BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Corn Exchange Meeting
Held on Monday 22nd July 2024 at 7:00pm in Woodhouse Gardens Pavilion

DRAFT Subject to confirmation

PRESENT

Cllr S Hitchings –Chairman of Committee
Cllr N Lacey-Clarke – Chairman of Council
Cllr M Putt
Cllr R Holmes
Cllr T Clarkson
Cllr L Hitchings – arrived at 7:03pm
Cllr A Cross – Vice Chairman of Committee
Cllr H Miéville – Vice Chairman of Council
Cllr C Stevens
Cllr S Chapman
Cllr Y Miéville

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk
Operations Manager

IN ATTENDANCE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Responsible Financial Officer — Nicci Brown

1. PUBLIC SESSION

None

2. APOLOGIES

Cllr B Quayle

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

None had been submitted.

4. MINUTES OF THE CORN EXCHANGE MEETING HELD ON 26th FEBRUARY 2024

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Chapman, SECONDED by Cllr H Miéville and AGREED (6 in favour, 4 abstentions) that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

7:03pm – Cllr L Hitchings arrived.

5. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

Funding Update – A site visit was arranged on 10th July 2024, with the Town Clerk, the Architect and a potential funder to look at the building and explain the works taking place. This went well and we await some feedback from the individual.

The Town Clerk has submitted an expression of interest to the Wolfson Foundation and Awards for all and we await a reply.

An update meeting has been held with the Community Ownership Fund manager and Town Clerk, which was successful, and a photographic update report has been sent to him so he can share it with his team. Update reports have also been sent to major funders and this will be repeated each time a financial statement is produced by the Quantity Surveyor.

Works – Works are going well and a progress meeting was held in June between the contractor and the Town Council's Design Team, the Town Clerk and Cllr S Hitchings. The next meeting is scheduled for 24th July 2024.

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

The Fire Service has asked Hammonds for the opportunity to carry out an exercise in the building, as there aren't many opportunities to make use of building sites in this way. Following checks with the architect and chairman of council, the Town Clerk has confirmed this is welcomed.

New Office – A member of the public complained to staff that it wasn't clear from the Legion gates that we offer disabled access into our office. The signage has therefore been updated. We have also had to update the signage on our old office redirecting people because some deliveries and visitors couldn't locate the Legion from the Town Clerk's Office.

Future Use – The Blandford School requested a meeting with the Town Clerk to discuss the possibility of holding the school performance in the Corn Exchange in October 2025.

The Bookings Receptionist has been searching for disabled theatre groups and will be contacting them in due course, as well as approaching the Dorset Council Registrar for information on registering the venue as a wedding venue.

Hoarding

Access – A complaint was received that the ramps were floating when the rainfall was heavy, and the area outside Spar and the Town Hall floods. This was shared with the contractor and they have now secured them.

Design Work – we have been working on the expansion of a Blandford Forum history timeline for display on the Spar side of the hoarding. This was originally a small banner during the Friends of the Forum period but has been added to (a lot!) with inclusion of significant dates suggested by Barry Barnett, who has been very helpful. We are also including the plans and a summary of the works on the Reeve side of the hoarding and both sides include QR codes so people can scan for more information. Mock ups are attached for an indication of the size and positioning but we need to work around the existing signage.

Insurance – The fire alarm is being tested weekly again, by the caretakers, as in the past, the contractor offered to do this but there would have been a charge to the Town Council.

Parts of the fire alarm are decommissioned because of the works but the rest is still active, our insurance company is aware the Fire alarm is only providing partial cover due to the works taking place.

Discharge of Conditions – The first Discharge of Condition application has been submitted, it will show up on Dorset Councils planning map as a live application. As agreed at the site meeting the architect has held off on some aspects so will probably need to do two more of these

6. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE PUBLIC WORKS LOAN BOARD LOAN AND AGREE A WAY FORWARD

The paper was noted (see Appendix B) and the Town Clerk and the RFO updated Councillors on the progress made with the financial advisors recommended by another Town Council.

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

Due to the difficulty in predicting interest rates, Councillors approve delegated authority to the chairs of Council, F&S and Corn Exchange, the RFO and the Town Clerk to make the decision when to draw down the Public Works Loan Board loan when we have a better understanding of when the loan amount is required.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

7. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON EXPENDITURE TO DATE ON THE PROJECT AND CONSIDER FORTHCOMING EXPENDITURE

The paper was noted (see Appendix C) and a discussion was held on the first financial statement provided by the Quantity Surveyor.

Cllr Lacey-Clarke enquired about the Variations chart No 3.01, which says 'confirmed', but it is marked 'provisional' elsewhere in the table. The Operations Manager will ask the Quantity Surveyor to clarify.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Cllr H Miéville asked about the cost of the slate, and associated savings, and this will be clarified at the next progress meeting on Wednesday.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The meeting closed at 7:28 pm.

SIGNED …… DATED ……..……..