BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
Held on Monday 30th March 2026 at 7:00pm in the Corn Exchange

DRAFT Subject to confirmation

PRESENT

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

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk
Operations Manager

IN ATTENDANCE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Claire Commons
Nicci Brown

162. PUBLIC SESSION

The Chairman held a moment's silence for Lucy Martin, (sister of Cllr. Morgan and partner of Cllr.Y. Mieville's son) and her 'unborn daughter Elodie, who tragically passed away last week.

The Chairman added recognition of Cllr Malcolm Albery, Chairman of Blandford St Mary Parish Council who sadly passed away last week and Cllr Cross spoke about his contribution to the Neighbourhood Plan.

163. REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCIL COUNCILLORS

Cllr Lacey-Clarke reported that there have been issues with the Whitecliff Mill Street road closure and people accessing the surgery. He and Cllr Quayle are working with the road closure team and SGN to improve access there.

Cllr Lacey-Clarke reported that Dorset Council is reducing their glysophate usage to one spray a year on their areas.

Cllr Lacey-Clarke referred to waste and missed waste collections, which they are also working on.

164. APOLOGIES

Cllr S Morgan

165. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None

166. MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON:

166.1 Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 23rd February 2026

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Clarkson, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED (12 in favour, 3 abstentions/non-votes) that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

166.2 Minutes of the Corn Exchange Meeting held on 20th October 2025

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr Holmes and AGREED that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

167. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

Festival of Remembrance – The BSVB has advised that they would expect the concert to still form part of their 10 engagements for the Town Council should this Festival of Remembrance be cancelled by the RBL at short notice.

Mr & Mrs Dymond – A thank you letter has been received from Mr & Mrs Dymond who received a Diamond wedding anniversary bouquet from the Mayor!

Asset of Community Value Nomination – Dorset Council has decided to list the Blandford Methodist Church Hall and Car Park adjacent to the Blandford Methodist Church as an asset of community value.

Update on Events

- We had a very good turnout for Commonwealth Day this year, with the majority of Councillors in attendance. Thank you for supporting this event.
- The evening talk with Simon Hoare MP in the Town Hall went smoothly and was very well received.
- There was a great atmosphere at the Community Expo on 14th March 2026 and we received very positive feedback. It was good to see some new groups in attendance.
- The Blues Brothers tribute was a successful, enjoyable event with ticket sales over 100 and the bar takings were £588.50.
- The Barn Dance has sold out for this Friday's event.
- Forthcoming events are listed here: www.ticketsource.co.uk/blandford-forum-town-council

Tile Sponsorship Book – The book is now on display in the Corn Exchange. Cllr Lacey-Clarke asked if it would be possible to purchase a copy for the sponsors to have and the Town Clerk confirmed this would be possible.

168. CIVIC REPORT

The paper was sent to Councillors via email (see Appendix B).

169. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES

169.1 Town & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Monday 9th March 2026

169.1.1 Recommendations

There were no recommendations.

169.1.2 The minutes were RECEIVED.

169.2 Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting held on Monday 23rd March 2026

169.2.1 Recommendations

Minute No. 72.2 – To confirm the Internal Auditor appointment for 2026/2027

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED unanimously that

The Committee reaffirms its appointment of Company A as the Internal Auditor for the financial years 2025/26 – 2029/30, based on 4 x 7 hour days, and with the long-term five year contract (giving a 2.5% saving on the hourly scale rate, which they anticipate rising by £1.50 per scale hour from 2025/26 to 2026/27), the cost to the council would be £1,425.82 plus VAT for 2025/26, £1,472.31 for 2026/27, £1,518.80 for 2027/28, £1,580.80 for 2028/29 and £1,642.78 for 2029/30 giving a five year total of £7,640.51 plus VAT. The long-term contract could be terminated at any time by either party giving three months' notice and would give an approximate saving of

169. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES (cont.)

£172.55 over the five years. The number of days required is based on historical performance and generally proves fairly accurate. In the event that additional work arises, this will be invoiced at the quoted rates. If less work is needed the Town Council will be charged proportionately less. The Committee recommends to full council that the Internal Auditor appointment is approved for the 2026/2027 financial year and they are totally independent of the Town Council.

Minute No.73 – Insurance risk assessment relating to the town council's insurance cover and approval of insurance premiums for 2026/2027

The Town Clerk advised that one of the quotes has not yet been fully received. It was therefore PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr Y Miéville and AGREED unanimously that

The Town Council:

- **Confirms there are no other aspects of insurance that they wish to amend.**
- **Gives delegated authority to the Chairman of Council, the Chairman of the Finance & Staffing Committee and relevant staff to select the preferred insurer for 2026/27 (Expenditure Authority: Localism Act 2011 s1-8).**

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Minute No. 74 – Review of the risk assessment management policy (including financial) arrangements for 2026/2027

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

The Town Council approves the Risk Management Policy (including Financial) arrangements for 2026/27 and has no amendments.

Minute No. 75 – Review of Asset Register

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

The asset register is approved.

Minute No. 78 – To review the Finance & Staffing Committee remit and the financial regulations

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

The Finance & Staffing Committee Remit and Financial Regulations are approved.

Minute No. 79 – To receive a report on the free venue hire requests received for 2025/2026

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

The free venue hire process is amended by adding a 25% / 50% / 75% discount to hire as an option instead of a blanket free hire award.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Minute No. 80 – To approve amendments to the investment policy

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

The Investment Policy is approved but with the retention of the Hampshire Trust Bank.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

169. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES (cont.)

Minute No. 81 – To consider the virement of underspent reserves and the current status of the general reserves

Prior to this meeting the Barnes for a Recreation Trust resolved to ask the Town Council to transfer £5,000 to meet rising costs from the sports clubs.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED (14 in favour, 1 abstention) that

Councillors approve the following transfers:

- **Tree maintenance to be vired to Tree Surveys**
- **Corn Exchange lanterns and curtains to be vired to Corn Exchange 1105**
- **Barnes for a Recreation Trust - £5,000 from interest earnt on capital or earmarked interest to the Barnes for a Recreation Trust charity account**

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

169.2.2 The Minutes were RECEIVED.

170. TO CONSIDER QUOTATIONS FOR THE CHARTER 400 MOSAIC AT WOODHOUSE PAVILION

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED unanimously that

The Town Council selects Company A to carry out the work using funds of £8,650 and delegates authority to the RFO and Chairman of the Finance & Staffing Committee to select an appropriate budget (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

171. TO CONSIDER SUPPORT FOR THE "STATEMENT OF REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS" DOCUMENT WITH DORSET COUNCIL

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

Cllr Lacey-Clarke requested a recorded vote and withdrew it prior to the vote taking place.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr Robinson and AGREED (12 in favour, 2 against and 1 abstention) that

The Town Council does not support the document and asks the council's representative to vote against it at the upcoming AGM and speak against it if appropriate.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

172. TO APPROVE AN AMENDMENT TO THE R&A HIRE CHARGES

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr H Miéville, SECONDED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke and AGREED unanimously that

The Town Council notes the corrected prices.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

173. TO RETROSPECTIVELY APPROVE EXPENDITURE FOR REPAIRS TO THE CCTV SYSTEM

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

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

The Town Council retrospectively approves expenditure for this essential work using funds of 3,190.97 from budget line 1340, CCTV Equipment, which has a balance of £46,930.41. (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

174. TO CONSIDER EXPENDITURE FOR THE TOILET CLEANING CONTRACT

The paper was noted (see Appendix G).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke and AGREED unanimously that

The Town Council renews the cleaning contract with the existing contractor for a period of one year only, using a maximum of £9,288 from budget line 6650 (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

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

175.1 Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Group

Nothing to report, although a meeting will be held in due course.

175.2 BFTC Commemoration Group

Nothing to report.

175.3 Climate Change & Biodiversity

The group continues to meet and the Chairman, Cllr Y Miéville reported that the first Clean Up Blandford litter pick of the year was very successful.

175.4 Dorset Council Grant to support the Market Area Enhancement Project

The working group Chairman, Cllr Stevens updated Councillors on the meeting held in the Council Chamber on 19th March 2026 and the updated plan was shared with Councillors prior to the council meeting. A discussion was held over the detail required in the plan, the impact on local cafés should there be pop-up cafés, and a meeting is scheduled with an officer from Dorset Council on 7th April 2026.

176. TO CONSIDER A GREEN GRANT APPLICATION

The paper was noted (see Appendix H).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Chapman and AGREED (14 in favour, 1 abstention) that

The Town Council approves expenditure of £1,005 from the Allotments Ring-Fenced earmarked reserves line 1050 (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

177. REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Cllr Cross provided an update on the twinning with Mortain and there is now a new Mayor. At this point, there are seven people from Mortain visiting Blandford Forum over the weekend of Mayor Making.

178. PLANNING MATTERS

178.1 Appendix A – New Planning Applications

The paper was noted (see Appendix I).

178.1.1 P/FUL/2025/07628 – 13-15 West Street Blandford Forum DT11 7AW

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Spruce, SECONDED by Cllr Putt and AGREED (14 in favour, 1 abstention) that

The Town Council objects to the application on the grounds of concerns over access with regards to fire safety / fire escapes.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

178.1.2 P/LBC/2026/01240 – 2 West Street Blandford Forum DT11 7AJ

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr Holmes and AGREED unanimously that

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

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

178.1.3 P/LBC/20267/01240 – 32 Langton Crescent Blandford Forum DT11 7EP

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lacey-Clarke, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED unanimously that

The Town Council has no objections to the application (Blandford + NP Policy: B10, Design Code: CA2, and Built Form Codes: 11, 15, 16 & 17 apply).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

179. CONFIDENTIAL

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

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

179.1 To receive an update report on legal matters currently being dealt with by the Town Council's solicitor (paper distributed to Councillors separately)

The paper was noted (see Appendix J).

The meeting closed at 9:12pm.

SIGNED ……. DATED ……..…….