

**BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Corn Exchange Meeting**

Held on Monday 30th November 2020 at 7:00pm online using Microsoft Teams

DRAFT
Subject to confirmation

PRESENT

Cllr L Lindsay – Chairman
Cllr P Clark
Cllr S Hitchings
Cllr B Quayle
Cllr C Stevens
Cllr R Holmes
Cllr A Cross

Cllr L Hitchings – Vice Chairman
Cllr H Mieville
Cllr H White
Cllr R Carter
Cllr P Osborne
Cllr N Lacey-Clarke
Cllr J Stayt (late arrival – 7:19 pm)

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk
Kate Pinnock (Ingham Pinnock Associates)
Nicci Brown

Operations Manager
Ross Ingham (Ingham Pinnock Associates)

Standing order 3 p) states that the Chairman shall preside, if present, but Chairman of Council, Cllr Lindsay was not feeling well and attendees therefore agreed that Vice Chairman, Cllr L Hitchings would chair the meeting on her behalf and Cllr Lindsay would remain in attendance. It was confirmed that, should it be required, Cllr Lindsay would have the casting vote.

Cllr Clark agreed to act as Vice Chairman to assist Cllr L Hitchings.

Cllr L Hitchings thanked attendees for joining this first meeting for the corn exchange project.

1. PUBLIC SESSION

There were no members of the public in attendance.

2. APOLOGIES

Cllr C Jacques

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

None had been submitted.

4. MINUTES OF THE CORN EXCHANGE MEETING

None – this is the first of the full council corn exchange meetings.

5. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

5.1 Consultants – A site meeting was held with the consultants on Thursday 26th November 2020.

6. TO APPROVAL ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURE FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF THE LOBBY GLAZING

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

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

6. **TO APPROVAL ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURE FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF THE LOBBY GLAZING (cont)**

The Town Council approves the additional expenditure for the works using funds of £8,499.05 from the Corn Exchange regeneration budget line (1105) (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8) and selecting Company B to carry out the works, managed by the architectural technician.

It is noted that this amount includes a contingency of £2,500 and the overall amount will be reduced to £4,499.05 if the funding application is successful.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

7. **TO APPROVE EXPENDITURE FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF AN ARCHITECTURAL TECHNICIAN TO COMPLETE THE TOWN HALL FAÇADE PROJECT**

The paper was noted (see Appendix B).

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

The Town Council agrees that the architectural technician is appointed to complete the project at a cost of £1,800 + VAT and that a contingency of £5,000 is approved in view of the time that has passed since the quotation for the lighting scheme was originally obtained (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

It was agreed to change the order of the meeting and receive the presentation from IPA first, followed by the adoption of the communications strategy.

8. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM INGHAM PINNOCK ASSOCIATES (IPA)**

Ross Ingham and Kate Pinnock from IPA updated councillors on the work they have been appointed to carry out on the council's behalf. The brief was to draw a line in the sand and embark on a fresh start, preparing a robust, evidence-based appraisal of options for the future. They are tasked with identifying a masterplan for the whole building that could be delivered in one phase or multiple phases, subject to funding, with a focus on a project that is deliverable in the current environment

They referred to the team of consultants they are working with; Ed Morton from The Morton Partnership (conservation structural engineers); Malcolm Simmonds Architects (conservation specialist architect); and Ian Walker Associates (specialist quantity surveyor).

7:19 pm Cllr Stayt arrived.

The work programme below shows in bold the work carried out to date:

1. **Inception meeting & site visit**
2. **Baseline research**
3. **Consultation**
4. **Vision and objectives**
5. Option development
6. Non-financial appraisal
7. Outline design and costing

8. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM INGHAM PINNOCK ASSOCIATES (IPA) (cont)

8. Financial appraisal
9. Reporting
10. Sign-off

Ross summarised the following studies that have been undertaken:

- Literature review
- Site visits
- Socio-economic baseline
- Straw-poll community consultation
- Financial and space utilisation analysis
- Competitor review
- Comparator review
- Informal consultation with Cllrs
- Informal consultation with users and stakeholders
- Design team workshop
- Options appraisal development

He pointed out that uses have changed over time to reflect the economy and community, the building has always adapted to remain relevant. It is clear the council wants the building to remain affordable for the community. Utilisation rates are on the whole low but particularly low for the most historically significant spaces due to access limitations. The building runs at an annual loss and loss is increasing; whilst income is going up, costs are going up faster.

Cllr Carter was startled by the losses experienced and queried if this included the period of the pandemic. Ross explained that it does not cover this financial year's usage and Cllr S Hitchings clarified that expenditure on maintenance has increased since 2015 due to various works that have been carried out.

IPA noted that, from the consultation results, the community particularly values the architecture and heritage as well as the WCs and the stage facilities.

Over the last 20+ years various attempts have been made to define a new purpose for the building. None of these proposals have come to fruition for a variety of reasons. Kate remarked that the council has a wonderful legacy with a building that has stunning architecture and can be used in many different ways. She also reassured councillors that it is a normal occurrence that projects do not come to fruition, particularly with town halls, and that IPA are confident they can take this forward and have the relevant experience in order to do so.

As a result of the work they have carried out, IPA reported on the emerging project objectives:

1. **Accessible:** The building must become more accessible for everyone, particularly to the historic first floor spaces which do not currently benefit from disabled access
2. **Sustainable:** The building must improve in terms of environmental and financial sustainability
3. **Affordable:** The building must continue to be an affordable option for local residents and groups to hire and not indirectly exclude the community it needs to serve
4. **Flexible:** The building must continue to be flexible and capable of being used for different types of activity
5. **Useable:** The building must become more usable for visitors and hirers in terms of heating, lighting, acoustics, storage and back-of-house
6. **Beautiful:** The beauty of the building must be restored and enhanced wherever possible, removing inappropriate additions and restoring and enhancing historic features wherever possible.

8. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM INGHAM PINNOCK ASSOCIATES (IPA) (cont)

Ross summarised the forward plan, as follows:

- Finalising any outstanding stakeholder consultation
- Online community consultation over the winter
- Developing a vision
- Assessing options
- Preparing an outline specification
- Developing sketches of preferred options
- Updating Conservation Officer and Historic England
- Reviewing emerging ideas with the Town Council

8:08 pm Cllr Quayle left the meeting.

Councillors thanked IPA for their work to date and for providing a different perspective on the complex.

9. TO ADOPT THE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

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

The Town Council agrees to adopt the communications strategy.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The meeting closed at 8:19 pm.

SIGNED

DATED