



BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

Mayor Making Ceremony

Friday 15th May 2026
at 10:30 am



Corn Exchange
Blandford Forum

ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS

Introduction

Welcome and opening prayers from the Reverend
Carmichael

Welcome from the outgoing Mayor of Blandford Forum,
Cllr Hugo Miéville

Prayers led by the Mayor's Chaplain

Reverend Carmichael

Presentation of Certificates

Presented to any individuals who have been nominated
for recognition and approved by way of a vote at a Town
Council meeting

Welcome and Gift Presentation to Mortain

Welcome to our guests from Mortain who have come over
to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of our Twinned Towns.

Mayor Making Ceremony

*Please explore the building whilst the chairs are moved in
preparation for...*

Buffet lunch and refreshments

Meet Councillors, officers, members of the public
and local organisations in the Corn Exchange.

Everyone is welcome!

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

2026 – 2027

Town Councillors

(in order of seniority)

Steve Hitchings

Hugo Miéville

Lee Hitchings

Colin Stevens

Nocturin Lacey-Clarke

Byron Quayle

Alan Cross

Rosemary Holmes

Sheila Chapman

Terry Clarkson

Yvonne Miéville

Maggie Putt

Gail Del-Pinto

Samantha Morgan

Jacqueline Robinson

Michelle Spruce

Town Clerk

Claire Commons

OUTGOING MAYOR CLLR HUGO MIEVILLE

Hugo spent the early part of his life in Teignmouth, Devon where he attended the local Grammar School. After gaining BA and MA degrees in French Studies at the University of Warwick, Hugo embarked on a teaching career. He retired from Milton Abbey School last year, after working there for forty years in a variety of different roles, including Head of MFL, Housemaster, Director of Activities and finally Alumni Manager.

Hugo has lived in Blandford Forum since 2001, and he has been a Town Councillor since 2011. He was Deputy Mayor three times between 2016 and 2025 and was the 50th Mayor of Blandford Forum in 2023. He loves the town for its beauty, its ideal mix between Georgian town and countryside, and its very friendly community.

He has greatly enjoyed serving the community this year as its Mayor, and felt honoured to be the Mayor to cut the ribbon at the reopening of the Corn Exchange earlier this year. Since then, he had attended some fantastic events there, including Any Questions (where he asked a question on- air!) and a fantastic charity concert by folk- rock band Merry Hell, as well as a charity Valentine's Ball. Other highlights of his year included attending a moving but rain-soaked Remembrance Service, and a lovely but rain-soaked Yuletide Festival. He also greatly enjoyed the new Summer Fayre, and his Civic Day - which was combined with the Dorset Town-Criers' Competition.

Following mayorship, Hugo hopes to spend more time with fellow-councillor wife, Yvonne and his lovely black Lab, Gracie- not to mention daughter Holly, her three daughters, son William and two stepsons James and John. He hopes to enjoy walking his dog, visiting France, playing golf and tennis (very badly!) and escaping to watch his favourite football team, Torquay United! Yvonne and Hugo are founder members of Blandford War on Waste, advocating for a plastic-free town, and they will continue to organise the Clean Up Blandford Campaign, which holds regular litter-picks.

Hugo would like to thank his Mayor's Chaplains Reverends Dale & Emma Carmichael and his three Mayoral charities: TREADS; Blandford Fashion Museum and Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance, for their support this year.

Here is a selection of photos from the Mayoral year...



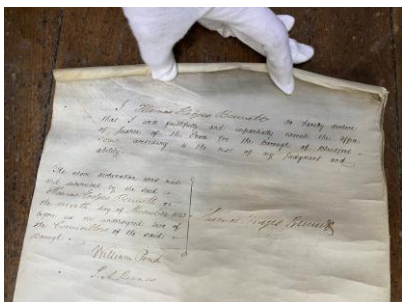
PAST MAYORS

The list below shows the Mayors of Blandford Forum Town Council since the reorganisation of local government in 1974:

| | | | |
|------|-----------------------|------|-------------------------|
| 2025 | Hugo Miéville | 1997 | Carole A Sharp |
| 2024 | Nocturin Lacey-Clarke | 1996 | Cyril Enoch Hill |
| 2023 | Hugo Miéville | 1995 | Haydn Roger White |
| 2022 | Colin Stevens | 1994 | Frankie Maurice Lane |
| 2021 | Lee Hitchings | 1993 | Deborah Helen Bore |
| 2020 | Lynn Lindsay | 1992 | Joseph Roger Hickish |
| 2019 | Lynn Lindsay | 1991 | John David Barnes |
| 2018 | Roger Carter | 1990 | John W Turnbull |
| 2017 | Peter Clark | 1989 | Rev Raymond O Balmer |
| 2016 | Jackie Stayt | 1988 | Haydn Roger White |
| 2015 | Stephen Hitchings | 1987 | Cyril Enoch Hill |
| 2014 | Stephen Hitchings | 1986 | Cyril Enoch Hill |
| 2013 | Bob Brannigan | 1985 | David C Kinsey Wright |
| 2012 | Sara Loch | 1984 | Martin J Brickell |
| 2011 | Esme Butler | 1983 | Gwendoline F Lane |
| 2010 | Esme Butler | 1982 | Rev Raymond O Balmer |
| 2009 | Lynn Lindsay | 1981 | Dr David Harries Davies |
| 2008 | Sara Loch | 1980 | Gwendoline F Lane |
| 2007 | Stephen Hitchings | 1979 | Rev Raymond O Balmer |
| 2006 | Sheila Chapman | 1978 | Gladys May Cole |
| 2005 | Esme Butler | 1977 | Arthur W G Adams |
| 2004 | Gerry Chapman | 1976 | Dr David Harries Davies |
| 2003 | Lynn Lindsay | 1975 | Dr David Harries Davies |
| 2002 | Esme Butler | 1974 | Stanley E Lawes |
| 2001 | Sheila Chapman | | |
| 2000 | Rosemary Holmes | | |
| 1999 | Haydn Roger White | | |
| 1998 | Peter J Warrington | | |

THE MAYORAL SCROLL

In January 2023, staff took the opportunity to carefully unroll the Mayoral Scroll back to the first entry, because this had not been done in recent years and nobody knew the full history of it.



The first entry, pictured left, is dated 9th November 1843. This was for the signing in of a Justice of the Peace for the Borough of Blandford Forum named Councillor Thomas Hodges Bennett and witnessed by Councillor Pond and Councillor Barnes. Councillor Hodges would have been a Justice of the Peace by virtue of his office as Mayor.

The Justice of the Peace would consider cases in the Magistrates Court, which is the room upstairs in the Town Hall (1734), with prisoners and defendants being held in the room next door, which is now known as the Council Chamber. Due to legal reform, the first entry with a Councillor being referred to as Mayor of Blandford Forum, and not Justice of the Peace, was 1968.

The scroll covers a period of seven monarchs and 33 Prime Ministers! It reaches from the doors to the Corn Exchange to the back of the stage (level with Church Lane car park).

It was fascinating capturing an image of each entry and seeing names of Mayors from the past who are no longer with us, such as Dr David Davies, Gwendoline Lane, John Barnes, Cyril Hill, Reverend Raymond Balmer and - more recently - Esme Butler.

To help preserve the sheets from the Borough Council scroll, Councillors resolved to separate the pages into two scrolls, so the Mayoral scroll you see on the table today dates to 1974 and is for Blandford Forum Town Council only.



INCOMING MAYOR CLLR COLIN STEVENS

Colin was born in Dorset and has always lived in and around Blandford Forum. He spent his childhood at Winterborne Whitechurch where he attended the village school, moving to Blandford school at the age of 11.

On leaving school, Colin took up an electrical apprenticeship with a local firm based in the Market Place. After qualifying, he started his own business in 1967 originally based in Dorset Street before moving to Blandford Heights, carrying out contracts nationwide before his retirement after running his own business for 50 years.

Colin has been married to his wife Chris for 59 years and they have a son and a daughter and 4 grandchildren.

Colin joined the council in 2015 representing the St Leonards & Langton ward. As part of the Town Council, Colin is chairman of the working group for the part Pedestrianisation of the Market Place. This, they hope to do on a trial basis by installing seating and planters to provide greenery which should also help to improve air quality, making the town a more pleasant place to live, work and visit. Now that our Corn Exchange has been restored to its former glory, it has helped to make the centre of our town a worthwhile place to visit.

Colin is also chairman of Trustees of the Blandford Opportunity Group which will be one of his Mayoral charities, and a trustee of the Blandford Almshouse charity and Blandford combined charity.

Colin is looking forward to his coming year as Mayor and hopes to serve the community to the best of his ability.

MAYOR'S CHAPLAIN

Reverend Chris Beaumont

MAYOR'S CHARITIES

Blandford Opportunity Group

Dorset KPA (Kidney Patients Association)



BLANDFORD FORUM
TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL TREE PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION 2026

Celebrating trees in and around Blandford Forum

- 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

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

mayor@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk

Please include your full name and phone number by 31st August 2026

16th to 24th May
2026

We invite you to discover, learn and remember about the lives of the 1.7 million men and women of the Commonwealth commemorated by the CWGC.

Join us at:

Blandford Cemetery

On the following date:

Sun 17th, 24th May

Find out more and book
your free ticket

www.cwgc.org/war-graves-week



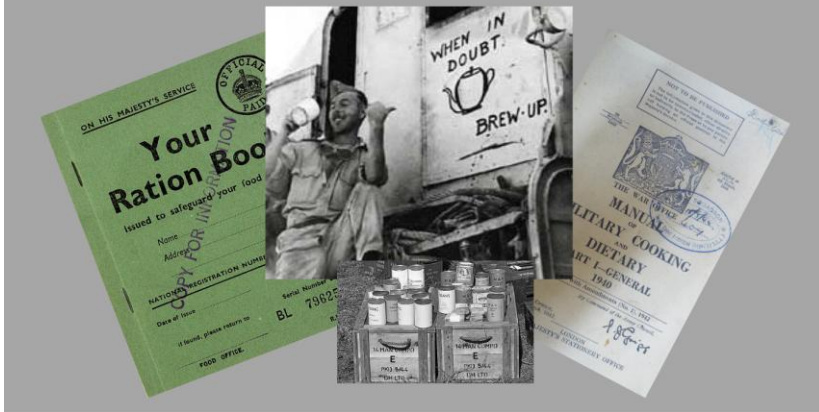
or scan the QR code

|||||
COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES
|||||

WAR
GRAVES
WEEK



FOOD FIGHT! THE ROLE OF FOOD AS A WEAPON DURING WORLD WAR 2



**YOU ARE INVITED TO THE TOWN HALL FOR AN
INSIGHTFUL AND INFORMAL TALK BY HISTORIAN,
LT COL (RETD) RJ TAYLOR.**

SATURDAY 30TH MAY 2026 AT 11AM

DOORS AT 10:30AM

TOWN HALL, MARKET PLACE, BLANDFORD FORUM DT11 7AF



REGISTER FOR FREE TICKETS

Telephone the Town Council on 01258 454500



www.ticketsource.co.uk/blandford-forum-town-council

ARMED FORCES EXPO



Saturday 11th July 2026

10am - 1pm

**The Corn Exchange,
Blandford Forum**

Join us at this free
event showcasing
military charities and
organisations with
military connections



THE FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGHES

The origin of the Freedom of Cities and Boroughs dates back to the early Roman Empire when to be “born free” as a Citizen of Rome contained many privileges and rights superior to those of any other city, although it did not secure exemption from taxation.

This distinction was continued in the very early history of Britain in the Saxon constitution until about 600AD. Upon the Norman Conquest, William the Conqueror introduced the feudal system, and in 1069 he granted the Burgesses of London a charter guaranteeing them their ancient laws and privileges. Even in Saxon times “Guilds” of men of the same trade existed for mutual aid and protection, which was continued by the Normans, and the members were Freemen who were admitted only after a long apprenticeship.

In many ancient Cities which had been granted charters by successive sovereigns none but Freemen were allowed to trade wholesale and retail, which was, perhaps, their greatest privilege. Freedom could be secured originally in three ways – by patrimony, Apprenticeship of Redemption – but of more recent years, admission would be claimed by gift or marriage, and Freemen’s Courts were held until towards the end of the 19th Century for admission of Freemen, which conferred a right to a parliamentary vote, and in some towns exemption from tolls and dues according to the ancient customs retained by charter.

Before the Representation of the People Act 1832, in many Parliamentary Boroughs the Electors consisted solely of the Freemen. By virtue of the Municipal Corporation Act 1835, the Freemen ceased as such to form a part of the body corporate.

The Act, however, respected existing usages and retained a right to share in the corporate property, commons and public stock. Freedom by gift and purchase are now abolished and birth, servitude or marriage only, entitle one to be entered on the “Freeman’s Roll”.

It was the practice to confer the honorary Freedom of the Borough as a mark of distinction upon a person whom the Council wishes to honour because they are a person of distinction, or one who has rendered eminent services to the Borough. It was first recognised by the Honorary Freedom of Boroughs Act 1855, now replaced by the Local Government Act 1933.

It does not confer any of the benefits previously possessed by Freemen: but the rare distinction of the honour of Freedom in more recent times is a reflection of the value and importance that accrued to it in ancient times socially and financially, and the credit and reputation of it is thus preserved and recognised in honorary promotion for eminent services at the present day.

The practice of conferring the honorary "Freedom of Entry" upon Regiments is a fairly recent one; indeed the earliest grant appears to have been in December 1943, when the Corporation of Sheffield conferred the honour upon the York and Lancaster Regiment. However, its roots lie deep in the history of local and central government; indeed it affords an interesting example of the power and influence of the old boroughs and cities in relation to central government in the past. Of these, the cities of Edinburgh and London are the most notable.

When the Army required more men, the custom was to send a recruiting officer and party to various towns and draw public attention by the steady beat of a drum. In these cities – and there were others – permission had to be obtained by the Army from the Corporation to enter and "beat the drum". This permission came to be granted "in solemn form".

It was also necessary to obtain the consent of the Corporation before troops could march through towns. Hence arose the practice of conferring, as a matter of honour upon individual Regiments the right "to march through the town with bayonets fixed, drums beating and colours flying".

From these ancient practices, the modern grant of "Freedom of Entry" can be traced.

FREEMEN OF BLANDFORD FORUM

| Freeman | Date Granted |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Blandford Soldiers who fought in the Boer War | 1901 – 1903 |
| Jack T Counter VC | 19 th June 1918 |
| Sir Robert Baden Powell | 17 th April 1929 |
| Lady Baden Powell | 17 th April 1929 |
| Alderman Miss E G Castleman-Smith | 20 th November 1935 |
| W H Wilson Esq. | 14 th June 1949 |
| W J Newman Esq. | 8 th December 1953 |
| The Dorset Regiment | 8 th November 1955 |
| Alderman B C Hunt | 1 st November 1956 |
| C K Lavington Esq. | 12 th October 1970 |
| The Royal Corps of Signals | 11 th September 1972 |
| The Devonshire & Dorset Regiment | 1 st March 1976 |
| Gwendoline Florence Lane | 5 th March 1988 |
| Agnes Audrey Williams | 5 th March 1988 |
| Dr David Harries Davies | 13 th April 1991 |
| Reverend Raymond O Balmer | 11 th September 1995 |
| Cyril E Hill | 12 th May 2000 |
| The Queen's Gurkha Signals | 11 th September 2005 |
| Peter J Warrington | 15 th November 2005 |
| Daphne Alner | 15 th November 2005 |
| Heather Bracewell | 11 th May 2007 |
| The Rifles Regiment | 15 th October 2007 |
| Carole A Sharp | 27 th May 2011 |
| Jackie Vacher | 11 th May 2013 |
| Esme Butler (awarded posthumously) | 25 th May 2018 |
| Dr Michael Le Bas | 24 th May 2019 |
| Roger Carter | 22 nd May 2025 |
| Lynn Lindsay | 22 nd May 2025 |

Please take the time to sign the Visitor Book.



Twinned with Preetz, Germany



**Town Clerk's Office
Church Lane, Blandford Forum
Dorset DT11 7AD**



**LOCAL COUNCIL
AWARD SCHEME
QUALITY GOLD**



EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

BRONZE AWARD

Proudly supporting those who serve.

Twinned with Mortain, France



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www.blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk**