



BLANDFORD FORUM

TOWN COUNCIL

To Town & General Purposes Cllrs; Cllr T Clarkson, Cllr R Homes, Cllr C Stevens, Cllr Y Miéville, Cllr H Miéville, Cllr B Quayle, Cllr S Morgan, Cllr G Del-Pinto, Cllr M Putt:
All other recipients for information only.

Tuesday, 29 September 2026

Dear Member

Summons

You are summoned to a meeting of the **Town & General Purposes Committee** of Blandford Forum Town Council for the transaction of the business shown on the agenda below. To be held at 7 pm on **Monday, 05 October 2026** in the Corn Exchange. The quorum for the Town & General Purposes Committee is 5.

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. This meeting will also be available to view online using Microsoft Teams [using this link](#).

General Duties of 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.

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 & General Purposes Committee Meeting: Monday, 23 November 2026

Yours sincerely

Claire Commons BA (Hons), Town Clerk

Twinned with Preetz, Germany



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



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Agenda

TGP2.1	PUBLIC SESSION.....	3
(7:00 pm)	To allow the public to make representations to the Council.	(up to 15 mins)
	<i>Receive and note</i>	
TGP2.2	APOLOGIES.....	4
(7:15 pm)	To receive and consider for acceptance, apologies for absence from Councillors summoned to attend (2 min)	
	<i>Decision Item</i>	
TGP2.3	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.....	5
(7:17 pm)	To declare interests relating to the business of the meeting.	(1 min)
	<i>Receive and note</i>	
TGP2.4	MINUTES.....	7
(7:18 pm)	To receive the minutes of the Town & General Purposes Committee.	(2 min)
	<i>Decision Item</i>	
TGP2.5	COMMITTEE CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE.....	8
(7:20 pm)	To receive updates and correspondence relating to the committee's remit.	(10 min)
	<i>Receive and Note</i>	
TGP2.7	BLANDFORD FORUM MARKET UPDATE- OCTOBER 2026.....	10
(7:30 pm)	To receive update and consider options for market improvements.	(10 min)
	<i>Decision Item</i>	
TGP2.11	COMMITTEE BUDGET REVIEW.....	13
(7:40pm)	To review the Town & General Purposes budgets to 30 th September 2026 and consider amendments, additions or savings for the draft 2027/285 budget	(15 min)
	<i>Decision Item</i>	
TGP2.9	CHRISTMAS DECORATION SPONSORSHIP LETTER.....	16
(7:55 pm)	To approve the letter to send out to businesses asking for sponsorship.....	(10 min)
	<i>Decision Item</i>	
TGP2.10	CHRISTMAS WINDOW COMPETITION.....	17
(8:05 pm)	To approve this year's Christmas Window competition for business in the town	(10 min)
	<i>Decision Items</i>	
TGP1.7	MARKET PLACE ENHANCEMENT.....	19
(8:15pm)	To consider Dorset Council's final design for the Market Place enhancement and agree the Town Council's preferred next step. (15 mins)	
	<i>Decision Item</i>	
TGP1.7	WINDOW WANDERLAND PILOT.....	22
(8:30pm)	To consider introducing a pilot Blandford Winter Window Wanderland as an inclusive, community led cultural initiative during the winter period..	(20 mins)
	<i>Decision Item</i>	

Anticipated meeting end time 8:50pm

TGP2.1 Public Session

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

(up to 15 mins)

Receive and note

Report Author: Town Clerk

Background and conduct of Public Participation

Standing Order 3 provides for a Public Participation session at Council and Committee meetings, usually at the start of the meeting and before formal business begins.

Members of the public may address the meeting on matters on the published agenda or within the Council's powers, normally for up to three minutes each and within the time allowed for the session, at the Chair's discretion.

Public Participation is not part of the formal decision-making business of the meeting. Once the session has closed, members of the public may only contribute further if invited by the Chair and permitted by the meeting.

Members of the public registered to speak

None at the time of issuing the papers.

Recommendation

That the Committee receives and notes the Public Participation session, including that no members of the public had registered to speak at the time of issuing the papers.

Reason for Recommendation

To acknowledge public engagement in accordance with Standing Orders. This is a receive and note item and does not require a decision by the Committee.

TGP2.2 Apologies

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

Decision Item

Report Author: Town Clerk

Background

Councillors are holders of public office and are summoned to attend meetings of the Council and its committees.

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.

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.

Apologies received and reason

None received at the time of issuing papers

Recommendation

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

Reason for Recommendation

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

(End)

TGP2.3 Declarations of Interest

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

(1 min)

Receive and note

Report Author: Town Clerk

Background

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.

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.

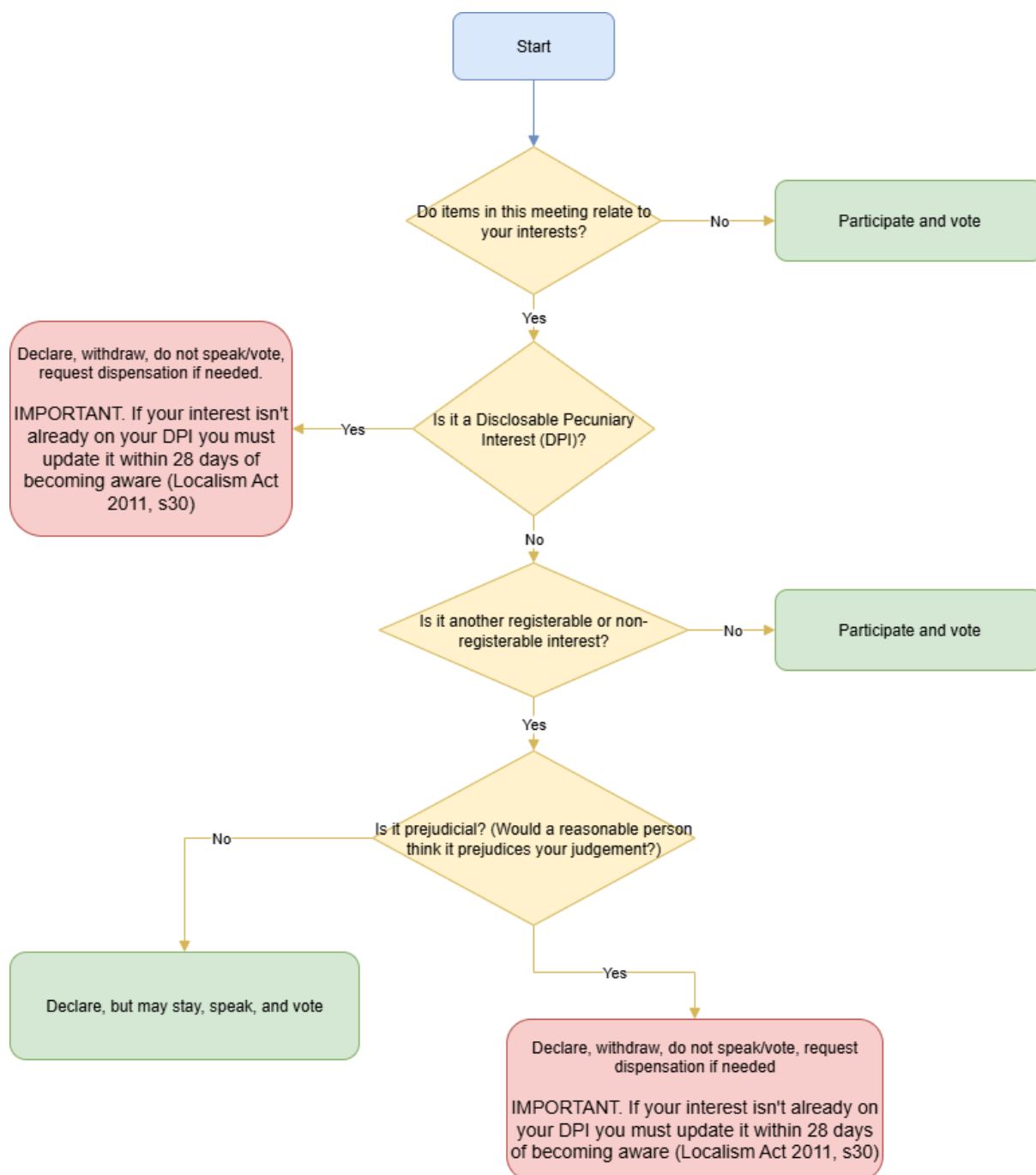
The Clerk will report any dispensations granted prior to the meeting.

Refer to Tables 1 and 2 in the [Code of Conduct](#) for further details about the types of interests which may apply.

If you think you need to request a dispensation, the process is included within the [Dispensation Request Form.docx](#).

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



Recommendation

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

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)

TGP2.4 Minutes

(7:18 pm) To receive the minutes of the Town & General Purposes Committee. (2 min)

Decision Item

Report Author:

Background

In approving draft minutes, the Council is concerned solely with whether the minutes accurately record the proceedings and resolutions of the relevant meeting.

It is immaterial whether individual Councillors were present at the meeting to which the minutes relate.

If any corrections are necessary due to inaccuracies, amendments must be approved by formal resolution before the minutes are signed.

Recommendation

That the minutes of [13th July 2026](#) be approved for signing as a true record of the decisions taken.

(End)

TGP2.5 Committee Clerk's Report and Correspondence

(7:20 pm) To receive updates and correspondence relating to the committee's remit. (10 min)

Receive and Note

Report Author: Committee Clerk

Update on the Red Bench Campaign

Organisers have asked for the councils help to push this project along as progress seems to have stalled in recent weeks. I emailed the Rangers to ask for an update on 14th September and am yet to hear back.

Civil Ceremonies

We are now entering what is known as the quiet time for civil ceremonies, however the work continues behind the scenes in order to secure future bookings. I will be attending the Wedding Fair at the Corn Exchange on Sunday 4th October along with the Dorset Registrar service to meet with potential hirers. We also placed an advert in the Blackmore Vale Magazine's special Wedding Feature which was published on 25th September.

Speed concern on Black Lane

A resident emailed the council with concerns regarding the speed of vehicles on Black Lane. I spoke with Emma Selway from the Road Safety Team at Dorset Council who very promptly got in touch with the resident and explained the following:

I wanted to provide an update following a conversation I have had with [resident] regarding concerns about the speed of traffic approaching the school from the Blandford Camp direction on Black Lane.

I explained that a 20-mph speed limit and flashing warning signs are already in place to encourage lower vehicle speeds.

However, in response to the concerns raised, I will contact Dorset Police to request consideration of a police presence during school drop-off and pick-up times to help reinforce compliance with the speed limit.

During our discussion, I also spoke with [resident] about safe drop-off practices. I advised against stopping on the roadside and allowing children to exit directly into the carriageway, as this presents a significant safety risk. Instead, I recommended parking in a safe location away from the immediate school area, where children can leave the vehicle onto a footway or other protected area before walking to the school entrance. While this may require a slightly longer walk, it provides a much safer environment for children and helps reduce congestion around the school gate. [Resident] indicated that she could do this and was aware of a safe location.

SkateFest 2026 washup meeting

Officers held a washup meeting on 10th September to discuss the event that was held in August. A big thank you to all those Councillors that volunteered, this event cannot happen without your help and it really did make a big difference having so many of you there. Plans are already under way already for next year's event.

Tin Pot Lane Signage

A site visit was arranged on 23rd September with Dan Cammell from Dorset Council Highways, Cllr Lacey-Clarke and Jon Goodenough, unfortunately Dorset Council postponed at the last minute and we will need to revisit this item.

Heddington Drive Bus Stop

Dorset Council's Transport Officer has confirmed that the bus stop improvements on Heddington Drive have now been completed.

Pro Barber Sign Update

To update you on the enforcement process please see reply from Neil Le'Maire, Enforcement Officer at Dorset Council received on 22nd September:

I have had nothing back from the tenant or their agent and have therefore contacted the owner of the building (who was also given assurances by the tenant). The owner has been advised that if any enforcement were to take place, then a notice would also have to be served on them as the owner. They are therefore keen to get this resolved and I will be meeting with them within the next few weeks.

Free Parking Day

A free parking day on Thursday 17th December has been approved by Dorset Council.

Blandford Police

A report has been requested from Blandford Police and will be circulated if received in time for the meeting .

(End)

TGP2.7 Blandford Forum Market Update- October 2026

(7:30 pm) To receive update and consider options for market improvements.

(10 min)

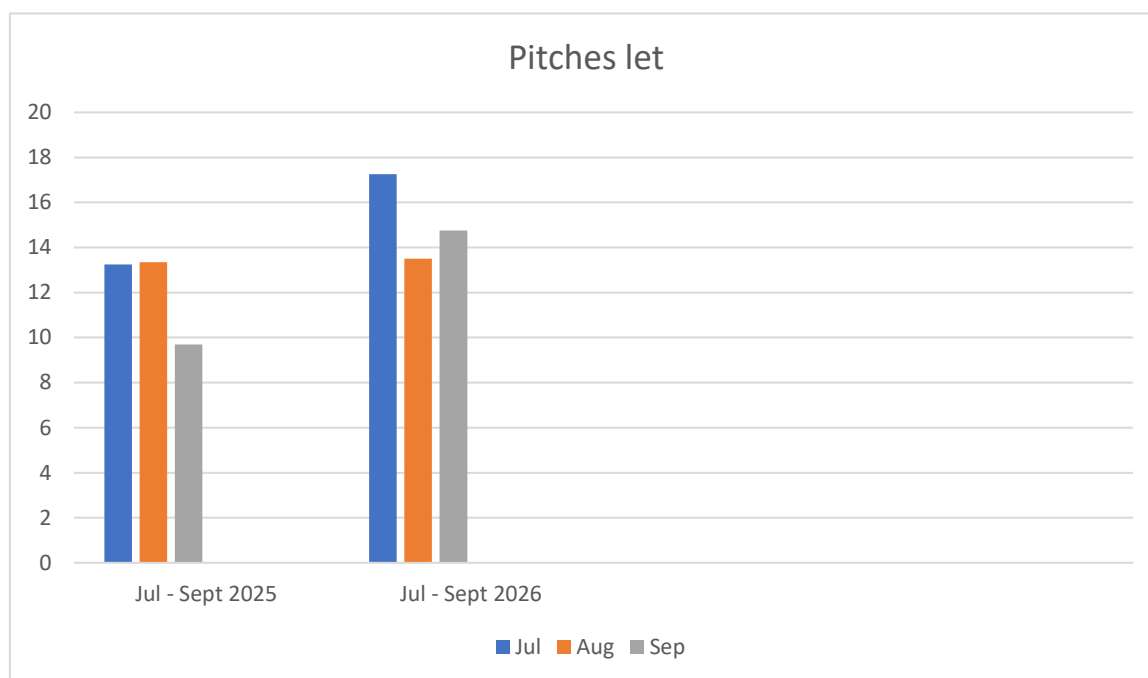
Decision Item

Report Author: Market Manager

Parking Compensation Update

Parking compensation is now paid only for the spaces occupied by the market. This change has reduced costs substantially.

Average Weekly Pitches Let



July: **13.25** average pitches in 2025; **17.25** in 2026.

Aug: **13.35** average pitches in 2025, **13.5** in 2026.

Sep **9.7** average pitches let in 2025, **14.75** in 2026.

Average weekly pitches let increased from 12.1 in July-September 2025 to 15.16 in July-September 2026, demonstrating continued growth in trader occupancy.

These figures have been affected by the increase in Indoor traders

Markets Update (July-September)

Market	Events Held	Cancelled	Avg Pitches Let	Highest	Lowest
Saturday Market	0	N/A	0	0	0
Thursday Indoor Market	11	2	8.0	10	5
Thursday Street Market	12	1	7.0	9	4

The Saturday Market remained inactive during the period with no pitches let.

The Thursday Indoor Market operated on 11 occasions, with two cancellations due to the Royal

Visit and an art exhibition. Occupancy remained strong, averaging eight pitches per market and regularly achieving 9-10 pitches.

The Thursday Street Market operated on 12 occasions, with one cancellation due to the Royal Visit. Occupancy averaged seven pitches per market, with a notable reduction during August before recovering in September.

Overall, Thursday markets continue to demonstrate the strongest trader demand and occupancy levels.

Market Pitch Enquiries

Enquiries for market pitches are followed up promptly.

Helping New Traders Get Started

- Public Liability Insurance requirements may deter some prospective traders.
- To make the process easier, I now share links to insurers offering affordable cover.
- I follow up every enquiry promptly to encourage growth and maintain trader interest.

Corn Exchange and Indoor Market Performance

The Corn Exchange continues to achieve good occupancy for the indoor market.

Café Update

The café remains popular and continues to support footfall. Temporary cover arrangements have been put in place to ensure the café remains open.

Community and Trading Impact

The café provides an important meeting place for the local community.
Traders continue to report good trading conditions.
Overall performance remains positive.

Indoor Market

The Café remains a vital community hub, providing a welcoming space where people can meet and purchase quality homemade products at affordable prices.

I continue to proactively follow up on all enquiries for new stalls across all markets, supporting ongoing growth and diversity of traders.

NMTF Young Traders

I am looking into the possibility of holding an event showcasing young traders from the South West region.

NABMA (National Association of British Market Authorities)

NABMA continues to provide strong, reliable support. The team demonstrates high expertise, is accessible for advice, and responds promptly to enquiries. The Basecamp platform remains a

valuable resource, enabling connections with market teams and managers nationwide to share best practice and learn from sector-wide experience.

Chip & Pin Payment Access

Chip & Pin payment options continue to be expanded across the market, improving convenience for customers and supporting a better shopping experience.

Saturday Market Improvement

I have been in touch with two private operators re two monthly Saturday markets Mother Hubbard's Events and Dorset Food & Drink. These would be a combination of producers and makers as well as farmers markets. My main stumbling block is that the operators have both asked for a reduction in rates/rents and the Town Clerk and I are unable to make any decisions around rates.

We need to kick start the Saturday markets and we also need to make our offer attractive to stallholders and operators alike. I therefore ask for delegated responsibility to be granted to The Town Clerk or myself or both around the Saturday market regarding Rents. I would like to offer an introductory rate to get these markets up and running and we need to be able to negotiate with Traders/Operators.

Recommendation

Delegates authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Town & General Purposes Committee, to negotiate temporary market rents and pitch fees for new traders, market operators and market development initiatives for a period not exceeding 12 months, with details of all agreements reported to the Committee quarterly.

TGP2.11 Committee Budget Review

(7:40pm) To review the Town & General Purposes budgets to 30th September 2026 and consider amendments, additions or savings for the draft 2027/285 budget (15 min)

Decision Item

Report Author: Responsible Financial Officer

Analytical Review of Revenue Budget

Members are invited to consider whether any services, projects or activities falling within the remit of the Town & General Purposes Committee require additional budget provision, budget reductions or the creation of earmarked reserves for the 2027/28 financial year.

TOWN & GENERAL PURPOSES as at 30.09.26

N/L code		2026/27					Budget Variance
		Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual to Date	Covered by reserves	Revised actual	
COSTS							
4711	Vandalism	0	0	0		0	0
5600	Markets - Advertising	200	100	0		0	(100)
5601	Markets - Equip Purchase	50	25	0		0	(25)
5602	Markets - Equip Maint	0	0	0		0	0
5603	Markets - Health & Safety	0	0	0		0	0
5604	Markets - Telephone	120	60	30		30	(30)
5605	Markets - DCC Parking Charges	12,875	6,438	990		990	(5,448)
5606	Markets - Rates	1,500	750	547		547	(203)
5607	Markets - Printing & Stationery	0	0	0		0	0
5020	CCTV/ANPR Maintenance	3,500	1,750	4,303		4,303	2,553
5050	CCTV Electric Supply	750	375	231		231	(144)
5060	Grit Bin Re-fill (1.)	100	50	0		0	(50)
6200	Containers Planting & Signs	5,300	2,650	1,487		1,487	(1,163)
6201	Town Maps			206	206	0	0
6210	Xmas Lights	17,500	8,750	10,358		10,358	1,608
6211	Tourism		0	0		0	0
6214	Town Improvements		0	0		0	0
6217	Contingency		0	0		0	0
	Total Costs	41,895	20,948	18,152	206	17,946	(3,002)
INCOME							
2900	Markets - Street Rent	10,000	5,000	3,192		3,192	(1,809)
2810	Shambles Rent / Craft Market	1,000	500	80		80	(420)
2820	Indoor Market	1,000	500	2,931		2,931	2,431
3754	T & G Income	0	0	0		0	0
3850	T & G Income	0	0	0		0	0
3900	Planter Sponsorship	700	350	542		542	192
	Total Income	12,700	6,350	6,744	0	6,744	394
	NET COST / (INCOME)	29,195	14,598	11,407	206	11,201	(3,396)

Nominal Code	Budget	Balance b/f	Transfer To/From General Reserves	Budget Approved 2026/27	Total Reserves	Spend YTD	Committed YTD	Current Balance	Proposed budget 2027/28
1020	Town Maps, Boards & Fingerposts	3,283		0	3,283	206	2	3,077	
1030	Tourism	2,201		0	2,201	0		2,201	
1035	Twinning	1,303		0	1,303	577	1	726	
1040	Town Improvements	2,089	1,000	1,000	3,089	0	0	3,089	
1135	Railway Arches	2,657	2,000	2,000	4,657	0	0	4,657	
		11,533	3,000	3,000	14,533	783	0	13,750	

Breakdown of Committed funds

Income/Transfers From Reserves

1	Twinning Assoc buffet 16.05.26	241.50	576.50
	Framed tile gift	118.00	
	Cream teas	92.00	
	Luncheon on Mayor Making - Blandford Museum	50.00	
	Town Crest gift	75.00	
2	Lock and keys for A-Max	206.12	206.12
			782.62
			0.00

Recommendation

That the committee receives and notes the current year performance against budget and considers adjustments, additions or savings for the 2027/28 financial year

Reserves

Reserve Accounts as at 30th September 2026

Nominal Code(s)	Standard Asset Replacement Accruals	Responsible Committee	Opening Balances	In year movement In	In year movements out	Current Balance as at	Sub Totals
			£				£
1300	IT	F & S	27,633.68			27,633.68	
1305	Skate park	R & A	63,952.91	20,000.00		83,952.91	
1310	General Play Equipment	R & A	69,555.92		21,485.95	48,069.97	
1315	Maintenance Equipment Replacement	R & A	18,122.23			18,122.23	
1320	Vehicle Replacement	R & A	28,754.50	10,000.00		38,754.50	
1325	Tractor Replacement	R & A	21,090.40			21,090.40	
1330	Mower Replacement	R & A	45,572.67		2,398.75	43,173.92	
1340	CCTV / ANPR	T & GP	46,930.41		3,190.97	43,739.44	
1345	Benches	T/C	10,000.00			10,000.00	
1350	Glenmore Depot	R & A	61,138.68			61,138.68	
1351	B/Heights Play Equipment	R & A	14,816.13			14,816.13	
1352	B/Heights Maintenance Equipment Replacement	R & A	19,918.69			19,918.69	
			427,486.22	30,000.00	27,075.67	430,410.55	430,410.55
	Earmarked Accounts		-	-		-	
1020	T & GP Town Maps	T&GP	3,282.77		206.12	3,076.65	
1030	T & GP Tourism	T&GP	2,200.91			2,200.91	
1035	T & GP Twinning	T&GP	1,302.81		576.50	726.31	
1040	T & GP Town Improvements	T&GP	2,089.49	1,000.00		3,089.49	
1135	Railway Arches	T & GP	2,657.06	2,000.00		4,657.06	
			11,533.04	3,000.00	782.62	13,750.42	13,750.42
10510	R & A B/Heights Phase 1 POS	R&A	41,229.15		1,991.05	39,238.10	
10520	R & A B/Heights Phase 2 POS	R&A	16,433.23		1,625.44	14,807.79	
10521	R & A B/Heights Phase 2 - Play area com Sums	R&A	2,257.43			2,257.43	
10530	R & A B/Heights Phase 3	R&A	12,108.55			12,108.55	
10531	R & A B/Heights Phase 3	R&A	50,966.32			50,966.32	
10532	R & A B/Heights Phase 3	R&A	57,442.93			57,442.93	
10533	R & A B/Heights Phase 3	R&A	24,483.78			24,483.78	
10534	R & A B/Heights Phase 3	R&A	34,900.27			34,900.27	
10535	R & A B/Heights Phase 3	R&A	172,440.51			172,440.51	
10536	R & A B/Heights Phase 3	R&A	113,457.57			113,457.57	
10537	R & A B/Heights Phase 3	R&A	9,978.26			9,978.26	
10538	R & A B/Heights Phase 3	R&A	52,801.28			52,801.28	
10539	R & A B/Heights Phase 3	R&A	116,943.53			116,943.53	
10540	R & A B/Heights Phase 3	R&A	13,011.55			13,011.55	
			718,454.36	-	3,616.49	714,837.87	714,837.87
1060	R & A Plan Preventative Maintenance	R & A	3,195.00	20,000.00	9,329.50	13,865.50	
1061	R & A Cemetery Chapel	R & A	11,420.00	1,000.00		12,420.00	
1062	R & A Cemetery Workshop	R & A	13,000.00	1,000.00		14,000.00	
1063	R & A Pumptrack	R & A		50,000.00		50,000.00	
1064	R & A Cemetery Wall	R & A	32,654.49			32,654.49	
1065	R & A DDA	R & A	3,133.81	900.00		4,033.81	
1067	R & A Play area fencing & surfacing	R & A	16,036.66			16,036.66	
1068	R & A Larksmead Outdoor fitness/equipment repairs and maintenance	R & A	2,000.00			2,000.00	
1070	R & A Seat Repairs and maintenance	R & A	1,695.85			1,695.85	
1071	R & A Skate Fest	R & A	356.72			356.72	
1072	R & A Community Fridge	R & A	857.22			857.22	
1075	R & A 5 Year Tree Survey	R & A	21,733.20			21,733.20	
1080	R & A H&S Mem Cemetery	R & A	1,263.00			1,263.00	
1090	R & A Woodhouse Garden Wall Repairs	R & A	22,505.00		8,650.00	13,855.00	
			129,850.95	72,900.00	17,979.50	184,771.45	184,771.45
	Other Earmarked Accounts		-			-	
1001	Earmarked Interest	F & S	4,795.40	6,447.00		11,242.40	
1002	Property Fund Dividend	F & S	58,798.49			58,798.49	
1003	Office relocation		16,538.84			16,538.84	
1005	Election Costs	T/C	8,266.95			8,266.95	
1006	Youth Services	T/C	10,726.03			10,726.03	
1009	BFTC Commemoration Group	T/C	354.63			354.63	
1010	Capital Interest	F & S	119,677.66	31,403.86		151,081.52	
1011	Cricket Club path/Land North of By pass	T/C	3,222.98			3,222.98	
1013	Neighbourhood Plan	T/C	3,760.36	25.72	245.45	3,540.63	
1017	Woodhouse Garden	T/C	19,981.67			19,981.67	
1019	St Peter & St Paul's Churchyard (Listed Wall & Town Pump)	T & GP	43,824.48			43,824.48	
1050	Allotments	R&A	4,317.46		579.95	3,737.51	
1052	Allotments transfer		14,136.00			14,136.00	
1335	Civic Regalia	F & S	11,925.32		2,065.88	9,859.44	
1195	Improvements to Market Area	T/C	69,000.00			69,000.00	
1500	General Reserves	T/C	230,099.16	45,475.50		275,574.66	
			619,425.43	83,352.08	2,891.28	699,886.23	699,886.23
	Capital Projects		-			-	
1105	Corn Exchange	T/C	167,161.28		5,937.68	161,223.60	
1110	Corn Exchange Promotions Group	T/C	3,548.62		3,326.94	221.68	
1115	Corn Exchange Project Development	T/C	177,928.83			177,928.83	
1117	PWLb repayments		153,693.20	100,000.00	62,067.20	191,626.00	
		-	502,331.93	100,000.00	71,331.82	531,000.11	531,000.11
			-			-	2,574,656.63
	Total Reserves		2,409,081.93	289,252.08	123,677.38	2,574,656.63	Total Reserves

TGP2.9 Christmas Decoration Sponsorship Letter

(7:75 pm) To approve the letter to send out to businesses asking for sponsorship

(10 min)

Decision Item

Report Author: Committee Clerk

Background

Each year the Council seeks voluntary sponsorship from local businesses to help offset the costs of providing Christmas trees and lights throughout the town. A sponsorship letter is distributed to businesses in the town centre and to businesses on the surrounding industrial estates that have supported the scheme in previous years.

As this is an established annual process and the letter requires only minor updates each year, it is proposed that the Committee approve the letter and delegate authority to the Town Clerk to make minor administrative amendments and issue it annually. This will enable officers to administer the sponsorship process as part of the Council's routine Christmas decorations programme, with the matter only returning to Committee if substantive changes are proposed.

A draft letter for use in the 2026 sponsorship campaign is attached for approval..



BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Council continues to manage the installation of the small trees in the town centre along with the column lighting, the lighting of the yew trees in the churchyard, and the lights in Woodhouse Gardens. The Town Council therefore covers the cost of replacement trees, brackets, fixtures, fittings and lights, and also pays for a local electrical contractor to carry out the installation using a cherry picker.

This year, the town's Christmas tree will be provided and decorated by a local contractor. As you may be aware, the shops and businesses in the town centre used to pay for the installation of the small Christmas trees and the Town Council would therefore really appreciate your support via a contribution of £18 (£15 + VAT) a year towards the costs. In return, the Town Council will promote your shop/business on its social media channels, with a photo, to acknowledge your support.

The Town Council does not receive business rates and is only funded by the precept (money raised from residents' council tax).

If you would like to contribute, please deliver a cheque/cash to Blandford Forum Town Council at the address below. Alternatively, you can pay via BACS or credit/debit card, in person or over the phone.

Account Name: Blandford Forum Town Council
Sort Code: 30-90-92 / Account Number: 00489333

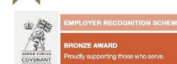
Please include the name of your shop/business as a reference, otherwise we will not be able to identify your business or promote it.

Thank you for your support. We wish you a successful festive season!

Twinned with Preetz, Germany



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



Twinned with Mortain, France



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

Recommendation

Councillors are requested to approve the attached sponsorship letter and to delegate authority to the Town Clerk to make minor administrative updates and circulate the letter annually to businesses in the town centre and to businesses in the surrounding industrial estates that have contributed in previous years. The letter shall be issued each autumn as part of the council's annual Christmas decorations sponsorship process, unless otherwise directed by the Committee.

TGP2.10 Christmas Window Competition

(8:05 pm) To approve this year's Christmas Window competition for business in the town (10 min)

Decision Items

Report Author: Committee Clerk

Background

The Christmas Window Competition is an established annual event that celebrates and promotes festive displays by local businesses. The judging panel has traditionally comprised the Mayor, the Chairman of the Town & General Purposes Committee and a special guest judge.

To streamline administration and avoid the need for annual Committee approval, it is proposed that responsibility for organising and delivering the competition be delegated to the Chairman of the Council, the Chairman of the Town & General Purposes Committee and the Events Officer, who shall jointly appoint an appropriate special guest judge each year. The competition shall form part of the Council's routine annual Christmas programme, with the judging dates, promotional materials and prize arrangements determined by officers in consultation with the judging panel. The matter will only be referred back to Committee where substantive changes to the competition are proposed.

A draft advertisement for the 2026 competition is attached for reference.

Recommendation

To approve the Christmas Window Competition as an annual Council event and to delegate authority to the Chairman of the Council, the Chairman of the Town & General Purposes Committee and the Events Officer to organise the competition, appoint a special guest judge, determine the judging and prize arrangements and award prizes each year. The matter shall only return to Committee if substantive changes to the competition are proposed.

CHRISTMAS WINDOW COMPETITION

The Town Council is continuing to run its Christmas Window Competition this year. It hopes to encourage shops and businesses to enhance the town's image and create a wonderful atmosphere for its residents, and visitors to the town, during the festive period.

The windows will be judged over the weekend of
4th - 6th December 2026.

The judging panel will consist of the Town Mayor, Cllr Colin Stevens, the Chairman of the Town & General Purposes Committee, Cllr Terry Clarkson and special guest.

The Town Mayor will present the prizes to shopkeepers at their premises the following week.

The prizes for the most original and creative displays are:

- 1st Prize - £100 and trophy
- 2nd Prize - Christmas Hamper
- 3rd Prize - Small Christmas Hamper

GOOD LUCK & MERRY CHRISTMAS!



**BLANDFORD FORUM
TOWN COUNCIL**

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

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

TGP1.7 Market Place Enhancement

(8:15pm) To consider Dorset Council's final design for the Market Place enhancement and agree the Town Council's preferred next step. (15 mins)

Decision Item

Report Author: Town Clerk

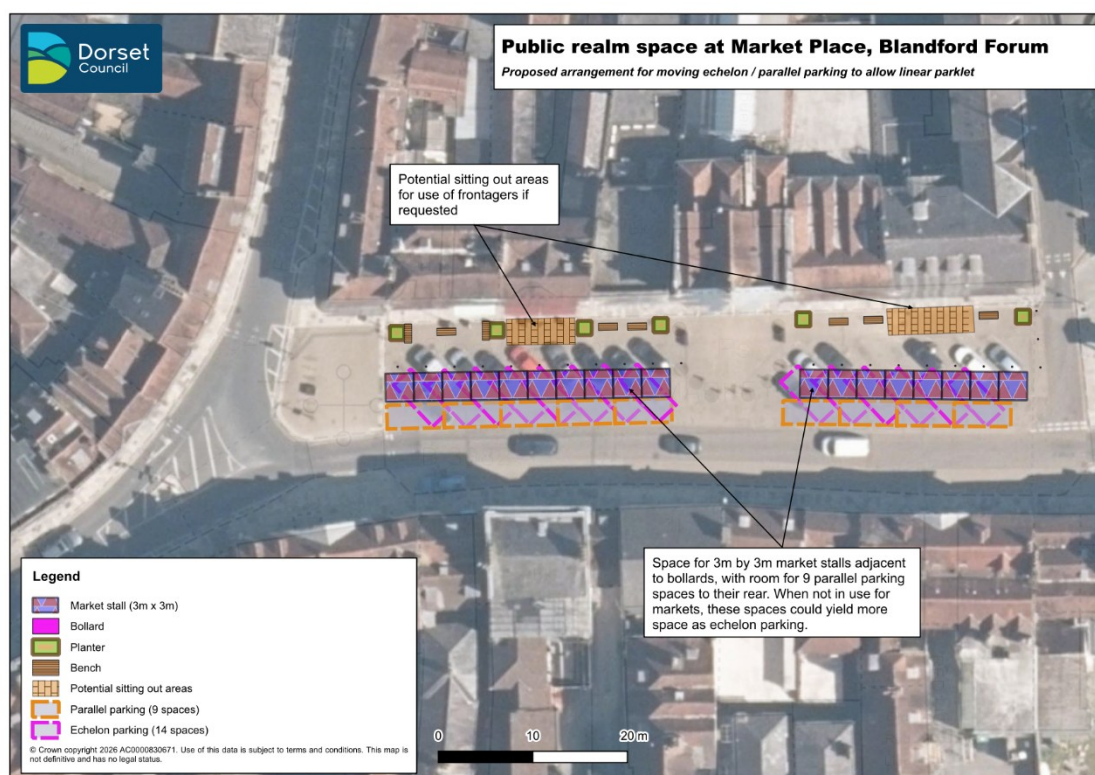
Summary and Background information

Dorset Council has now held a project initiation meeting with its design team and has developed a preferred final option for the Market Place enhancement. The proposal seeks a balance between market operations, retained parking and additional public realm space. It would retain pay-and-display parking along the frontage, provide a separate clear strip for market stalls and operations behind the parking, and create a further strip of public realm space with planters and seating.

The drawing included with the report is Dorset Council's latest design for consideration. It shows how the available space would be used for market operations and identifies the proposed parking arrangement, public realm area and indicative positioning of street furniture.

Officers consider that the proposal provides a workable balance between market operations, parking provision and public realm improvements. Initial review indicates that it should allow the market to function while retaining parking outside businesses and providing an improved public realm.

The first image shows the proposed layout overlaid onto a historic market day, while the second shows the arrangement on non-market days. It is anticipated that the echelon parking would operate on non-market days, with the parallel parking spaces reserved for stallholder vehicles on market days. Allowing public parking behind market stalls is not considered practical due to vehicle manoeuvring requirements and the associated risk of collision with stalls.



Legal Authority and Implication

Dorset Council is the highway and parking authority and would be responsible for the necessary approvals, detailed design and implementation. Transfer of responsibility for non-highway street furniture or maintenance to the Town Council should be clearly agreed before works proceed.

Financial Implication

The Town Council holds £69,000 earmarked reserves for this project. Details of costs to be borne by Dorset Council and the Town Council are not yet known.

Impact Assessment

The assessment below reflects Dorset Council's final design. Detailed delivery arrangements and responsibilities will still need to be confirmed.

Category	Impact	Level	Explanation
Equalities	● Positive	Medium	A wider, clearer public realm could improve accessibility; detailed design must retain safe, unobstructed routes.
Environmental	● Positive	Low	Planters and improved public space may enhance the townscape; planting and maintenance details remain to be agreed.
Crime and Disorder	○ Neutral	Low	No material impact identified; sightlines and street-furniture positioning should be monitored through implementation.
Resources	○ Neutral	Medium	Officer input will be needed on implementation, market arrangements, stakeholder engagement and any future maintenance responsibilities.
Economic	● Positive	Medium	The proposal retains parking, supports market activity and creates additional public space that may encourage longer visits and local spend.
Risk Management	○ Neutral	Medium	Dimensions, loading, stallholder vehicles, parking charges, movable street furniture and asset responsibilities must be resolved before implementation.

Marketing and Communications

A small amount of opposition was raised to earlier designs because they removed parking, with some Market Place premises concerned that this could adversely affect their businesses. The final design retains parallel parking and therefore addresses the principal concern previously raised. It would nevertheless be prudent for the Town Council to make specific face-to-face contact with those who previously objected, and with directly affected Market Place premises, to explain the revised design, demonstrate that their comments have been taken into account and seek to establish whether the proposal now offers a solution capable of broad support.

Social Media: No proactive publicity should be issued until direct engagement has taken place and the Council has agreed its position.

Website: No update before direct engagement. Information may be published once the Council has agreed its position and initial discussions with affected premises have taken place.

Press Release: To be issued following conclusion of works.

Community Engagement: The Town Clerk should arrange face-to-face meetings with those who

objected to earlier proposals and with directly affected Market Place businesses. The discussions should explain how previous concerns have informed the revised design, highlight the retention of parking and invite any final operational observations.

Timescale: Face-to-face contact should take place promptly after the meeting and before wider publicity or implementation discussions are progressed.

Recommendation

That the Committee supports the final design, asks Dorset Council to progress it as a permanent solution, and approves face-to-face engagement with affected Market Place businesses.

Reason for Recommendation

The final design offers a practical balance between market use, retained parking and improved public realm, and directly addresses the main concern raised about earlier designs. Early face-to-face engagement will demonstrate that previous comments have been considered, allow any remaining operational issues to be identified and help build broad support. Seeking clarity on a permanent solution could avoid the cost and disruption of a trial.

(End)

TGP1.7 Window Wanderland Pilot

(8:30pm) To consider introducing a pilot Blandford Winter Window Wanderland as an inclusive, community led cultural initiative during the winter period.. (20 mins)

Decision Item

Report Author: Town Clerk

Summary and Background information

Window Wanderland is a community arts initiative which encourages residents to transform their windows into illuminated displays, creating free outdoor galleries for their community to explore. The concept is designed to be inclusive and adaptable, allowing people to participate at a level that suits them.

It is proposed that Blandford develops its own Winter Window Wanderland, encouraging residents, community groups and organisations to bring light, colour and creativity to neighbourhoods across the town. Displays would be illuminated over four evenings, from Thursday to Sunday, with community workshops, downloadable resources and a limited number of free maker packs helping people to participate.

There are merits to holding the event both before and after Christmas. A December event could complement existing seasonal activities and build on enthusiasm for lights and decorating, while a post-Christmas event could provide a distinct community focus during a quieter part of winter, celebrating the gradual return of lighter days. Window Wanderland events are held at different times of the year, including both December and later winter.

It is proposed that a small councillor/officer working group develops the pilot, including considering the most appropriate timing and opportunities for community involvement. A draft plan is attached.

The standard toolkit proposed includes GDPR compliant mapping and management of resident email addresses.

Further Information Sources

[Window Wanderland – Connecting people and communities, transforming streets into magical outdoor galleries](#)

[Standard Toolkit – Window Wanderland](#)

[Overview draft proposal](#)

Legal Authority and Implication

The Council holds the General Power of Competence. This provides the appropriate authority and supports community participation, cultural activity and wellbeing.

Financial Implication

A budget of up to £1,000 is proposed. This includes £350 for the Window Wanderland Standard Toolkit, together with provision for workshop and maker materials, Window Wow postcards, printing and publicity.

Marketing and Communications

The initiative would be promoted as an opportunity for the community to Make, Wander, Share

and Appreciate. Communications would use the Council's website and social media alongside schools, community organisations and neighbourhood networks. Photographs and stories would be shared to enable those unable to wander in person to enjoy the event online. "Window Wow" postcards would encourage positive appreciation without competition or judging. The local PCSO/policing team would be invited to support both community engagement and safe enjoyment of the event. The detailed campaign and its seasonal messaging would be developed once the timing of the pilot is agreed.

Recommendation

That the Committee approves the delivery of a pilot Blandford Winter Window Wanderland, with a budget of up to £1000 and establishes a councillor/officer working group to develop and deliver the initiative, including determining the preferred timing and engaging with community organisations and the local policing team.

(End)