

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
Held on Monday 26th January 2026 at 7:02 pm in the Corn Exchange

DRAFT
Subject to confirmation

PRESENT

Cllr H Miéville – Chairman of Council
Cllr S Hitchings
Cllr N Lacey-Clarke
Cllr A Cross
Cllr M Putt
Cllr R Holmes
Cllr S Morgan

Cllr C Stevens – Vice Chairman of Council
Cllr Y Miéville
Cllr S Chapman
Cllr T Clarkson
Cllr B Quayle
Cllr G Del Pinto

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk Operations Manager

IN ATTENDANCE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Cllr M Spruce
Anisha Dhillon
Matthew Harrison

Cllr L Hitchings
Nicci Brown

126. PUBLIC SESSION

The Chairman thanked staff for organising the BBC Radio 4 Any Questions? event on Friday evening, which was very successful and a great advert for the Corn Exchange.

127. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS

Cllr Lacey-Clarke advised Councillors that there will be a long period of roadworks on White Cliff Mill Street due to gas works. The Dorset Council budget for 2026/27 has seen an uplift, however parking is not being increased. Cllr Lacey-Clarke added that the use of AI is increasing within the council.

128. APOLOGIES

Cllr M Spruce (in attendance via Microsoft Teams) Cllr J Robinson
Cllr L Hitchings (in attendance via Microsoft Teams)

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

None had been submitted.

131. MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON:

131.1 Minutes of the Co-option Meeting held on 24th November 2025

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Cross, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED unanimously that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

131.2 Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 15th December 2025

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Putt, SECONDED by Cllr Chapman and AGREED (11 in favour, 2 abstentions/non-votes) that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

132. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

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

Armed Forces Expo – A date of Saturday 11th July 2026, has been agreed as per the resolution from the December meeting.

Any Questions? Broadcast – An email has been sent to all ticket holders for Friday evening, explaining how the questions can be submitted and asking them to cancel any bookings they no longer need due to the large waiting list. This has resulted in some cancellations, so we have been able to reallocate the tickets.

Meetings – After discussion with the Chairman of the Corn Exchange meetings, there are no agenda items however there is a need to meet to discuss the play area tenders, with the deadline being 2nd February 2026 and to confirm the appointment of the Town Clerk. Hence the meetings on Monday 9th February 2026 will now be 7pm full council and 7:30pm R&A committee with the tenders being the only agenda item.

HR Providers – Line managers continue to carry out work on the changeover between HR providers and the new app platform has been very useful.

Weddings – Thanks to Wimborne Minster Town Council for officer time spent with BFTC staff advising them on the civil ceremonies.

Work Experience – The Town Clerk has agreed to take on two work experience students from The Blandford School for a week in March and Councillors attending the Commonwealth Fly a Flag event will meet them.

DC Cllr Barrie Cooper – Following the Town Clerk's e-mail about the pump track proposal, Cllr Barrie Cooper has been to Offcamber to discuss the project with Tris Day and been to the office to confirm he is inclined to support it and he will be in attendance at the meeting with Blandford St Mary Parish Council on 4th March 2026 at the Brewery.

Recruitment Update – Several applications have been received and the shortlisting meeting will take place on Wednesday.

133. CIVIC REPORT

The paper was sent to Councillors via email.

134. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES

134.1 Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting on Monday 19th January 2026

134.1.1 Recommendations – None

134.1.2 The Minutes were RECEIVED.

135. TO CONSIDER GRANT APPLICATIONS

135.1 In Jolly Good Company

The paper was noted (see Appendix B).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Clarkson, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED (11 in favour, 2 abstentions) that

Due to the number of repeat applications, the Town Council asks for provision of accounts but does not require an amended application form.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

136. TO ADOPT THE NEW EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

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

The Town Council approves the new Employee Handbook and distributes to the staff, implementing the manual from 1st February 2026.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

137. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE TOWN COUNCIL PLAN

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

138. TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FROM THE BLANDFORD BOWLING CLUB CENTENARY PROJECT AND CONSIDER REFERRING THE MATTER TO THE BARNES FOR A RECREATION TRUST

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

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

Councillors did not raise any queries and the Town Council refers the matter to the Barnes for a Recreation Trust.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

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

139.1 Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Group

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

139.2 BFTC Commemoration Group

Nothing to report.

139.3 Climate Change and Biodiversity

The last meeting was held on 21st January 2026 (notes [uploaded to the website](#)).

139.4 Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project

Cllr Stevens reported that he has been working on this and is meeting the Chairman of Council on Friday to progress the matter and they will provide the Town Clerk with dates so she can arrange a meeting.

140. REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

None

141. PLANNING MATTERS

141.1 Appendix A – New Planning Applications

The paper was noted (see Appendix G).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED (12 in favour, 1 against) that

141. PLANNING MATTERS (cont.)

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

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

141.2 To consider changing the council's position on the planning application for Lot 4 Blandford Brewery, Blandford St Mary

The paper was noted (see Appendix H).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Cross, SECONDED by Cllr Clarkson and AGREED (11 in favour, 2 against) that

In light of new information, the Town Council has no objections to the amended application now the concerns over parking have been addressed.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

142. CONFIDENTIAL

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

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.

7:50pm – Cllr Y Miéville left the meeting.

142.1 To consider advice from the Town Council's solicitor regarding the Marsh & Ham toilet/TIC block

7:52pm – Cllr Y Mieville returned to the meeting.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Stevens, SECONDED by Cllr Putt and AGREED (11 in favour, 2 abstentions) that

The Town Council engages with a structural surveyor to assess the building prior to signing the agreement and advises the Dorset Council accordingly.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The meeting closed at 8:28 pm.

SIGNED **DATED**