

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
Held on Monday 25th September 2023 at 7:03pm in the Corn Exchange



PRESENT

Cllr H Mieville –Chairman of Council
Cllr B Quayle
Cllr R Holmes
Cllr P Clark
Cllr L Lindsay
Cllr P Osborne
Cllr A Cross

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

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk

Operations Manager

82. PUBLIC SESSION

- 82.1 Charity Events – Mayor, Cllr Hugo Mieville advertised his forthcoming events – Fabulous Forum and a Charity Concert – and tickets are available to purchase.
- 82.2 Park Road Recreation Ground – Cllr White spotted a disabled person on a mobility scooter today at the recreation ground with a dog running around on the sports pitches.

83. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCILLORS

Cllr Quayle delivered the report, as follows:

- 83.1 Dorset Council Proposal for the Market Area Enhancement – Cllr Quayle updated Councillors that he and Cllr Lacey-Clarke had been pressing Dorset Council on the possibility of a pedestrian area in the Market Place. DC proposes removing nine parking bays to the west of the Town Hall, to create a space with removable bollards or planters so the market can still take place. This would prevent vehicles from entering the space. If planters are used, the Town Council would need to provide and maintain these but if it was bollards Dorset Council would. The period of the trial would be for six months, the Town Council wouldn't have to cover loss of income and designs are subject to feedback. Dorset Council states the space would remain 'highways' and they would pay for the initial works (removal of road markings and installation of bollards). But there needs to be a plan in place for it to be used. It is negotiable when the six-month trial starts however Cllr Lacey-Clarke advised that a new council may withdraw the offer if it was delayed. Any plan would need to undergo a road safety audit. Cllr Lacey-Clarke will distribute the report for everyone to consider and a working group meeting will be arranged in due course. The matter will then be brought back to full council for a decision.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

- 83.2 Verges – This is another area that has been debated for some time. Reduced cutting does have environmental benefits but the DC Cllrs have raised concerns over an urban area not being the best setting for long grasses. Wildlife corridors have been raised and some verges have been highlighted in Blandford, so the Rangers are going to cut the grass and sow wildflower seeds in the hope that the verges will be covered in flowers next year.
- 83.3 Highways Officer – A new officer has recently started and Cllr Quayle asked Councillors to let him and Cllr Lacey-Clarke know of any issues as they will be taking him round the roads to bring him up to speed.

ACTION: TOWN COUNCILLORS

84. APOLOGIES

Cllr C Stevens
Cllr L Hitchings

Cllr C Jacques

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

None

7:35pm – Cllr Herbert left the meeting.

86. MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS:

86.1 Special Co-option Meeting held on 24th July 2023

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr Holmes and AGREED (8 in favour, 4 abstentions, 1 non-vote) that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

86.2 Town Council Meeting held on 31st July 2023

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Holmes, SECONDED by Cllr Chapman and AGREED (10 in favour, 3 abstentions) that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

7:40pm – Cllr Herbert returned to the meeting.

87. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

Shillingstone Map – During the clearing of the office storeroom in preparation of moving an old map of Shillingstone and Okeford Fitzpaine (circa 1933), was discovered. The map showed rights of way and was subsequently offered back to Shillingstone Parish Council which they were delighted to accept. It can only be imagined that the map was accidentally passed to us by accident during the changeover in 1974.

50th Anniversary – We are looking into creating a '50' flower display in Woodhouse Gardens next summer to mark our 50th anniversary, along with replacement planter plaques as they need updating anyway.

CCTV Funding – A funding application made to the Dorset PCC: Operation Relentless Round 3, for the Town Centre CCTV System Relocation to Blandford Police Station, was unsuccessful.

Community Expo – This is the 10th year we have been running Community Expos! We always receive really positive feedback but did receive negative comments from one exhibitor on Saturday 16th September asking when we would start advertising the event and suggesting it needs a complete overhaul and that the name is changed. With it being busy throughout the morning and praise and positivity from others we will continue with the same format instead of reinventing something that currently works very well for the community.

Skatepark – The work to the unit platform has been completed. Expenditure was authorised at R&A on 19th June 2023 as it was attempted to get the work done in time for the Skate Fest but only a temporary repair was possible for the event due to the manufacture of parts. The sub structure was worse than anticipated therefore the cost had risen to £9,650.00+VAT.

Corn Exchange Funding – We have been successful in our application for funding from the Community Ownership Fund for £265,000. This will make a big difference to the amount of funding we will need to borrow. Cllr Carter thanked the staff for their efforts in completing the application form along with the consultants.

87. **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE (cont)**

Cemetery of the Year – The Town Council's Cemetery on Salisbury Road has scooped a prize at the National Cemetery of the Year Awards. The Memorial Awareness Board (MAB) has been promoting and organising the Cemetery of the Year Awards for nearly 20 years. Blandford Forum Town Council won the 2023/24 Gold prize in the Parish, Town and Community Council category of the National Competition and received the award in September.

Philip Potts of the Memorial Awareness Board said; "The awards are an excellent opportunity to reward hard-working staff and demonstrate the central role Cemeteries can play in the community. They provide places of peaceful contemplation and beauty, as well as their ecological importance. The team at Blandford Forum Town Council performed exceptionally throughout the extensive judging period, which is focused on Industry Standards, Environmental Issues and Good Practice."

Cllr Lynn Lindsay, Chairman of the Town Council's Recreation & Amenities Committee said: "This award is such a wonderful pat on the back for the staff who work hard to maintain and administer the cemetery. It acknowledges that they really do go above and beyond to provide a professional and quality service and the staff are thrilled with this recognition. My husband is interred at Blandford Cemetery and I take great comfort knowing the cemetery is well maintained and cared for. I recently raised the high standards of the grounds maintenance work throughout the town at a council meeting, which was supported by fellow Councillors."

The Town Council is also grateful to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission for their part in maintaining the war graves sections within the Cemetery and, therefore, helping us achieve this award.

The Chairman, Cllr Mieville thanked the staff for their efforts in achieving this award.

Sennheiser Wireless Mic Kit – This redundant kit has been sold for the asking price of £200, which was paid in cash and will therefore be paid into the Town Council's bank account.

88. **CIVIC REPORT**

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

Cllr Mieville summarised some of the events he has attended during the last period as well as his Civic Day, which was very successful. Cllr Mieville thanked the Rangers for their input into the day at The Milldown and Stour Meadows.

89. **RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES**

89.1 Recreation and Amenities Committee Meeting held on Monday 11th September 2023

89.1.1 Recommendations

There were no recommendations.

89.1.2 The Minutes were RECEIVED.

89.2 Finance and Staffing Committee Meeting held on Monday 18th September 2023

89.2.1 Recommendations

Minute No. 23 – TO REVIEW THE FREE VENUE HIRE POLICY/CRITERIA

At the Finance & Staffing committee meeting, the resolution was PROPOSED by Cllr Mieville, SECONDED by Cllr Lindsay and AGREED.

Cllr Lacey-Clarke PROPOSED approving the resolution with an amendment to the resolution, which was SECONDED by Cllr Chapman and AGREED that any appeal is 'referred to full Town Council meetings'.

89. **RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES (cont)**

The free venue hire policy is amended to include the following:

1. The £300 is per year (financial or annual) and anything over this amount will be taken to an appropriate meeting for approval.
2. There is an appeal process for unsuccessful applications, with the application being referred to full Town Council meetings.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Minute No. 24 – TO CONSIDER FEEDBACK FROM THE WORKING GROUP REGARDING A REQUEST FROM THE BLANDFORD YOUTH & COMMUNITY CENTRE FOR A SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

At the Finance & Staffing committee meeting, the resolution was PROPOSED by Cllr Mieville, SECONDED by Cllr L Hitchings and AGREED unanimously.

Cllr Lacey-Clarke PROPOSED approving the resolution with an amendment, which was SECONDED by Cllr Osborne and AGREED (8 in favour, 2 against, 3 abstentions) that 'or appropriate meeting thereafter' is included at the end of the resolution.

The following information is requested from the Youth & Community Centre:

- Detailed usage figures
- Up to date accounts to the end of June 2023
- What is the minimum amount of funding required to keep the Youth & Community Centre running

Subject to receipt of information, a new Service Level Agreement up to 31st March 2025 will then considered at the October Town Council meeting or appropriate meeting thereafter.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Minute No. 25 – TO REVIEW THE FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE REMIT AND THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

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

No amendments are made to the Finance & Staffing Committee Remit and Financial Regulations at this time.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

89.2.2 The Minutes were RECEIVED.

90. **TO CONSIDER RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STANDING ORDERS WORKING GROUP**

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

8:07pm – Cllr Lindsay left the meeting and returned at 8:11pm.

Committee Membership

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Chapman, SECONDED by Cllr Holmes but NOT AGREED (5 in favour, 8 against) that the Town Council approves the amendment. The Standing Orders are therefore not amended on this occasion.

90. **TO CONSIDER RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STANDING ORDERS WORKING GROUP (CONT)**

Voting on Appointments

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr S Hitchings and AGREED (11 in favour, 2 against) that

The Town Council approves the proposal that the Chairman/Vice Chairman of Council shall be elected by an absolute majority, by secret ballot.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

8:34pm – Cllr Holmes left the meeting.

Code of Conduct and Dispensations

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED (7 in favour, 3 against, 2 abstentions, 1 non-vote) that

The Town Council approves the amended standing order:

On receipt of a formal notification that there has been a verifiable breach of the Code of Conduct the Proper Officer shall consider referring it to the Monitoring Officer, following consultation with either the Chair of Council or Chair of the Finance & Staffing Committee, if appropriate.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

8:38pm – Cllr Holmes returned to the meeting.

Communicating with Dorset Council Councillors

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr Holmes and AGREED (12 in favour, 1 abstention) that

The Town Council approves the following amendment:

Staff are required to keep Dorset Council councillors informed by way of regular updates and, where necessary, a copy of each letter/e-mail sent to the Dorset Council shall be sent to the ward councillor(s) representing the area of the council.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Co-option Policy

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

The matter is deferred to the next meeting once NALC's position is confirmed.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

9pm – Cllr Lindsay left the meeting.

Certificates/Recognition

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Chapman, SECONDED by Cllr Holmes and AGREED (11 in favour, 1 abstention, 1 non-vote) that

The section of certificates and awards is amended as per the report and the new certificate will be known as a Certificate of Civic Recognition.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Throughout the Document

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED (9 in favour, 2 against, 1 abstention, 1 non-vote) that

90. **TO CONSIDER RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STANDING ORDERS WORKING GROUP (CONT)**

Any references to he/she and his/her to be changed to they/them throughout the document.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

91. **TO CONSIDER THE INTRODUCTION OF A BICYCLE REPAIR STATION TO THE TOWN**

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Chapman, SECONDED by Cllr S Hitchings and AGREED (10 in favour, 2 abstentions, 1 non-vote) that

The Town Council approves the proposal and will bring expenditure back to a future meeting once possible funding sources are known.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

92. **TO CONSIDER SPONSORING THE BLANDFORD BUSINESS AWARDS 2023**

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Cross, SECONDED by Cllr Holmes and AGREED (10 in favour, 2 abstentions, 1 non-votes) that

The Town Council approves expenditure of £250 to sponsor the Entrepreneur category using funds from T&GP Town Improvements (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

9:09pm – Cllr Lindsay returned to the meeting.

93. **TO CONSIDER GRANT APPLICATIONS**

93.1 **Life Education Wessex & Thames Valley**

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter that a grant of £645 is awarded, but this was NOT SECONDED. It was then PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr Osborne that a grant is not awarded on this occasion. It was also PROPOSED by Cllr Cross that a lesser grant is offered, which was SECONDED by Cllr Chapman but NOT VOTED upon because the previous proposal was voted in as follows:

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr Osborne and AGREED (8 in favour, 2 against, 3 abstentions) that

The Town Council does not approve a grant on this occasion.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

93.2 **The Blandford Group Practice**

The paper was noted (see Appendix G).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr White and AGREED (10 in favour, 3 against) that

The Town Council is unable to provide a grant due to the lack of information provided on this occasion.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

94. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE AND CONSIDER ANY REQUESTS REGARDING THE:

94.1 Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Group – Blandford +

To approve the final version of the Modified Neighbourhood Plan before it goes to Dorset Council Cabinet on 3rd October 2023

The paper was noted (see Appendix H).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED (11 in favour, 2 abstentions) that

The Town Council approves the final version of the modified Neighbourhood Plan.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

94.2 BFTC Commemoration Group

The group is planning for the exhibition to be held next year to mark D-Day 80.

94.3 Climate Change & Biodiversity

94.3.1 To review the updated Climate & Biodiversity Plan

The paper was noted (see Appendix I).

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

The Town Council approves the amended version of the Plan.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

94.3.2 To receive an update on progress with the plastic free community scheme

The paper was noted (see Appendix J) and Councillors were asked to encouraged local groups to sign up to the pledge.

95. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE TOWN COUNCIL'S PLAN

The paper was noted (see Appendix K).

96. REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Cllr Chapman provided an update on the work of the Blandford Evening WI.

97. CONFIDENTIAL

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr Carter 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.

97.1 To consider approval of the proposed Deed of Release for Lamperd's Field Allotment

The paper was noted (see Appendix L).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke and SECONDED by Cllr Cross that the Town Council approves the document subject to the removal of clauses 2.2 and 2.3.

97. CONFIDENTIAL (cont)

An amendment was PROPOSED by Cllr S Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED unanimously that the following is added to the resolution: ‘, *subject to determining the consequences of that with the Town Council’s legal advisors*’.

Cllr Lacey-Clarke requested a recorded vote.

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

The Town Council approves the document with the removal of clauses 2.2 and 2.3, subject to determining the consequences of that with the Town Council’s legal advisors.

It was agreed that the most recent version of the Town Council’s agreement with the Allotment Management Committee is distributed to Councillors, and the matter will therefore be included on the Planning agenda scheduled for Monday 2nd October 2023.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The meeting closed at 10:02pm.

SIGNED

DATED