BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
Held on Monday 15th December 2025 at 7:00pm in the Corn Exchange

DRAFT
Subject to confirmation

PRESENT

Cllr H Miéville – Chairman of Council
Cllr C Stevens – Vice Chairman of Council
Cllr S Hitchings
Cllr A Cross
Cllr R Holmes
Cllr L Hitchings
Cllr S Chapman
Cllr M Spruce
Cllr T Clarkson
Cllr M Putt
Cllr B Quayle
Cllr Gail Del-Pinto

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk
Operations Manager
Committee Clerk
Cllr Barrie Cooper
Daniel Cadisch – Chief Officer, Citizens Advice Central Dorset
Alan Jones – Headteacher, The Blandford School
Jens Bertelsen – Chair of Governors, The Blandford School

IN ATTENDANCE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Nicci Brown

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and read the housekeeping notice for the members of public in attendance. He mentioned the sad loss of Cllr Lacey-Clarke's mother. He also referred to the successful Opening Event in the Corn Exchange on Sunday 30th November 2025 and the Carol Service in the Parish Church on 3rd December, both of which attracted positive feedback, and congratulated the volunteers who put together the Blandford Yuletide Festival event.

111. PUBLIC SESSION

Cllr Cross provided a company to get in touch with about the potential pump track project.

111.1 Daniel Cadisch – Chief Officer, Citizens Advice Central Dorset – Daniel updated Councillors on the financial position of the organisation and the biggest challenges they, and their users, are facing. There has been a shift in the last year, with more people in personal debt. He thanked the Town Council for its financial support and for hosting the CA on a Friday morning within the council offices. In addition to the office support, they also offer digital support. Councillors asked questions and the Chairman thanked Daniel for the valuable work the CA carries out and for all his efforts.

111.2 The Blandford School, Alan Jones and Chair of Governors, Jens Bertelsen – Jens explained he succeeded James Vaughn as the Chair of Governors and his first task was to lead a panel of governors to select a new Headteacher. Alan Jones was the successful candidate after spending over two decades in London. He took the opportunity to introduce himself and explain his background and aims.

112. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS

Cllr Quayle asked that Councillors direct any issues to him at this time and reported on the devolution deals currently being discussed at Dorset Council. His understanding is that the DC administration is keen on pursuing the new Mayoral-led authority, which is being looked at for 2027. A family hub is due to be shared between Blandford and Sturminster Newton in 2026, with one location here and one in Sturminster Newton. Some areas have been flooded recently due to the extreme weather and Dorset Council is looking into these problem areas. Due to recent reports, he asked Councillors to let him know if there are any issues with litter bins.

113. APOLOGIES

Cllr J Robinson
Cllr Y Miéville
Cllr N Lacey-Clarke
Cllr S Morgan

114. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS (ALL COUNCILLORS, EXCLUDING THOSE LIVING OUTSIDE THE PARISH, FOR SETTING THE PRECEPT)

Recommendation of the precept for 2026/27 – It was PROPOSED by Cllr Stevens, SECONDED by Cllr Holmes and AGREED unanimously that

A dispensation is granted to all Councillors, that reside in or own a property in Blandford Forum, to enable them to participate in discussion and vote on the setting of the budget and precept (council tax).

115. MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 24th NOVEMBER 2025

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Cross, SECONDED by Cllr Putt and AGREED (11 in favour, 1 abstention/non-vote) that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

116. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

116.1 Woodhouse Gardens Lights – The contractor installed the lighting scheme prior to 1st December and the gardens will be lit between 4:30pm and 9pm every day during the festive season apart from Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

116.2 Mayor's Christmas Card – The card has been chosen by the Mayor, Cllr H Miéville and has been printed locally.

116.3 Christmas Tree – Staff have received very positive comments about the Christmas tree.

116.4 Civic Carol Service – The office has received very positive feedback for the civic carol service held on 3rd December 2025.

116.5 Lamperd's Field – The Town Council's solicitor has confirmed that the Town Council has exchanged and entered into the surrender and replacement allotment agreements relating to Lamperd's Field.

116.6 The Friends of Blandford Community Hospital – Thanks to the Friends, the ticket price of the Frankie's Guys event has been reduced by £10 per person and they have offered to support two other tribute acts. In addition, three daytime discos have been booked for the first Tuesday of February, March and April with the aim of promoting socialising, mental health and activity and they are covering the cost of the DJ and will run the kitchen. The ticket sales will go to the council to cover the cost of the room hire/staffing.

116.7 Corn Exchange Tours / Talks – The Town Clerk hosted Clerks in the county and gave a talk on the project on Tuesday 9th December as part of the Society of Local Council Clerks meeting and, along with the architect, delivered a presentation to Conservation Officers on 11th December 2025.

The Town Clerk updated Councillors at the meeting on ticket sales for forthcoming events, and informed Councillors that the Charity of William Williams is holding a meeting on site on Tuesday 6th January 2026 after a tour of the venue and brief overview of the project.

117. CIVIC REPORT

The paper will be distributed to Councillors in due course.

118. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES

118.1 Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting dated 8th December 2025

118.1.1 Recommendations

Minute No. 56.2 To reaffirm the Internal Auditor's Contract

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.

Minute No.59.3 – Consideration of the overall budget for the year 2026/27 and recommendation of the precept for 2026/27

It was PROPOSED by Cllr H Miéville, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED (11 in favour, 1 abstention) that

The budget is approved for the 2026/2027 financial year and the precept amount to be requested from the Dorset Council is £948,739 for the 2026/2027 financial year (3.03% increase on the 2025/2026 budget, and £7.68 over the year for a Band D household).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

118.1.2 To Receive the Minutes

The Minutes were RECEIVED.

119. TO APPROVE EXPENDITURE FOR ASBESTOS REMOVAL AT THE FOOTBALL PAVILION

The paper was noted (see Appendix B).

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

The Town Council authorises expenditure from the PPM budget of £9329.50+VAT to remove all asbestos from the rear and sides of the Football Pavilion and selects Company B at a cost of £2,805 for the removal of the asbestos soffits and installation of new soffits (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

120. TO CONSIDER A LEASE WITH THE FOOTBALL CLUB ON THE PAVILION AT PARK ROAD RECREATION GROUND

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

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

The Town Council offers the BUFC a 25-year full repairing lease on similar terms to the BRFC with costs incurred being passed on to the club in the future.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

121. TO APPROVE A POLICY AUTHORISING STAFF TO TAKE DEPOSITS FOR BOOKINGS

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

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

121. TO APPROVE A POLICY AUTHORISING STAFF TO TAKE DEPOSITS FOR BOOKINGS (cont.)

The Town Council adopts the policy and brings it back to council if there are any issues that need addressing.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

122. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE AND CONSIDER ANY REQUESTS FROM THE:

122.1 Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Group- Blandford+

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

122.2 BFTC Commemoration Group

Nothing to report.

122.3 Climate, Biodiversity & Nature

Nothing to report.

122.4 Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project

Nothing to report at this stage.

123. REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

123.1 To consider filling BFTC representative vacancies

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

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

The following vacancies are filled:

Allotment Society – Cllr Spruce
Ancient Monuments Officer – Cllr Holmes
Blandford Leisure Centre – Cllr H Miéville

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

124. TO CONSIDER APPROVING THE COUNCIL DIARY 2026/27

The paper was noted (see Appendix G).

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

The Town Council makes the following changes to the council diary:

- **The annual meetings are moved to Tuesday 5th May 2026 and Tuesday 4th May 2027 (and arrangements are made with existing hirers).**
- **Mayor Making ceremonies are therefore held on Friday 15th May 2026 and Friday 14th May 2027.**
- **The Town Clerk and incoming Mayor discuss moving the civic carol service with the Parish Church a week later so the Christmas tree is lit beforehand.**
- **Delegated authority is given to the Town Clerk to set a date for the Armed Forces Expo in 2027 and she will agree a date with Cllr Clarkson.**

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

125. PLANNING MATTERS

125.1 Appendix A – New Planning Applications

The paper was noted (see Appendix H).

125.1.1 P/FUL/2025/06782 – 1 The Plocks Blandford Forum DT11 7AA

Councillors declared a personal interest as the applicant, Mr Clark is a former Councillor.

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

The Town Council has no objections to the application. Blandford + NP policies B10, Design Code: CA2, Built Form Codes: 9,15,16 & 17 apply.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

125.1.2 P/PASO/2025/07076 – Blandford Leisure Centre Milldown Road Blandford Forum DT11 7DB

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

The Town Council has no objections to the application. Blandford + NP policies B10, Design Code: CA5, Built Form Code: 9 apply.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

125.1.3 Tree Works – P/TRC/2025/07010 – South Pasture St Leonards Avenue Blandford Forum DT11 7PD

Information Only.

125.2 Appendix B – Dorset Council Decisions on Planning Applications and Applications Awaiting Decisions (distributed prior to the meeting)

The paper was noted (see Appendix I).

The meeting closed at 9:01pm.

SIGNED …… DATED ……..……