



Do you know anyone locally who is originally from Belgium, Greece, Denmark or Norway? We would like to include them in the 12pm service on 6 June to ensure the 13 participating countries are represented.

Town Council staff have been working with the Chairman of the Blandford & District Branch of the Royal British Legion on commemorative events for the town. The Town Council's Commemoration working group is also busy preparing the D-Day exhibition and everyone is welcome to attend all the events. In addition, there will be a window competition for shops and businesses to participate in.

Thursday 6 June - Saturday 8 June - D-Day Exhibition, Woodhouse Gardens

Thursday 6 June - Proclamation Service in the churchyard of the Parish Church, 12pm

Thursday 6 June - Beacon Lighting Ceremony, Woodhouse Gardens, 8pm

Friday 7 June - National Fish & Chip Day at Forum Frier's and Long John's (recognised as part of the D-Day 80 events, because this food wasn't rationed at the time)

Saturday 8 June - Armed Forces Expo, Legion House, 10am-1pm. This free community event will showcase military charities and organisations with military connections, the Ringwood Pipe Band, Nepalese cuisine, face painting and D-Day ration packs!

Town Hall & Corn Exchange Project

On Monday 11 March 2024, the Town Council was informed that its application to the Public Works Loan Board for a loan of £1.3 million was approved by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This is the final piece in the jigsaw of providing funds for the much-needed renovation of the Grade I Listed Town Hall and Corn Exchange; a project totalling £3.4m.

The Town Council closed the building to the public on 1 April 2024, with the contractors due to start in May, and staff have been decanting to various locations since. The offices are being relocated to the Royal British Legion building, also on Church Lane, for the duration of the works. The proximity to the existing office is ideal, it is an accessible building and it will provide two offices for staff to work from. We will continue to be open to the public Monday to Friday between 9:30am to 12:30pm.

Town Council meetings have moved to Woodhouse Gardens Pavilion, instead of the Corn Exchange, on a Monday evening and the calendar of meetings can be found on our website.

The Corn Exchange's Indoor Market and popular Bethell Bridge café have relocated to Woodhouse Gardens on a Thursday. Please continue to support them and help us keep the Indoor Market going.

We will continue to keep residents updated with progress made on the project. In the meantime, for further information, please do not hesitate to contact us or visit <https://blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk/corn-exchange> and follow us on the social media channels below:



Exercise your right to vote at the Town Council Elections on Thursday 2 May 2024

Make sure you have the appropriate photo ID for the polling station, as this is a new requirement and you cannot vote without it. In addition, your polling station may have changed so please check before setting out.

Please follow the links for more information:

<https://blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk/town-council/elections> and <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/councillors-committees-elections/elections-and-voting>.



Mayor Making Ceremony

Friday 24 May at 10:30am

Everyone is welcome to join us at Blandford Forum Parish Church

Pedestrianisation of Part of the Market Place



It has long been an aspiration of the Town Council to find ways of responding to the local desire to revitalise the Market Place, by creating a vibrant atmosphere and attracting more footfall, of both residents and visitors.

The Town Council was involved in discussions with the former North Dorset District Council (NDDC), the Town Team, Town Museum, and other interested parties, 10 years ago looking at potential improvements for the Market Place with a focus on a covered market area and possible pedestrianisation. In 2016, the Town Council took on responsibility from NDDC for the street market. Then, in 2019, a Market Area Enhancement Working Group was established with the aim of delivering a project to enhance the street market area using a £70,000 grant provided by NDDC.

The Town Council was keen to see some sort of pedestrianisation in the Dorset Council-owned area and initial consultations were carried out. Before these ideas could be further progressed, the pandemic intervened, followed by the replacement of the town centre paving slabs by the Dorset Council, which rendered any further large-scale changes in the town centre impractical for the time being.

In September 2023, the Dorset Council proposed pedestrianisation of the area shaded red on the map above, for a trial period, with some limited funding attached. However, their intention was for the trial to take place in 2024, which would of course coincide with the works taking place to the Corn Exchange - and the anticipated requirement for plant to be located outside the building. The Town Council therefore resolved in January 2024 that the pedestrianisation project will be linked to the completion of the regeneration of the Town Hall/Corn Exchange.

The Town Council's Working Group continues to meet to discuss how best to fully consult residents and we also want to know how residents would like to see the space being used. Suggested usage is for pop-up cafés, local groups and charitable organisations, theatrical and musical performances, but we are very much open to ideas.

A public consultation will be produced by the Town Council after the local elections, and we look forward to hearing your thoughts on the proposals. This is a monthly agenda item on the Town Council meetings, so you are welcome to attend a meeting to hear discussions and express your opinions too.

Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!

On Saturday 16th March, Town Criers from across Dorset met in Dorchester in honour of Alistair Chisholm, who has retired from 27 years of Crier duties. It had been decided to run the Stanley Mansbridge Perpetual Trophy on that day as well, as this is a competition open to Dorset Town Criers only, and the subject for the competition Cry was 'Alistair Chisholm'.

The Criers trooped round into Brewery Square to perform their Cries, which were being judged by Chris Brown, Town Crier of Wimborne Minster, and the erstwhile holder of the Trophy and his Sergeant at Arms, Mervyn Gudgeon. After half an hour of witty and fulsome praise for Alistair, during which his blushes were not spared, Liz Rawlings of Blandford Forum was declared the winner and was presented with the Trophy (pictured). Jean Jeffrey, who has been Town Crier to Blandford Forum for over 40 years, last won this competition in 1997!

The photographer for the event was Hannah Fleming-Hill, daughter of Andrew Fleming, the Swanage Town Crier, and the prize for the best costume was awarded to Jackie Hall of Wareham.

Liz's wonderful win means that the 2025 Trophy event will be hosted by Blandford Forum, which we look forward to doing!

