BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

To: All Town Councillors
Members of the Public & Press

Dorset Council Councillors

Dear Member,

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Town Council which will be held in the **Corn Exchange**, The Market Place, Blandford Forum on **Monday 27th April 2026 at 7:00 pm** to consider the following items. This meeting will also be available to view online using Microsoft Teams using this link.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
20th 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. Public Session

2. Report from Dorset Council Councillors

3. Apologies

4. To receive any Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations

5. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 30th March 2026

6. Town Clerk's Report & Correspondence

7. Civic Report

8. Recommendations and Receipt of Minutes

   None

9. To approve expenditure for Past Mayor badges

10. To receive an update on the proposed Pump Track

11. To resolve to sign the transfer of public open spaces for Phases 3a, 3b and 3c of the Persimmon Homes development and approve expenditure authority for the play areas

12. To discuss forming a working group to respond to Dorset Council's consultation on ward boundaries

13. To consider a grant application from NOCS

14. To review the updated Strategic Plan (now including the Pump Track and staff review)

15. To receive an update and consider any requests from the:

    15.1 Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – Blandford +

    15.2 BFTC Commemoration Group

    15.3 Climate, Biodiversity & Nature

    15.4 Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project

        15.4.1 To agree recommendations from the Market Area Enhancement working group regarding a draft plan for the proposed area

16. Reports from Community and Local Organisations (Councillors are requested to advise the Chairman of Council or the Town Clerk if they wish to make a report under this heading)

17. Confidential

    The public and press may be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity might be prejudicial to the public interest as per the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

    17.1 To consider nominations to present certificates to members of the community (sent to councillors separately)

    17.1 To receive the survey of the Marsh & Ham toilet block and consider next steps (sent to Councillors separately)

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

5th May	Annual Meeting of the Town Council
15th May	Mayor Making Ceremony
18th May	Planning Meeting

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

Twinned with Preetz, Germany

Twinned with Mortain, France

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

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

LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME QUALITY GOLD

EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME
BRONZE AWARD
Proudly supporting those who serve.
ARMED FORCES COVENANT

Agenda Item No. 6

Town Clerk's Report

The First Wedding in the Town Hall! – On Friday 3rd April (Good Friday) we held the first civil ceremony in the Town Hall for a local couple with 24 hours' notice. Dorset Registrars and members of staff rallied around to organise this on a bank holiday which the bride and groom were very thankful for.

Payments for Weddings – We are currently treating them like normal bookings so we are taking a deposit for them. This means they could have booked a wedding during the 2025/26 financial year for August 2027 and only pay a very small deposit and next year will pay for the balance (if they don't cancel due to the small deposit) at the 2025/26 rate which was in place when they booked it. As other Town Councils charge up front with no refunds, staff think we should take the more affordable £200 for a Town Hall ceremony upfront too or the £800 for the entire venue. We would of course be happy to hold a date for a month or so if it is in advance to give people a chance to wait for pay day or find the money. Therefore, if couples want to book ahead and benefit from current prices they need to be prepared to pay for it at the time of booking. Councillors were emailed for their views on this. Since then, the office staff have confirmed that all but one wedding has been paid in full and the outstanding one is being approached to pay the balance.

Events Update

The Frankie's Guys tribute night sold out and was a great success with positive feedback. Over £400 was taken on the bar and they have been booked for 2027!

The Countess of Sandwich will join us Friday evening for a talk in the Town Hall and Dick Taylor has been booked for 30th May 2026. Please let the office know if you can think of any other speakers we can approach as these events are very popular.

Thanks to the Councillors who have attended the events we have put on to boost the use of the Corn Exchange since we reopened in November!

Redundant Equipment – Two contractors have kindly advised on pricing redundant Wi-Fi and AV equipment (since the refurbishment) and the Town Clerk has sold a TP Link and Access Point bundle for £30 and an Allen & Heath QU-PAC for £800. There is one outstanding item that will hopefully sell in the next week.

Free Parking Days – Dorset Council has approved the following free parking days for 2026/2027; Saturday 11th July 2026, Monday 31st August 2026, Sunday 8th November 2026, Saturday 28th November 2026 and Saturday 5th December 2026 (Small Business Saturday). This leaves one date left to use.

Insurance – Council delegated authority to officers to confirm the insurance provider in consultation with some Councillors and the total amount is £24,532.97 for the commercial combined policy, £2,461.76 motor insurance, £644.51 Personal Accident. Regarding the cancellation of the existing policy covering the Corn Exchange Premises, a formal Cancellation Endorsement effective from the 19th April 2026 has been received totalling £1,948.91, inclusive of 12% insurance premium tax.

Charter 400 Mosaic – The Town Clerk approached Hall & Woodhouse and the Chairman responded to advise that, after careful consideration, they cannot allocate resources away from other local good causes to help with.

Flood Risk Management – Dorset Council's Engineer for Flood Risk Management has been in touch to arrange a site meeting for 22nd April 2026 and some Councillors will be in attendance and it is hoped they will report back to this meeting.

Plant-based Solutions – A local resident has emailed Councillors to ask them to support stronger plant-based food policies. They have written as follows;

Councils across the UK are exploring how food policy can contribute to climate commitments and public health goals. Six UK councils have already endorsed the Plant Based Treaty, alongside more than 70 cities globally. While councils vary in their direct influence over different settings, local authorities can play an important leadership role in the food served through council-run catering, procurement policies, public events, and partnerships. Increasing plant-based options is a practical way to reduce emissions, improve public health, and demonstrate climate leadership at the local level. I would welcome your support for:

- *Increasing plant-based options in council-managed settings and events*
- *Reviewing procurement policies to support lower-carbon and healthier food options*
- *Considering endorsement of the Plant Based Treaty as a framework for local climate action*

Nearly 1,000 UK councillors have already endorsed the Plant Based Treaty in their individual capacity. I hope you can add your name in support too: https://plantbasedtreaty.org/individual-endorse/ If you would like further information or wish to arrange a presentation, please contact hello@plantbasedtreaty.org.

The resident has therefore been invited to attend one of our online climate working group meetings and a response is awaited.

Town Clerks – This is the last council meeting for the outgoing Town Clerk, Linda Scott-Giles whose last day is 30th April 2026, although she will of course be summoning Councillors to the annual meeting with the agenda going out w/c 27th April 2026. She has had handover days with the incoming Town Clerk, Claire Commons who starts on 1st May 2026.

Agenda Item No. 9

To approve expenditure for Past Mayor badges

Fattorini's is a specialist firm, which has provided the Town Council with Councillor, Freeman and Past Mayor badges that have been designed by this council in the past.

The Town Clerk has sought a quote for the Past Mayor's badge, because there is only one remaining for this year and the estimating team has provided the quote for the pendants as below:

Q0088907:1 - PAST MAYOR PENDANT
Metal and enamel pendants a and bar **Pendant 34mm diameter and bar 30mm x 12mm.** **Vitreous enamelled two colours.** **Complete with pin fitting to reverse of bar.** **Finished in polished gilt.** **Packed in a presentation case.** **Design B101104-13**
Quantity 15 £136.66 each nett

Please note that the above prices are generally valid for 30 days and are exclusive of carriage and VAT. Delivery lead-time is currently in the region of 6 to 8 working weeks from receipt of a firm instruction/order to proceed (this is subject to change and depends upon factory loading at the time of any order.)

The last time an order was placed it was for 15 badges, hence the same number was requested and it is recommended that council approves expenditure for 15 badges at £136.66 each (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
25th March 2026

To receive an update on the proposed Pump Track

Background

The Town Council was approached by Offcamber, a bicycle shop in Blandford Forum, who put forward the proposal of a pump track in Stour Meadows. Tris Day, who works at Offcamber, came to a public council meeting to explain the benefits of the facility and asked the council to take the lead, offering his expertise and knowledge. Councillors were supportive and included funding of £50,000 for the project in the 2026/27 budget, instructing staff to proceed with taking the project forward.

In the first instance, the Town Clerk wrote to Blandford St Mary Parish Council for its views, with it being within its parish boundary, and Dorset Cllr Barrie Cooper was approached. He was very supportive and offered to help in any way.

Planning and layout of the track – Offcamber suggested the location adjacent to the skate park, which is also maintained by the Town Council. A professional, experienced company will design the track within the confines of the space available. Due to the shape and size of the site we have been advised to have a simple oval track. Planning permission will need to be applied for on that basis. Several companies have been approached for their views and one company has attended a site meeting to assess the feasibility of the site and provided a quote to assist in the budget setting and grant application process. The project estimate is £100,000.

The proposed site is shown in red below.

Funding – This will be sought from several areas with most of the funding from Blandford Forum Town Council. Apart from the application to the Dorset Council for a grant from the Capital Leverage Fund, a request has also been sent to Blandford St Mary Parish Council. Any extra funding required will be sought from Sport England and the Sovereign Network Group. A bicycle firm called Muc-Off has also been approached for support due to local connections.

We received positive feedback from the Grants Monitoring Officer at Dorset Council who explained that we need to evidence exactly where the other funding would come from and that they want *to see more evidence of tangible need in a new application from young people especially as the proposed track is next to an existing skatepark.* Hence, a consultation was launched in consultation with Tris at Offcamber and the results can be viewed later in this report.

Permissions – A site meeting has been held with the parking team at Dorset Council to seek their initial approval to proceed with the proposed area. This was a positive meeting and written confirmation is being sought. The Dorset Council Flood Risk Manager has been consulted and confirmed that the location is within the floodplain of the main River Stour and is also at risk of surface water flooding, which Councillors will be aware of. A planning application will be submitted to the local planning authority and objections are not expected due to the land currently being an unused space, which will not impact on the walkers of that area. Once funding is secured a planning application will be submitted.

Prior to Works – An arrangement would need to be agreed with Dorset Council to use the free Car Park as welfare and storage area during construction of the track.

Works to track to start – A tender process will be carried out due to the cost of the works. Works would then be carried out by a competent firm and safety to the public during this time would be paramount.

Update

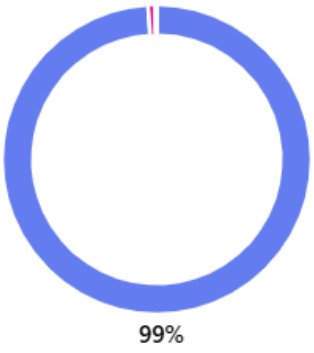
The Town Clerk and Tris Day (Offcamber) attended the Blandford St Mary Parish Council meeting on 4th March 2026 and presented the idea to the Councillors. They were supportive and suggested the site is fenced, like the skate park is, to ensure safety of its users. We asked that they consider a financial contribution at a future meeting.

Consultation Feedback

The deadline for responses is Friday 24th April 2026, hence any replies submitted between 21st April and 24th April will be added at the meeting on 27th April 2026. The Town Council has received an excellent response to the consultation, with 571 responses, which will help with funding applications.

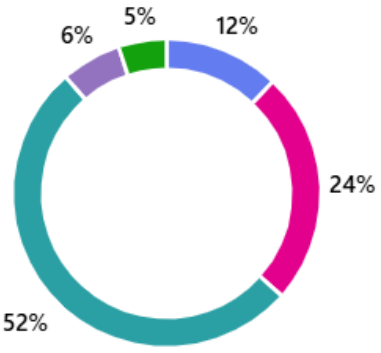
. Would you like to see a pump track adjacent to the Town Council's skate park in Stour Meadows, Blandford St Mary? T he area is shown in red on the aerial view photo.

Yes	566
No	4
Don't know	1



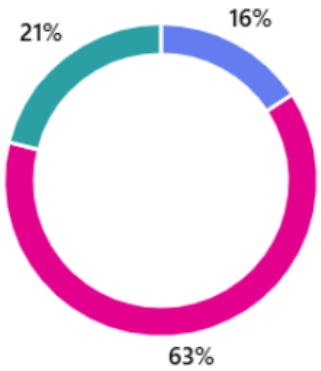
If it is something you would use, please tell us how you would use it?

Skateboard	111
Scooter	224
Bike/BMX	477
Skates	58
Other	46



And how often do you think you would use it?

Daily	86
Weekly	345
Monthly	115



Do you have any comments you would like to make about this proposal? More details

343
Responses

Latest Responses
"Blandford needs more activities and the kids will love this... can't wait! Pleas... "
"I would like to support this venture"
...

62 respondents (19%) answered children for this question. Update

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Town Council notes the report and agrees the following actions:

- Seek confirmation of use of land from the Dorset Council.
- Reapply to the Dorset Council Capital Leverage Fund in the next round.
- Seek other potential funding streams (Sovereign Network Group, Sport England, Blandford St Mary Parish Council.)
- Obtain planning permission.
- Go out to tender.

Linda Scott-Giles
Town Clerk
20th April 2026

Agenda Item No. 11

To resolve to sign the transfer of public open spaces for Phases 3a, 3b and 3c of the Persimmon Homes development

Report

Councillors are aware that the Town Council is signatory to a Section 106 agreement to take over the ownership and maintenance responsibilities for the public open space (POS) on Phase 3a, 3b and 3c of the Persimmon Homes housing development at Badbury Heights.

The long-awaited (and constantly chased) transfer documents for Phases 3a, 3b and 3c have now been received from the Town Council's solicitor. Our solicitor is still awaiting a final payment of £199,944.03 but the developer's solicitor has emailed to confirm that their client has received sign off and confirmed the amount. Therefore, it is hoped that the final payment will be made soon, we are also awaiting confirmation that a small number of tree works have been carried out.

Our solicitor has informed us that:

"Generally, with these transactions where solicitors are instructed, both solicitors will be holding their respective client's signed (but undated) transfer deed(s), and the relevant solicitor (in this case, Persimmon's solicitor) will be holding the required monies to complete.

Persimmon's solicitor will then send us the monies, and only then would we complete/date the transfer, and we would then arrange to send the monies to you. It is therefore normal for the transfer to be signed without funds having been received (but the transfer should not be dated).

In short, we would only complete the transfer once we have received the completion monies from Persimmon's solicitor."

A new resolution is required to sign the transfer documents as standing orders state:

Section 22 Execution and sealing of legal deeds:

i. *A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the council unless authorised by a resolution.*
ii. *Subject to standing order 22(a) above, the council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Proper Officer in the presence of two councillors who shall sign the deed as witnesses.*

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Town Council authorises:

The Chairman of Council, Vice Chairman of Council and the Town Clerk to sign and seal the transfer document for Phases 3a, 3b and 3c and return it to the solicitor.

Jon Goodenough
Operations Manager
26th March 2026

To discuss forming a working group to address Dorset Council's consultation on ward boundaries

On 24th March 2026 Dorset Council launched a 10-week public consultation inviting proposals for new council wards and ward boundaries. This will close on 1st June 2026.

After they have considered all representations made to them during this consultation, they intend to publish draft recommendations in September 2026.

DC will then hold a further period of consultation on the draft recommendations. The final recommendations are expected to be published in March 2027.

The new electoral arrangements will come into effect at the local elections in May 2029.

Please click this link for more information and see information below that was sent to us from Dorset Council:

If you represent a local organisation or community group in Dorset, please pass this message on to your members or anyone who you think might be interested in the review. You can share the message by email or through social media by using the buttons at the bottom right of the page.

What is an electoral review?
Our electoral review will recommend new electoral arrangements for Dorset Council. We will propose:

- *the total number of councillors elected to the council in the future;*
- *the number of wards;*
- *the number of councillors representing each ward;*
- *ward boundaries; and*
- *the names of wards.*

How to get involved
This is a public consultation and we welcome views from individuals and organisations across Dorset on where they think new ward boundaries should be drawn.

*We are minded to recommend that **82 councillors** should be elected to Dorset Council in the future.*

*This is no change from the current number of councillors. We are now inviting proposals to help us draw up a pattern of wards accommodate **82 councillors**.*

In drawing up new electoral wards, we must balance three legal criteria, namely:

- *to deliver electoral equality: where each councillor represents roughly the same number of electors as others across the county;*
- *that the pattern of wards should, as far as possible, reflect the interests and identities of local communities;*
- *that the electoral arrangements should provide for effective and convenient local government.*

We will treat all submissions equally, and judge each case on its merits and against the legal criteria. If you wish to put forward a view, we would also urge you to ensure that evidence supports your submission.

For example, if you wish to argue that two areas should be included in the same electoral ward, make sure you tell us why they should be together, providing evidence about community facilities, ties, organisations, and amenities, rather than simply asserting that they belong together. There is more advice on our website about how you can get involved in the consultation.

Our website features technical guidance that explains the process and our policies, as well as guidance on how to take part in each part of the process.
We have also set up a webpage dedicated to the review of Dorset, where you can find all the relevant information, access interactive maps of the current ward boundaries, and give your views.

Recommendation

The recommendation is to form a working group to either have delegated authority or report back to the May Planning meeting.

Becci Brady
Committee Clerk
25th March 2026

Agenda Item No. 13

To consider a grant application from NOCS

Name of Organisation	New Opportunities for Community and Support – NOCS
Registered Charity Number (if applicable)	1174878
Contact Name	Neil Kernon (Trustee Chair)
Purpose of Organisation	Providing support, development opportunities and fun for people with high levels of social anxiety and difficulties with social interaction, particularly due to autism spectrum conditions (ASC), such as Asperger's, or mental health challenges. This is done using the medium of table top gaming of many varieties, including "Warhammer ©", dungeons and dragons, board games, card-based games, etc.
Amount Requested	£ maximum available
Is this a Green Grant? Delete as appropriate	Y/N - NO
Purpose of Request	NOCS provides services available to children and young adults, and is a substantial provider of youth services in Blandford. NOCS has struggled to raise funding to cover core costs over the past few years, and is now facing closure unless additional funding can be secured. NOCS cannot operate without premises, due to the face-to-face nature of what the charity does. That also necessitates providing staffing. Whilst the rent we are charged by our landlord is below market value, and paid employees are kept to a minimum (most staffing being provided by volunteers), we nevertheless need approx. £3,500 every month to continue to operate. We have approached various other funders who have supported us in the past, including The National Lottery, and are asking the council to provide us with grant support in the first instance, as no other youth services are available specifically for young people with the issues which we cater for.
How many Blandford Forum residents will benefit directly?	250+ every month
Any further relevant information	See Accounts distributed by email to Councillors
Signed: Neil Kernon	**Dated: 31/03/2026**

NOCS has also asked about a service level agreement too, but for urgency this application for a grant has been put forward in the first instance.

The accounts up to March 2025 have been shared with Councillors by email, and the provisional budget for 2026/27 is shown below:

Staffing			Adjusted salaries			
Salaries	£ 23,506.32		£ 20,629.00			
NI	£ 676.32					
Pension	£ 853.44		£ 244.47			
Staff training	£ 300.00					
		£ 25,336.08		£ 20,873.47		
Non Staff expenditure						
Rent	£ 10,800.00		£ 10,800.00		Premises	
Rates	£ 885.60		£ 885.60		£ 15,565.60	
Energy	£ 840.00		£ 840.00			
Telephone & internet	£ 1,440.00		£ 1,440.00		General	
Insurance	£ 505.00		£ 505.00		£ 3,953.00	£ 40,392.07
Accountancy & Bookkeeping	£ 1,848.00		£ 1,848.00			
Software	£ 600.00		£ 600.00			
Cleaning	£ 600.00		£ 600.00			
Repairs & maintenance	£ 1,000.00		£ 1,000.00			
General expenses	£ 1,000.00		£ 1,000.00			
		£ 19,518.60		£ 19,518.60		
		£ 44,854.68 £ 3,737.89		£ 40,392.07	£ 3,366.01	

Some further information was requested and is detailed below:

“The bulk of the remaining reserve was earmarked for statutory obligations on staff redundancy. However, since we submitted the application, we have secured a further £8k in funding from the National Lottery, which should arrive in our account on Wednesday, and which should be taken into account. This will sustain us for a couple of months, whilst we pursue other avenues of funding.

At present, the shop aspect is owner operated and, whilst it runs within the charity premises by virtue of a licence to do so, it is financially independent. The charity does not present benefit from the profits. There is a plan in place to change that, in which case the profit would become part of the charity’s income. However, it will always be modest (£200 - £400 a month) and has to be due to the strict rules on the level of business activity which a charity is permitted to undertake and remain a charity. We are therefore looking to secure funding which will cover 100% of our overhead, if we can. We could then go back to the plan to acquire the retail side, which we could then put towards building a reserve.

As a small local charity, unless a large donor were to come forward and gift us a significant sum to invest to generate in ongoing income, we are, and will always be, entirely dependent on charitable donations from whatever source we are able to secure it. The retail arm aside, we do not expect ever have any regular income beyond donations, with their inevitable uncertainty.

I therefore urge councillors to consider what we do for the community, especially our young people, and especially those with complex social needs, and decide based on a desire not to see those vital services cease, as there is nothing in Blandford with which to replace them.”

To agree recommendations from the Market Enhancement working group regarding a plan for the proposed Pedestrianised area

The working group met on Monday 20th April 2026 to discuss the draft brief of the Market Place area provided by Dorset Council.

The following points were agreed:

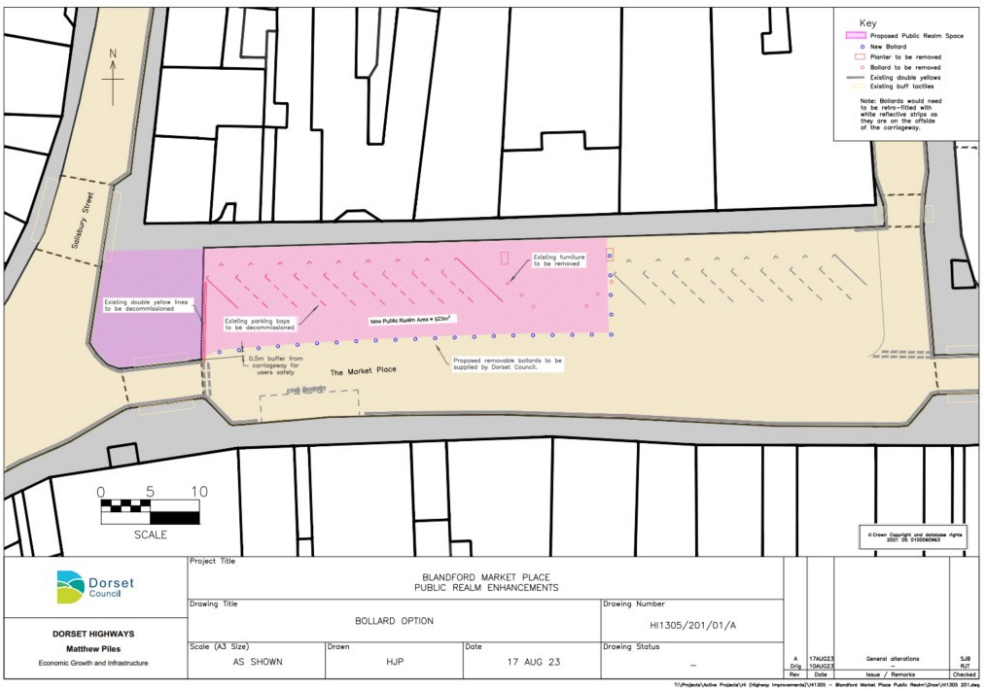
- The positioning of the benches and planters (the camber would need to be considered)
- To keep the potential areas for outside café seating to be managed privately.
- The positioning of the temporary bollards provided by Dorset Council.
- To have a chess board to the right-hand side of the area, to the left of the Corn Exchange (old HSBC bank).
- The issue with market trader's vehicles was discussed as the plan would not allow for vans to be parked on market days. It was suggested that a question would be put to DC to ask for parking concessions for the market traders.
- It was decided that the outside furniture should be owned by the council as opposed to being privately owned.
- In terms of managing the area, this will be the responsibility of the Town Council, the logistics of this will need to be discussed with the incoming Town Clerk.

Draft brief for next stage of Market Place Public Realm Scheme

Budget
How much is available from the Town Council budget allocated to the scheme?

Scope of works
The Town Council are requesting a trial of a multi-functional public realm area in the space currently used for 9 echelon parking spaces and the semi-circular area outside the entrance to the Corn Exchange.

An early proposal for the space available was drafted in 2023 - see HI 1305 - Bollard Option below:



The aim of the scheme is to improve the quality of the public realm in the town centre and provide a space for a range of uses - the market, outdoor events and informal use of space. Currently the space is used for the market with the car parking available at all other times. The trial is intended to run initially for 6 months with the option to maintain it for a further 6 months if it proves beneficial.

Day to day maintenance (i.e., of street furniture, planters or any other permanent equipment) within the enclosed area will be the responsibility of the town council.

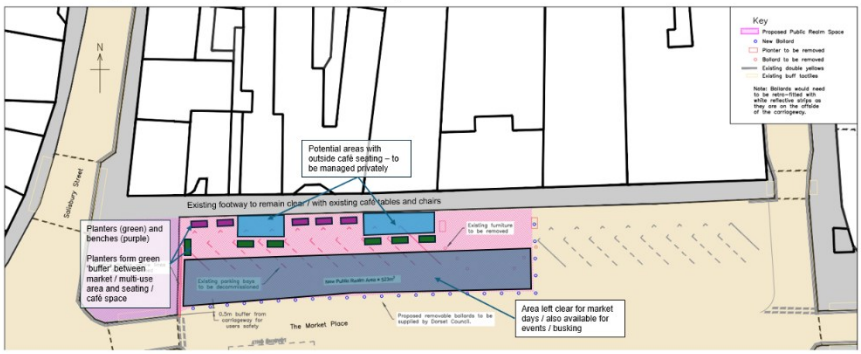
Consideration within the design must be made to enable cleansing operations to continue and any waste bins located to enable ongoing waste collection by Dorset Council.
The initial proposal is to install a series of demountable bollards around the perimeter of the site, to allow vehicles admittance for market operations.

Dorset Council has been asked to provide further design assistance with the layout of the public realm space to include:

- A multi-functional area within the bollard-enclosed area that will be left clear and used for market traders on market days and available to charity stalls / busking on other days
- A zone to the north of the space where semi-permanent benches / planters can be installed to enhance the area as a place to sit and dwell. It is envisaged that these will not be moved during the trial.
- Areas allocated (subject to further discussions) for cafes to extend sitting out areas beyond the existing footway, with chairs / tables managed by the proprietors.

A draft layout is set out below using semi-permanent street furniture and two possible sitting out areas. This is purely indicative to give an indication of what could be under consideration.

Potential draft generalised layout of the Market Place public realm



The design team are expected to work closely with a joint working group of a Dorset Councillor, Town Councillors and the Town Council staff to identify options for arranging suitable street furniture in order to reach a layout satisfactory for Dorset Council Highways, Conservation Team and any other relevant stakeholders.
CP Version 0.1 – April 2026

Recommendation

It is recommended that Councillors to discuss the working group's points and come to an agreement which can be reported back to Dorset Council to enable the next stage of work.

Becci Brady
Committee Clerk
20th April 2026