



BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

To: All Town Councillors
Dorset Council Councillors

Members of the Public & Press

Dear Member,

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

You are summoned to attend the Annual Meeting of the Town Council which will be held in the **Corn Exchange, Market Place, Blandford Forum** on **Tuesday 5th May 2026** at **7:00pm** to consider the following items. This meeting will also be accessible [online using Microsoft Teams](#).

Linda Scott-Giles
Outgoing Town Clerk
27th April 2026

A G E N D A

Prior to consideration of the following Agenda, there will be a democratic quarter of an hour, which may be extended at the discretion of the Council, during which time members of the public may speak. During the course of the meeting, members of the public and our elected representatives from the Dorset Council may indicate they wish to speak, and, at the discretion of the Chairman, and with the approval of the Members, they may be allowed to do so on points of information only. The Council may on occasion invite members of the public to comment on specific issues where points of information or their particular knowledge on a subject might prove of benefit to the Council.

Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, belief or disability), Crime & Disorder, Health and Safety and Human Rights. Disabled access is available.

All in attendance should be aware that filming, recording, photography or otherwise may occur during the meeting.

1. Election of the Chairman of Council / Town Mayor (the Chairman will deliver their Declaration of Office)
 - 1.1 To confirm the Mayor's Charities for 2026/27
 - 1.2 To confirm the Mayor's Chaplain for 2026/27
2. Election of the Vice Chairman of Council / Deputy Town Mayor
3. Apologies
4. To receive any Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations
5. [Confirm the accuracy of the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 27th April 2026](#)
6. Receive and note minutes of and/or to determine recommendations made by committees (None)

7. [Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, employees and other local authorities](#)
8. [Review of the terms of references for committees](#)
9. [Appointment of members to existing committees](#)
 - 9.1 Town Council Planning (All Members)
 - 9.1.1 Election of Chairman
 - 9.1.2 Election of Vice Chairman
 - 9.2 Town Council Corn Exchange (All Members) – If required (not currently diarised)
 - 9.2.1 Election of Chairman
 - 9.2.2 Election of Vice Chairman
 - 9.3 Recreation & Amenities Committee
 - 9.3.1 Nine Members including the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council
 - 9.3.2 Election of Chairman
 - 9.3.3 Election of Vice Chairman
 - 9.4 Town & General Purposes Committee
 - 9.4.1 Nine Members including the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council
 - 9.4.2 Election of Chairman
 - 9.4.3 Election of Vice Chairman
 - 9.5 Finance & Staffing Committee
 - 9.5.1 Nine Members including the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council and the Chairmen of Recreation & Amenities and Town & General Purposes Committees
 - 9.5.2 Election of Chairman
 - 9.5.3 Election of Vice Chairman
10. [Appointment of any new committees, confirmation of the terms of reference, the number of members \(including, if appropriate, substitute councillors\) and receipt of nominations to them](#)
11. [Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations](#)
12. [Review of arrangements \(including legal agreements\) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses](#)
13. Reports from representatives of community and local organisations
14. [Review of representation and subsequent appointment on external bodies and arrangements for reporting back](#)
15. [Review the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the General Power of Competence and confirm that the Town Council still meets the criteria of The Parish Councils \(General Power of Competence\) \(Prescribed Conditions\) Order 2012](#)
16. [Review of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment including the formation of a Working Group to inspect the Town Council's Deeds and Trusts and the Mayoral Scroll \(see council minutes of 3/7/23\)](#)
17. [Review and confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks](#)

18. [Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies](#)
19. [Review the Council's complaints procedure](#)
20. [Review of the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information, data protection legislation and website accessibility](#)
21. [Review of the Council's policy for communicating with the press/media](#)
22. [Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures](#)
23. [To confirm the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council](#)
24. [Review of the Council's Risk Assessment Management Policy Arrangements \(including Financial\)](#)
25. [Review of the Council's Business Continuity Plan](#)
26. [Review of the Council's Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Plan](#)
27. [To adopt an IT Policy](#)

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

15th May Mayor Making Ceremony at 10:30am
 18th May Planning Meeting at 7pm

Minutes of the Town Council and Committee meetings are available from the Town Clerk's Office and at www.blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk

Twinned with Preetz, Germany



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 Church Lane, Blandford Forum
 Dorset DT11 7AD



Twinned with Mortain, France



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Review of Delegation Arrangements to Committees, Sub-Committees, Employees and other Local Authorities

Introduction

By having this agenda item featuring as part of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council it provides the Town Council with the opportunity to review any delegation arrangements it might have for its Committees, Sub-Committees, Employees or with other Local Authorities.

A new item for 2026/27 is a [Scheme of Delegation](#) document for approval, to bring in line existing practice and streamline the processes.

Delegation Arrangements to Committees

The Town Council operates with a Committee structure, which has been in place for many years and has worked well. Each Committee operates within an agreed remit (terms of reference) and the remits of each Committee feature in another report later in the agenda.

Delegation Arrangements to Sub-Committees

The Town Council at present does not have any formal sub-committees. The Town Council operates with Working Groups that are established either by the Town Council or a Committee and meet as frequently as is required while a particular issue is considered. A Working Group reports back to either its parent Committee or Town Council/Planning on a regular basis or once the task has been completed. When the task of the Working Group has been completed the Working Group disbands.

Delegation Arrangements to Employees

The Town Council delegates a range of tasks and responsibilities to various employees of the Council and these are clearly detailed in the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

Delegation Arrangements to Other Local Authorities

The Town Council does not at present delegate to, or have delegated to it, any responsibility for the provision of a service. There is therefore no need to review the present arrangements.

Recommendation

The delegation arrangements the Town Council presently has in place in relation to Committees, Sub Committees, Employees and with other Local Authorities as detailed above require a more detailed document to support the activities of the council and it is recommended that council adopts and approves the [Scheme of Delegation](#) document overleaf for the 2026/27 Mayoral year.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
20th January 2026

Scheme of Delegation

1. Introduction

This scheme of delegation outlines the responsibilities and decision-making processes within Blandford Forum Town Council. It aims to ensure efficient governance, accountability and transparency, while delegating authority appropriately.

Under the Local Government Act 1972 s101(a) the Town Council has the power to arrange for the discharge of its functions to a committee, sub-committee or officer of the authority.

Delegation of some decisions is an essential part of the efficient operation of the Town Council, which provides a range of services and assets. The Town Council does not have the power to delegate a decision to an individual councillor or informal grouping of councillors.

The matters detailed in this document will be delegated on an ongoing basis, until such time as this Scheme of Delegation is reviewed.

2. General Principles:

- a) The Town Council will operate within the legal framework set by relevant legislation and regulations.
- b) Decision-making will be conducted in accordance with democratic principles, considering the best interests of the community.
- c) Delegated authority will be exercised responsibly, with due consideration for public scrutiny and accountability.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Full Council

Some matters cannot be delegated; these include the following items, which can only be determined by resolution of the Full Council:

- a) Appointing the Mayor and Deputy Mayor in May each year.
- b) Adopting and amending Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Committee Terms of Reference and the Scheme of Delegation.
- c) Approving the Town Council's budget and the precept.
- d) Agreeing the Town Council's Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement.
- e) Authorising expenditure not provided for within the approved budget or otherwise permitted under the Council's Financial Regulations.
- f) Authorising borrowing.
- g) Appointing representatives to outside organisations.
- h) Declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence.
- i) Confirming the appointment of a new Town Clerk, further to a recommendation from the appointed recruitment panel when a vacancy arises.
- j) Making, amending, revoking, re-enacting or adopting by-laws and promoting or opposing the making of local legislation.
- k) All other matters which must, by law, be determined by resolution of Full Council.

3.2 Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Groups

Matters delegated to the council's standing committees, sub-committees and working groups are specified under each Terms of Reference.

3.3 Advisory Panels

Advisory Panels have no delegated powers; they are only able to recommend a course of action to the council or relevant standing committee.

3.4 Town Council Officers

Under the Local Government Act 1972 the Town Council 'shall appoint such officers as they think necessary for the proper discharge by the authority of such of their or another authority's functions as fall to be discharged by them'.

Officers have the role of interpreting and implementing decisions made by the council and its committees/sub-committees/working groups.

Specific decisions can be delegated to officers by the Town Council, sometimes with the requirement for the officer to consult with the Chairman of Council/Vice Chairman or a Committee Chairman.

In the vast majority of instances, the officer decision will accord with the views of the councillors consulted, however the act of delegation to the nominated officer means the decision is theirs and theirs alone. All such delegated decisions will be reported to a subsequent council meeting.

The Town Clerk is the council's Proper Officer and in their absence their duties will be fulfilled by the Operations Manager and Committee Clerk.

Nominated officers can delegate functions to an appropriate staff member, although they retain ultimate responsibility for any decisions made.

Delegated authority must be exercised in accordance with the law, the council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and wider policies.

No.	Area of Operation	Delegation	Officer/Committee
1.	Allotments	Sign agreements, carry out inspections and allocate plots when vacancies arise, in accordance with the waiting list	Allotment Management Committee Proper Officer
		Carry out inspections of allotment plots and issue warning notices	Allotment Management Committee Proper Officer
		Issue eviction notices in accordance with the Allotments Policy	Allotment Management Committee Proper Officer
2.	Appointments	Nomination and appointment of representatives of the council to any other authority, group or organisation	Full Council
3.	Archives and information management	Receive, retain and archive documentation in accordance with the Records Management Policy and Retention Schedule	Proper Officer
4.	Assets	Maintain the fixed asset register	RFO & Business Support Officer (BSO)
		Day to day administration and operation of play areas, public open spaces and other community areas, together with routine inspection and control	Proper Officer Operations Manager
5.	Audit	Liaise with internal and external auditors	Proper Officer & RFO
		Select and review internal auditors	Full Council

6.	Cemetery	Sign Deeds of Exclusive Right of Burial, Transfer of those rights, approve memorial applications and requests for additional inscriptions	Proper Officer Operations Manager BSO
		Allocation of new ashes plots	
7.	Civic Events	Organising civic events	Events Assistant under the guidance of the Proper Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of Council
8.	Communications	Issue all formal communications on behalf of the Town Council in accordance with the Communication and Media Policy	Proper Officer Chairman of Council
		Manage the Town Council's social media platforms	Proper Officer
9.	Consultations	Respond to consultations in accordance with the resolutions of the relevant committee	Proper Officer
10.	Correspondence	Authorisation to respond immediately to any correspondence requiring or requesting information or relating to previous decisions of the Council, but not correspondence requiring an opinion of the Council to be taken	Proper Officer
11.	Council Meetings	At least three clear days before a meeting of the Council or a committee, serve on councillors a signed summons in accordance with Standing Orders	Proper Officer
		Give public notice of the date, time, place and agenda at least three clear days before a meeting of the council or a committee, in accordance with Standing Orders	Proper Officer
		Keep minutes and other proper records of council meetings, in accordance with the Records Management Policy and Retention Schedule	Proper Officer

No.	Area of Operation	Delegation	Officer/Committee
12.	Elections / Co-options	To notify Electoral Services of all casual vacancies arising in Council membership	Proper Officer
		Arrange for newly elected/co-opted councillors to sign Declaration of Acceptance of Office forms	Proper Officer
		Arrange for newly elected/co-opted councillors to complete Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests	Proper Officer
13.	Emergency Planning	Lead the Council's response in the case of a major emergency, in consultation with Dorset Council's Emergency Planning Officers	Proper Officer and Chairman of Council
14.	Employment	Oversee the operational duties, welfare, training (with the exception of Professional qualifications) and development of all staff in addition to matters contained in the Staff Handbook and Health and Safety Handbook	Proper Officer

15.	Events	Authorise requests to facilitate events	Proper Officer
		Authorise Council representation at public events, in accordance with the authority to spend as detailed in the Financial Regulations	Proper Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of Council
16.	Expenditure	Budgetary control and authority to spend, in accordance with the Financial Regulations	Proper Officer and all nominated budget holders
17.	Expenditure in an emergency/urgent situation	Unbudgeted expenditure on behalf of the Council which is deemed urgent or is of an emergency nature, e.g. work or services required to address an imminent risk to Council operations, personnel or the public. Retrospective approval of such items of expenditure must be obtained at the next relevant meeting. See Financial Regulations for details.	Proper Officer, Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council
18.	Finance – Cash flow and payments	The RFO will create online bank payments and transfers which will be authorised by the Proper Officer and two nominated councillors, in accordance with the Financial Regulations	Proper Officer RFO All Councillors nominated
19.	Finance – Investments	Invest Council funds in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and Investment Strategy	Proper Officer RFO
20.	Finance - Virements up to £2,999	The virement of funds between budgets, in accordance with the Financial Regulations.	RFO, in consultation with budget holders
No.	Area of Operation	Delegation	Officer/Committee
21.	Finance - Virements of £3,000 and over	The virement of funds between budgets, in accordance with the Financial Regulations.	Finance and Staffing Committee / full Council
22.	Freedom of Information	Respond to Freedom of Information requests	Proper Officer
23.	Grants	Consideration of grant applications submitted to the Town Council, in accordance with the Grants Policy	Full Council
		Submission of grant applications on behalf of the Town Council, as instructed by the Council	Proper Officer
24.	Health and Safety	Act as the Council's nominated Health and Safety Officer	Operations Manager
<i>Please note that the Council also appoints an external advisor to act as its 'Competent person' under relevant legislation. The shared Health and Safety responsibilities are set out in the Council's Health and Safety Handbook.</i>			
25.	Insurance	In accordance with the Financial Regulations, effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers, in consultation with the Town Clerk	RFO Proper Officer
		Annual review of the Council's insurance cover, including fidelity guarantee insurance	Finance and Staffing Committee
26.	Legal documents	Sign notices, contracts and agreements on behalf of the Council and any other documents requested by the Council, in accordance with the Standing Orders	Proper Officer
27.	Chairman of Council	Arrange for newly elected Chairman of Council and Vice Chairman to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office forms	Proper Officer

28.	Planning Committee Decisions	Respond to the Local Planning Authority on planning applications and consultations, in accordance with the resolutions of the Planning Committee	Committee Clerk
29.	Procurement	Undertake procurement exercises in accordance with the Financial Regulations	Proper Officer and all nominated budget holders
30.	Property and Assets	Manage the Town Council's property and assets, instigating repairs and maintenance within agreed budgets.	Operations Manager
31.	Public Toilet	Arrange temporary toilets when required	Proper Officer Operations Manager
32.	Recruitment of Town Clerk	Accept resignation and approve recruitment process	Chairman of Council
		Shortlisting and interviewing applicants	Finance & Staffing Committee to shortlist and Chairman of Council, Vice Chairman of Council, Finance & Staffing Committee Chairman to interview
		Confirming the appointment of a new Town Clerk, following a recommendation from the recruitment panel	Full Council
No.	Area of Operation	Delegation	Officer/Committee
33.	Recruitment of replacement of permanent staff (other than the replacement of the Town Clerk) or temporary staff to cover long periods of absence	Accept resignation and approve recruitment process	Proper Officer
		Shortlisting and interviewing applicants	Proper Officer Operations Manager
		Appointment following the recruitment process	Proper Officer Operations Manager
34.	Recruitment of additional staff	Approve staffing budget	Finance & Staffing Committee and recommendation to Full Council
		Approve Job Description and evaluation if a new position	Finance & Staffing Committee and recommendations to Full Council
		Approve recruitment process, ensuring the additional recruitment is in line with the agreed staffing budget	Proper Officer
		Shortlisting and interviewing applicants	Proper Officer Operations Manager
		Appointment following the recruitment process	Proper Officer Operations Manager
35.	Services	Day to day administration and operation of services, together with routine inspection and control	Proper Officer Operations Manager
36.	Vehicles and equipment	To maintain, repair and service the Council's motor vehicles and equipment using contractors where appropriate	Operations Manager

4. Review

This Scheme of Delegation was reviewed by Full Council at the Annual Town Council meeting held on 5th May 2026 for approval and adoption, Minute no. 7.

It will be reviewed by Full Council annually in May or when there are changes to legislation, whichever is sooner.

5. References

- Local Government Act 1972 s101(a)

PoliciesProceduresRegulationsStandingOrders/Shared Documents/Policies/Council Administration/Scheme of Delegation 2026.docx

Review of Terms of Reference for Committees

Introduction

By having this agenda item featuring as part of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council it provides the opportunity to review the Terms of Reference for Committees.

General Terms of Reference Applicable to All Committees

The Town Council introduced the general terms of reference for all committees ([viewable here](#)) in January 1999. This was later amended in March 2002 and last updated in 2019 to reflect the change to the Dorset Council. The document continues to work well and there is no apparent reason to amend the document.

Corn Exchange Meetings

This was introduced in 2020 and the remit is [viewable here](#). The document continues to work well and there is no apparent reason to amend the document.

Town Council Planning Committee

The remit and delegated powers of the Town Council Planning Committee ([viewable here](#)) were last reviewed in May 2025.

Finance & Staffing Committee

The remit and delegated powers of the Finance & Staffing Committee ([viewable here](#)) were last reviewed in May 2025.

Town & General Purposes Committee

The remit and delegated powers of the Town & General Purposes Committee ([viewable here](#)) were last reviewed in May 2025.

Barnes Trust

The Trust would like to ask that the Town Council moves the Park Road management / administration from within the Recreation & Amenities Committee remit to Barnes Trust. The resolution from the Barnes meeting on 27th April 2026 was as follows:

The Barnes Trust implements a reduction in rent to £1,700 a year (this will be reviewed annually). A new service charge will be introduced and phased in incrementally (1st year 33%, 2nd year 66%, 3rd year 100%), from 1st April 2027. There will be the introduction of a service charge in arrears (specific to each club) based upon the extra costs the council has incurred. A list will be drawn up detailing examples of costs the council will consider and those they will not pay for. In addition, Cllr S Hitchings suggested the Barnes Trust administers the sports clubs at Park Road instead of the Town Council. It was also agreed that an additional comment is added to the annual meeting agenda of the Town Council on 5th May 2026 for the council to consider approving the changes.

Recreation & Amenities Committee

The remit and delegated powers of the Recreation & Amenities Committee ([viewable here](#)) were last reviewed in May 2025.

Recommendation

That the Town Council agrees that:

No changes are required to the General Terms of Reference Applicable to All Committees or the Corn Exchange, Planning, Finance & Staffing Committee, Town & General Purposes Committee and Recreation & Amenities Committee remits.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
30th January 2026

Appointment of members to existing committees

DRAFT DOCUMENT

<u>EXISTING 2025/2026</u>	<u>2026/2027</u>
<p align="center"><u>TOWN COUNCIL PLANNING (16)</u></p> <p>Committee Chairman Cllr A Cross Committee Vice Chairmen Cllr C Stevens Committee Members All Town Councillors</p>	<p>Cllr Cllr All Town Councillors</p>
<p align="center"><u>TOWN COUNCIL CORN EXCHANGE (16)</u></p> <p>Committee Chairman Cllr S Hitchings Committee Vice Chairman Cllr A Cross Committee Members All Town Councillors</p>	<p align="center"><u>IF REQUIRED</u></p> <p>Cllr S Hitchings Cllr A Cross All Town Councillors</p>
<p align="center"><u>RECREATION & AMENITIES COMMITTEE (9)</u></p> <p>Committee Chairman Cllr S Chapman Committee Vice Chairman Cllr A Cross Chairman of Council Cllr H Mieville Vice Chairman of Council Cllr C Stevens Committee Members Cllr L Hitchings Cllr S Hitchings Cllr M Putt Cllr J Robinson Cllr Y Mieville</p>	<p>Cllr Cllr Cllr Cllr Cllr Cllr Cllr Cllr Cllr</p>
<p align="center"><u>TOWN & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE (9)</u></p> <p>Committee Chairman Cllr R Holmes Committee Vice Chairman Cllr T Clarkson Chairman of Council Cllr H Mieville Vice Chairman of Council Cllr C Stevens Committee Members Cllr Y Mieville Cllr M Putt Cllr G Del-Pinto Cllr S Morgan Cllr B Quayle</p>	<p>Cllr Cllr Cllr Cllr Cllr Cllr Cllr Cllr Cllr</p>
<p align="center"><u>FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE (9)</u></p> <p>Committee Chairman Cllr L Hitchings Committee Vice Chairman & Vice Chair of Council Cllr C Stevens Chairman of Town & General Purposes Committee Cllr R Holmes Chairman of Council Cllr H Mieville Chairman of Recreation & Amenities Committee Cllr S Chapman Committee Members Cllr T Clarkson Cllr S Hitchings Cllr M Putt Cllr A Cross</p>	<p>Cllr Cllr Cllr Cllr Cllr Cllr Cllr Cllr</p>

Appointment of any new committees, confirmation of the terms of reference, the number of members (including, if appropriate, substitute councillors) and receipt of nominations to them

Introduction

By having this agenda item featuring as part of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council it provides the Town Council with the opportunity to consider establishing any new committees, terms of reference member numbers and Councillor nominations.

New Committees

This matter has been given consideration by officers and there is no apparent reason why any new committees need to be established for the 2026/27 Mayoral year.

Recommendation

That the Town Council continues with its existing Committee structure for the 2026/27 Mayoral year and confirms membership of any working groups.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
29th January 2026

Review and Adoption of appropriate Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Introduction

In 2018, The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) published revised Model Standing Orders. The Town Council adopted the Standing Orders and numerous amendments have since been made. By having this agenda item featuring as part of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council it provides the Town Council with the opportunity to review and adopt appropriate Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

Standing Orders ([viewable here](#))

The Town Council last adopted the Standing Orders in September 2021 and they are reviewed each year.

Financial Regulations ([viewable here](#))

In 2019 NALC published Model Financial Regulations, which were adopted by full Council and most recently updated in September 2021. The Regulations were last considered by the Finance & Staffing Committee in March 2026.

Recommendation

That the Town Council considers the contents of the report and makes any changes prior to adopting the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations for the 2026/27 Mayoral year.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
30th January 2026

Review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses

Introduction

By having this agenda item featuring as part of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council it provides the Town Council with the opportunity to review any arrangements or charters with financial contributions to other local authorities.

Arrangements, Charters and Agreements

- a) Blandford Market – The Town Council is still awaiting for the Dorset Council to transfer the Blandford Market and its Charter. Thanks to the efforts of the DAPTC, progress has now been made and the transfer is currently with our solicitor. In the meantime, the Town Council has an agreement with Dorset Council’s parking services to reimburse them for loss of income from Market Place parking spaces.
- b) Grass Cutting – The Town Council has contracts in place with Blandford Scouts and the Dorset Council for grass cutting services.
- c) Play Area Checks – An agreement is in place with Blandford St Mary Parish Council for health and safety checks of the outdoor gym equipment they have at Stour Meadows. The term for this agreement was changed from annual to 5 years and expires in 2028.
- d) MVS Blandford – A four-year agreement (expiring December 2027) is in place with local mechanics, MVS Blandford, for the Town Council’s vehicles in return for vehicle sponsorship. Councillors reviewed this agreement in December 2023 after other quotes were sought from local mechanics.
- e) General Servicing Agreements – The Town Council has agreements in place with the following providers for essential services:
 - Fire and Intruder Alarms
 - Lift servicing
 - Photo Voltaic panels servicing
 - Fire appliances
 - Toilet cleaning
 - Utilities contracts
 - Waste disposal
 - Sanitary waste disposal
 - IT support
 - Photocopier
 - Franking Machine
 - Clock servicing
 - Hot water boilers
- f) Health and Safety and Human Resources – The Town Council has a 5-year agreement in place with Croners for this support (expires May 2031).
- g) Insurance – The Town Council approved a three-year contract for its insurance provision in March 2024, although the final year was cancelled and a contract with a different provider was started in April 2026.

Service Level Agreements

- a) Treads – The Council will make a financial contribution to Treads of £2,000 a year for the financial years 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28.
- b) Blandford Information Centre – The Council will make a financial contribution to the TIC of £3,000 a year for the financial years 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28.
- c) Town Museum – The Council will make a financial contribution to the Museum of £2,500 a year for the financial years 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28.
- d) Fashion Museum – The Council will make a financial contribution to the Fashion Museum of £2,500 a year for the financial years 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28.
- e) Citizen's Advice Bureau – The Council will make a financial contribution to the CAB of £5,500 a year for the financial years 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28.
- f) Nourish – The Council will make a financial contribution of £5,000 a year for the financial years 202/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28.

Each SLA has varying conditions for the funding the Town Council provides.

Service Provision Funding Agreement

- a) Blandford Stour Valley Band – The agreement is for the Council to make a financial contribution to the Band of £1,500 a year for the financial years 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 with a 3% increase on 1st April 2026 and 1st April 2027.

Should you wish to view any of the documentation referred to in this report, please contact the Town Clerk.

Recommendation

That the Town Council notes the arrangements currently in place with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
30th January 2026

**REPRESENTATIVES TO COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS AND
TOWN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS 2026-27**

DRAFT DOCUMENT

ORGANISATION	REPRESENTATIVE 2025/26	REPRESENTATIVE 2026/27
Allotment Society	Cllr M Spruce Cllr Y Mieville	
Ancient Monuments Officer	Cllr R Holmes	
BFTC Commemoration Group	Cllr M Putt Cllr R Holmes Cllr A Cross Cllr C Stevens Cllr S Chapman Cllr G Del-Pinto	
Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan	<u>Voting Rights</u> Roger Carter Cllr A Cross <u>Attendees:</u> Cllr S Chapman Cllr T Clarkson	
Blandford Business Group	Cllr R Holmes (Chair of T&GP) Cllr J Robinson Cllr S Morgan	
Blandford Community Fridge	Cllr Y Miéville Cllr C Stevens Cllr J Robinson Cllr S Morgan	
Blandford Fashion Museum	Cllr M Putt Cllr C Stevens Cllr J Robinson	
Blandford Forum Charities (4 Cllrs) (Five-year term)	Cllr R Holmes Cllr N Lacey-Clarke Cllr H Miéville Cllr S Chapman	
Blandford Information Centre Observer	Cllr T Clarkson	
Blandford Leisure Centre Consultative Group	Cllr H Miéville Cllr G Del-Pinto	
Blandford Literary Festival	Cllr R Holmes Cllr Y Miéville	
Blandford Opportunity Group	Cllr N Lacey-Clarke Cllr Y Miéville	
Blandford Yuletide Festival	Cllr M Putt Cllr Y Miéville Cllr C Stevens Cllr S Chapman Cllr T Clarkson Cllr G Del-Pinto Cllr L Hitchings Cllr J Robinson Cllr H Miéville	
Citizens Advice Central Dorset	Cllr T Clarkson Cllr S Morgan	
Clean Up Blandford Campaign	Cllr A Cross Cllr Y Miéville Cllr G Del-Pinto	

	Cllr C Stevens Cllr M Putt Cllr S Morgan Cllr H Miéville	
Cycling Officer	Cllr L Hitchings	
Diversity Representative	Cllr N Lacey-Clarke Cllr R Holmes Cllr T Clarkson	
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils (DAPTC) Larger Councils and North Dorset	Cllr C Stevens Cllr S Morgan	
Flood Warden	Cllr R Holmes Cllr T Clarkson	
Foundation Governors Blandford Secondary School Foundation	Cllr N Lacey-Clarke Cllr M Putt	
Free Expression	Cllr H Miéville	
Mortain & Blandford Twinning Association	Cllr M Putt Cllr A Cross Cllr H Miéville	
North Dorset Tourism Meetings	Cllr C Stevens Cllr T Clarkson	
Nourish (Blandford Food Bank)	Cllr S Hitchings Cllr S Morgan (Deputy)	
Preetz Twinning Association	-	
Remembrance Sunday Planning Group (5-year term)	Cllr S Hitchings Cllr R Holmes Cllr S Chapman Cllr T Clarkson Cllr G Del-Pinto Cllr J Robinson Cllr M Putt	
Town Museum, Arts & Heritage Trust	Cllr A Cross	
TREADS	Cllr Y Miéville Cllr S Morgan	
Tree Warden	Cllr T Clarkson Cllr J Robinson	
Wellness Clinics	Cllr Y Miéville Cllr S Morgan	
William Williams Charity Representative	Cllr C Stevens	

Review the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the General Power of Competence and confirm that the Town Council still meets the criteria of The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012

Introduction

This agenda item is two items combined because they are so closely linked.

Expenditure

The Town Council used to apply s137 for its expenditure authority prior to the General Power of Competence and Councillors will be aware that s137 has not been applied for some time. During the last financial year, the Town Council has only used the General Power of Competence.

Eligibility

Section 28 of the Town Council's Standing Orders confirms the eligibility requirements, which this council has been approving on an annual basis to avoid it being missed from the agenda on an election year (!), which are as follows:

- The General Power of Competence (GPC) is a power of first resort, giving a local authority "the power to do anything that individuals generally may do" where permitted by the Localism Act 2011 s1-8.
- Before exercising the General Power of Competence, a meeting of the full Council shall have passed a resolution to confirm it has satisfied the prescribed statutory criteria required to qualify as an eligible parish council.
- To be eligible, the number of councillors elected at the last election (or subsequent by-election) must equal or exceed two thirds of the total numbers of seats on the council and the council must have a qualified clerk. It must confirm it remains eligible at every annual meeting of the council after ordinary elections and can use the GPC as long as it does not break other laws.

Recommendation

That the Town Council notes its expenditure incurred under the General Power of Competence and confirms that it continues to meet the criteria of The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
30th January 2026

Review of Inventory of Land and Assets Including Buildings and Office Equipment and the Formation of the Town Council's Deeds and Trusts Working Group

Introduction

By having this agenda item featuring as part of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council it provides the Town Council with the opportunity to review its inventory of land and assets and to form a Working Group to inspect the Town Council's Deeds and Trusts.

Inventory of Land

The Town Council has responsibility for various parcels of land and buildings in Blandford Forum and these are all included in the land inventory at [Appendix A – Land Inventory](#).

In 2009 the Town Council registered land that it already owned with the Land Registry, which is also detailed at Appendix A.

If any Member would like to see the Land Registry titles, please contact the Town Clerk.

Inventory of Assets (including buildings and office equipment)

The Town Council's Responsible Financial Officer and Business Support Officer maintain an Asset Register and all the items listed have a description, date acquired, model and serial numbers, purchase price, value price, insurance details and comments box (where appropriate).

The Asset Register includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- a. Office and IT equipment
- b. Civic and Mayoral items
- c. Furniture
- d. Fire Extinguishers
- e. Christmas Decorations
- f. Street Furniture
- g. Plant Fixtures and Fittings (hot water and condensing boilers)
- h. Grounds Maintenance equipment
- i. Motor Vehicles
- j. CCTV Equipment

Due to the size of these documents, copies have not been made available for Members. If any Member would like to see the Asset Register, please contact the Town Clerk.

The Asset Register was last approved at the 30th March 2026 Town Council meeting.

Inspection of the Town Council's Deeds and Trusts

The Town Council agreed on 18th May 2018 that deeds and trusts should be reviewed on an annual basis. This is considered valuable background for newer members as it provides an interesting background to the land and properties that the Town Council owns or manages.

Mayoral Scroll

At the Town Council meeting held in July 2023, Councillors agreed to inspect the two Mayoral Scrolls when they are displayed for the annual Mayor Making ceremony, at the start of each council term. It was not specified if this should be done by Councillors or staff but it is recommended that the Town Clerk ensures this is carried out each May.

Recommendation

- To approve the list of land registered to the Town Council and note Appendix A.
- To approve that the Town Council's Asset Registers are updated regularly and were last reviewed at full council on 30th March 2026.
- To note that the deeds and trusts were last inspected in 2023/24 and were not inspected during 2024/25 or 2025/26 due to the closure of the Corn Exchange and limited access to the fire safe.
- To instruct the Town Clerk to ensure the scrolls are checked in May.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
30th January 2026

Land Inventory

The deeds, documents and agreements for the list below in Blandford Forum are available to view in the Town Clerk's Office by arrangement.

Item No.	Location	Use	Area (m ²) (if known)	Title No.	Ordnance Survey Map Reference	Own	Lease	Maintain
1.	Cemetery, Chapel, Workshop and Cemetery Field, Salisbury Road DT11 7UX	Burials	23,328	DT374396	ST8907SW	✓		
2.	Closed Churchyard of St Peter & St Paul, East Street/Market Place DT11 7AD	Closed Churchyard	1,545	-	ST88506327			✓
3.	Corn Exchange and Town Clerk's Office, Market Place DT11 7AF	Town Council offices and community venues	-	DT375116	ST8806SW	✓		
4.	Damory Down Amenity Areas	Amenity areas/open spaces	-	DT30798	ST8807	✓		
5.	Dr David's Memorial Plot (DC), Wimborne Road	Memorial grass/shrub area	8	DT358635	ST887064			✓
6.	Elizabeth Road Allotments/Philip Road <i>(awaiting Community Asset Transfer from Dorset Council)</i>	Allotments	-	-	ST890065			✓
7.	Unit 18, Glenmore Business Park (Depot), Higher Shaftesbury Lane DT11 7FP	Welfare unit and storage	-	DT397470	ST8907NW	✓		
8.	Lamperd's Field Allotments and Store, Salisbury Road DT11 7SP	Allotments and storage compound	-	DT284885	ST8907NE		✓	
9.	Langton Play Area	Play Area	1,503.01	DT358635	ST8806SE	✓		
10.	Langton Car Park/back of M&S (grass cutting), Langton Road (DC)	Amenity areas/open spaces	1,529.44	-	ST8806SE			✓

11.	Larksmead Recreation Ground, Pavilion and Play Area, Larksmead DT11 7LU	Recreational area	25,787.85	DT374443	ST8907SE	✓		
12.	Marsh & Ham (grass cutting), off West Street (DC)	Amenity areas/open spaces	2,571.93	-	ST8844006114			✓
13.	Marsh & Ham Toilet Block / Information Centre, off West Street (DC) <i>(no lease with Dorset Council in place for several years)</i> <i>(awaiting Community Asset Transfer from Dorset Council)</i>	Public Conveniences	-	-	ST8844006114		✓	
14.	Park Road Recreation Ground, Car Park, Pavilions, Play Area (Barnes for a Recreation Ground Trust), Park Road DT11 7BX	Recreational area	15,692.74	DT374492	ST8806NW	✓		
15.	Railway Arches (DC), Stour Meadows (back of Langton Road long stay car park)	Redundant railway arches	-	DT264601	ST8806SE		✓	
16.	Skate Park (DC), Stour Meadows car park (back of Hall & Woodhouse brewery, within the parish of Blandford St Mary) DT11 9LQ	Skate Park	1,280.50	DT300638	ST8805NE		✓	
17.	Tabernacle Toilet Block, The Tabernacle	Public Conveniences	-	-	ST8806SE	✓		
18.	The Great Fire Monument (Town Pump), Market Place DT11 7AD	Monument	-	-	ST88506327	✓		
19.	Woodhouse Gardens and Pavilion, The Tabernacle DT11 7GQ	Formal gardens and community venue	412	DT358635	ST8806SE	✓		
20.	Badbury Heights development – amenity areas (Phase 1 & 2 transferred, Phase 2 Play Area, awaiting 3a & 3b), off Higher Shaftesbury Lane	Amenity areas/open spaces	-	DT410020	ST8924407790	✓		

Review and Confirmation of Arrangements for Insurance Cover in Respect of all Insured Risks

Introduction

By having this agenda item featuring as part of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council it provides the Town Council with the opportunity to review its insurance cover.

Insurance Cover in Respect of All Insured Risks

An Insurance Risk Assessment of the Town Council's Insurance Cover was carried out, and Premiums for 2026/2027 were deferred by the Finance & Staffing Committee on 23rd March 2026 and subsequently approved – with delegated authority – by Town Council on 30th March 2026.

The full policy schedule was sent to Councillors with the F&S agenda, but should Councillors wish to view it again please request a copy from the RFO.

Recommendation

That the Town Council notes that its Insurance Cover in respect of all insured risks has been approved for the 2026/2027 Mayoral year.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
30th January 2026

Review of the Council's and/or Employees' Membership of Other Bodies

Introduction

By having this agenda item featuring as part of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council it provides the Town Council with the opportunity to review its/or its employees' membership of other bodies.

The Council's Membership of Other Bodies

- a) The Town Council annually takes out Membership of the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC). BFTC automatically obtains the support services and guidance offered to Town Council from the National Association of Councils (NALC) once it has joined its County Association. The Membership of DAPTC is through the Annual Subscription scheme and the total cost for the subscription in 26/27 is £2,036.95.
- b) The Town Council is a Member of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM). Membership is essential for cemetery management training, which includes memorial safety, and they also offer legal advice by telephone. The membership cost is currently £105 a year.
- c) The Town Council joined the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) in 2015. NABMA offers support and advice on both indoor and outdoor markets. The membership cost is £484 for 2026/2027.
- d) The Town Council approved expenditure of £385.67 a month for a 60-month period with Croner. Croner provides support and consultancy on H&S and HR issues.
- e) The Town Council takes out Membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) for the clerk on an annual basis. This provides the Town Clerk with training events, seminars and a Dorset and national network for Clerks to share and exchange ideas and experiences. The subscription cost for 2025/2026 was £475, however the outgoing Town Clerk did not renew it in January 2026 due to her departure in April. The new Town Clerk will continue with a membership. The SLCC provides valuable information on various subject matters and is a very useful resource, which other staff members also benefit from with online training courses.
- f) The office staff use Canva for service sheets, calendars, posters, social media graphics, etc. and this costs £99 a year.
- g) The ICO subscription is £73 for the year to June 2027.
- h) The Amazon Prime subscription is £114 for the year to December 2027.

Recommendation

That the Town Council notes the report.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
30th January 2026

Review of BFTC's Complaints Procedure

Introduction

By having this agenda item featuring as part of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council it provides the Town Council with the opportunity to review its complaints procedure.

Code of Practice for Handling Complaints

BFTC had for some years a code of practice for handling complaints, which was replaced by NALC's recommendation as a result of Minute No. 83 of the Town Council meeting held on 8th September 2014. The Complaints procedure ([viewable on our website here](#)) has been updated to be in line with NALC's Legal Topic Note 9E on Handling Complaints.

An Employee Complaint

The procedure confirms that such a complaint will be dealt with as an employment matter.

It would appear that the present procedures work and there is no need to change or amend the process used.

A Councillor Complaint

The procedure confirms that complaints about a Councillor are subject to the jurisdiction of the Dorset Council, unless it is a breach of the rules about Disclosable Pecuniary Interests which will be a criminal offence to be reported to the police.

It would appear that the present procedures work and there is no need to change or amend the process used.

A General Complaint

If a general complaint is received, it should if possible be resolved by the Town Clerk, other officer or Chairman of Council. If this is not possible then a formal process will ensue and this will involve the formation of a Councillor panel, as detailed in Section 3 of the Complaints Procedure.

Recommendation

That the Town Council's Complaints Procedure is approved for the 2026/2027 Mayoral year.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
30th January 2026

Review of the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under Freedom of Information, Data Protection legislation and Website Accessibility Statement

Introduction

By having this agenda item featuring as part of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council it provides the Town Council with the opportunity to review the procedure for handling requests under the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

In 2021, the review of the council's website accessibility statement was added to this annual item due to its importance.

Detail

All Councils should produce a paper that details the information it holds and where the information can be located under the Model Publication Scheme.

The Town Council adopted a Privacy Policy at the Town Council meeting held on 23rd April 2018 and the Model Publication Scheme has since been merged into this Policy.

This is available to view on our website:

[Privacy Policy and Freedom of Information](#)

The council's website accessibility statement is also available to view on the council's website: [Website Accessibility Statement](#). An assessment was carried out in March 2026 by an external contractor and a report was produced, which is one of the items the Internal Auditor will be checking as part of the audit process.

Recommendation

That the Town Council's Privacy Policy, including Freedom of Information Policy, and its Website Accessibility Statement are approved for the 2026/2027 Mayoral year.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
30th January 2026

Review of the Council's Policy for Communicating with the Press & Media

Introduction

By having this agenda item featuring as part of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council it provides the Town Council with the opportunity to review the policy for dealing with the Press or Media.

Background

A Town Council Working Group to review the Press & Media Policy was formed following receipt of NALC's model policy. The Town Council adopted a policy and retained section 21 of the Town Council's Standing Orders at the Town Council Meeting held on Monday 8th December 2014. These have been reviewed annually since.

The Press & Media Policy (viewable in the Councillor private area on the website) and section 21 of the Standing Orders have worked well to date and there is no apparent reason to amend the document.

Recommendation

That the Town Council agrees that the Press & Media Policy and section 21 of the Standing Orders continue to be appropriate for the 2026/2027 Mayoral year.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
30th January 2026

Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures

Introduction

By having this agenda item featuring as part of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council it provides the Town Council with the opportunity to review its employment policies and procedures. This was an additional agenda item for the annual meeting, introduced by NALC as part of their amended Standing Orders (April 2018).

Detail of the Report

The Town Council has the following documents in place with regards to employment policies and procedures, which are all verified and updated by officers and Croners:

- Employee Manual
- Training Policy
- Equality Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Contracts, Offer Letters and Job Descriptions
- Risk Assessments
- Office Procedures
- Strategic Plan
- And other associated documents

Some of these documents are available from the Town Clerk should Councillors wish to see a copy.

Councillors will recall that a Menopause Policy was also adopted by council in March 2023.

Recommendation

That the Town Council's employment policies and procedures are approved for the 2026/2027 Mayoral year.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
30th January 2026

Confirm the Dates, Times and Place of Ordinary Meetings of the Full Council for the Year Ahead

Introduction

By having this agenda item featuring as part of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council it provides the Town Council with the opportunity to review the Council Diary for 2026/27.

Council Diary

At the Town Council Meeting held in January 2026, the Town Council agreed [the calendar of meetings up to end of May 2027](#).

Recommendation

To note the calendar up to May 2027. It is also recommended that the calendar is agreed much earlier this year to secure annual dates for events, because the Corn Exchange is much busier than it has been in the past.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
30th January 2026

Review of the Risk Assessment Management Policy (including Financial) Arrangements for 2026/27

Introduction

By having this agenda item featuring as part of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council it provides the Town Council with the opportunity to review its risk assessment management policy.

Detail of the Report

Changes to the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 required the Council to conduct an annual review of internal control, which includes the arrangements for management of risk. While a review of the risks affecting the outside sites, together with administration and staff has been carried out, in light of the added regulation it was felt that a financial risk assessment was needed.

The Town Council reviews this document annually, and it was most recently updated for the Finance & Staffing Committee meeting held on 23rd March 2026 and subsequently approved by full Council on 30th March 2026.

The policy was distributed to Councillors by email with the F&S agenda in March, but Councillors may request a copy from the Town Clerk.

Recommendation

That the Town Council's Risk Assessment Management Policy (including Financial) is approved for the Mayoral year 2026/2027.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
30th January 2026

Review of the Council's Business Continuity Plan

Introduction

By having this agenda item featuring as part of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council it provides the Town Council with the opportunity to establish or review its Business Continuity Plan.

Background

The Business Continuity Plan (distributed to Councillors by email) was reviewed by staff in April 2026 and only minor changes were made.

Recommendation

That the Town Council agrees that the Business Continuity Plan continues to be appropriate for the 2026/2027 Mayoral year.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
30th January 2026

Review of the Council's Climate Biodiversity and Nature Action Plan

Introduction

By having this agenda item featuring as part of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council it provides the Town Council with the opportunity to review its Climate Biodiversity and Nature Action Plan ([viewable here](#)).

Background

The Plan was amended and approved by council in March 2022 and various amendments have been made since, with this being an annual item on this meeting agenda.

Recommendation

That the Town Council agrees that the Climate Biodiversity and Nature Action Plan continues to be appropriate for the 2026/2027 Mayoral year.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
30th January 2026

To adopt an IT Policy

The Council has various IT-related policies, however it is recommended that it adopts a comprehensive IT policy to comply with Assertion 10.

The template is a recommended format for smaller authorities.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
27th March 2026



BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

IT Policy

Adopted: 5th May 2026
Review due: May 2027

Twinned with Preetz, Germany



Town Clerk's Office
Church Lane, Blandford Forum
Dorset DT11 7AD



Twinned with Mortain, France



Tel: 01258 454500
Email: admin@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk
www.blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk

1. Introduction

Blandford Forum Town Council henceforth known as “BFTC” recognises the importance of effective and secure information technology (IT) and email usage in supporting its business, operations, and communications.

This policy outlines the guidelines and responsibilities for the appropriate use of IT resources and email by council members, employees, volunteers, and contractors.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who use IT resources, including computers, networks, software, devices, data, and email accounts. BFTC endeavours to provide digital devices but acknowledges that some small BFTC staff and members may be using their own personal devices. Everyone must adhere to this policy to maintain digital security.

3. Training and awareness

BFTC will source regular training and resources to educate users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns, and technology updates. You should engage in regular training on email security and best practices, including but not limited to:

- the [Parish Council Domain Helper Service's virtual cybersecurity workshops for councils](#)
- The National Cyber Security Centre [Cyber Security training for small organisations](#) and free [Cyber Action Toolkit](#).

4. Acceptable use of council provided IT resources and email

When using IT resources for the council's purposes, you must adhere to ethical standards, and respect copyright and intellectual property rights.

Where possible, authorised devices, software, and applications will be provided by the BFTC for work-related tasks.

You must not install unauthorised software without checking with the clerk, and you must not use equipment or email to access or forward inappropriate or offensive content.

5. What you must do if you use your own personal devices

BFTC will endeavour to provide individuals with devices to use for council business. If you are using your own device you must make sure you are:

- using strong passwords for all your accounts (preferably using a password manager)
- downloading the latest operating system security updates
- using anti-virus software

6. Network and internet usage

You must be careful about which Wi-Fi networks you join. Public Wi-Fi networks in coffee shops or on trains can be targeted by hackers. Always make sure you are using a trusted internet connection, which is password protected when carrying out official business.

7. Password and account security

You are responsible for maintaining the security of your accounts and passwords. Use the National Cyber Security Centre's [advice for choosing a strong password](#). For business continuity, login details and passwords need to be stored securely so they can be accessed by trusted individuals in an emergency.

8. Email communication

BFTC will endeavour to provide you with an official email account for organisation-related communication only. You must make sure that emails are professional and respectful in tone. You must always check you are sending any confidential or sensitive information to the correct recipients.

Always be cautious when downloading attachments and opening links to avoid phishing and malware. Before opening any attachments or clicking on links, verify the source by looking at the email it has come from carefully. Do not download and open anything if you are unsure who has sent it.

9. Email access

BFTC reserves the right to check email communications to ensure compliance with this policy and relevant laws. Monitoring will be conducted in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR. Clerks may need to access emails so that they respond to FOI or subject-access requests. If you are using a personal email account for council business, this is still subject to data protections laws and FOI requests.

10. Data management, data retention and security

All sensitive and confidential data should be stored and transmitted securely. You must regularly backup any important data to prevent data loss and follow your organisation's data retention policies.

You should retain and archive emails in compliance with your data retention policies. Regularly review and delete unnecessary emails to maintain an organised inbox.

11. Reporting security incidents

All suspected security breaches, including email breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the clerk.

12. Compliance and consequences

Breach of this IT and Email Policy may result in the suspension of IT privileges.

13. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Updates may be made to address emerging technology trends and security measures.

14. Contacts

For IT-related enquiries or assistance, users can contact the clerk who will advise of the external IT support company.

All staff and councillors are responsible for the safety and security of IT and email systems.

(Saved at Policies/IT Policies)