

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town & General Purposes Committee
Held on Monday 9th March 2026 at 7:00pm in the Corn Exchange

DRAFT
Subject to confirmation

PRESENT

Cllr R Holmes – Committee Chairman	Cllr T Clarkson – Committee Vice Chairman
Cllr H Miéville – Chairman of Council	Cllr C Stevens – Vice Chairman of Council
Cllr Y Miéville	Cllr B Quayle
Cllr G Del-Pinto	Cllr S Morgan

IN ATTENDANCE

Committee Clerk	Operations Manager
Market Manager	
Rosemary Abdulrahman (Resident)	Ahmed Abdulrahman (Resident)

SITTING IN

Cllr S Hitchings

20. PUBLIC SESSION

Mr Abdulrahman presented the proposal to install a red bench as part of the 'Red Bench Project'. The campaign promotes awareness and visibility of suicide and encourages anyone who may feel suicidal to use this medium to seek help. They have carried out fundraising events and have the funds required to pay for the supply and installation of the bench, they are purely asking for the council to support them in asking Dorset Council for permission for the bench to be installed somewhere along the River Stour.

21. APOLOGIES

Cllr M Putt

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

None.

23. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13th OCTOBER 2025

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Clarkson, SECONDED by Cllr H Miéville and AGREED unanimously that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

24. COMMITTEE CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

Pro Barber Shop Front – The Council continues to receive questions from residents regarding the signage issue that has been ongoing for more than a year now. The Committee Clerk has repeatedly made calls and emailed Dorset Council Enforcement Department regarding this issue and received a response last week which has been shared with Councillors via email.

25. GENERAL UPDATES FROM:

25.1 Blandford Business Support Group

No update.

25.2. Blandford Police

The report was noted and was distributed to Councillors prior to the meeting.

25. GENERAL UPDATES FROM: (CONT.)

25.3 Market Manager

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

The Market Manager explained that the recent trading figures have started to improve. He is trying to obtain a regular Fruit and Vegetable provider. He was asked if a Farmers or French market could be brought back, and the Market Manager explained that the French market has not been possible since Brexit but will look into a Farmers market but pointed out that more custom would be needed to make this happen.

The indoor market on a Thursday has greatly improved now that the Corn Exchange refurbishment is complete. The Saturday outdoor market is struggling due to willing traders., he suggested that this could be down to competition from other towns enticing traders as they have a higher number of customers.

It was suggested that perhaps the council could look at moving the Saturday market to another day, councillors will discuss this option further at another time.

As from 1st April 2026 Dorset Council will only charge Blandford Forum Town Council for spaces used for the market as opposed to paying for the entire Market Place on a market day.

Cllr S Hitching left the room at 7:38pm.

26. DORSET COUNCIL HIGHWAYS MATTERS

26.1 Report of Bus Stop incident on Heddington Drive

The paper was noted (see Appendix B).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Holmes, SECONDED by Cllr Del-Pinto and AGREED unanimously that

The Committee supports Option 3 from Dorset Council's report.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

27. TO APPROVE EXPENDITURE FOR THE SUMMER BEDDING 2026

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

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

The Committee approves expenditure of £4,200 for summer bedding using funds from 6200 T&GP Containers, planting and signs (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

28. TO CONSIDER FREE PARKING DAYS FOR ALL DORSET COUNCIL CAR PARKS IN BLANDFORD FORUM

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

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

The Committee agrees to free parking in the town on the following dates in 2026; 11th July, 31st August, 8th November, 28th November and 5th December.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Cllr S Hitchings returned to the meeting at 7:58pm.

29. TO CONSIDER THE THEME FOR THE MAYOR'S CHARITY CALENDAR 2027

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

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

The Committee selects the theme of 'photographs of the town' provided by members of the public and approves expenditure authority of £350.00 + VAT for the printing and to order up to 150 copies (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence Localism Act 2011 s1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

30. TO DISCUSS SUPPORTING THE DORSET MIND'S CHATTY BENCH CAMPAIGN

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

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

The Committee agrees to support both the Dorset Mind Chatty Bench and the Red Bench Project in principle, and will write to Dorset Council to express its support for both campaigns.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

31. REVIEW OF TOWN & GENERAL PURPOSES BUDGETS

31.1 Analytical Review of Revenue Budget to 28th February 2026

The paper was noted (see Appendix G)

31.2 Review of Earmarked Reserves to 28th February 2026

The paper was noted (see Appendix H).

31.3 Reserve Accounts to 28th February 2026

The paper was noted (see Appendix I).

The meeting closed at 8:12pm.

SIGNED: DATED: