

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
Held on Monday 28th February 2022 at 7:05pm in the Corn Exchange



PRESENT

Cllr L Hitchings – Chairman
Cllr A Cross
Cllr S Hitchings
Cllr B Quayle
Cllr R Holmes
Cllr N Lacey-Clarke
Cllr P Osborne

Cllr C Stevens – Vice Chairman
Cllr R Carter
Cllr H White
Cllr H Mieville
Cllr E Bray
Cllr L Lindsay

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk

Operations Manager

IN ATTENDANCE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Cllr C Jacques

Nicci Brown – Press

131. PUBLIC SESSION

The Chairman stated that the Town Council is very concerned about what is happening in Ukraine, as many across the world are. This is a national and world matter and Blandford Forum can but offer its local support to any Ukrainian living here, or refugee that may come here.

Cllr Bray added that she has started a shoebox appeal that was originally intended to be a local campaign, but it has grown and become popular with drop off points across the country, and asked Councillors if they are able to help.

Cllr Mieville suggested that a minute silence is held for those who have lost their lives in the conflict and Cllr Lacey-Clarke added that we should also think of the Russian fatalities, which was agreed, and a minute silence followed.

The Chairman informed Councillors that a Ukraine flag has been purchased by the Operations Manager and Councillors voted unanimously that the flag should be flown once received and it was agreed that it would temporarily replace the St. George Cross as the cross is already included in the Union Flag.

Rev Beaumont attended the meeting to pray with Councillors that peace is brought to Ukraine.

132. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS

Report given by Cllr Lacey-Clarke this month.

- 132.1 Cllr Lacey-Clarke was pleased to announce that social and voluntary/community sector grants are now available for core costs from Dorset Council.
- 132.2 The litter bins were missed on several occasions over the last few weeks. Cllr Lacey-Clarke and Cllr Quayle have discussed the issue with the waste team, which is down to recruitment issues, and they are now a priority for DC to empty them.
- 132.3 Land search requests have increased since COVID and the response rate is down to 28 days from 63 days now, which is improving.
- 132.4 Steven Ford has been appointed to the Dorset Council as the Director for Climate Change.

132. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS (cont)

- 132.5 Cllr Lacey-Clarke and Cllr Quayle have been invited to a meeting about the slab programme, following a request by an internet provider. The scheme was postponed until the cabling could be laid in the ducting.

Cllr Mieville asked if there is anything the Dorset Council Councillors can do about the lack of NHS dentists in Blandford Forum. Cllr Lacey-Clarke explained that there is little they can do apart from lobbying.

133. APOLOGIES

Cllr K Herbert

Cllr P Clark

It was noted that Cllr Herbert was not present as she has been named as one of 100 of the UK's most inspiring female entrepreneurs by Small Business Britain, in a line-up that reflects the phenomenal contribution to society, economy and communities that many female founders are making across the UK. This was applauded by Councillors, and it was agreed that flowers and champagne would be presented to her.

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

None had been submitted.

135. MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 24TH JANUARY 2022

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

136. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

- 136.1 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 21st March 2022. 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.
- 136.2 Certificate of appreciation policy – Councillors have been reminded of the policy and asked for nominations to be made by the end of March. This has also been publicised on social media.
- 136.3 Meeting Restrictions – Following the councillor/staff survey, the majority would like restrictions to remain in place although the Town Clerk noted that the majority of attendees were not following the agreed measures for February meetings. The survey results will be sent to Councillors by email, so they are aware of the agreed measures for March meetings in the Corn Exchange.
- 136.4 NJC Pay Award Update – An update has been received on the pay award that is to be backdated to 1st April 2022 at 1.75% for all employees.

137. CIVIC REPORT

The paper was sent to Councillors via email (see Appendix A).

138. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES

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

138.1.1 Recommendations

The paper was noted (see Appendix B).

BLANDFORD FOOD BANK

It was noted that the recommendation from the December meeting was as follows:

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

This information has now been received and shared with Councillors.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke that the Town Council enters into an SLA with Blandford Food Bank at a cost of £5,000 a year, but this proposal was withdrawn when Cllr Carter suggested that it is further discussed at the next Finance & Staffing Committee meeting.

8:14pm – Cllr Lacey-Clarke left the meeting.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Mieville, SECONDED by Cllr White and AGREED (9 in favour, 3 abstentions, 1 non-vote) that

The Town Council enters into an SLA with the Blandford Food Bank at £5,000 a year for a period of three years from 1st April 2022, with the funding being ringfenced for the Blandford Food Bank and Blandford Pantry projects only.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

8:16pm – Cllr Lacey-Clarke returned to the meeting.

8:17pm – Cllr Lindsay left the meeting.

It was agreed that the draft SLA will be distributed to the SLA working group, then ratified by the Finance & Staffing Committee at its meeting scheduled for 21st March 2022.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

139. CONSIDER THE RECCOMENDATIONS FROM THE WORKING GROUP REGARDING ANY AMENDMENTS TO THE SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS DUE FOR RENEWAL IN APRIL

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

8:22pm – Cllr Lindsay returned to the meeting.

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

The Town Council accepts the recommendations from the working group and the Town Clerk is instructed to amend and distribute the documents accordingly. It was also agreed that the Boxing Club SLA, and associated funding, will be started once a lease is signed.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

8:25pm – Cllr Lacey-Clarke left the meeting and did not take part in discussion or voting as he sponsors a planter.

140. TO APPROVE EXPENDITURE FOR THE PLANTERS AND BEDDING

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED (12 in favour, 1 non-vote) that

The Town Council approves expenditure for the planters and bedding of £3,819.20 + VAT using funds from the Planters budget line (6200) (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8) and also notes the increase in sponsorship costs.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

8:26pm – Cllr Lacey-Clarke returned to the meeting.

141. TO APPROVE EXPENDITURE FOR THE TOILET CLEANING CONTRACT FOR 2022/2023

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

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

The Town Council renews the cleaning contract with the existing contractor for a period of one year only, using funds of £8,184.00 from budget line 6650 (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

142. TO APPROVE EXPENDITURE FOR THE SKATE PARK COMMUNITY EVENT ON 21ST AUGUST 2022

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

Cllr L Hitchings noted that he is an area manager for St John Ambulance.

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

The Town Council approves expenditure of £1750 + VAT for the organiser and £144 + VAT for St John Ambulance cover for the skate fest in August 2022, using budget line 1071 Skate Fest (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

143. TO CONFIRM ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF BLANDFORD CHURCH MASSACHUSETTS

The paper was noted (see Appendix G).

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

The Town Council agrees that Mr Stokoe is invited to represent the town on 4th September 2022 at the church service to mark the 200th anniversary of the church and he is welcome to speak at the event. In addition, a video message is being compiled with local organisations.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

144. TO CONSIDER THE PURCHASE OF A DEFIBRILLATOR FOR THE TOWN HALL/CORN EXCHANGE LOBBY

The paper was noted (see Appendix H).

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

The Town Council agrees to the purchase of a defibrillator for the Corn Exchange lobby, at a cost of up to £1,500 using the Town Improvements budget line and Cllr L Hitchings will advise the office on which unit to order (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The defibrillator notices on the website and notice boards will be updated to clarify that the Town Council is not responsible for ensuring the emergency services have the codes to enable the public to be able to use them.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

145. TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FROM OH NO IT ISN'T REGARDING THE PANTOMIME FOR 2022

The paper was noted (see Appendix I).

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

The Town Council asks Oh No It Isn't to revert to its original dates as it does not want to inconvenience the regular hirers, as previously agreed in March 2020.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

146. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE TOWN COUNCIL'S PLAN (SENT SEPERATELY TO COUNCILLORS)

The paper was noted (see Appendix J).

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

147.1 Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – Blandford +

147.1.1 To note the B+ developments

The paper was noted (see Appendix K) and Cllr Carter updated Councillors that a meeting is being held on 1st March 2022 and he will make all the information available from it to Councillors.

147.2 BFTC Commemoration Group (minutes sent separately to Councillors).

The paper was noted (see Appendix L).

147.3 Climate Change & Biodiversity

Cllr Osborne updated attendees on the activity of the working group, the last meeting and the actions from it, and confirmed that the next meeting is scheduled for 17th March 2022 and will be held online.

147.4 Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project

Cllr Stevens noted Cllr Lacey-Clarke's update on the paving slabs earlier in the meeting.

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

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

147.5.1 To retrospectively approve the additional expenditure for the commemorative bench

The paper was noted (see Appendix L).

The Assistant Town Clerk's application to The National Lottery Awards for All has been successful for funding of £1,400 towards the QPJ bench. At the Town Council meeting on 20th December 2021 Councillors authorised expenditure of £2,000 for a bespoke design and purchase of a memorial bench, plus the installation of the bench at the Marsh & Ham and were later advised that this had increased considerably, partly due to the increase for the metal.

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

The Town Council approves the total costs for the bench of:

£2,800 + VAT, less £300 discount + £300 graphic designer fees = £2,800 + VAT + delivery (less £1,400 due to the successful grant application)

(Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

It was noted that a replacement bench is required on Salisbury Road, due to vandalism, and staff are able to replace this with a metal bench that is currently in storage. Cllr White noted that it was a Queen's Jubilee bench 45 years ago and suggested a plaque be considered for the new bench.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Cllr Holmes asked the Operations Manager to check the condition of the bench halfway along Holland Way.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The Town Clerk updated members that the Town Council's tree will be planted on 11th March in Woodhouse Gardens, for the Queen's Canopy and a plaque has been ordered from the RBL Industries and everyone is welcome to attend.

Cllr Stevens had been discussing the possibility of planting a tree in June over the weekend of the Jubilee celebrations on the churchyard. However, this is outside of the tree planting season and will now be taken on by the church instead.

148. REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

148.1 Blandford Secondary School Foundation Meeting (minutes sent separately to Councillors)

The paper was noted (see Appendix M).

The meeting closed at 9:01pm.

SIGNED

DATED