

D-Day 80 Commemoration Events in Blandford Forum



On 6 June 2024 Blandford Forum Town Council, working in partnership with the Blandford & District Branch of the Royal British Legion, held two events to remember the tens of thousands of allied forces who gave service on D-Day eighty years ago and helped secure the peace we in the UK enjoy today. The aim of each event was to be special and unique to Blandford Forum, where thousands of troops had spent their last days in 1944 before travelling to France.

D-DAY 80 PROCLAMATION SERVICE AT NOON



Liz Rawlings, Blandford Forum Town Crier read the Proclamation on the churchyard and the Mayor of Blandford Forum, Cllr Nocturin Lacey-Clarke invited representatives to present the flags of the 13 allied countries and add them to the Legion's poppy cross. Lt Col (Retd.) Bob Brannigan delivered a fascinating address to attendees, explaining Blandford's contribution to D-Day and what it would have been like in the town at that time.

RINGING OUT FOR PEACE!



At 6:30pm the Tower Captain, Philip Rioch and his team of bell ringers at Blandford Forum Parish Church were ringing the bells for peace, which was done by churches up and down the country. What a glorious sound it was, and it was manually created by eight individual bell ringers.

D-DAY 80 LIGHT OF PEACE AT 8PM

The Beacon Lighting Ceremony included a visit to the D-Day exhibition and refreshments in Woodhouse Gardens. Cllr Lacey-Clarke read the D-Day 80 Tribute after 103-year-old Larks Leas Rest Home resident, Gordon Grenville-Hunt proudly lit the beacon. It was a very special evening concluded by the Piper, Lyndon Wall playing a haunting lament whilst attendees admired the beacon, lit to signify the light that emerged from the dreadful darkness of war. Thank you to all the participants and attendees.



Chairman of Council's Report 2023/24

Cllr Hugo Mieville was elected as the Chairman of Council at the Annual Meeting on Tuesday 9 May 2023, and became the 50th Mayor of Blandford Forum Town Council at the Mayor Making ceremony in the Corn Exchange on Friday 19 May 2023. This is his summary of his Mayoral year...

The first weekend of **May 2023** was dominated by a fantastic programme of civic celebration of the Coronation of King Charles III, with events being organised by both the Town Council itself and the Yuletide Festival Committee. In late May, I attended the first of two meetings in 2023 at The Blandford School to discuss the problem of anti-social behaviour. I also had the honour of opening the annual Blandford Camera Club exhibition in the Corn Exchange.



At the **June 2023** council meeting, it was announced that no objections had been received to the Corn Exchange planning application, which was welcome news. The Council voted to pay £5000 towards the relocation of the town CCTV equipment for the Police to use. The organisers were congratulated on a very successful Green Week, including a Sustainability Fair attended by the Mayor. The Town Council held a very successful first Armed Forces Expo in the Corn Exchange, which opened with a short ceremony in the Market Place and we were thrilled to have Anthony Woodhouse present to sign Hall & Woodhouse up to the Armed Forces Covenant. I was also honoured to sign to reaffirm the Town Council's support for the Covenant. This event is to be repeated in future years!

At the Town Council meeting in early **July 2023**, it was decided to attempt to fill the vacancy on the Council by co-option, which resulted in the delightful Sheila Chapman returning to the Town Council! It was decided to separate the first 130 years of the Mayoral Scroll as a Borough Council from the last 50 years, and to store it in-house. It was agreed at the meeting in late July to support Blandford Forum becoming a plastic-free town, and a budget of £500 was set for this. It was also decided to apply for a Community Asset Transfer for the Elizabeth Road allotments. I had the honour of presenting a bouquet to 102-year-old Gordon Grenville-Hunt at the Larks Leas Rest Home, and later in July my wife and I presented a bouquet to the amazing 110-year old Nan Dennett, who has sadly since died. We also attended a Bugle Breakfast at The Rifles Wallisdown barracks on the same day as originally meeting Nan. I also attended a very interesting meeting of the Poverty Action Group at the United Reform Church. There were no council meetings during **August**, but plenty of mayoral action - what with attending a very successful Town Council Skatefest and opening Jerry's Steakhouse in the same day; presenting another centenarian bouquet, opening the Art Club exhibition at The Blandford School and joining the fun provided by Jamie Jigsaw at the free council-run event in Woodhouse Gardens.



September also proved to be a busy mayoral month. We were proud to showcase our beautiful open spaces during the Mayoral Civic Day, thanks to help from the Dorset Council Rangers, and - with the support of Wessex Acoustic - we were able to put on a lively evening of folk music performed by the amazing Merry Hell, to raise money for our charities - Blandford Town Museum and Nourish.

Meanwhile, the Council was back in full swing. Potential Dorset Council support for the partial pedestrianisation of the Market Place was announced, as was a very welcome sum of £265,000 from the government's Community Ownership Fund towards the Corn Exchange project. The Town Council also won a Gold Award in the Cemetery of the Year competition in the Town and Parish Councils section - a grave moment and a great honour! It was agreed to finance a Bicycle Repair Station in the centre of the town, and funding streams are being worked on, whilst the final version of the modified Neighbourhood Plan was approved.

In **October**, the Town Council accepted the proposals from Dorset Council for the Market Area Enhancement in principle, and it also voted to spend £2,789 on essential water works to the Elizabeth Road allotments, and £2,300 on the ANPR maintenance contract. We held two very successful fund-raising events for my mayoral charities in successive weeks at the Corn Exchange: the Fabulous Forum, showcasing young talent, and lovely combined concert for the BSVB and Rokit Choir. I also attended as Mayor the awards dinner for the Blandford Business Awards, and the very successful Poppy Launch at the Legion and the Corn Exchange - the first time that the town had received the honour of holding this event.



In **November**, the Heads of Terms were agreed for a 25-year lease for the Rugby Club to enjoy partial use of the land at Larksmead. The Town Council also agreed to appoint consultants to develop ideas to assist it with the delivery of the Market Place project. The mayoral month was dominated by Remembrance events: the RBL Commonwealth War Graves event at the Cemetery; the School's Remembrance event, and of course the two parades on Remembrance Sunday: one at the Camp and one in the town. All these events were beautifully organised and very moving. I also had the honour of attending the opening of the new Gurkha Temple at the Camp, and to meet the Pandit and the Guru presiding. And at the end of the month, I was privileged indeed to attend The Rifles' Biennial Dinner at the Guildhall, in the company of Her Majesty the Queen!

At the **December** Town Council meeting, it was agreed to set the precept for 2024-25 at £880,115, which represented an increase of 6.12% on the previous year. It was also resolved after all not to form a charitable trust to manage the Corn Exchange project. The Council approved the splendid new Design Code which was to be added to the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan - and at the same time approved the plans in place for the D-Day 80 commemorations in June. The Town Clerk reported that the Project Manager at Dorset Council had advised that we should not rush towards the proposed trial pedestrianisation of the Market Place until both the Council and Highways Department were ready: it had originally been proposed to set up a working-group to progress the scheme before April 2024, which would have clashed with the Corn Exchange works and been a very tight timescale to work towards.



The mayoral month was inevitably dominated by Christmas, and my wife and I attended no fewer than seven Carol Services in Blandford and around Dorset as Mayor and Mayoress, as well as a fantastic mayoral charity Christmas Concert by the BSVB and Rokit, and a Christmas Fair in the Corn Exchange - plus a delicious mayoral Christmas lunch at the Methodist Church. We then took a deep breath over the Christmas break!

In **January**, the Town Council approved a one-off and unrestricted grant of £5,000 to the Blandford Youth and Community Centre. The Council also agreed to pursue the six-month trial pedestrianisation of the Market Place, to link with the completion of the regeneration of the Corn Exchange. Meanwhile, I made some low-key but fascinating mayoral visits to the new prayer 'Sanctuary' at Bryanston School, to the Awards evening at The Blandford School and to the Evangelical Church to present the children with an award for their Christmas tree decorations. The end of the month saw me fast-tracked to the Railway Club Annual Lunch, before enjoying a convivial evening at the Brewery Centre for the Community Chest Awards.

At the **February** Town Council meeting, we bowed our heads in fond memory of former Mayor Martin Brickell, who had sadly passed away. The Council heard the good news of the improved facilities at the Town Museum for visually impaired visitors, and approved some amendments to the Mayoral Allowance and the Mayoral Handbook. It also approved expenditure of £4,766 for our superb annual displays of planters and bedding. However, the most significant event of my entire mayoral year took place at the Town Council (Corn Exchange) meeting on Monday 12 February when I chaired a meeting, where a recorded vote ensured that the Town Council approved expenditure of almost £3.5m for the project and would, as a result, apply to borrow £1.3m from the Public Works Loan Board, to add to our reserve - and donations - towards the modernisation and refurbishment of the Corn Exchange: a moment greeted by applause from councillors and public alike, after years of discussion and planning.

The mayoral month then included lunch at the new 'La Vita' restaurant; a very busy and successful Community Expo; a fascinating afternoon spent at the wonderful Repair Cafe, and a very moving but simple ceremony outside the Corn Exchange to mark the second anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

In **March**, further arrangements for the D-Day commemorations were announced. It was confirmed that a Town Council newsletter would clarify the Town Council's position on the future of its Market Place project and provide a further update on the Corn Exchange project. We held a nice ceremony with local schoolchildren in and outside the Corn Exchange to mark Commonwealth Day.



To mark the end of the current use of the Corn Exchange before its temporary closure, and the Town Council having reached its 50th year, we enjoyed a simple afternoon of conversation, cake and music by the Blandford Stour Valley Band towards the end of the month.

However, one of the mayoral highlights of the month has to be a superbly enjoyable Mayoral Charity '70s Dinner and Dance at the Sealy Suite. My wife, Yvonne and I thoroughly enjoyed the evening, whilst raising funds for my charities. The other highlight was a fascinating tour of the historic Palace of Westminster, by kind permission of Simon Hoare MP, who generously gave us a huge amount of his time!

In **April** the Town Council approved the expenditure of up to £3000 to be spent on a consultation on the public realm, preparatory to the proposed trial pedestrianisation of part of the Market Place, and also agreed the wording of a public consultation on its plans. You can read about this consultation further on in this newsletter and I urge you to respond to it with your views. It also agreed on the division of various objects between the Town Museum and other venues during the refurbishment of the Corn Exchange, as well as the renewal of the contract for the cleaning of the public toilets - so all cisterns are now go!

I had the honour of bowling the first bowl of the Blandford Bowling Club season. I also hugely enjoyed my Mayoral Thanksgiving Service in the Parish Church, which allowed me to celebrate the work of my mayoral charities and the musical groups which supported me all year. At the same time, the work to decant properties from the Corn Exchange continued apace. This move will form the backdrop of the council year to come, and explains why we held the Mayor Making ceremony in the Parish Church in May, when I handed over the chains to my Deputy Mayor, Cllr Nocturin Lacey-Clarke.



I have really enjoyed my term as Mayor. It's been an absolute privilege to meet so many committed people from a whole range of activities and organisations in Blandford - we are very lucky to have them all! And to have such a committed hard-working and yet good-humoured group of Town Councillors and Town Council staff. I have hugely enjoyed as well travelling across Dorset to meet the Mayors and Mayoresses of our fair county, and to see what their lovely towns have to offer. Above all, perhaps, I have enjoyed working with my charities and the people who run them (especially Gail and Sylvia) at the various events throughout the year, to make what was just over £5000 for their benefit. It has been a privilege to do that, and - above all - to be the 50th Mayor of Blandford Forum Town Council. Thank you.



Councillor Hugo Mieville
Chairman of Council and Town Mayor 2023/24



Mayor of Blandford Forum 2024/25

The Chairman of Council and Mayor of Blandford Forum for the year 2024/2025 is Cllr Nocturin Lacey-Clarke (pictured right).

His chosen charities are Blandford Amateur Boxing Club and Blandford Youth & Community Centre. The Mayor's Chaplain is Chaplain Harry Vincent.

The Vice Chairman of Council and Deputy Mayor is Cllr Hugo Mieville (pictured above).



Your Council

Seven councillors stepped down at the local elections in May; Haydn White, Lynn Lindsay, Roger Carter, Peter Clark, Pat Osborne, Kaylee Herbert and Cathy Jacques. A reception was held at Woodhouse Gardens Pavilion on 3 May 2024 to thank them for their commitment to the Town Council. We also took the opportunity to acknowledge Linda Scott-Giles' 20 year anniversary with the Town Council, having joined in 2004 as Assistant Town Clerk, and been Town Clerk since 2011, and the Mace Bearer, David Jardine turning 70. Town Crier, Liz Rawlings carried out a fitting cry for the occasion!

We have three new councillors as a result of the local elections; Cllr Terry Clarkson, Cllr Yvonne Mieville and Cllr Maggie Putt. They were all elected uncontested and there are now four vacancies on the Town Council. If you are interested in joining our team, please get in touch with the Town Clerk or chat to one of your Councillors to find out more about the role.



TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS

Local groups, charitable and voluntary organisations can apply for a grant (including a green grant), subject to meeting the criteria.

The forms are available from the office or on our website:

www.blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk/services/grants

Please follow us on the council's social media channels:



Contact Your Councillors

The Town Clerk for Blandford Forum Town Council is Linda Scott-Giles, who can be contacted using the details on the front page.

WARD	TOWN COUNCILLOR	HOME ADDRESS AND E-MAIL ADDRESS	TEL NO
CENTRAL	Margaret Putt	17 Maple Tree Close, DT11 7FY CllrPutt@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk	07519 986922
	Steve G Hitchings	27 Kings Road, DT11 7LD cllrs.hitchings@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk	01258 455840
	Sheila Chapman	55 Eastleaze Road, DT11 7UN cllrchapman@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk	07486 637373
	Rosemary Holmes	16 Liddington Crescent, DT11 7RP cllrhomes@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk	01258 480451
	Byron Quayle	16 Alexandra Street, DT11 7QP cllrb.quayle@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk	07843 616343
	Vacancy		
HILLTOP	Alan Cross	15 Manor Farm Close, Pimperne, DT11 8XL cllrcross@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk	01258 452849
	Terry Clarkson	55 Barnes Close, DT11 7NG CllrClarkson@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk	07914 067709
LANGTON ST LEONARDS	Hugo Mieville	4 Albert Street, DT11 7HY cllrmieville@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk	01258 480366
	Colin R Stevens	16 Andrew Close, DT11 7PG cllrc.stevens@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk	01258 453955
	Vacancy		
	Vacancy		
OLD TOWN	Yvonne Mieville	4 Albert Street, DT11 7HY CllrY.Mieville@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk	01258 480366
	Nocturin Lacey-Clarke	5 Dorset Street, DT11 7RG cllrn.lacey-clarke@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk	07815 951095
	Vacancy		
BADBURY HEIGHTS	Lee S Hitchings	12 Staverton Walk, DT11 7TN cllrl.hitchings@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk	07917 863531

Dorset Council - you can also contact Cllr Nocturin Lacey-Clarke

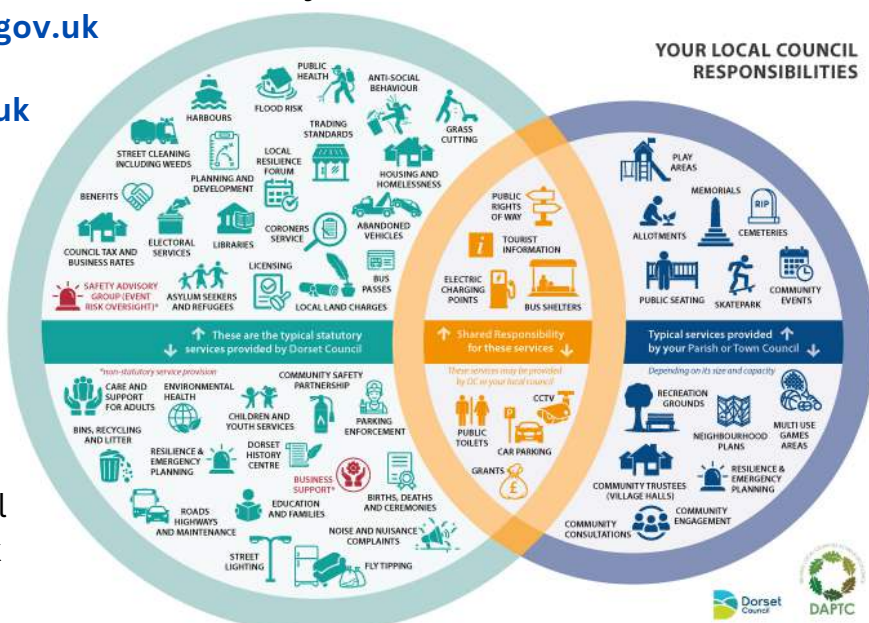
cllrnoc.lacey-clarke@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

and Cllr Byron Quayle

cllrbyron.quayle@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

for Dorset Council queries and issues such as planning, housing, highways, waste, bins and council tax.

The image to the right, provided by the Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils and Dorset Council, helps to identify if it is a Blandford Forum Town Council or Dorset Council issue but, if you aren't sure, please ask and we will be able to advise.



**TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL RETURN
(ACCOUNTS) 2023/24**

The Internal Auditor to the Town Council has confirmed the accounts as correct.

		31st March 2023	31st March 2024
		£	
1	Balances Brought Forward	1,397,541	1,442,321
2	(+) Annual Precept	803,241	825,250
3	(+) Total Receipts (income)	1,237,010	194,194
4	Staff Costs	451,355	508,452
5	Loan Interest Repayments	0	0
6	(-) Total Other Payments	1,544,116	638,838
7	(=) Balance Carried Forward*	1,442,321	1,314,475
8	Total Cash & Investments	1,422,077	1,297,819
9	Total Fixed Assets**	5,748,440	5,764,120
10	Total Borrowing	Nil	Nil
11	Acts as sole Trustee for Managing Trust Funds	Yes	Yes

* Of the balances held at 31 March 2024 over £1,048,953 was held for Capital projects, which includes £1,045,502 for the refurbishment of the Corn Exchange.

** Fixed assets of £5,764,120 is the value of the properties and equipment owned by the council at approximate cost value (for example the Corn Exchange and the Skate Park). This also includes £682,985 Long Term Asset, which for smaller bodies accounting purposes should and has been excluded from box 7 and is instead shown as part of box 9.

**The Town Council has confirmed the precept for
2024/25 is £880,115.**

**Councillor Attendance
at Meetings**

May 2023 – April 2024

Occasionally, Councillors are required to attend other events/meetings on behalf of the Town Council in place of council meetings. When Councillors join meetings online, due to their circumstances, it is not recorded that they have 'attended' the meeting, because they are not able to vote via online attendance.

Councillor	Meetings Attended	Expected Attendance
Haydn White	35	40
Lynn Lindsay	31	40
Steve Hitchings	38	40
Roger Carter	32	36
Hugo Mieville	44	44
Peter Clark	29	36
Lee Hitchings	28	40
Colin Stevens	36	40
Noc Lacey-Clarke	40	44
Pat Osborne	21	32
Byron Quayle	23	36
Alan Cross	31	40
Rosemary Holmes	36	40
Cathy Jacques	19	36
Kaylee Herbert	26	40
Sheila Chapman	19	21

*Annual Tree
Photography Competition*



Celebrating trees in and around Blandford Forum

To enter, please email a photo of your favourite, or a particularly interesting tree within the DT11 postal area to:

admin@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk including your full name and phone number, by 31st August 2024.

Three entries can be submitted per person. Town Councillors will pick the winning photo. The winner will be presented with the trophy, sponsored by Cllr Lacey-Clarke.

Picture taken by resident, David Rose (winner of 2023 competition).



BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

CHARITY CALENDAR 2025

For the 7th year running, the Town Council is creating a calendar to raise money for the Mayor's Charities.

THEME: PETS OF BLANDFORD FORUM

Do you have a photo of your pet in and around DT11 7 that could be included in our charity calendar?

If you have any photos that fit the theme and could be included in the calendar please email them to admin@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk by 31st August 2024.

Pedestrianisation of Part of the Market Place

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Ten years ago, the Town Council was involved in discussions with the former North Dorset District Council (NDDC), the Town Team, Town Museum, and other interested parties, 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 to the left of the Town Hall / Corn Exchange, 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 Councillors 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. 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.

A public consultation has been produced by the Town Council and you can share your views by 31 August 2024 by scanning the QR code above, picking up a copy from the Town Council Office in Legion House, Church Lane or following this link: <https://forms.office.com/e/syDKRUhbMC>

BLANDFORD
SKATEFEST
2024



18TH AUGUST | 10AM - 4PM
BLANDFORD SKATE PARK, STOUR PARK, DT11 9LE

FREE WORKSHOPS FOR ALL AGES (EQUIPMENT PROVIDED)

COMPETITIONS FOR BOTH BEGINNERS AND THOSE MORE EXPERIENCED

PROFESSIONAL DEMONSTRATIONS THROUGHOUT THE DAY

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL



FREE SUMMER HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT



JAMIE JIGSAW

2ND AUGUST | **10AM - 1PM** | **WOODHOUSE GARDENS**
BLANDFORD FORUM
DT11 7DN

CIRCUS WORKSHOP | MAGIC & JUGGLING | BALLOON MODELLING

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL <https://blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk>