

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
Held on Monday 25th March 2024 at 7:00pm in the Corn Exchange



PRESENT

Cllr H Miéville – Chairman of Council	Cllr N Lacey-Clarke – Vice Chairman of Council
Cllr B Quayle	Cllr S Hitchings
Cllr R Holmes	Cllr R Carter
Cllr C Jacques	Cllr H White
Cllr A Cross	Cllr P Clark
Cllr S Chapman	Cllr C Stevens

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk	Operations Manager
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IN ATTENDANCE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Nicci Brown

173. PUBLIC SESSION

Cllr Miéville thanked Councillors for their attendance on Saturday afternoon at the council's 50th anniversary tea party with the Blandford Stour Valley Band performing and free refreshments. Cllrs Miéville and Carter also took the opportunity to thank staff for the excellent event.

Cllr Carter also urged the councillors to work together on major projects and expressed his desire for this to happen with the market area project.

Cllr White supported Cllr Carter's comment and noted that he is so pleased that the Corn Exchange project is due to start soon.

174. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS

Cllr Quayle said the Market Place is now on the radar with the Dorset Council and he and Noc have received over 1,000 responses to their consultation. Cllr Miéville advised that the Town Council will also be carrying out a consultation after the local elections and asked Cllr Quayle that the Dorset Council considers all responses to surveys together equally.

Cllr Holmes asked that something is done about the number of cigarette butts wedged in between the paving slabs and asked if the spilt paint could be cleaned up by the Dorset Council. Cllr Quayle will report this back and wondered if the next Town Council might like to supplement street cleaning in addition to the responsibility held by the Dorset Council.

175. APOLOGIES

Cllr L Lindsay	Cllr K Herbert
Cllr P Osborne	Cllr L Hitchings

176. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None

177. MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 26TH FEBRUARY 2024

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr Holmes and AGREED unanimously that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

178. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

Mayor Making – Following the resolution at the Corn Exchange meeting held on 26th February 2024, the Parish Church has been booked for the Mayor Making ceremony scheduled for Friday 24th May 2024 (later this year due to the election) and a light lunch will be held at Legion House afterwards.

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 asked that the notice for this fund was displayed on the Town Council's notice boards and Facebook page, which was done. Parents of eligible children, who must live within the footprint of Blandford Forum only and not the periphery villages, were invited to apply for an application form by no later than 20th March 2024.

Blandford Community Fridge – The Community Fridge was visited by the Dorset Council Environmental Health Officer on 6th March 2024 for the Food Hygiene inspection and was awarded a five-star rating.

King Charles III – A portrait has been ordered, now they are being allocated to local councils, and this is currently awaited. It will be framed and displayed once received.

Commonwealth Event – Over 110 pupils from local schools joined the Town Council on Monday 11th March for the flying of the Commonwealth Flag, anthem, quiz, affirmation, and refreshments! This was an excellent turnout and was well received.

Town Council's 50th Year – An event was arranged for Saturday 23rd March in the Corn Exchange to mark the 50th anniversary of the Town Council between 2pm and 4pm. Entertainment was provided by Blandford Stour Valley Band and there will be free tea, coffee & cakes for members of the public to enjoy. A photographic display was prepared, with as many photos collated as possible to show the council over the last half a century. In addition, you will notice the new planter stickers marking the 50th year, and there will also be a 50 marked out in flowers in Woodhouse Gardens!

Easter Egg Hunt – The Easter Egg Hunt in Woodhouse Gardens has been arranged for Friday 5th April 2024, 10am to 12pm, and is kindly sponsored by Sarunds. Councillors are very welcome to attend.

Tree Sponsors – The list was sent to the Dorset Council on 8th March 2023 to and this has been chased since and an opening will be arranged with the residents who sponsored a tree.

Jerry's Steakhouse – The licensing application has been received for Jerry's Steakhouse and Councillors have responded to the Highways Officer directly, and the consensus was for there to be demarcations – even just corners – to assist with the approved boundary of the sitting out area.

Sam James – The performer and his son visited to film the venue before it closes to the public.

Paranormal Visit – Cllr Jacques visited the Corn Exchange with a friend and the caretaker on Thursday evening and did some filming.

179. CIVIC REPORT

The paper was sent to Councillors via email (see Appendix B). Cllr Miéville thanked Councillors and staff for their support at his Charity Night on 9th March 2024 and also referred to the Parliament visit held on 13th March 2024, where Simon Hoare MP warmly greeted attendees. Cllr Miéville said it had been a very interesting and enjoyable day.

180. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES

180.1 Town & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Monday 11th March 2024

180.1.1 Recommendations

There were no recommendations.

180.1.2 The minutes were RECEIVED.

180.2 Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting held on Monday 18th March 2024

180.2.1 Recommendations

Minute No. 46 – TO RECEIVE THE INSURANCE RISK ASSESSMENT RELATING TO THE TOWN COUNCIL’S INSURANCE COVER AND APPROVE INSURANCE PREMIUMS FOR 2024/25

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

The Town Council confirms that there are no other aspects of insurance cover that they wish to amend and approves expenditure authority to enter into a further 3-year long term agreement with Company A until 18th April 2027 at a cost of 3 Year (LTA): £16,693.52 (including IPT) for 2024/2025 (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Minute No. 47 – TO REVIEW OF THE RISK ASSESSMENT MANAGEMENT POLICY (INCLUDING FINANCIAL) ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2024/25 (SENT TO COUNCILLORS SEPARATELY DUE TO THE SIZE OF THE DOCUMENT)

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

The Town Council approves the Risk Management Policy (including Financial) arrangements for 2024/25 and has no amendments.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Minute No. 48 – REVIEW OF THE ASSET REGISTER

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

The Town Council approves the full asset register.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Minute No. 52 – TO REVIEW THE FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE REMIT AND THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Holmes at the F&S Committee and then PROPOSED by Cllr White at this meeting, and SECONDED by Cllr Holmes and AGREED unanimously that

No changes are made to the Finance & Staffing Committee Remit or Financial Regulations.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Minute No. 53 – TO APPROVE THE INVESTMENT POLICY

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

The Investment Policy is approved, subject to the amendments in the report and the F&S Committee minutes.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

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

Minute No. 55 TO CONSIDER THE VIREMENT OF UNDERSPENT RESERVES

It was PROPOSED by Cllr S Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr White at the F&S Committee meeting and then AMENDED at this meeting by Cllr S Hitchings and SECONDED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke and AGREED unanimously that

Any underspend from the Mayoral Allowance, Civic budget and Grants / SLA budget is rolled over into the 2024/25 financial year. In addition, any underspend from the Salaries and Corn Exchange Project Manager budget is transferred to 1105 Corn Exchange reserves (due to a previous resolution that the consultants are paid by the Project Manager budget in lieu of recruiting a member of staff).

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

180.2.2 The minutes were RECEIVED.

181. **TO CONSIDER MEETING DATES FOR APRIL TO JULY 2024 FOR WOODHOUSE GARDENS PAVILION**

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

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

The Town Council approves the calendar of meetings at Woodhouse Gardens Pavilion and the new council then reviews the situation in July 2024.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

182. **TOWN HALL / CORN EXCHANGE PROJECT**

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

182.1 **To receive an update**

In addition to the report, the Town Clerk advised that the contractor start date confirmed as 20th May 2024, although efforts are being made to bring this forward. The request has therefore been sent to the Dorset Council to enact the three-month exemption for non-domestic Rates from 1st April 2024. A Town Council in Dorset has offered to store valuable items if we cannot source anywhere more local subject to BFTC covering the necessary insurance costs.

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

GoPak Tables – The 6ft tables are offered at £20 each and the 3ft tables at £10 each.

Indoor Market Rates – The charges are amended for Woodhouse Gardens Pavilion to a free month in April and then £10 per table and £15 for the café from May onwards.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

182.2 **To consider expenditure authority to seek expert financial advice on the timing of the drawing down of the loan from the Public Works Loan Board**

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

The Town Council approves expenditure of £3,000 for a financial report regarding the timing of the Town Council's borrowing decisions (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

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

183.1 Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Group

The paper was noted (see Appendix E) and Cllr Carter updated Councillors on the ongoing work of the group and his desire to continue supporting the group after he stands down at the May elections.

183.2 BFTC Commemoration Group

Cllr Carter advised that work is being carried out to plan for the D-Day 80 exhibition, which will take place on 6th – 8th June 2024 in Woodhouse Gardens pavilion, and the room is being measured for the layout plan.

183.3 D-Day 80 Events

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

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

The judging for the window competition takes place over the weekend of 6-9th June 2024 and the judges are the Mayor, the Chairman of the B&D RBL Branch and the Chair of the Commemoration Group.

The Town Council agrees to pay £180 for three Tiger Moth aircraft to carry out a fly-past on Thursday 6th June 2024 using funds from the £800 approved for the D-Day 80 events (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

183.4 Climate Change & Biodiversity

The group continues to meet and the Chairman reported that a Clean Up Blandford litter pick took place on Saturday. Cllr Miéville encouraged other organisations, or Councillors, looking to organise litter picks to communicate and coordinate with the Clean Up Blandford Campaign to help manage areas together and pool resources.

183.5 Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project

The working group Chairman, Cllr Stevens updated Councillors on the online meeting held with the Dorset Council officers and advised that a meeting poll has been sent out to arrange the next meeting, which will include external representatives. Cllr Miéville advised that, due to a fair amount of comment being published on social media about this Town Council project, a newsletter and social media post will be distributed by the Town Clerk and a consultation will take place after the elections.

184. REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Cllr Carter updated Councillors about the most recent meeting of the Foundation Governors, which is facing numerous challenges and the School is looking to become an Academy.

185. CONFIDENTIAL

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Holmes, SECONDED by Cllr Jacques 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 Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

185.1 TO APPROVE THE UPDATED HEADS OF TERMS FOR THE LAND NORTH OF THE BYPASS

The paper was noted (see Appendix G).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Miéville, SECONDED by Cllr Holmes and AGREED (10 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention) that

The principle commercial terms set out in the Heads of Terms are approved, subject to
(1) drafting of associated provisions complying with Solicitor's recommendations and
(2) amendment to the provision of a 'possible' primary school and
(3) amend Blandford Town Council to Blandford Forum Town Council.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The meeting closed at 8:47 pm.

SIGNED

DATED