



BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

Town Clerk's Office, Church Lane, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 7AD
Tel: 01258 454500 • Fax: 01258 454432 • admin@blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk • www.blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk



CHAIRMAN OF BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11

Blandford Forum Town Council is made up of 16 councillors who represent the 5 wards in the Town, Damory Down, Langton St Leonard's, Old Town, Station and Hilltop. There are three councillors on each ward apart from Old Town which has 4. All 16 Councillors sit on Full Council and the Planning committee. The Town and General Purposes, Recreation and Amenities and Finance and Staffing committees all have seven members with the Chairman and Vice Chairman as ex-officio members of these committees. A list of all councillors, which ward they represent and their contact details is available on the Town Council notice boards. Agendas are published and displayed on the Town Council notice boards around the town, at the library and on the Council's website. Members of the public are welcome to attend council and committee meetings and can make comment via the public sessions held at 7.00pm at the beginning of meetings, which are held on most Monday evenings in the Community Room at the address above. The public can also contact councillors or officers through correspondence/email, by telephone, or in person at the Town Clerk's Office, which is open Monday to Friday between 9.30am and 12.30pm. A calendar of meetings and information relating to Council business, minutes, hiring of venues etc and a list of local groups and organisations is available on the Town Council website.

FULL COUNCIL The Town Council has agreed to give the honour of the Freedom of Blandford Forum to Mrs Carole Sharp. Mrs Sharp has helped many people of the town through her involvement with the Charity of William Williams and the Blandford Forum Charities and wholeheartedly deserves this special honour. A scroll has been presented to the Rifles in recognition of the freedom of the town being extended to them by the Council in 2007 after the army re-organisation that saw the amalgamation of many regiments and the loss of the Devon and Dorset Regiment. A card handmade by local resident, Glenda White, has been sent to Buckingham Palace on the wedding of Prince William & Kate Middleton sending best wishes on behalf of the residents of Blandford Forum. A replica of the Blandford Railway station made by the Blandford Museum Railway Club was pictured on the front cover of the February Railway Modeller magazine. A copy now hangs in the council offices. We have benefited from the appointment of the 4 youth advisors to the Council from The Blandford School, they have been able to speak and debate issues at Full Council and at all committees. Due to school workload 2 reps have resigned, but 2 new appointments have recently been made and they will join us shortly. The Town Council introduced Councillor Surgeries in September; these have been held every month at different times and on different days. The take up of these events has been poor and from this we can surmise that our residents do not have the need to meet with us in this format. Therefore it has been decided that the Council will only hold surgeries when another council event is taking place and it is practical to do so. The Town Council is fully committed to retaining the Leisure Centre. The agreement has been signed and £50,000 was paid to North Dorset District Council in October 2010 and the agreement is to give another £50k in 2011 and again in 2012. NDDC confirmed that SLM Everyone Active had been the successful chosen operator for the Leisure Centre. It was agreed by BLCAG – Blandford Leisure Centre Action Group, NDDC and SLM that free swimming tickets would be issued to the town and those parishes that contributed to the Leisure Centre fund. This equated to 1,666 free swim tickets for Blandford Forum residents. These were distributed over two Saturday mornings with the remainder being given out by individual councillors around their wards. The Tabernacle Toilets have been remodelled with a very welcome contribution from NDDC of £13,000 and NDDC officers also provided the technical support for the project. The unisex disability compliant toilet was opened on Thursday 21st April. There is a small charge of 20p to use the facility. BFTC realised how important public conveniences are for the residents and visitors to the town and are very pleased to be operating these facilities. Letters have been written to the surrounding parishes for contributions towards the running costs of the toilets and this year we received £153 from Durweston PC, £253 from Spetisbury and £200 from Stourpaine. We have had many presentations over the year – Persimmon Homes regarding a pre-planning application for land off Wimborne Rd adjacent to Archbishop Wake School, Transition Towns, The Crown Estates as the applicant and Bryanston Park Preservation Group as the group opposed to the siting of 80 houses on the Crown Meadows / Deer Park, and two presentations from SSE Contracting, this is in relation to the replacement of most of the town's light columns under a PFI - Public Finance Initiative agreed by DCC over 7 years ago. The Town Council has objected to DCC's intention to dispose of the playing field at the former Milldown Primary School although a final decision is still awaited. Celebrations are already under way for the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 2012. Council transferred £5k - money unused from a different budget heading to support a Civic Church service, flowers to be red, white & blue and an offer to the Royal Corps of Signals to attend a Freedom Parade on the occasion of their 40th anniversary of being granted the freedom of the Town in 1972. We have had an acknowledgement that they are delighted to accept the offer in principle at this time. The Corn Exchange Project Board continues to formulate plans for the regeneration of the Corn Exchange complex. In the meantime the Town Hall windows have been replaced. The Town Council has decided to formulate a "Town Plan" which will encompass the



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needs and vision for the town over the next 20 years. This process will be quite lengthy to ensure that we take into account thoughts and views from residents and local groups and organisations. At some point in the future, consultation will take place with residents to find out how you wish to see your town develop. We have passed comment on consultations from the District & County Council. In addition to the council meetings Councillors have also spent many hours attending working group meetings on a wide range of subjects.

Recreation and Amenities Committee This committee is responsible for all the open space and venues owned and run by the Town Council. The skate park continues to be very popular with young people using it from all over Dorset. Improvements were made to the equipment last summer and new fencing was installed this year. The hire charges at all venues have been frozen for 2011/12. The cost of hiring the kitchen at the Corn Exchange has been removed from the 1st April 2011. The cemetery records are now available to view online www.deceasedonline.com so the public have much better access to grave stones, maps and photos in connection with genealogy searches. The refurbishment of Woodhouse Gardens is currently taking place – this includes new flooring, chairs, tables, kitchen, toilets, curtains, emergency lighting and outside lighting. This is a popular venue, with hirers and users all benefiting from the improvements. Ball stop fencing at the bowling club has been approved by the Town Council and erected between the bowling club & the cricket club. New doors and windows have been installed at Larksmead pavilion and at the Cricket pavilion a new carpet and emergency lighting have been approved. Repairs to the external woodwork have been undertaken at the Bowling club together with new replacement fencing at the Langton play area. A new storage container was purchased for the recreation ground at Park Rd. The council has purchased a second vehicle to help with the Public Open Space that was taken on from NDDC and the imminent hand over of public open space on the Persimmon development. The staff are continually praised for the up keep of the cemetery, Woodhouse Gardens, Larksmead and the recreation ground.

Town & General Purposes This committee looks after the town and provides it with lovely floral displays throughout the year and for which we receive many congratulatory letters. The Town Leaflet was designed, printed and funded by the Town Council in 2010 and it has been updated and approval has been given for another 5,000 to be printed in 2011. T & GP continue to enhance the Christmas lights display and the Christmas season in general with the continuation of the shop window competition, and last year saw a competition to design the Mayor's official Christmas card. Banners were produced of children's work to hang around the barriers protecting the Christmas tree. The committee also erected a mast to carry electric across to light up the tree in the Marsh & Ham car park. T& GP donated £500 from their Christmas budget to the Blandford Yuletide Festival, which was a great success. 10 grit bins were purchased and sited with DCC approval in locations around the town. DCC confirmed that they would be responsible for the filling up of the bins which we are pleased to report did take place during the bad weather conditions which we encountered over the Christmas period. The Committee recently approved the purchase of an additional 10 bins subject to DCC committing to keeping them topped up. Three new aluminium boards to house the town maps have been bought and sited at the Marsh & Ham toilet block, the Langton car park and Tesco's. A bench at the bottom of Sheep Market Hill has been replaced. In response to a request from a local organisation a community notice board has been sited at the Tabernacle block which is well used by local organisations. Expenditure has been approved for essential works at the Old Bath House to the fascia and the building itself. NDDC have also agreed to the work taking place. Before work can commence a tree works application must be submitted to cut back overhanging vegetation. The committee has recently approved expenditure to purchase two fixed and one portable CCTV camera, expanding our system to 5. This is subject to SSE giving us consent to use their lighting column at the junction on Bakers Corner.

PLANNING Although the District Council is the authority for development control, the Town Council is able to make comment on planning applications within the town. Although NDDC do not have to act on our decisions, we feel that it is important that our knowledge of our town is put to good use and comments made. The Chairman and Vice Chairmen of this committee meet & review the plans and visit properties if necessary and bring the information to the planning meeting so that thorough discussions and decisions can be made. Letters received from members of the public are made available to Councillors. Objectors normally attend the meeting and are given the opportunity to address the committee in the public session. Over the past year we have considered 105 planning applications. We also pass comment on recommendations from the Town Council's tree officer regarding felling and works to trees within the town which is then relayed to the District Council's Tree Officer.

FINANCE & STAFFING Some new appointments have taken place during the year, the employment of a full time person working at the recreation ground and the creation of a part time position at Woodhouse Gardens has been filled by a previous full time employee. A Committee Clerk has recently been employed for maternity leave cover. Grants have been awarded during the year to the Blandford swimming club - £600, the Blandford Museum Railway Club - £500, the



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Allotment Society £1,500, Treads - £974, the Cricket Club - £770 – DT11 Forum partnership £2,000 Service Level agreements are in place with yearly amounts going to Treads of £4,000, Blandford Museum - £2,000, CAB - £2,000 and the Tourist information Centre – £ 2,000. Also, it has been agreed to increase the Treads SLA to £5,000 in 2011/12. A new system is being trialled to combat the demise of the cheque and relevant procedures have been put in place to accomplish this. Town Councils have seen the business rates on their cemeteries rise dramatically. This new rate has been set by the Valuation Office - the business rate for our cemetery has gone from an actual cost of £412 – 25 in 2009/10 rising eventually over the next few years to £5,900. We have raised our concerns regarding this huge increase and await the outcome. The committee agreed a budget for the year 2011/12 that reflected the extra £50,000 for the leisure centre but trimmed other budgets to reflect the difficult financial times everyone was experiencing. This was then referred to full Council where it was fully debated and an overall budget set at £558,982 which is a total of £152.68 for a band D property and a total increase of 1.55%.

I would like to thank the staff and my fellow councillors for their support, commitment and their hard work that has taken place throughout the year. Blandford Forum Town Council has and will continue to work for the community.

Cllr Esme Butler, Chairman of Council and Town Mayor (May 2010 – May 2011)

TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL RETURN (ACCOUNTS) 2010/11

The Internal Auditors to the Town Council have confirmed the accounts as correct. Copies of the full accounts are available by using the contact details above and are available to view on the Town Council's website.

		31 st March 2010	31 st March 2011
		£	
1	Balances Brought Forward	1,252,227	1,556,982
2	(+) Annual Precept	519,301	544,942
3	(+) Total Receipts (income)	319,556	172,811
4	Staff Costs	320,469	319,179
5	Loan Interest Repayments	0	0
6	(-) Total Other Payments	213,633	387,732
7	(=) Balance Carried Forward*	1,556,982	1,567,824
8	Total Cash & Investments	1,688,348	2,507,845
9	Total Fixed Assets**	3,568,388	3,588,996
10	Total Borrowing	Nil	Nil
11	Acts as sole Trustee For Managing Trust Funds	Yes	Yes

* Of the balances held at 31 March 2011 over £965,000 was held for Capital projects, which includes £618,000 for the refurbishment of the Corn Exchange.

** Fixed assets of £3,588,996 is the value of the properties and equipment owned by the Council at approximate cost value (for example the Corn Exchange and the Skate Park).



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COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS (MAY 2010 – APRIL 2011)

Councillor	Meetings Attended	Expected Attendance
Bob Brannigan	24	26
Esme Butler	35	35
Harold Galpin	31	30
Tony Harrocks	14	14
Steve Hitchings	28	26
Sylvia Hixson Andrews	23	26
Rosemary Holmes	29	35
Hilary Lawson	22	26

Councillor	Meetings Attended	Expected Attendance
Lynn Lindsay	27	30
Sara Loch	27	30
Mike Owen	19	26
Andrew Pemberton	24	30
Isabel Rose	24	26
Jackie Stayt	29	30
Francis West	23	30
Haydn White	29	30

Occasionally Councillors must attend other meetings, conferences and civic events on behalf of the Town Council and are therefore unable to attend Town Council meetings.

CONTACT YOUR TOWN COUNCILLORS

WARD	TOWN COUNCILLOR	ADDRESS	TEL NO (01258)
DAMORY DOWN	Esme Butler	7 Staverton Walk DT11 7TN	480756
	Roger Carter	2 Greenhill DT11 7TX	455903
	Rosemary Holmes	16 Liddington Crescent DT11 7RP	480451
HILLTOP	Tony Harrocks	1 Mortain Close DT11 7XA	480062
	Steve G Hitchings	27 Kings Road DT11 7LD	455840
	Jackie Stayt	29 Damory Street DT11 7EU	456999
LANGTON ST LEONARDS	Bob Brannigan	1 Hambledon Gardens DT11 7SE	459452
	Harold F Galpin	Russell House, Durweston DT11 0QA	454294
	Hugo Mieville	4 Albert Street, DT11 7HY	480366
OLD TOWN	Sylvia Hixson Andrews	15 Bryanston Street DT11 7AZ	458911
	Sara Loch	The Old House, The Close DT11 7HA	450278
	Andrew Pemberton	The Rectory, The Tabernacle DT11 7DW	459672
	Frances West	Langham House, 81 Salisbury Street	458055
STATION	Lynn Lindsay	31 Barnes Close DT11 7NG	456209
	Mike Owen	63 Damory Street DT11 7HD	459170
	Haydn R White	79 Salisbury Road DT11 7LP	453666

TO RECEIVE THIS NEWS UPDATE IN LARGE PRINT PLEASE TELEPHONE: 01258 454500