

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Corn Exchange Meeting
Held on Monday 16th October 2023 at 7:01pm in the Corn Exchange



PRESENT

Cllr H Mieville –Chairman of Council
Cllr S Hitchings
Cllr C Stevens
Cllr P Osborne
Cllr H White
Cllr P Clark
Cllr L Lindsay

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

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk

Operations Manager

IN ATTENDANCE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Ed Morton, The Morton Partnership
Ross Ingham – Ingham Pinnock Associates

15. PUBLIC SESSION

Emma Parker Cowles

16. APOLOGIES

Cllr C Jacques
Cllr R Holmes

Cllr L Hitchings

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

None had been submitted.

18. MINUTES OF THE CORN EXCHANGE MEETING HELD ON 24th JULY 2023

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr Herbert and AGREED (9 in favour, 4 abstentions) that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

19. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

Private Donors – Following an exploratory meeting with Simon Hoare MP, a number of possible private donors have been approached regarding the project. They have been invited to meet with the design team, the Mayor and Town Clerk. Any responses received will be reported back to council.

Decant – The decant plan continues, and another storeroom has been cleared and sorted through, although workload in the office has meant a lack of progress in recent weeks. A large amount of paperwork was submitted to the Dorset History Centre in August and two redundant electrical items (mic kits) have recently been sold at £200 and £40.

Storage Unit – Staff continue to research storage spaces for the large number of items we will need to store during the works.

Public Works Loan Board – The application form has been drafted in preparation for the final application to be made, which will be after the tender process once the loan amount is known.

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

Community Ownership Fund – The Town Council has been awarded £265,000 for the project by the Community Ownership Fund. This is fantastic news and will make a significant difference.

Artsreach – Councillors have been provided with the results of a consultation and survey carried out for Artsreach. The results confirm that Artsreach has reached its goal which was for an improvement in health and wellbeing and a decrease in social isolation in our communities. The results of a survey of Artsreach volunteers reveals that a significant majority feels that its events have clear benefits, both for the individuals helping stage Artsreach events and for various aspects of community cohesion.

20. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE DESIGN TEAM

Ross Ingham updated Councillors on recent successful fundraising with £400,000 from William Willians, £265,000 from the Community Ownership Fund and £1,000 from The Cleary Fund for the specific task of restoring the coat of arms in the Town Hall. In addition, another attempt has been made to the Dorset Council, seeking a grant of £25,000.

Ed Morton informed Councillors that we have five potential bidders via Contracts Finder who we will be going out to tender with. The tenders will be back towards the end of November, appointment will be made in January 2024 with a view to being on site from April 2024 with a 15-month contract period. Ross added that it will be at the early part of next year we will be in a position to apply for the Public Works Loan Board. Ross advised that an outcome is still awaited from the Planning department.

Cllr Mieville thanked the consultants for their informative update and for all their efforts with the funding and tender process.

Cllr Stevens said he had spoken to a local craftsman who is interested in reproducing the Corn Exchange tiles and Cllr Lacey-Clarke suggested they are sponsored for something like £25.

21. TO CONSIDER FUTURE USE OF TOWN COUNCIL PROPERTY

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

The benches and tables are retained, with the possibility of the Blandford Men Shed refurbishing them. This is to be explored and brought back to council in the future.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The meeting closed at 7:46pm.

SIGNED

DATED