

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
Held on Monday 12 December 2011

PRESENT

Cllr E Butler - Chairman
Cllr S Hitchings
Cllr RVJ Brannigan
Cllr A Pemberton
Cllr H White
Cllr R Carter
Cllr R Holmes
Cllr S Hixson Andrews



Cllr S Loch – Vice Chairman
Cllr H Galpin
Cllr L Lindsay
Cllr T Harrocks
Cllr J Stayt
Cllr H Mieville
Cllr P Clark

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk
County Cllr B Cooper

Committee Clerk

YOUTH ADVISORS

Felix Morris-Duffin

7.02pm – Cllr Loch arrived.

120. PUBLIC SESSION

- 120.1 Tree Works – Cllr Carter reported the tree behind the BT yard at Shorts Lane was due to be removed but now is not going to be. It is becoming a hazard and the Tree Officer will be informed and asked to review.
- 120.2 Christmas Trees and Lights – Cllr White extended thanks to Cllr Hitchings, Colin Stevens and the other volunteers from the Fire Station who put up the Christmas trees and lights on the buildings throughout the town.
- 120.3 PCSOs – Cllr Lindsay wished to extend her thanks for the speedy response from the PCSOs who assisted with the dog fouling problems in Barnes Close.
- 120.4 PC Simon Evans – The crime statistics were distributed and PC Evans highlighted the fact that the 38% detection rate was well above the national average and crime is dropping throughout the Blandford area.

121. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

- 121.1 Bypass Signage – 40 new signs have been erected along the bypass and it was the volume of cables and pipe work under the proposed signs that resulted in a lot of digging by hand and, hence, the length of time the work was taking.
- 121.2 Bayfran Way – A petition will be going to Highways asking them to consider traffic calming in this area.
- 121.3 Night street lighting – Cllr Cooper felt that Higher Shaftesbury Lane should be included in the scheme and asked for the Town Council to support this motion. The Town Clerk advised that the Town & General Purposes Committee will be considering the matter at its meeting in January.

121. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR (CONT)

- 121.4 Marsh & Ham – The railings opposite the entrance to the Marsh & Ham car park are being increasingly used for placards advertising local businesses and Planning Enforcement will be contacting anyone with displays there.
- 121.5 No Entry sign – Cllr Holmes requested that the “No Entry” sign from West Street into the Market Place is replaced. This was removed in an effort to reduce the street clutter from the area and it was felt that the road layout was sufficiently obvious that no signage would be necessary. However, market traders have been seen turning right here as a short cut to the market.
- 121.6 Church Lane – Cllr Hitchings reported that, on Saturday 10th December, a large lorry was stuck at the bottom of Church Lane for 45 minutes as it could not get around the corner. He asked if it would be possible for the shops to use smaller delivery vehicles. This is not just restricted to the Church Lane area but throughout the town as, unlike other towns, there is no time restriction on when deliveries can take place. This matter will be put before T & GP in the January meeting.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

- 121.7 Church Lane signage – The road markings are in place but they still do not address the problem of pedestrians crossing the road pushing wheelchairs and pushchairs from the Market Place to the church. It was requested that a mirror is placed on the sign opposite so pedestrians can see around the corner.
- 121.8 Whitecliff Mill Street – Two columns are awaited for this street.

122. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

- 122.1 Cllr Hickish – had sent his apologies and Cllr Cooper read out his report.
- 122.1.1 Nelsons Wine Bar – Due to legal and technical complications in respect of the ownership of the property, enforcement action cannot be taken. However, the occupiers have been warned and a watching brief is being maintained.
- 122.1.2 Williams Williams – Bere’s Yard - It was confirmed that the barrier that has been erected did not require planning permission.
- 122.2 Cllr Harrocks
- 122.2.1 Blandford Community Hospital – Following the announcement of the proposed reduction in outpatient services Cllr Harrocks wrote to the Chairman of the NHS Foundation Trust and was advised that the reductions would be debated at an open meeting in Dorchester on 29th November, which he had attended and gave a brief report of the meeting. He has written to Robert Walter MP and is awaiting a reply. Cllr Stayt informed councillors that hospital cars are far less available than they were and The Friends of Blandford Hospital will continue to provide cars free of charge whenever possible.
- 122.3 Cllr Cooper
- 122.3.1 Car Park Charges – Saturday 10th December – Cllr Cooper felt that anyone who bought a ticket in a Blandford car park should apply for a refund.

122. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS (CONT)

122.4 Cllr Butler

122.4.1 Budget Workshop – Cllr Butler reported that this had proved to be very useful. Within the workshop, it was suggested that parish and town councils should be issued with a charge for elections and those present were asked which option they supported - the District Council selling some of their assets or taking out a loan.

122.4.2 Policy Review Panel – The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 14th December at 10 am and all Councillors are welcome to attend. The agenda will include the loss of some outpatients' services at Blandford Community Hospital, the effect of any closures of Job Centre Plus offices and NDDC's Housing Strategy. The Tesco application will be included on the next Development Control meeting scheduled for Tuesday 20th December.

122.5 Cllr Tanner

122.5.1 Damory Court – The tree has been inspected by Signpost and Cllr Tanner is now chasing for action.

122.5.2 Railway Hotel – The brambles have been cut back.

122.5.3 Birdcage Walk – Works have been carried out at Birdcage Walk.

122.5.4 Pothole – The pothole by the Co-op has been repaired.

122.5.5 Car Park Review – This has now been to Cabinet and the recommendations are that there will be no overnight or Sunday charging. The decision has been taken to increase charges and to charge where no charge was previously made.

122.5.6 NDDC – The budget setting process has begun.

122.5.7 Deer Park Development – There will be a confidential meeting of the District Councillors on Wednesday 14th December to hear the Crown Commissioners detail their latest proposals regarding the Deer Park. A request for Town Councillors to attend this meeting was refused and any information from the meeting should be treated confidentially.

123. APOLOGIES

Cllr M Owen
District Cllr J Hickish

District Cllr J E T Tanner

124. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillors were reminded of their obligations to declare orally their interests as per the Parish Councils Model Code of Conduct Order 2007 Number 1159.

125. MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2011

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Stayt, SECONDED by Cllr Hitchings and AGREED (14 in favour, 1 abstention) that the Minutes are APPROVED and SIGNED.

126. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

- 126.1 Free car parking – Saturday 10th December – An e-mail has been received from Stephen Hill, General Manager at NDDC offering a further day's free parking for Saturday 17th December at the District Council's expense. Councillors asked that the invoice for the advertising is verified before payment is made and that the shops are encouraged to advertise the free car parking.
- 126.2 Corn Exchange Kitchen – As Cllrs Lindsay and Owen are unable to attend the Working Group meeting at 2pm on the 13th December Cllr Harrocks and Cllr Clark will attend in their place and report back to Planning on Monday 19th December.
- 126.3 T E D George Fund – NatWest Children's Fund – Cllr Butler and the Town Clerk met with the administrators of the Community Fund who have been tasked with the administration of the children's fund on behalf of NatWest. A letter has been sent to NatWest asking why funds have been given to groups when it is intended for individuals under the age of 12 in Blandford Forum, in consultation with the Mayor. A response has been received today and a reply will be compiled by the Town Clerk and Cllr Butler in due course.
- 126.4 Dorset Branch of the SLCC – The Town Clerk attended the meeting to hear an update on the Localism Act with regards to the National Planning Policy Framework, the Community Infrastructures Levy and Power of Competence. A staff/councillor training schedule has been drawn up for 2012 and clerks also discussed the proposed increases for 2012/2013. It appears that surrounding parishes may be interested in the Town Council's existing projector once we have purchased a replacement and investigations will be made into hiring it out.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

- 126.5 Petty Cash – There was £5 missing during the petty cash checks carried out by the Chairman of Finance & Staffing Committee prior to the meeting last week and it was agreed that the Town Clerk would report the reason why at this meeting. The RFO explained after the meeting that this was found in the un-banked cash taken in on Monday as the RFO had swapped the cash received from the toilets income earlier that day to put more change into the petty cash.
- 126.6 Taking Forward growth in the Towns and Villages of North Dorset – NDDC has written to invite town councillors to a drop in session on 18 January 2012 between 2pm and 7pm at Nordon to find out more about Neighbourhood Planning and which option the town council might wish to follow. A letter was distributed to councillors and the different options will be considered at the Town Council meeting scheduled for Monday 13th February 2012.
- 126.7 ASDA – The Project Communications Manager for ASDA/PDPL has asked councillors to consider writing to NDDC's Development Control Committee to request a deferral of Tesco's planning application so it can be considered at the same time as ASDA's. It was agreed that this matter will be considered at the Planning Committee on Monday 19th December 2011.
- 126.8 Police Meeting – Enquiry Office Review – Cllr White attended in lieu of the Town Clerk. The review covered the reception desk only and not the whole station. In Blandford, it is proposed that the desk is manned 5 days a week and the suggestion was made that this should be Tuesday to Saturday 10 am to 6pm with an hour for lunch from 2pm to 3pm. There are further consultations to be carried out and other options being considered such as an appointment system being brought in whereby members of the public could telephone and book an appointment. The current consultation continues until February 2012.

127. CIVIC REPORT

The paper was tabled (see Appendix A).

The Mayor thanked councillors and staff who attended and helped at the tree lighting ceremony which was very successful. Lots of positive feedback has been received from members of the public.

Cllr Butler referred to the North Dorset Locality Property Review Meetings that she has been attending for over a year. The information containing authority ownership will be going live shortly and approval to release this information will be received in due course.

128. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES

128.1 Town & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Monday 21 November 2011

The minutes were RECEIVED.

128.2 Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting held on Monday 28 November 2011

The minutes were RECEIVED.

128.3 Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting held on Monday 5 December 2011

128.3.1 Minute No. 40 – To respond to the presentation from The Blandford School regarding the request for funding towards an artificial sports pitch

It was PROPOSED by Cllr White, SECONDED by Cllr Loch and AGREED unanimously that Standing Orders are suspended.

The following recommendation was considered:

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr Loch and AGREED unanimously that a **RECOMMENDATION** is made to full Council that

The Town Council does not approve a grant for the project but considers allocating funds from the Land North of the Bypass (Sports Pitches) budget line subject to further discussions with The Blandford School to determine exactly how much use the Blandford Forum community and taxpayers will be able to benefit from such a facility.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Loch, SECONDED by Cllr Brannigan and AGREED (13 in favour, 2 against) that the **RECOMMENDATION** is **AMENDED** so that a specific budget is not allocated at this time.

Subject to the above amendment, it was PROPOSED by Cllr Loch, SECONDED by Cllr Brannigan and AGREED (13 in favour, 2 against) that

The Town Council does not approve a grant for the project but considers allocating Town Council funds subject to further discussions with The Blandford School to determine exactly how much use the Blandford Forum community and taxpayers will be able to benefit from such a facility.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Standing Orders were reinstated.

128. **RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES (CONT)**

128.3.2 **Minute No. 50 – Consideration of the overall budget for the year 2012/2013 and recommendation of the precept for 2012/2013**

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

The Town Council's overall precept for the year 2012/13 is set at £565,489 which is a total of £150.34 per Band D property, a total increase of 0%.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

A 0% increase was realised due to extra houses being built in the town, this allowed the Council to increase its overall budget by 1.16% but in actual terms, because of the larger number of properties, this equated to a 0% increase to all residents.

The minutes were RECEIVED.

129. **TO CONSIDER FORMING WORKING GROUPS TO RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING CONSULTATIONS**

The paper was noted (see Appendix B) and as time is very limited for the response to all of the consultations it was felt that there was not sufficient time to form working groups.

129.1 **Neighbourhood Planning Regulations**

129.2 **Community Infrastructure Levy**

129.3 **Technical Reforms of Council Tax**

129.4 **Dorset-Wide Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Joint Development Plan**

130. **TO FORMALISE THE LOCATION AND ARRANGEMENT FOR THE JUBILEE BEACON**

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

Cllr Butler declared a personal interest as Chairman of the Jubilee Group.

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

Larksmead is confirmed as the preferred location to site the Beacon and fireworks should be purchased for the event. Members are aware that the insurance premium may rise to cover the event and the offer of support from the Diamond Jubilee Group is accepted.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

131. **TO CONSIDER WHETHER THE TOWN COUNCIL WISHES TO REQUEST A CHANGE OF FUTURE USE FOR LAND AT HIGHER SHAFTESBURY ROAD**

Cllr Butler declared a personal interest as a member of NDDC's Planning Policy Committee.

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

131. TO CONSIDER WHETHER THE TOWN COUNCIL WISHES TO REQUEST A CHANGE OF FUTURE USE FOR LAND AT HIGHER SHAFTESBURY ROAD (CONT)

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Hixson Andrews, SECONDED by Cllr Stayt and AGREED (14 in favour, 1 non-vote) that

The Town Council requests that North Dorset District Council reassess the designated use of the land at Higher Shaftesbury Road from Industrial only to allow a mixture of Retail and Industrial usage.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

132. CORN EXCHANGE PROJECT BOARD

132.1 To consider retrospective expenditure approval for Regeneration Scheme Stage 1 Design Fees

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Hixson Andrews, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED (14 in favour, 1 abstention) that

The Town Council retrospectively approves the expenditure of £4,600 for the detailed survey and technical drawings of the Town Hall, Corn Exchange and Town Council offices with funds to be drawn from the Phase 3b S106 developer contributions received towards the improvement works to the buildings.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

132.2 To consider expenditure approval to carry out a public exhibition

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Hixson Andrews, SECONDED by Cllr Pemberton and AGREED (11 in favour, 2 against, 2 abstentions) that

The Town Council approves the expenditure of a maximum of £2,000 for the public exhibition and presentation to accompany the planning and listed building consent applications for the Corn Exchange regeneration scheme, with funds to be drawn from the Phase 3b S106 developer contributions received towards the improvement works to the buildings.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

133. TO CONSIDER SUBMITTING A REQUEST TO NDDC TO CONDUCT A REVIEW OF THE TOWN'S BOUNDARY

Cllr White gave a presentation regarding boundaries and the suggested changes to Blandford Forum's boundary. Cllr Hitchings reported that NDDC has to review their boundaries every four years and they are due to review them again in 2012.

9:04pm – Felix Morris-Duffin and Cllr Cooper left the meeting.

133. **TO CONSIDER SUBMITTING A REQUEST TO NDDC TO CONDUCT A REVIEW OF THE TOWN'S BOUNDARY (CONT)**

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

The Town Council forms a working party consisting of Cllrs White, Holmes, Carter, Pemberton, Stayt and Harrocks to produce a report/presentation for Council to consider in the New Year. In addition, a letter will be sent to NDDC informing them of the Council's intent.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

134. **TO CONSIDER A NEW PLANNING APPLICATION 2/2011/1274 – 09 NOV – MR LEMON – MILLDOWN LODGE – ERECT SINGLE STOREY EXTENSION**

The paper was noted (see Appendix G) AND Cllr Butler declared her intention to take part in discussions and vote on new planning applications at Town Council on the understanding that her decisions are based on the information available at this time and that she reserves the right to change those decisions when the applications are discussed at North Dorset District Council.

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

The Town Council has no objection to the application.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

135. **REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS**

None

136. **CONFIDENTIAL**

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Loch, SECONDED by Cllr Carter and AGREED unanimously that

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

136.1 **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

Cllr Butler declared a personal interest as she owns two graves in the cemetery.

Blandford Cemetery – Following a recent training course carried out by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM), it was highlighted that the Town Council should no longer reuse graves that are over 100 years old with no memorial. We will honour those that have already been purchased and further information will be reported at the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting in February.

136.2 RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES

136.2.1 Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting held on Monday 5 December 2011

Minute No. 51.2 – To consider the financial implications attached to the Town Crier’s position and duties

It was PROPOSED by Cllr White, SECONDED by Cllr Lindsay and AGREED unanimously that

The Council gives a biannual payment of £400 to the Town Crier to offset the costs of the South West Town Criers’ Competition using funds from the Town & General Purposes Committee’s Earmarked Reserves Tourism budget (Expenditure Authority: Local Government 1972, s144).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Minute No. 51.3 – To consider a report regarding a staff payment in recognition of additional duties and responsibilities

The Chairman of Finance & Staffing reiterated his original proposal to Members and reminded them of the recommendation from the Finance & Staffing Committee, which is as follows:

It was PROPOSED by Cllr White, SECONDED by Cllr Brannigan and AGREED unanimously that a **RECOMMENDATION** is made to full Council that

In recognition of the exceptional team work, additional duties and responsibilities that one additional day of leave is granted to every employee who was in post on the 1 May 2011 and is still in post. This extra is to be taken by the end of next year’s leave period at 31st March 2013.

The Town Clerk advised Members that staff have accrued TOIL during the absence of an Assistant Town Clerk and Town Clerk and that the majority will be carrying over annual leave into 2012/2013 and will struggle to use up their existing allowance due to workload. Members were also given new information with regards to the additional responsibilities and workload imposed on staff during the absence of the Clerks.

Following a lengthy discussion, a new proposal was put forward and agreed, as follows:

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Loch, SECONDED by Cllr Hixson Andrews and AGREED (8 in favour, 5 against and 2 abstentions) that

A single one-off payment of £500 is made to all staff who were employed by the council on 1 May 2011, and are still employed by the council now (but excluding the Town Clerk), in recognition of the exceptional team work, additional duties and extra responsibilities carried out during the absence of an Assistant Town Clerk and Town Clerk (Local Government Act 1972 s111). This payment is to be a non-pensionable payment, subject to VAT, and is not pro rata depending on the hours the employee works. The payment is to be funded from the under-spend in the Salaries budget and given in the December salary payroll.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

9:55pm – Cllr Pemberton left the meeting.

136.2 RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECEIPT OF MINUTES (CONT)

The Chairman of Council declared a Personal and Prejudicial interest and left the room during discussion and voting.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr White and AGREED (9 in favour, 1 against, 3 abstentions and 1 non-vote) that

A payment is made to the Chairman of Council in recognition of the additional duties and responsibilities that she took on, effectively filling in the Town Clerk's role for 6 months. The additional sum of £1500 (using funds from the under-spend in budget line 4906 – Councillor Training and Expenses) is to be added to the Chairman of Council's allowance for this year only and this being subject to being within the legal limits set by an independent remuneration panel (Local Government Act 1972 s111).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The minutes were RECEIVED.

The meeting closed at 10pm.

SIGNED DATED