

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
Held on Monday 31st July 2023 at 7:00pm in the Corn Exchange

DRAFT
Subject to confirmation

PRESENT

Cllr H Mieville –Chairman of Council
Cllr C Stevens
Cllr R Holmes
Cllr P Clark
Cllr L Lindsay
Cllr P Osborne

Cllr N Lacey-Clarke – Vice Chairman of Council
Cllr B Quayle
Cllr K Herbert
Cllr H White
Cllr R Carter
Cllr S Chapman

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk

Operations Manager

66. PUBLIC SESSION

- 66.1 Planters – Cllr Carter thanked the Operations Manager and his team for the wonderful floral displays the grounds staff have created with the planters and hanging baskets throughout the town.
- 66.2 Town Centre Shops – Cllr Holmes referred to a national news item referring to empty shops and asked if the Neighbourhood Plan addresses businesses converting to residential accommodation and Cllr Carter confirmed that there hasn't been a change in policy B8.
- 66.3 Declaration of Acceptance of Office to be signed by the successful candidate following the Old Town Ward co-option meeting held on 24th July 2023

The Chairman congratulated Sheila Chapman on being co-opted to the Town Council, to represent the Old Town ward, at the Special Co-option Meeting held on 24th January 2023. Cllr Chapman read out and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which was witnessed by the Town Clerk.

67. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCILLORS

Cllr Quayle delivered the report, as follows:

- 67.1 Cllr Quayle reported that the Household Support Fund opens at 10am on 2nd August 2023. Details can be found here: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/-/household-support-fund>
- 67.2 The Dorset Council Organisational Support Revenue Fund Round 3 is open for applications and closes at midnight on 6th October 2023 for charity-based organisations and details can be found here: https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/dorset-council-organisational-support-revenue-fund?p_l_back_url=%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Drevenue%2Bfund
- 67.3 Dorset Council has been selected as one of three authorities across the UK by the Government Pathfinder Programme for groundbreaking work on Children's Services. The government is going to implement some of the most significant reforms for generations and Cllr Quayle commented that this is a fantastic opportunity and is very welcomed.
- 67.4 The Dorset Council Library Strategy was signed off last week and Dorset Council will not be closing down any libraries. They will all be rebranded to a library plus or a library connect, which will offer more services, and Blandford Forum will be a library connect. Cllr Quayle also encouraged Councillors to comment on the strategy.
- 67.5 The Housing Strategy was launched last week and Cllr Quayle recommended commenting on the consultation.

67. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCILLORS (cont)

- 67.6 The Green Flag sites at Stour Meadows and The Milldown have been reaccredited.
- 67.7 A bin has been relocated on Salisbury Street/Whitecliff Mill Street.
- 67.8 Cllr Quayle would like to engage with town councils to help with the fostering in Dorset due to the number of children in care. Cllr Mieville said he is happy to support this and the Town Clerk confirmed that the office has been supporting the Dorset Council Fostering Enquiries Officer by encouraging the fostering team to attend the Expo, Town Assembly, staff have displayed posters and posted on social media. Cllr Stevens raised a query about children he is aware of and Cllr Quayle asked him to bring this particular case to him after the meeting.
- 67.8 Cllr Lacey-Clarke updated councillors that a site meeting is being arranged for Oakfield Street with DC's Rolly Skeats. This will be held in August or September.
- 67.9 Cllr Lacey-Clarke informed Councillors that the Dorset Council has been progressing the temporary pedestrianisation of the Market Place and will bring a paper to council after the summer recess to find out if this is something the Town Council wants to progress. Cllr Mieville remarked that he was pleased to hear there has been progress at Dorset Council but expressed disappointment that it has missed the opportunity of the summer period.
- 67.10 Cllr Carter asked about the lack of grass cutting, because it was promised for June, as there are many areas that have not yet been cut although Wimborne Road has been which is most welcome. Cllr Lacey-Clarke advised that the Dorset Council Rangers cannot cut/collect when it is wet. Cllr Carter feels the area looks a mess and the Town Council staff continue to cut the grass. He suggested a different way of cutting to help improve appearance and visibility as in Bournemouth and Poole areas. Cllr Lacey-Clarke added that there had also been mower issues. Cllr Quayle mentioned that the Dorset Council machines collect whereas the Town Council ones do not, so the wet grass would clog the machinery and he personally feels that it looks bad if it is left. The Town Clerk informed Councillors that the staff receive compliments about the Town Council amenity areas and complaints about the Dorset Council areas where the grass is long, which are encouraged to be reported online.

Cllr Herbert thanked Cllr Quayle for resolving a grass cutting issue recently.

68. APOLOGIES

Cllr Cross
Cllr L Hitchings

Cllr S Hitchings
Cllr C Jacques

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

None

70. MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 3rd JULY 2023

Cllr Carter asked for an amendment to clarify that at Minute No. 57 stated he requested double yellow lines all the way down, but it was only in some, specific areas.

Cllr Carter added that at Minute No. 62 it should be clarified that it is for pupils at The Blandford School.

Subject to these amendments, it was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr Quayle and AGREED (9 in favour, 3 abstentions) that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

71. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

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

- 71.1 Skatefest Parking – Dorset Council has agreed to the closure of the Stour Meadows car park – at no charge – on Sunday 20th August. The entrance to the car park will be blocked and cars will be directed to park on Stour Meadows. The rangers are booked to mow the grass prior to the event. As in previous years, Kings Ramps will be running the day and refreshments will be served by volunteers from the mayor's charities. The event is being sponsored by Ken's Kabs, The Greyhound and Morrisons. Thanks to the councillors who have volunteered to help marshal the parking. Any additional help is much appreciated. Cllrs John and Michael Dallison from Blandford St Mary parish council have also offered to help.
- 71.2 Defibrillator Training – Resident, Iain Green has now done 3 sessions and committed to 3 more scheduled for September 2nd, October 7th and November 4th. These sessions have been very well received by Councillors and public alike, and as such, thank you to Cllr Stevens who distributed 100 letters to businesses to encourage them to sign up. Iain has had enquiries from at least 2 other groups to hold private sessions for further training as well.
- 71.3 Wessex Water Contravention Letter – A site meeting was held on Friday 7th July with the allotment reps, Town Council officers and plumber, Gary Manson. Wessex Water explained the issues with the pipes not being deep enough and the hose attachments. The allotment reps will correspond with Wessex Water, and have been advised to complete a grant application form. A quote is awaited from the plumber and it has been indicated that it won't be cost prohibitive.
- 71.4 Dorset History Centre – A visit to the centre has been arranged for councillors and staff as this is an important part of the council's responsibility to preserve council records.
- 71.5 Town Council's Birthday – Next year will be the 50th anniversary of hundreds of councils that were created on 1st April 1974, by the Local Government Act 1972. It is suggested that this date is reviewed once we know exactly when the Corn Exchange building will be closing for refurbishment as it may be nice to have a party similar to the Coronation event held in the Corn Exchange, offering free food and entertainment to the public.
- 71.6 Union Flags – Local property developer, Barry Pliskin raised a lack of Union Flags with Cllr Clark and emailed the Town Clerk about it. The Operations Manager sourced two brackets from existing stock and 30 additional flags were purchased at a cost of £108, which Mr Pliskin has offered to pay for and Cllr Clark is in the process of putting up spare brackets and the preparing broom handles for the poles.

72. CIVIC REPORT

The paper was distributed to Councillors (see Appendix B).

Cllr Mieville said a couple of highlights from the last week were seeing his wife walk through the town as a Womble, and presenting Nan Dennett with a bouquet of flowers on her 110th birthday.

73. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES

73.1 Town & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 10th July 2023

73.1.2 Recommendations

There were no recommendations.

73.1.3 The Minutes were RECEIVED.

The Chairman asked Councillors for permission to bring the plastic free community agenda item forward, so the member of public in attendance could hear the outcome, which was agreed.

74. TO CONSIDER SUPPORT FOR PLASTIC FREE COMMUNITY STATUS AND ASSOCIATED FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

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

The Town Council resolves to support Blandford Forum becoming a plastic free community, as follows:

- **Leading by example to remove single-use plastic items from council premises, as per the Town Council's existing Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Plan.**
- **Encouraging plastic free initiatives, promoting the campaign and supporting events (including Litter Free Dorset campaigns to Bin Your Butt and Only Rain Down the Drain, continue to advertise the Clean-Up Blandford litter picks on the website and social media).**
- **Having a representative of the council on the Plastic Free Community steering group (Cllr Pat Osborne and Cllr Hugo Mieville).**

The Town Council authorises expenditure of up to £500, using a Green grant to cover costs of printing and any event expenditure (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

75. TO CONSIDER THE ARCHIVE OF THE MAYORAL SCROLL (IN LIGHT OF NEW INFORMATION)

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

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

The first 130 years of the Mayoral Scroll is to be separated from the most recent 50 years – creating two scrolls – one representing the Borough Council and one for the Town Council. It was agreed that the Mace Bearer, David Jardine is thanked for his suggestion.

Councillors would like to be in a position where both scrolls are displayed at the annual Mayor Making ceremony, at the start of each council term, so the Mayoral Scrolls can be inspected. However, a decision on the storage location is deferred until after a visit to the Dorset History Centre and Blandford Town Museum, or Councillors may choose to store both scrolls in the existing fire safe.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

76. TO CONSIDER EXPENDITURE FOR ESSENTIAL REPAIRS TO THE BELLCOTE AT THE CEMETERY

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

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

The Town Council approves expenditure of up to £11,550.00 plus VAT using funds from General Reserves budget line 1500 (to include for full stone indent repair) (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

77. TO RETROSPECTIVELY APPROVE AUTHORITY TO SUBMIT A COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER APPLICATION FOR ELIZABETH ROAD ALLOTMENTS

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

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

The Town Council retrospectively approves authority to submit a Community Asset Transfer Application for Elizabeth Rd Allotments with the intention of retaining the site as allotment land.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

78. TO CONSIDER THE RENEWAL OF THE LOAN OF DORSET BUTTONS TO BLANDFORD FASHION MUSEUM

The paper was noted (see Appendix G).

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

The Town Council agrees to extend the loan of the collection of Dorset Buttons & Lace Bobbins to the Fashion Museum for a period of 10 years and the Chairman of Council is authorised to sign a letter on behalf of Blandford Forum Town Council.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

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

79.1 Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – Blandford +

Cllr Carter updated Councillors on progress with the modification review. The examiner has responded to the Dorset Council and recommended three minor amendments to the Neighbourhood Plan, which is excellent news. Cllr Carter thanked the Town Clerk and Committee Clerk for their efforts and the Town Clerk praised the Monitoring Group, which has persevered with the plan and put a lot of work into the modification review.

79.2 BFTC Commemoration Group

79.2.1 To consider a report containing guidance from the Pageant Master to mark D-Day 6th June 2024

The paper was noted (see Appendix H).

There was general disappointment with the national suggestions not being particularly inspiring and it was agreed that officers meet with the BFTC Commemoration working group and report back to council.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

79.3 Climate Change & Biodiversity

Cllr Osborne confirmed that the last meeting focussed on the plastic free community status, which had already been discussed as an agenda item.

79.4 Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project

Cllr Stevens reported that some Councillors had met with a Hall & Woodhouse Director to discuss plans for the market area/town centre, which went well. However, he also raised concerns over two groups running parallel with the proposals from the Dorset Council mentioned earlier in the meeting by Cllr Lacey-Clarke. Cllr Lacey-Clarke did not feel there were two groups running separately and felt the Town Council had been clear it wanted pedestrianisation in the market area and stated that the Dorset Council group working on this is just to facilitate the Town Council's intentions and help progress the matter.

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

Cllr Carter added that he agreed with Cllr Stevens that it is essential we all work together on this project, which has been running now for several years when Hugh de longh was at NDDC/DC. Cllr Carter acknowledged that Cllr Lacey-Clarke had got the project moving but added that we need to know what is being planned. Cllr Quayle expressed his annoyance that he and Cllr Lacey-Clarke had fought Dorset Council to agree to use of the parking area. Cllr Lacey-Clarke said that all the progress that has been made is a result of daily emails he has sent to Parking Services and not from working group meetings. Cllr Lacey-Clarke stated that he and Cllr Quayle want the outcome the Town Council asked for and the Town Clerk asked for a reminder of the resolution, as she could not recall one being made. Cllr Lacey-Clarke referred to an online working group meeting held in 2021 and said the consultation referred to at that meeting by a Dorset Council Councillor would now take place at the time of a trial instead of prior to it. Cllr Lacey-Clarke suggested the Town Council awaits the offer in writing, which is anticipated in October, and it can then be considered and either accepted or rejected.

8:15pm – Cllr Herbert left the meeting.

80. REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

None

8:19pm – Cllr Lindsay left the meeting.

81. APPENDIX A (PLANNING) – NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The paper was noted (see Appendix I).

81.1 [P/NMA/2023/04066](#) – Former Forfarmers Mill, Blandford Heights Industrial Estate, Blandford Forum DT11 7TL

This application was for information only.

81.2 [P/HOU/2023/04005](#) – 21 Downside Close Blandford Forum Dorset DT11 7SD

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr Chapman, and AGREED (10 in favour, 2 non-votes) that

The Town Council has no objections to the application and Blandford + NP Policy B1 applies.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

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

The meeting closed at 8:23pm.

SIGNED

DATED