BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Finance & Staffing Committee
held on Monday 8th December 2025 at 7:00pm held in the Corn Exchange

DRAFT
Subject to confirmation

PRESENT

Cllr L Hitchings – Committee Chairman
Cllr H Miéville – Chairman of Council
Cllr C Stevens – Committee Vice Chairman / Vice Chairman of Council
Cllr S Chapman
Cllr M Putt
Cllr S Hitchings
Cllr T Clarkson
Cllr A Cross
Cllr R Holmes

SITTING IN

Cllr M Spruce
Cllr Y Miéville
Cllr G Del-Pinto

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk
Operations Manager
Responsible Financial Officer

49. PUBLIC SESSION

Cllr Stevens reported that a resident informed him that some gates are not closing at Elizabeth Road allotments. Cllr Chapman said she would report it to the Chairman.

50. APOLOGIES

None

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

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr H Miéville and AGREED unanimously that

A dispensation is granted to all Councillors that own a property in Blandford Forum to enable them to participate in discussion and vote on the setting of the council tax.

52. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9th JUNE 2025

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Chapman, SECONDED by Cllr S Hitchings and AGREED unanimously that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

53. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

Nothing to report.

54. ANALYTICAL REVIEW OF EXPENDITURE AGAINST BUDGET FOR:

54.1 Administration Budget for the year to 30th November 2025

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

54.2 Overall Revenue Budget for the year to 30th November 2025

The paper was noted (see Appendix B).

54.3 Reserves Accounts as at 30th November 2025

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

55. REVIEW OF FINANCE DOCUMENTATION (SENT TO ALL COUNCILLORS PRIOR TO THE MEETING) TO RECEIVE AND RETROSPECTIVELY APPROVE THE:

55.1 Petty Cash Transfers 5-6 totalling £312.95

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Putt and AGREED unanimously that

The Petty Cash Transfers 5-6 totalling £312.95 are received and retrospectively approved.

55.2 Direct debit payments for the period 1st September 2025 (sheet 224) totalling £98,073.00.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Chapman AGREED unanimously that

The Direct debit payments for the period 1st September 2025 (sheet 224) totalling £98,073.00 are received and retrospectively approved.

55.3 Online Faster Payments FP 313 – FP 326 totalling £513,652.89 (including transfers of precept, and grants to other Town Council accounts)

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Holmes AGREED unanimously that

The Online Faster Payments FP 313 – FP 326 totalling £513,652.89 (including transfers of precept and grants to other Town Council accounts) are received and retrospectively approved.

55.4 Online Corn Exchange Faster Payments CE065 – CE075 totalling £631,245.48

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Chapman AGREED unanimously that

The Online Corn Exchange Faster Payments CE065 – CE075 totalling £631,245.48 are received and retrospectively approved.

55.5 Investment Account for the period to 31st October 2025

The paper was noted (see Appendix D) and the RFO and Chairman updated the Committee on the current status of the council's investments.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Stevens, SECONDED by Cllr Cross AGREED unanimously that

The Investment Account for the period to 31st October 2025 are received and retrospectively approved.

55.6 Report by Chairman on Bank Reconciliation and Petty Cash checks

The Chairman confirmed that he has carried out a petty cash check and everything was found to be in order.

55.7 Bank Reconciliation to 31st October 2025

The Chairman confirmed that he has carried out monthly bank reconciliation checks, which were received and retrospectively approved by the Committee.

The bank reconciliation to 31st October 2025 are received and retrospectively approved.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

56. INTERNAL AUDITOR

56.1 To receive the Internal Auditor's Report dated 25th November 2025 (Visit 1 of 3)

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

56.2 To reaffirm the Internal Auditor's Contract

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr H Mieville, SECONDED by Cllr Chapman and AGREED unanimously that

The approved contract is continued with the Internal Auditor and the Committee confirmed the individual is completely independent from the council.

57. TO REVIEW THE FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE REMIT AND THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

There were no proposals to consider at this time.

58. CONFIDENTIAL

It was PROPOSED by Cllr H Miéville, SECONDED by Cllr Putt and AGREED unanimously

The public and press may be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity might be prejudicial to the public interest as per Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

58.1 To receive the Payroll budget (staff grading) for the year 2026/27

The paper was tabled (see Appendix G).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr H Mieville, SECONDED by Cllr Chapman and AGREED unanimously that

The staff grading for 2026/27 is approved as per the displayed document and is signed by the Committee Chairman.

58.2 To note the Town Clerk's Appraisal (in accordance with Standing Orders), carried out on 20th May 2025 with Cllr L Hitchings (outgoing Chairman/Vice Chairman of Council unable to attend)

The Chairman reported that the Town Clerk's appraisal was carried out on 20th May 2025.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Chapman, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED unanimously that

The public and press were welcomed back into the meeting for the following items;

59. CONSIDERATION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET FOR 2026/27

59.1 Consideration of the proposed revenue budget for Administration Costs for 2026/2027

The paper was noted (see Appendix H).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Chapman, SECONDED by Cllr Holmes and AGREED unanimously that

The proposed Administration budget for 2026/27 is accepted.

59. CONSIDERATION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET FOR 2026/27 (CONT.)

59.2 Recommendations from Committees

The paper was noted (see Appendix I).

Recreation & Amenities Committee Budgets

Consideration of the proposed budget for the financial year 2026/2027 and recommendation to Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting

It was PROPOSED by Cllr S Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Clarkson and AGREED unanimously that

The PPM budget line is increased to £20,000, the Cemetery chapel and workshop lines are increased to £1,000 each, £900 is included in the DDA budget line, bringing the total earmarked reserves to £22,900 for the Recreation & Amenities Committee, for the 2026-27 financial year.

Town & General Purposes Committee Budgets

Consideration of the proposed budget for the year 2026/2027 and recommendation to Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Holmes, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED unanimously that

The earmarked reserves are set at £3,000 for the Town & General Purposes Committee for the 2026-27 financial year.

59.3 Consideration of the overall budget for the year 2026/27 and recommendation of the precept for 2026/27

The paper was noted (see Appendix J).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr H Mieville, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED unanimously that **a RECOMMENDATION is made to full council that**

The draft budget of £948,694 is approved for the 2026/2027 financial year (3.02% increase on the 2025/2026 budget, and £7.67 over the year).

This will be finalised at the Town Council meeting scheduled for Monday 15th December 2025.

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

The meeting closed at 8:18pm.

SIGNED: …… DATED: ……..