

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
Held on Monday 25th April 2022 at 7:13pm in the Corn Exchange



PRESENT

Cllr L Hitchings – Chairman
Cllr A Cross
Cllr S Hitchings
Cllr B Quayle
Cllr R Holmes
Cllr P Clark
Cllr P Osborne
Cllr K Herbert

Cllr C Stevens – Vice Chairman
Cllr R Carter
Cllr H White
Cllr H Mieville
Cllr E Bray
Cllr L Lindsay
Cllr C Jacques
Cllr N Lacey-Clarke

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk
Assistant Town Clerk

Operations Manager
Nicci Brown – Press

On the request of Cllr Holmes, a minute's silence was held for ANZAC day before the start of the meeting.

162. PUBLIC SESSION

No members of the public were in attendance.

163. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS

Report given by Cllr Quayle this month.

- 163.1 Dorset Council and Dorset County Hospital have agreed a 20-year lease for Southwarks House, with the aim to free up the clinical site and bring health provision to the high street.
- 163.2 In April, 96% of parents and carers received their first choice of school.
- 163.3 Dorset Council continues work to bring Coombe House School up to standard.
- 163.4 The bin replacement in the town centre has started. One of the bins has been vandalised already. It will take another six weeks to install all bins. Cllr Quayle has not noticed any overflowing during the long weekend.
- 163.5 The Marsh & Ham car park is now a flexi car park as well. Cllr Ray Bryan is looking into the business case to keep Stour Meadows car park free. Cllr Quayle encouraged all Councillors and residents to write why it should be kept free.
- 163.6 The new Waste Management Centre for Blandford Forum has been approved.
- 163.7 There has been a two-week delay on the slab replacement. Dorset Council is working on clearing the backlog.
- 163.8 Cllr Quayle requested that any Highways issues should be reported to both Dorset Councillors, so they are able to chase and deal with it.

163. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS (cont.)

163.9 Due to recent events at a Dorset Council meeting, parish and town councils are being asked to look at their security measures during meetings. Cllr Stevens reported that other towns are thinking about security measures for their meetings.

Cllr Mieville asked about the ongoing health provision issues as well as issues obtaining prescriptions. Cllr Quayle reported that he is chasing these issues with the practice manager, and they are working through them. There is an online market available for pharmacies. He is hoping that a new license will be available to Blandford once further housing has been built.

Cllr Cross asked about the time delay for the new Waste Management Site, as there will be an archaeological dig. Cllr Lacey-Clarke responded that there is no timeframe as they don't know what they will find yet.

Cllr Holmes reported an overflowing dog bin along Holland Way, as well as other waste around the bin. Cllr Quayle reported that there is a back log due to Covid, but they are working on it. He asked Cllr Holmes to send an email so he can take it up with the relevant people.

The Chairman advised that he was copied into a resident's email complaining about the service from the local chemist. The Chairman read out the following email:

I feel I have to contact you reference the service that you are providing our town of Blandford Forum, Dorset. Several years ago you bought up all the chemists in the town (much to my bewilderment that our town council allowed that to happen in itself), this of course gave you a total monopoly of the town. That gave you 3 outlets of which you have closed one leaving us with only 2. These have to serve not only the residents of Blandford Forum but also the surrounding villages. You have struggled to supply any service that is expected of such a major brand, and over recent years this has dropped far below acceptable levels. The shops themselves are dirty, dusty, unscrubbed floors, shabby ceilings and lighting, empty and dirty shelves, the list goes on. Your staff struggle to keep up with the workload, so therefore your staffing levels need to improve. I do have sympathy for them as they simply cannot keep up. Just one example being is the supply and collecting of prescriptions. I choose to collect a paper copy of my prescription from my doctors and personally take it to the chemist where I have waited for it to be made up, on average taking 20 -30 minutes, however the last few months I have been given a waiting time of 1 - 1 1/2 hours or asked to come back the next day! This to you may be acceptable but bearing in mind I live in one of the surrounding villages this means a second journey into town which doubles the fuel, parking and my valuable time.

This is totally unacceptable and must be improved, you can no longer use the excuse of covid for the waiting or staffing level. I suggest a deep clean of both premises, improved stocking levels and staffing levels. For an outlet supplying medical supply's it needs to be brought up to standard.

164. APOLOGIES

None

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

None had been submitted.

166. MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 28TH MARCH 2022

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Jacques, SECONDED by Cllr Holmes and AGREED (15 in favour, 1 abstention) that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

Cllr Bray left the meeting at 7.50pm.

167. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The paper was noted (see Appendix A)

167.1 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. During the meeting Cllr Quayle clarified that these are not the inscribed slabs, but are the ones with fossils contained within them. These will be stored by the Town Council until a use can be found for them locally.

167.2 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.

167.3 Recruitment Update – At the time of writing, there has been little interest in the council's current vacancies.

167.4 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.

167.5 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.

167.6 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 have been taken 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.

167.7 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.

167.8 Persimmon Transfer – By way of update, the Town Council's solicitor has written to confirm that: *I have received some title documents from Persimmon's solicitor in respect of the title query we had raised with them (to establish the extent of any rights granted to third parties over the public open space when neighbouring residential plots were sold off during previous phases). I am in the process of reviewing these and will let you know as soon as this point is satisfied.*

168. CIVIC REPORT

The paper was sent to Councillors via email.

169. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES

None.

Cllr Bray returned to the meeting at 7.55pm.

170. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE PROPOSALS FROM THE WORKING GROUP FOR THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS IN THE TOWN CENTRE AND WOODHOUSE GARDENS

The paper was noted (see Appendix B).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED (15 in favour, 1 abstention) that

The Town Council agrees that

- £2,266.30 is spent on existing contractors to provide the lighting for a reduced period of hire 1/12/22-1/1/2023 in Woodhouse Gardens.
- 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 a 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 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.
- 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 & East Street entrance x 2 to Tabernacle (4T86, 5T86, 2T86) and Church Lane (2C194, S2C194).
- Purchase the Bannière Quadrille design 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.
- The Town Council agrees that any street lighting expenditure comes from the DC Highways budget line and other expenditure comes from Christmas Town Decorations and Town Improvements (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

171. TO CONSIDER THE PURCHASE OF AN APP AND ASSOCIATED DEVICES FOR RECORDING HEALTH AND SAFETY CHECKS INSTEAD OF THE PAPERWORK SYSTEM

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED (15 in favour, 1 against) that

The Town Council agrees to expenditure of up to £2,500 during this financial year using budget line Health & Safety and delegate the matter to the R&A Committee (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

172. TO CONSIDER EXPENDITURE AUTHORITY FOR TWO LAPTOPS

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

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

172. TO CONSIDER EXPENDITURE AUTHORITY FOR TWO LAPTOPS (cont.)

The Town Council approves expenditure authority of £1,110 for the purchase of one replacement laptop and one new laptop using IT equipment accruals budget line 1300. ESET Licenses at £43.79 will also be required and a new mailbox and email address at £12 a month for the additional Office 365 license (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Cllr Herbert left the meeting at 8.15pm and returned at 8.17pm.

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

173.1 Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – Blandford +

Cllr Lindsay left the meeting at 7.23pm.

173.1.1 To consider the Neighbourhood Plan modification project

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Holmes and AGREED (13 in favour, 1 against) that

The Town Council agrees to proceed with the Modifications Project and Option 1 and to fund its portion of the modification project of £18,228 + VAT, if the grant application is not successful. If the grant application is successful, the expenditure of £1806 + VAT is approved (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Cllr Lindsay returned to the meeting at 7.27pm.

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

The Town Council agrees to include a town centre vision in the modified plan.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

173.2 BFTC Commemoration Group

Cllr Carter visited the Dorset Archive Centre but did not find anything suitable for the forthcoming exhibition. With the assistance of the Town Clerk, they are in the process of purchasing a film about Blandford.

173.3 Climate Change & Biodiversity

Cllr Osborne thanked the Town Clerk for her support during his day in the office looking at the carbon footprint of the Town Council.

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

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr Quayle and AGREED (15 in favour, 1 against) that

The Town Council agrees to support this scheme and purchases a box of 50 hedgehog highway surrounds at a cost of £150, and distributes them to residents for free as with the wildflower seeds giveaway, to raise awareness and help protect biodiversity (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

173. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE AND CONSIDER ANY REQUESTS FROM THE (cont.):

173.4 Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project

Cllr Stevens had no update.

173.5 The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Working Group

Cllr Stevens reported that banners are being ordered to advertise the event. He is hoping that Councillors will attend the Thanksgiving Service on Friday 3rd June as Mayor's from other towns and the MP are attending.

174. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON STRATEGIC PLAN PROJECTS

The report was noted.

175. REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

None were received.

176. CONFIDENTIAL

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

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.

The Chairman decided to take a break at 8.57pm and resumed the meeting at 9.02pm.

176.1 To consider nominations to present a certificate of appreciation to members of the community

Nomination A

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

The Town Council accepts the nomination for A.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Nomination B

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

The Town Council accepts the nomination for B.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Nomination C

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr Holmes and AGREED unanimously that

The Town Council accepts the nomination for C.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Nomination D

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr Clark and AGREED unanimously that

The Town Council accepts the nomination for D.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

176.1 To consider nominations to present a certificate of appreciation to members of the community (cont.)

Nomination E

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr Holmes and AGREED unanimously that

The Town Council accepts the nomination for E.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Nomination F

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

The Town Council accepts the nomination for F.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Nomination G

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr Clark and AGREED (15 in favour, 1 against) that

The Town Council accepts the nomination for G.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The meeting closed at 9:08 pm.

SIGNED

DATED