



BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

To: All Town Councillors
Members of the Public & Press

Dorset Council Councillors

Dear Member,

CORN EXCHANGE MEETING

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Town Council which will be held in Woodhouse Gardens Pavilion, Blandford Forum on **Monday 20th October 2025 at 7:00pm** to consider the following items. This meeting will also be available to view online using Microsoft Teams [using this link](#).

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
13th October 2025

A G E N D A

Prior to consideration of the following Agenda, there will be a democratic quarter of an hour, which may be extended at the discretion of the Committee, during which time members of the public may speak. During the course of the meeting, members of the public and our elected representatives from the Dorset Council may indicate they wish to speak, and, at the discretion of the Chairman, and with the approval of the Members, they may be allowed to do so on points of information only. The Committee may on occasion invite members of the public to comment on specific issues where points of information or their particular knowledge on a subject might prove of benefit to the Committee.

Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, belief or disability), Crime & Disorder, Health and Safety and Human Rights. Disabled access is available. All in attendance should be aware that filming, recording, photography or otherwise may occur during the meeting.

1. Public Session
2. Apologies
3. To receive any Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations
4. [Minutes of the Corn Exchange Meeting held on 21st July 2025](#)
5. [Town Clerk's Report & Correspondence](#)
6. [To receive an update on events and bookings](#)

Minutes of the Town Council and Committee meetings are currently available from the Town Clerk's Office and at www.blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk

Twinned with Preetz, Germany



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



Twinned with Mortain, France



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Town Clerk's Report & Correspondence

Thanks! – With the building being handed back to us on 20th October 2025, it feels right to extend a heartfelt thanks to all the staff who have been involved in the Corn Exchange project. It has had an impact on all of them at some point during the project and this has been in addition to their normal workload. Teamwork has been a vital part of the project and we are very fortunate to have such a committed and dedicated team, all with the same goal of seeing this project through for the benefit of the town and its community. We still have lots to do over the next few weeks, but the Town Clerk is confident we will be able to accomplish this as a team.

Temporary Member of Staff – Councillors will be aware that one of the caretaking team has not been fit for work and with the reopening of the building fast approaching one of the construction team has been offered a temporary position after checking with our HR advisors. He will help reinstate the building and cover caretaking shifts for a three-month period from 20th October 2025. Line managers are satisfied that this person would be effective in post and have carried out the usual recruitment/onboarding checks.

Pictures – During the M&E handover, the Town Clerk asked the contractor if we could make use of the mobile scaffolding in the Town Hall for hanging the pictures and this has been approved and was arranged for 13th October 2025.

Ramp – A site meeting is being held on Tuesday 14th October with a local company to quote for the ramp for people to use from the stage left to the changing room.

WiFi in the Corn Exchange – The Town Clerk approached Cllr L Hitchings for his view on reintroducing WiFi to the building for the offices through to the Corn Exchange and Town Hall due to his expertise on the matter. A site meeting was held on Monday 6th October 2025 with the IT company and the Town Clerk sought quotes for the broadband, which ranged from £305 for a leased line over a three-year contract, and £55 for a SoGEA line over three years. After numerous emails and discussions internally and to two companies, Cllr L Hitchings suggested approaching a fibre company direct and a business account has been set up for £62.49 a month for a year's agreement, which provides us with enough performance without having to go to the leased line. However, if it doesn't do what we want, we could consider moving to a leased line.

The National Lottery Community Fund – The Town Clerk is pleased to confirm the grant application for the stage curtains totalling £9,031 has been successful from TNL Community Fund. This makes a total of £1,146,121 in grants and s106 funding applied for and administered during the term of the project and the funders have all been sent regular updates on the project throughout the 19 months. The Town Council's accrued funds totalled a separate £1,071,500 and the loan was for £1.3m.

Meetings – On 24th October 2025, The Georgian Group will be visiting the Royal Coat of Arms in the Town Hall and the Dorset Council Registrar team will be visiting all the rooms for the purpose of licensing the venue for civil ceremonies. The BBC Radio 4 engineer is also due to visit that day, subject to the broadband line being installed successfully the day before.

Dorset Clerks – At the last SLCC Dorset Branch meeting of clerks across the county, the Gillingham Town Clerk asked if it would be possible for the Blandford Forum Town Clerk to host a meeting in the Corn Exchange. This is currently being arranged for a date in November/December!

Furniture – The furniture is confirmed to be delivered on 22nd October 2025.

Tile Sponsorship Scheme – The funders have all been provided with an update and offered their name or organisation's name to be included in the list of tile sponsorship due to their existing contribution, so it is recognised they funded the project in some way. To date, 70 tiles have been purchased.

To receive an update on events and bookings

Bookings

Regular Hirers – The regular hirers who have confirmed they would like to return to their bookings are as follows:

- Monday nights – council meetings
- Tuesday nights – Slimming World
- Wednesday mornings and evenings – Slimming World
- Thursday – indoor market and café (café tables in the Shambles instead of the market to allow flexibility for other bookings/weddings, etc.)
- Thursday evening – possibility of KR Martial Arts wanting to return

Responses from regulars wanting to come back has been very positive and with the addition of a hirer from Woodhouse Gardens wanting to move to the Town Hall.

We also have 5 enquiries for civil ceremonies in the Town Hall and 1 enquiry for all rooms.

Events – At present, the bookings are as follows:

2025

November (hirers have been advised this could be cancelled subject to progress/readiness)

9th – Remembrance Sunday civic reception

11th – Armistice Day (Shambles)

14th & 15th – Blandford Literary Festival

25th – Wellness Walk-in Clinic (Blandford Group Practice)

29th – Mayor's Charity Bingo night

December

2nd – Daytime Disco

4th – Hay's Travel Christmas Quiz

5th – Yuletide Festival

11th – Mortain Twinning Association AGM

12th – Wessex Acoustic Folk Night – Gerry Colvin

13th – Silent Disco (working with a student from The Blandford School following the surveys they completed)

19th – Christmas Cheer Coffee Morning

19th – Blandford Stour Valley Band Christmas Concert (evening event)

22nd – Mr Merlin (children's entertainment morning 2 x shows)

2026

January

6th – Daytime Disco

9th – Johnny Cash Roadshow (tribute)

23rd – BBC Radio 4 Any Questions

27th – Wellness Walk-In

February

3rd – Daytime Disco

14th – Mayor's Valentines Charity Night

24th – Wellness Walk-In

28th – Epic Comedy Night

March

- 3rd – Daytime Disco
- 8th – Wedding Fair
- 9th – Raise the Commonwealth Flag
- 14th – Spring Community Expo
- 14th – Mayor's Wessex Acoustic – Merry Hell
- 28th – Blandford Hospital Spring Fair
- 31st – Wellness Walk-In

April

- 3rd – Barn Dance with Black Sheep
- 7th – Daytime Disco
- 10th – Dan Clarke – Evening of Mediumship
- 17th – Frankie's Guys (4 singers – Frankie Valli tribute)
- 28th – Wellness Walk-In

May

- 5th – Daytime Disco
- 21st – Mayor Making
- 23rd – Ring Wrestling Stars
- 26th – Wellness Walk-In
- 29th – 31st – Blandford Camera Club Exhibition

June

- 2nd – Daytime Disco
- 4th – 7th – 295th Anniversary of the Great Fire of Blandford (exhibition subject to museums contributing displays)
- 12th – Nikki Kitt – Evening of Mediumship
- 27th – Armed Forces Day (TBC for the Expo)
- 27th – Private Birthday Party
- 30th – Wellness Walk-In

July

- 7th – Daytime Disco
- 25th – Dirty DC (very popular ACDC tribute)
- 28th – Wellness Walk-In

August

- 4th – Daytime Disco
- 7th – Fleetwood Bac (very popular Fleetwood Mac tribute)
- 14th – 23rd – Arts Week
- 25th – Wellness Walk-In

September

- 1st – Daytime Disco
- 29th – Wellness Walk-In

October

- 3rd – Tea Festival
- 6th – Daytime Disco
- 9th – Dan Clarke – Evening of Mediumship
- 24th – Blandford Hospital Autumn Fair
- 27th – Wellness Walk-In

November

- 3rd – Daytime Disco

8th – Remembrance Sunday civic reception
11th – Armistice Day (Shambles)
24th – Wellness Walk-In

December

1st – Daytime Disco
4th – Yuletide Festival
19th – TBC Christmas Cheer Morning
– Blandford Stour Valley Band Christmas Concert (evening event)

Pending Confirmation

- The daytime discos mentioned each month are subject to an agreement with a local organisation.
- Princess Anne – the Lord Lieutenant is visiting in August to view the building prior to extending an invitation on the council's behalf. The Blandford Garrison has expressed initial support for a Freedom parade should the invitation be accepted and subject to significant changes.
- Arts Development Company – opening events (discussions ongoing)
- Artsreach have pencilled in several dates between January and March 2026 – still holding dates for them.
- The Blandford School (a performance or festive concert).
- Earl and Countess of Sandwich (Mapperton House, which has a Bastard staircase and they have been invited, and agreed, to deliver a talk).
- Lucy Worsley (TBC).
- Kate Bush (tribute) June or Sept if possible – in touch, no date yet.