivery positions through the adoption of the Dorset Local Plan and its allocations. In this case, assuming the Modified Plan is made by the end of June 2023, this protection will last up to June 2025.

- The advantage of this option is that there will be no need for the MG to go through the process of assessing sites for new allocations. Instead, it can follow the action plan set out by ONH for modifying existing policies and introduce new policies as discussed at the session. This would be a relatively straightforward process, and, assuming the MG can show that the modifications do not 'change the nature of the plan' (as defined by the 2017 Regulations), there will be no referendum required if the examiner agrees. The process is therefore shorter and less cumbersome.
- The disadvantage of this option is that it may only give the Made Plan and the B+ area a short period of calm of a further two years and assumes that DC can maintain at least a three-year housing land supply and 45% housing delivery.

Cost for Option 1 £21,700 + VAT

Option 2 – Do something more:

- Secondly, there is the option of pursuing a modification of the Made Plan that will not change its nature followed immediately by a full review in 2023+. The purpose of the modification will be as per Option 1, to secure the protection of §14 of the NPPF until 2025. The purpose of the review in 2023+ would be to meet the new housing requirement figure to 2038 instead of the allocations proposed in the emerging Dorset Local Plan. An initial discussion with DC suggests that a precedent has been set for this approach at Wareham, and DC would be prepared to have a discussion on how this option may work.
- The advantage of this option is that not only will it secure the same protection as Option 1, but it will also mean that the new neighbourhood plan will have a far stronger defence against speculative planning applications even beyond the two-year protection period and even if DC cannot meet the lower supply threshold. Prior to this new level of protection (which first came in in late 2016 and is now part of the NPPF), the vast majority of planning appeals for housing proposals in these circumstances were dismissed where it could be clearly shown that the made neighbourhood plan had planned positively for housing development. There are no guarantees, of course, and experience shows that Local Planning Authorities too often approve housing schemes that were in conflict with made neighbourhood plans, fearing that they would lose appeals and perhaps keen to bolster their housing land positions.
- The disadvantage of the option is that it will require a full neighbourhood plan review process of the same community engagement and technical evidence provisions (including SA/SEA and HRA) as with the Made Plan. There is also currently no certainty that there will be government grant and technical package support provision to enable all the technical work to be completed. The SG will still have to oversee and steer this work and manage the informal and formal community engagement work. This process will of course take longer and will require a new referendum.

Cost for Option 2 is £14,000 + VAT (Modification) and £23,800 + VAT (Full Review) = £37,800 + VAT

If the Town Council is successful in securing a grant from Locality, ONH will adjust their invoicing schedule accordingly reflecting the grant-capped day rate.

At the meeting with ONH initial discussions were held about which policies to keep, modify or delete and if there is a requirement for new policies to be added. It was noted that a new Blandford Forum Town Centre Vision policy should be created. It is also understood that the MG would need a formal instruction from the Councils to pursue the Action Plan related to the Town Centre. At the session the example of New Milton was discussed, where the Neighbourhood Plan with OH support established a town centre vision, which was instrumental in the Town Council securing funding to improve the vitality of the Town Centre. Historic England's High Streets Heritage Action Zone programme remains open. The example of North Lowestoft in securing a Design Guide as part of its Heritage Action Zone bid can be seen here. In each case, and more widely, it is the communication of a clear vision which leads to successful applications to funding streams for particular projects.

As per the MOU, expenses are split as follows:

BFTC	84% of the total cost
BSMPC	12% of the total cost
Bryanston PC	4% of the total cost

BFTC has £9,243.93 in Reserves account, with £7,643.93 being committed.

Recommendation

Town Councillors should consider;

- if they wish to proceed with the Modifications Project.
- If they wish to proceed with the Option 1, preferred by the Monitoring Group
- If they wish for a town centre vision to be included in the modified plan
- If the Town Council would fund their portion of the modification project (£18,228 + VAT), if the grant application is not successful

Sybille Maddock
Assistant Town Clerk
31st March 2022

To consider council support and involvement in the Highways for Hedgehogs campaign



Linda Cook
12 Richmond Close
Market Weighton
YO433EX

HedgehogsRus@mail.com

Firstly, thank you for taking the time to read this letter!

I am writing to all Councils, Parishes, Towns and Wards in the UK to ask them to take part in this amazing project!

Hedgehogs R Us Highway Project

With hedgehog numbers in decline and hedgehog awareness on the rise, there has never been a better time to get involved in hedgehog conservation.

A Hedgehog Highway is a 5 inch gap in a fence and is essential in the battle to prevent the extinction of our endangered spiky friends. This gap allows them access to forage for food and meet mates. A Highway surround raises awareness to their plight and encourages others to take part.

I am asking for each area of the UK to use a small portion of their assigned funds to purchase just ONE box of hedgehog highway surrounds and make them available for their residents. These could be situated in a Town Council building, a Town Hall or even a Local Shop or Post Office?

Each box of 50 is £150 and includes:

- * 50 Hedgehog Highway surrounds & 50 information leaflets
- * A display box & window sticker showing you are part of the project.

Depending on what your budget guidelines allow you to do, you could:

1. Give the highways to residents for free
2. Sell them for £3 each to regain your invested money
3. Sell for the suggested resale price of £5 and use the £100 profit for a community project / hedgehog project of your choice.



The project will be receiving a lot of publicity in the coming months via Social Media and I really hope that you choose to take part.

My dream is to make the whole of the UK one giant Hedgehog Highway and for that dream to come true, it needs EVERYONE to take part.

Money is donated to Hedgehog Conservation for every box sold too!

If you would like to order or have any questions please do not hesitate to get in touch and thank you for caring.

Linda Cook, Founder of Hedgehogs R Us

It is recommended that councillors consider supporting this scheme, as they did with the wildflower seeds giveaway, to raise awareness and help protect biodiversity.