BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
Held on Monday 9th February 2026 at 7:00pm in the Corn Exchange

DRAFT Subject to confirmation

PRESENT

Cllr H Miéville – Chairman of Council
Cllr S Hitchings
Cllr R Holmes
Cllr N Lacey-Clarke
Cllr T Clarkson
Cllr B Quayle
Cllr M Spruce
Cllr C Stevens – Vice Chairman of Council
Cllr A Cross
Cllr J Robinson
Cllr Y Miéville
Cllr M Putt
Cllr S Chapman
Cllr G Del-Pinto

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk
Committee Clerk
Operations Manager

IN ATTENDANCE (VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS)

Cllr L Hitchings

143. PUBLIC SESSION

143.1 Daytime Disco – Cllr Cross noted the success of the daytime disco and encouraged Councillors to attend on behalf of the Friends of Blandford Hospital.

143.2 Signage – Cllr Putt raised the signage on the new barbers', and the Committee Clerk provided an update informing Councillors that she has been emailing Dorset Council's Enforcement Team and they have been in touch with the owner and will let BFTC know when there is news.

144. APOLOGIES

Cllr S Morgan
Cllr L Hitchings (in attendance via Microsoft Teams)

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

None

146. CONFIDENTIAL

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Holmes, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens 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.

146.1 TO RECEIVE THE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE RECRUITMENT PANEL

The Chairman summarised a recruitment process for the Town Clerk, managed by the current Town Clerk, which had allowed a period of just over a month from 24th December 2025 to 28th January 2026 for advertisement and had attracted 12 applications. He thanked the Town Clerk for managing the process, which had saved the council money.

The Finance & Staffing Committee shortlisted six candidates for an interview process over two days last week. Staff and Councillors were given the opportunity to watch the candidates' presentations and a recruitment panel consisting of Cllrs Hugo Miéville, Colin Stevens and Steve Hitchings conducted the interviews.

7:07pm – Cllr Y Miéville left the meeting.

146.1 TO RECEIVE THE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE RECRUITMENT PANEL (CONT.)

Following this process, the recruitment panel then considered the candidates in detail and recommended unanimously that Mrs Claire Commons be appointed as Town Clerk.

Mrs Commons has accepted a provisional offer of employment subject to conditions, including Full Council approval. A start date had yet to be agreed but will be early May 2026 and handover dates will be confirmed between the outgoing and incoming clerks.

The Chairman of Council asked the Town Clerk to share Mrs Commons' job application form, which she had agreed to and this was tabled for the Councillors who are not on the Finance & Staffing Committee. Mrs Commons is highly qualified and experienced for the role and demonstrated a passion for the town.

7:09pm – Cllr Y Miéville returned to the meeting.

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

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

147. TO APPOINT THE NEW TOWN CLERK TO THE COUNCIL AND PROPER OFFICER FOR ANY PURPOSE IN RESPECT OF WHICH A PROPER OFFICER IS MENTIONED IN STATUTE

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Stevens, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED (12 in favour, 2 abstentions) that

The Town Council appoints the new Town Clerk, Claire Commons, to the Town Council and as Proper Officer for any purpose of which a Proper Officer is mentioned in statute. The start date and other detailed contractual arrangements are delegated to the Chairman of Council and the outgoing Town Clerk, or her deputy.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The meeting closed at 7:17pm.

SIGNED ……. DATED ……..……