



# BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

To All Councillors; C Stevens (Chairman), Y Mièville (Vice Chairman), S Hitchings, H Mièville, L Hitchings, B Quale, A Cross, R Holmes, S Chapman, T Clarkson, M Putt, G Del-Pinto, S Morgan, J Robinson, M Spruce:

All other recipients for information only.

Tuesday, 16 June 2026

Dear Member

## Summons

You are summoned to a meeting of the **Town Council** for the transaction of the business shown on the agenda below. To be held at 7 pm on **Monday, 22 June 2026** in the Corn Exchange. The quorum for Full Council is 9.

## Public Participation and Democratic Quarter Hour

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 Committee, during which time members of the public may speak. During 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 Committee may invite members of the public to comment on specific issues where their particular knowledge on a subject might prove of benefit to the Committee.

**Join:** <https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/338548595037?p=WiglJ231IPpnFynaSk>

Meeting ID: 338 548 595 037. Passcode: bV2uv75r

## General Duties of the Council

Members are reminded that, in exercising its functions, the Council must consider the following: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, belief or disability), Crime & Disorder, Health and Safety, and Human Rights. Disabled access is available. Councillors are reminded of The Seven Principles of Public Life:

**Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership.**

## Recording of Meetings

All attendees should be aware that filming, recording, photography or similar activity may take place during the meeting.

**Date of Next Town Council Meeting:** Monday, 27 July 2026

Yours sincerely

Claire Commons BA (Hons), Town Clerk

Twinned with Preetz, Germany



Town Clerk's Office

Church Lane, Blandford Forum

Dorset DT11 7AD



Twinned with Mortain, France



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## Agenda

TC2.1	<b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</b> .....	3
(7:00 pm)	To allow the public to make representations to the Council. ....(up to 15 mins) <i>Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12, S.10</i>	
TC2.2	<b>APOLOGIES</b> .....	4
(7:15 pm)	To receive and consider for acceptance, apologies for absence from Councillors summoned to attend ..... (2 min) <i>(Local Government Act, 1972 s.85)</i>	
TC2.3	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> .....	5
(7:17 pm)	To declare interests relating to the business of the meeting.....(1 min) <i>Blandford Forum Town Council Code of Conduct, 2021</i>	
TC2.4	<b>MINUTES</b> .....	7
(7:18 pm)	To receive the minutes of the previous meeting of the Town Council. ....(2 min) <i>(Local Government Act 1972 Sch 12)</i>	
TC2.5	<b>REPORT FOR INFORMATION TO FULL COUNCIL</b> .....	8
(7:20 pm)	To receive minutes and reports and consider recommendations from the Committees of the Council.....(10 min) <i>(Local Government Act 1972 Sch 12)</i>	
TC2.6	<b>ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) 2025/26</b> .....	11
(7:35 pm)	Recommendation from the F&S Committee. To approve the AGAR 2025/26. .... (15 mins) <i>Local Government Act 1092 s.151 and Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015</i>	
TC2.7	<b>STREET NAME PROPOSAL</b> .....	16
(7:50 pm)	To agree proposed street name for the new road serving the Recycling Centre ..... (10 mins) <i>Localism Act 2011 – General Power of Competence</i>	
TC2.8	<b>IT POLICY</b> .....	17
(8:05 pm)	To consider adoption of a revised IT policy and whether council-owned devices should be made available to councillors. .... (20 mins) <i>Localism Act 2011 – General Power of Competence</i>	
TC2.9	<b>ALLOTMENTS REQUEST</b> .....	21
(8:25 pm)	To consider request for support from the Allotment Society ..... (15 mins) <i>General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011</i>	
TC2.10	<b>TOURISM DATA</b> .....	23
(8:40 pm)	To consider commissioning tourism data for Blandford Forum. .... (15 mins) <i>General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011</i>	

Anticipated meeting end time 8:55pm

**TC2.1 Public Participation**

(7:00 pm) To allow the public to make representations to the Council.

(up to 15 mins)

*Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12, S.10*

**Report Author:**

**TC2.1.1 Background**

- a The Standing Orders of the Council (specifically Standing Order 3) provide for a designated Public Participation session at each meeting of the Council and its Committees.
- b During Public Participation, members of the public are invited to address the meeting regarding matters on the published agenda or within the Council's powers.
- c Public Participation is distinct from the formal business of the meeting. Once the session concludes, the public are observers only and must not participate further unless invited by a resolution of the Council.
- d The Council's commitment to openness, transparency, and community engagement supports the inclusion of Public Participation within the formal structure of the meeting.
- e At the Annual Meeting of the Council, Public Participation shall only commence after the election of the Chair, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972 and Standing Orders.

**TC2.1.2 Members of the public registered to speak**

- a None registered to speak.

**TC2.1.3 Conduct of Public Participation**

- a Public Participation will occur at the start of the meeting.
- b Each speaker may address the meeting for a maximum of three minutes, subject to the Chair's discretion to extend or reduce this time if necessary.
- c The maximum total duration for Public Participation shall normally be 20 minutes unless the Council resolves otherwise.
- d Speakers are asked to address the meeting courteously, and must not make offensive, defamatory, or irrelevant comments. Speakers do not have a right to expect debate or immediate responses.

**TC2.1.4 Recording of Public Participation**

- a The minutes of the meeting shall record that Public Participation took place and will summarise the general topics raised, but shall not record the names of individual speakers.

**TC2.1.5 Recommendation**

- a That the public comments are received, and any points of note are identified for consideration at future meetings of the Council or its committees or for action by officers of the Council

**TC2.1.6 Reason for Recommendation**

- a To acknowledge public engagement in accordance with Standing Orders and ensure that matters raised are appropriately considered without committing the Council to immediate decisions.

**TC2.2 Apologies**

(7:15 pm) To receive and consider for acceptance, apologies for absence from Councillors summoned to attend (2 min)

*(Local Government Act, 1972 s.85)*

**Report Author:**

**TC2.2.1 Background**

- a Councillors are holders of public office and are summoned to attend meetings of the Council and its committees.
- b In accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council must consider and decide whether to accept the reason for absence provided by any Councillor who is unable to attend a meeting.
- c If a councillor fails to attend any meeting of the Council (or its committees) for a period of six consecutive months, without having obtained formal acceptance of their apologies by the Council (or the relevant committee), they are automatically disqualified from office.

**TC2.2.2 Apologies received and reason**

- a Cllrs S Chapman and J Robinson, each due to a conflicting personal engagement,

**TC2.2.3 Recommendation**

- a That the Council considers and either accepts or rejects each apology for absence received.

**TC2.2.4 Reason for Recommendation**

- a Accepting apologies resets the six-month period for continuous attendance, ensuring compliance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

(End)

**TC2.3** **Declarations of Interest**

(7:17 pm) To declare interests relating to the business of the meeting.

(1 min)

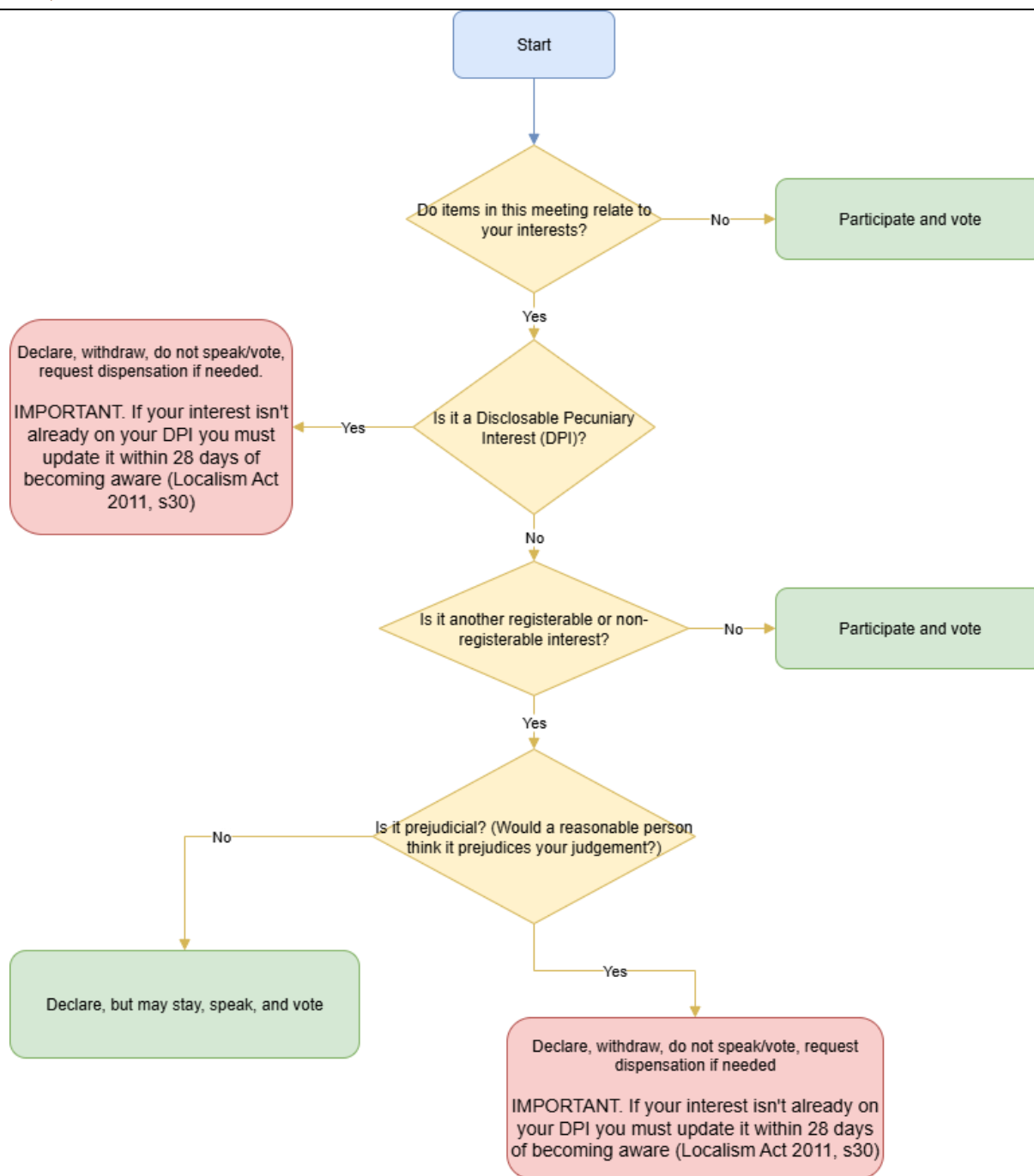
*Blandford Forum Town Council Code of Conduct, 2021*

**Report Author:** Town Clerk

**TC2.3.1** **Background**

- a All Councillors and Officers are reminded of their obligations under the Blandford Forum Town Council Code of Conduct to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Registerable Interests, or Non-Registerable Interests relating to matters on the agenda.
- b Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest, it is the individual Councillor's responsibility to declare that interest at the earliest opportunity in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
- c The Clerk will report any dispensations granted prior to the meeting.
- d Refer to Tables 1 and 2 in the [Code of Conduct](#) for further details about the types of interests which may apply.
- e If you think you need to request a dispensation, the process is included within the Dispensation Request Form.docx.
- f The table below provides a summary of what your responsibilities are depending on the type of interest declared.

Type of Interest	Declare at Meeting?	Stay for Debate?	Vote?	Withdraw?	Notes
DPI (registered or not)	Yes	No	No	Yes	Must declare and withdraw, unless dispensation granted
Other/Non-Registerable (not prejudicial)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Declare, but may participate fully
Other/Non-Registerable (prejudicial)	Yes	No (except to speak if public can)	No	Yes	Declare, may speak if public can, then withdraw
With Dispensation	Yes	As specified	As specified	As specified	Dispensation may allow limited participation



TC2.3.2 Recommendation

a That the Council notes the declarations made in relation to the business of the meeting.

TC2.3.3 Reason for Recommendation

Recording declarations at the meeting ensures transparency, compliance with the Council's adopted Code of Conduct, and adherence to statutory obligations.

(End)

**TC2.4** Minutes

(7:18 pm) To receive the minutes of the previous meeting of the Town Council. (2 min)

*(Local Government Act 1972 Sch 12)*

Report Author:

**TC2.4.1** Background

- a In approving draft minutes, the Council is concerned solely with whether the minutes accurately record the proceedings and resolutions of the relevant meeting.
- b It is immaterial whether individual Councillors were present at the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- c If any corrections are necessary due to inaccuracies, amendments must be approved by formal resolution before the minutes are signed.

**TC2.4.2** Recommendation

- a That the minutes of [5<sup>th</sup> May 2026](#), (Annual Meeting of the Council) be approved for signing as a true record of the decisions taken.

(End)

**TC2.5 Report for Information to Full Council**

(7:20 pm) To receive minutes and reports and consider recommendations from the Committees of the Council. (10 min)

(Local Government Act 1972 Sch 12)

Report Author: Town Clerk

**TC2.5.1 Summary**

a Reports provided within this item are to be received, they provide updates on decisions already taken by the Council or its Committee and actions taken under the Scheme of Delegation (where not previously reported). Any actions marked as complete at the last point of reporting will be removed from the list for conciseness.

**TC2.5.2 Updates and Actions from previous Council meetings**

DATE	MINUTE REF	DECISION	STATUS	UPDATE
5/5/26	TC1.7	Remove reference to Corn Exchange Committee and upload revised scheme of delegation to the website	● In Progress	Website waiting to be updated
5/5/26	TC1.8	Amend terms of reference re Barnes and upload to website	● In Progress	Website waiting to be updated
5/5/26	TC1.9	Committee membership – update website	✓ Complete	
5/5/26	TC1.10	Working Groups – update website	✓ Complete	
5/5/26	TC1.11	Standing Orders & Financial Regulations – update website	● In Progress	Website waiting to be updated
5/5/26	TC1.14	Representation on external bodies	● In Progress	
5/5/26	TC1.16	Town Clerk to check the scrolls	✓ Complete	
5/5/26	TC1.19	Complaints procedure – update website	● In Progress	Website waiting to be updated
5/5/26	TC1.21	Press & Media Communication policy – update website	● In Progress	Website waiting to be updated
5/5/26	TC1.22	Employment policies and procedures	● In Progress	Website waiting to be updated
5/5/26	TC1.23	Calendar of Meetings	✓ Complete	
5/5/26	TC1.24	Risk Assessment	✓ Complete	
5/5/26	TC1.25	Business Continuity Plan	✓ Complete	
5/5/26	TC1.27	IT Policy – review and bring back with coats for council provided devices	● In Progress	Agenda item for this meeting.

Cont...

**TC2.5.3 Planning Committee 18/05/2026 and 01/06/26**

a Click the dates to view the respective minutes. The Chair may provide a further update at this point.

DATE	MINUTE REF	DECISION	STATUS	UPDATE
18/5/26	P1.5	Submit comments on 3 planning applications	✓ Complete	
18/5/26	P1.8	Ward Boundaries considered adequate but reconsider at future meeting	✓ Complete	A note has been made in the office to bring this back if required.
1/6/26	P2.6	Submit comments on 4 planning applications	✓ Complete	
1/6/26	P2.7	Submit ACV for Bere's Yard	● In Progress	Submitted, marked as 'in progress' until decision has been made

**TC2.5.4 Finance & Staffing Committee 08/06/2026**

a Click to view minutes. The Chair may provide a further update at this point.

DATE	MINUTE REF	DECISION	STATUS	UPDATE
8/6/26	FS1.8	Recommend to Full Council all AGAR documents and send Assertion 10 information in advance	✓ Complete	Included on this agenda

**TC2.5.5 Recreation & Amenities Committee 15/06/2026**

a Minutes will be circulated as soon as they are available. The Chair may provide a further update at this point.

**TC2.5.6 Working Group and Representative Reports**

a TREADS – Accommodation and SLA Reporting Update. Cllr G Del Pinto

*Members are advised that quarterly monitoring reports required under the Service Level Agreement with TREADS have now been received and will be reviewed and shared as appropriate.*

*Separately, it has been highlighted through recent community discussion that TREADS continues to experience challenges in securing suitable accommodation from which to deliver its services.*

*An informal option has been identified for consideration at a centrally located community venue within Blandford Forum. The facility offers flexible access to a main hall and ancillary spaces at a sessional hire rate, with additional smaller rooms potentially available for more discreet or one-to-one work. Availability varies across the week, and any arrangement would be subject to standard booking requirements, including appropriate insurance and safeguarding provisions.*

*No formal commitment has been made at this stage. Should the organisation wish to pursue this opportunity, further discussions with the venue provider would be required to confirm suitability, availability, and terms.*

**TC2.5.7 Mayor's Report**

a Councillor Hugo Miéville 12<sup>th</sup> May – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2026

DATE	FUNCTION	COMMENTS
Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2026	Dorset Premier League trophy	I was honoured to be invited to participate in the official photograph for Blandford United to show off the Dorset Premier League trophy on Tuesday evening. What a great achievement for the Royals! Next season will see them move up into Step 6 of the football pyramid. I've enjoyed watching several games this season, and plan to be a regular supporter next season. Come on you Royals!
Sunday 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2026	Annual Camera Club exhibition	The Deputy Mayor and her consort, Cllr Hugo Mieville, were delighted to be invited to attend the annual Camera Club exhibition in the Corn Exchange last Sunday. They were very impressed with the standard of exhibits, coming from some very talented photographers. The Deputy Mayor was pleased to award the Esme Butler Prize, in honour of the former Mayor and enthusiastic photographer, and to give a short speech praising all the contributors to the exhibition.

b Councillor Colin Stevens

DATE	FUNCTION	COMMENTS
Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> June 2026	Collingwood Memorial	Chris and I attended the Collingwood Battalion Royal Naval Division Memorial event held at the memorial at Collingwood Corner. It was a short but meaningful occasion. I had the privilege of laying a wreath on behalf of the town council and residents of Blandford.
Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2026	Shaftesbury Mayor Making	Chris and I had the pleasure of attending the Shaftesbury Mayor making ceremony at which Cllr Andy Hollingshead was sworn in as mayor. A short but very interesting ceremony.
Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> June	Ferndown Mayor Making	Chris and I attended the Ferndown Mayor making ceremony at the Barrington Arts and Community Centre at which Cllr Lawrence Wilson was sworn in as mayor. This was the first Mayor making ceremony that Ferndown has held. The whole event was led by their town crier. For a first event, it was a good turnout with Mayors representing 9 towns from across Dorset.
Saturday 13 <sup>th</sup> June 2026	Opening of Dolce Amore	Chris and I had the pleasure of opening Dolce Amore, a new gelateria and cafe in the town. A real Italia ice cream and pizza cafe. It was very well supported with lots of people, and 24 different flavoured ice creams on display. Hopefully the start of another successful business in the town.

**TC2.5.8 Dorset Council Reports**

a Dorset Councillors are invited to provide a report at this point. Any written reports will be circulated before the meeting and an opportunity to provide a verbal report will be provided at this point.

**TC2.5.9 Recommendation**

a That the reports are received and any points of note are identified for future meetings of the Council or its committees or for action by officers of the Council.

**TC2.5.10 Reason for Recommendation**

a To provide a minute record of information provided to members of the Council and to determine matters which fall within the committee scheme of delegation for debate but exceed the delegation for determination.

(End)

**TC2.6 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26**

(7:35 pm) Recommendation from the F&S Committee. To approve the AGAR 2025/26.

(15 mins)

*Local Government Act 1092 s.151 and Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015*

Report Author: Town Clerk

**TC2.6.1 Summary and Background information**

a The council is required to complete and approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. The AGAR forms part of the statutory external audit process for local councils.

b The following documents are presented for consideration and approval:

c Internal Auditor's Report

d [Internal Auditor page of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return](#)

e [Section 1 Annual Governance Statement](#)

f [Section 2 Statement of Accounts](#)

g [Annual Accounts document](#)

h [Confirming the dates of the Exercise of Public Rights](#)

i [Confirm any conflicts of interest with the External Auditor BDO LLP](#)

j [Change of contact details](#)

k The Finance and Staffing Committee considered the AGAR documentation at its meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2026 and reviewed each assertion within section 1 – Annual Governance Statement individually..

l The Committee considered the Internal Auditor's view that the Council had not fully met Assertion 10 in 2025/26. It therefore recommended a 'NO' response to Assertion 10 and asked for further detail to be circulated before Full Council to inform members' decision.

**TC2.6.2 Further Information Sources**

a Assertion 10 detail

**TC2.6.3 Recommendation**

a Confirms that the accounting statements (AGAR section 2) have been prepared and signed by the RFO (by general agreement unless a vote is called for).

b Adopts the Annual Internal Audit Report 2025-26 (formal vote)

c Completes each question and approves the Annual Governance Statement (AGAR Section 1) (Formal Vote)

d Approve the Accounting Statements (Agar Section 2) and Annual Accounts (formal vote)

e Confirm that the Clerk and the Chair of the meeting have signed the Annual Governance Statement (general agreement unless a vote is called for)

f Confirm that the Chair has signed the Accounting Statements (Agar Sections 1 and 2) (general agreement unless a vote is called for)

g Confirm the period for the exercise of public rights as 26<sup>th</sup> June 2026 to 6<sup>th</sup> August (general agreement unless a vote is called for)

h Confirm Change of details to new Clerk

**TC2.6.4 Reason for Recommendation**

a To ensure the Council complies with statutory and financial reporting, governance and accountability requirements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and to enable submission of the AGAR and supporting documentation to the External Auditor within the required timescales.

(End)

[Internal Auditor page of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return](#)

Pages 1, 2 and 6 of the AGAR have not been included as they contain general guidance, administrative checklist information and the External Auditor's completion page, which is completed following conclusion of the external audit process. Please ask the office if you wish to see these.

## Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26

Blandford Forum Town Council
blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

During the financial year ended 31 March 2026, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2025/26 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
<b>A.</b> Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
<b>B.</b> This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
<b>C.</b> This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
<b>D.</b> The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
<b>E.</b> Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
<b>F.</b> Cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
<b>G.</b> Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
<b>H.</b> Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
<b>I.</b> Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
<b>J.</b> Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
<b>K.</b> If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2024/25, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2024/25 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
<b>L.</b> The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
<b>M.</b> In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2025/26 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2024-25 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
<b>N.</b> The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024/25 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
<b>O.</b> The authority has complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance. <b>PLS SEE ATTACHED NOTE</b>		✓	
<b>P. (For local councils only)</b> Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	✓		

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

24/10/2025

18/02/2026

22/05/2026

Mrs R Darkin-Miller LLB(Hons) BFP FCA

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

 SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

02/06/2026

\*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

\*\*Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL AGAR 2025/26

Test O: Assertion 10 – Digital and Data Compliance

During the year the requirements of the Council's Annual Governance Statement Assertions and of the Annual Internal Audit Report were expanded to include assurances and testing around Digital and Data. As a result, I have carried out new testing in this area. I found that whilst the Council is compliant in relation to almost all requirements, it had not carried out the following actions:

- Whilst an IT policy has now been adopted by the Council, this was only done part-way through the 26/27 financial year.

As a result, I have responded 'no' for this test.



R Darkin-Miller LLB (Hons) BFP FCA 02/06/2026

Section 1 Annual Governance Statement

## Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

We acknowledge as the members of:

Blandford Forum Town Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2026, that:

	Agreed		'Yes' means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.			<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.			<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We have assured ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.			<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.			<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.			<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.			<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.			<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.			<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A <i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>
10. We have put in place arrangements for the effective IT and data management in accordance with proper practices during the year under review.			<i>has made suitable arrangements for its IT and data management and has complied with proper practices in doing so.</i>

**\*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

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## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

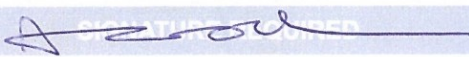
### Blandford Forum Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2025 £	31 March 2026 £	
1. Balances brought forward	1,314,475	3,214,508	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value <b>must</b> agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	880,115	921,873	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	3,012,704	1,060,426	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	533,862	577,099	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	126,388	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	1,458,925	2,928,914	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	3,214,508	1,564,405	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. <b>must</b> equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	3,310,509	1,540,081	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – <b>To agree with bank reconciliation.</b>
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	5,349,978	8,571,583	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	1,300,000	1,248,000	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	
11 Do the figures in the accounting statements above exclude any trust transactions?	✓		For guidance refer to the Practitioners' Guide sections 2.31 to 2.33.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2026 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

**Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval.**

  
Date 02/06/2026

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

**TC2.7 Street Name Proposal**

(7:50 pm) To agree proposed street name for the new road serving the Recycling Centre (10 mins)

*Localism Act 2011 – General Power of Competence*

Report Author: Town Clerk

**TC2.7.1 Background and Summary Information**

- a Dorset Council is constructing a Waste Management and Household Recycling Centre on the Blandford Forum Bypass. As part of this development, a new street name is required for addressing and registration purposes.
- b As Dorset Council is the applicant, Blandford Forum Town Council has been invited to propose suitable street names for consideration. These names will subsequently be registered with Royal Mail.
- c The associated planning application can be viewed at [Planning application: P/DCC/2021/01597 - dorsetforyou.com](https://www.dorsetforyou.com/Planning-application-P/DCC/2021/01597)
- d When proposing street names, the following should be taken into account:
- Relevance to the site, its function, or local heritage
  - Ease of spelling and pronunciation
  - Avoidance of duplication with existing names in the area
  - Suitability for emergency services and postal use

**TC2.7.2 Financial Implications**

- a None relating to this report.

**TC2.7.3 Recommendation**

- a That the Council proposes 1 preferred name and 2 reserve names for submission to Dorset Council

(End)

**TC2.8 IT Policy**

(8:05 pm) To consider adoption of a revised IT policy and whether council-owned devices should be made available to councillors. (20 mins)

*Localism Act 2011 – General Power of Competence*

Report Author: Town Clerk

**TC2.8.1 Summary and Background information**

- a At the Annual Meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2026, Council considered a DAPTC IT policy template intended to support compliance with AGAR Assertion 10, but did not adopt it because of concerns about the bring your own device (BYOD) provisions.
- b Two policy approaches are now available for consideration: the original DAPTC version, which is more detailed and technical, and a shorter Dorchester Town Council version based on key principles such as confidentiality, password security, authorised use and GDPR compliance.
- c It is understood that either approach may support compliance with Assertion 10, and officers are not recommending one option over the other. The key requirement is that Council adopts an appropriate IT policy for the forthcoming audit year.
- d Members also asked officers to explore the option of council-owned devices for councillors who do not wish to use personal devices for council business. Indicative device and equipment costs are set out below; if devices were issued, a user agreement would also be required.

**TC2.8.2 Further Information Sources**

- a [Annual Meeting of the Town Council agenda including IT policy](#)
- b [Dorchester Town Council policy](#)
- c [Assertion 10 guidance](#)
- d [Draft Councillor Device User Agreement](#)

**TC2.8.3 Legal Authority and Implication**

- a The Council has a duty to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for information governance, cyber security awareness and protection of council data held electronically.
- b Compliance with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 requires the Council to take proportionate organisational and technical measures to protect personal data.
- c Information held on personal devices and used for council business may remain subject to Freedom of Information and Subject Access Request legislation

**TC2.8.4 Financial Implication**

- a No expenditure is required solely to adopt either IT Policy option.
- b Should the Council wish to provide council-owned devices for councillors, indicative costs are estimated as follows:

Item	Estimated Cost
Basic tablet device	£140 – £250 each
Protective/drop-proof case	£20 – £50 each
Initial setup/configuration	£25 – £50 each
Optional device management/security software	£3 – £8 per device/month

- c Should all 16 councillors request a device, indicative initial costs are estimated between approximately £2,240 and £4,800 excluding ongoing software or setup/support costs.
- d Actual expenditure would likely be lower if devices were made available only upon request.
- e No specific budget provision currently exists for councillor devices. Any future purchase would require use of reserves, virement from existing budgets, or future budget provision. Note, the

Council's level of General Reserves is very low and highlighted as an area of risk in the audit report.

#### TC2.8.5 Impact Assessment

Category	Impact	Level	Explanation
Equalities	● Positive	Medium	Accessibility features on devices may support some councillors and improve digital access.
Environmental	● Positive	Medium	Digital papers may reduce printing, though this should be balanced against device manufacture/disposal.
Crime and Disorder	● Positive	Medium	An IT policy supports cyber security and secure handling of information
Resources	● Negative	Medium	Council-owned devices would create procurement, setup and replacement costs
Economic	○ Neutral	Low	Minimal wider economic impact.
Risk Management	● Positive	High	Adoption of an IT Policy supports AGAR compliance, information governance and cyber security arrangements.

#### TC2.8.6 Marketing and Communications

- a The following marketing and communications are proposed to accompany this resolution. The resolution must specify if any alteration is required to this proposal.
- Social Media: None  
Website: The adopted IT Policy to be uploaded to the Council website within the Policies section  
Press Release: None  
Community Engagement: Not required

#### TC2.8.7 Recommendation

- a Adopt an IT Policy and if minded to provide council owned devices, authorise an overspend of £5,000 from the IT budget to be met by General Reserves and delegate to the Town Clerk to source devices for councillors requesting them, in line with financial regulations and issue with the user agreement.

#### TC2.8.8 Reason for Recommendation

- a Adoption of an IT Policy is required to support compliance with AGAR Assertion 10 and appropriate information governance arrangements. The report also enables Council to consider whether optional council-provided devices may assist councillors who do not wish to use personal equipment for council business.

(End)

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## Draft Councillor Device User Agreement

This agreement sets out the responsibilities of Councillors issued with a council-owned electronic device for council business.

### 1. Purpose

The device is provided to support Councillors in carrying out their official duties, including:

- accessing agenda papers and council documents;
- email communication;
- participation in remote meetings or training;
- and other approved council business.

The device remains the property of Blandford Forum Town Council at all times.

### 2. Acceptable Use

Councillors agree to:

- use the device responsibly and lawfully;
- take reasonable care of the device and accessories;
- use strong passwords or PIN protection;
- keep the device secure when not in use;
- promptly install council-approved updates where required;
- and report any security concerns immediately to the Town Clerk.

Councillors must not:

- allow unauthorised persons to use the device for council business;
- install software believed to be unsafe or inappropriate;
- access illegal, offensive or inappropriate material using the device;
- deliberately bypass security settings;
- or use the device in a manner likely to bring the Council into disrepute.

Limited reasonable personal use is permitted provided this does not interfere with council business or compromise security.

### 3. Security and Data Protection

Councillors acknowledge that:

- council information may contain confidential or personal data;
- council business conducted on the device may be subject to Freedom of Information or data protection legislation;
- passwords and login details must not be shared;
- and suspected phishing emails, scams or malware must be reported promptly.

If enabled by the Council, security features such as remote wipe, password enforcement or device tracking must not be disabled.

#### 4. Loss, Theft or Damage

Councillors must:

- report loss or theft of the device to the Town Clerk as soon as reasonably possible;
- report accidental damage promptly;
- and cooperate with any steps necessary to protect council data.

The Council understands that reasonable wear and accidental damage may occur through normal use.

However, the Council reserves the right to seek reimbursement where loss or damage results from:

- deliberate misuse;
- negligence;
- unauthorised modification;
- or repeated failure to take reasonable care of the device.

#### 5. Return of Equipment

The device, charger and any accessories must be returned:

- upon ceasing to be a Councillor;
- at the end of the council term if requested;
- or whenever requested by the Council.

All council information must be removed or securely transferred before disposal or reassignment of the device.

#### 6. Technical Support

Basic setup and support will be arranged through the Town Clerk and/or the Council's IT support provider.

The Council cannot guarantee immediate repair or replacement of faulty devices.

#### 7. Agreement

I confirm that I have read and understood this agreement and agree to comply with its terms.

<b>Councillor Name</b>	
Signature	
Date	
Device Issued	
Serial Number	

**TC2.9 Allotments request**

(8:25 pm) To consider request for support from the Allotment Society

(15 mins)

*General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011*

Report Author: Town Clerk

**TC2.9.1 Summary and Background information**

- a Blandford Allotment Society has submitted a written request asking the Council to consider financial support in the form of full or partial remission of its ground rent for 2026/27 and 2027/28, stated to be approximately £600 per annum, or alternatively permission to pay any reduced rent by monthly instalments in arrears over 12 months.
- b The Society advises that it has experienced a significant reduction in income alongside a substantial rise in essential costs including rent, electricity, insurance, website and water, with total expenditure on these items in 2025/26 reported at almost £5,530, an increase of over £1,904 compared with the previous year. Water charges are reported to have doubled in comparison with 2024/25.
- c The request explains that reserves which supported the Society in earlier years are now exhausted and that cash flow is tight. The Society states that it is reliant on current-year plot renewal income to meet the next water bill due in November.
- d The Society also states that it has a longer-term recovery plan based on seeking grant funding, crowd funding, increasing ancillary income from events and promotions, and recalculating 2027 plot rents in order to restore a modest surplus. It anticipates returning to a more stable financial position between late 2027 and mid-2028.

**TC2.9.2 Further Information Sources**

- a [Full written request from Blandford Allotment Society, dated 8 June 2026.](#)

**TC2.9.3 Legal Authority and Implication**

- a The Council may consider this request in its capacity as landowner and in accordance with the terms governing occupation of the allotment land.
- b Before agreeing any remission, deferral or instalment arrangement, members should be satisfied that the decision is lawful, properly documented and consistent with the Council's general fiduciary duty to local taxpayers.
- c If members are minded to grant any concession, the decision should clearly specify the amount, period, payment basis and any review arrangements.

**TC2.9.4 Financial Implication**

- a The annual rent referred to in the Society's request is approximately £600 per annum. A full remission for both 2026/27 and 2027/28 would therefore reduce Council income by approximately £1,200 in total. A partial remission or instalment arrangement would reduce or delay income to a lesser extent.
- b Members may wish to consider whether a concession should be limited in duration and whether any review point should be built in, given the Society's stated expectation that its position may improve by late 2027 to mid-2028.
- c If no concession is granted, the Society has asked that it be permitted to pay any reduced rent monthly in arrears over 12 months.
- d Before making a decision, members should be aware of increasing costs to the Council over the last three years:

Income (£)	Costs (£)	Year
554.99	£1,619.69	23/24
771.33	2,986.07	24/25

1,224.74	3,977.45	25/26
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#### TC2.9.5 Impact Assessment

Category	Impact	Level	Explanation
Equalities	○ Neutral	Low	No specific equalities impact has been identified from the cover report itself, although continued support for allotment activity may have wider community wellbeing benefits.
Environmental	● Positive	Medium	Supporting the continued operation of allotments may assist with local food growing, biodiversity and community use of green space.
Crime and Disorder	○ Neutral	Low	No direct crime and disorder implications have been identified.
Resources	● Negative	Low to Medium	Any remission, reduction or deferred payment arrangement would reduce or delay income to the Council.
Economic	○ Neutral	Low	The proposal has limited wider economic impact, but may help the Society maintain operations while it implements recovery measures.
Risk Management	● Mixed	Medium	Granting a concession may support continuity of the allotment society, but it may also create precedent and should therefore be clearly reasoned and documented.

#### TC2.9.6 Marketing and Communications

- a No Marketing or Communications are proposed other than for the Society to be informed in writing of the Council's decision and any conditions attached.

#### TC2.9.7 Recommendation

- a That Blandford Allotment Society be permitted to pay the rent by monthly instalments in arrears over 12 months.

#### TC2.9.8 Reason for Recommendation

- a The allotments are already operating at a loss and are therefore being subsidised by the taxpayer. Permitting payment by instalments in arrears over 12 months provides a proportionate response to the Society's request without increasing that subsidy further.

(End)

**TC2.10 Tourism data**

(8:40 pm) To consider commissioning tourism data for Blandford Forum.

(15 mins)

*General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011*

Report Author: Town Clerk

**TC2.10.1 Summary and Background information**

- a Visit Dorset has asked whether Blandford Forum Town Council wishes to receive town tourism data for 2025, to be produced by The South West Research Company on its behalf. The cost would be £230 plus VAT, invoiced via Visit Dorset.
- b The last Blandford-specific tourism data identified by officers is for 2017. That summary recorded approximately 28,000 staying visitor trips, 499,000 day visits, £22.2 million direct visitor spend and 450 jobs supported by visitor-related spend.
- c Visit Dorset's business support material confirms that Dorset tourism research is commissioned annually and that town-level data is available in some cases. The reports are prepared by The South West Research Company and are used to provide insights on the value of tourism and visitor activity.
- d If commissioned, the research would be carried out in late summer 2025 and the resulting data would be provided in late autumn or early winter. Members are asked to consider whether the cost is justified by the potential value of updated evidence to support tourism, economic development, grant applications, partnership working and future policy decisions.

**TC2.10.2 Further Information Sources**

- a [2017 Blandford tourism summary](#)

**TC2.10.3 Legal Authority and Implication**

- a The Council may incur this expenditure under the General Power of Competence where members consider that obtaining tourism data would support the Council's functions, strategic planning or community leadership role.
- b There are no direct legal implications arising from the purchase itself beyond ensuring that expenditure is properly authorised and recorded in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.

**TC2.10.4 Financial Implication**

- a The cost of the 2025 tourism data would be £230 plus VAT.
- b This is a relatively modest one-off cost, but members may wish to consider whether updated tourism evidence is currently needed and whether there is a suitable budget from which the expenditure can be met.

**1. Impact Assessment**

Category	Impact	Level	Explanation
Equalities	○ Neutral	Low	No specific equalities impact has been identified.
Environmental	○ Neutral	Low	The report itself has no direct environmental impact, although the data may inform future tourism planning.
Crime and Disorder	○ Neutral	Low	No direct crime and disorder implications have been identified.
Resources	● Negative	Low	The proposal would create a small one-off cost to the Council.
Economic	● Positive	Medium	Updated visitor data may help inform decisions that support the local visitor economy.

Risk Management	● Mixed	Low	There is a small financial risk if the data is not subsequently used, balanced against the value of having current evidence.
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1. **Marketing and Communications**

- a. No specific marketing or communications are proposed other than, if commissioned, the data being used to inform future reports, projects or external funding applications as appropriate.

2. **Recommendation**

- a. That the Council considers whether to commission Blandford Forum tourism data for 2025 from Visit Dorset at a cost of £230 plus VAT.

3. **Reason for Recommendation**

- a. To enable the Council to decide whether updated tourism evidence would provide sufficient value to justify the cost and support future decision-making.

(End)