



## GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Hall, School Road, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4QR

### FULL COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on **Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023** at The Town Hall, School Road, Gillingham, commencing at 7.30pm.

#### Present:

Cllr Sharon Cullingford, Mayor  
Cllr Barry von Clemens, Deputy Mayor  
Cllr Graham Bashford  
Cllr Fiona Cullen  
Cllr Rupert Evill  
Cllr Alan Frith  
Cllr Paul Harris

Cllr Mick Hill  
Cllr Val Potheary  
Cllr Graham Poulter  
Cllr Sarah Snook  
Cllr Donna Toye  
Cllr Mark Walden  
Cllr Roger Weeks

#### In attendance:

Town Clerk, Julie Hawkins  
Assistant Town Clerk, Jill Ezzard  
1 member of the public

#### The following joined the meeting via MS Teams:

Michael Streeter, Gillingham and Shaftesbury News  
Dr Pamela Buchan

Prior to the start of the meeting there was a presentation by Dr Pamela Buchan regarding A *Motion for the Ocean*.

**961. Public Participation. Please note: a period up to a maximum of fifteen minutes will be allowed for public comments and questions restricted to items listed on the following agenda.**

There was no public participation.

#### **962. To receive apologies for absence.**

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to accept the apologies for absence from Cllr Ashfield, Cllr Kilcourse and Cllr A von Clemens who were unable to join the meeting for personal reasons.

**963. Declarations of Interest: Members are required to comply with the requirements of Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 disclosable pecuniary interests.**

There were no declarations of interest.

**964. To receive questions pertaining to the previous minutes.**

There were no questions.

**965. To approve the minutes as a true and accurate record of the Full Council meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023.**

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023.

**966. To receive, consider and adopt the following standing committee reports:**

**a) General Purposes Committee meeting held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023.**

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023 are approved and adopted.

**b) Planning Committee meetings held on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> January and Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023.**

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> January and Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023 are approved and adopted.

**c) Human Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023.**

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Human Resources meeting held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023 are approved and adopted.

Cllr Toye abstained from voting.

**d) Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023.**

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Human Resources meeting held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023 are approved and adopted.

Cllr Toye abstained from voting.

**967. To approve payments of £10,000 and over.**

There were no payments of £10,000 and over.

**968. To receive and consider a Health and Safety Report.**

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The report was noted.

**969. To receive and consider reports from sub-committees and task and finish groups, as follows:**

**a) Sports and Leisure Task and Finish Group (Lead Member - Cllr Cullingford)**

Cllr Cullingford stated that there had been no meeting.

**970. To receive and consider reports from outside bodies, if available:**

**a) Town Meadow Group**

Cllr Cullingford reported that The Town Meadow Group will be hosting a volunteer day on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

**b) DAPTC Larger Towns**

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix A](#). The report was noted.

**c) DAPTC Northern Area Town and Parish Councils**

Cllr Cullingford stated that there had been no meeting.

**d) Gillingham Town Team**

Ian Day, Chairman of Gillingham Town Team, had submitted his apologies. There was no report.

**e) Gillingham Chamber of Commerce**

Cllr B von Clemens stated that it was business as usual for the Chamber and there was nothing to report.

**f) Gillingham Transport Forum**

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix B](#). The report was noted.

**g) Blackmore Vale Community Rail Partnership**

Cllr Walden stated that there had been no meeting, but upgrades and accessibility improvements are taking place at Gillingham Station.

**971. To receive and consider a report regarding 'Motion for the Ocean'.**

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix C](#).

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Gillingham Town Councils defers the *Motion for the Ocean* Pledge to the Greener Gillingham sub-committee who will report back to Full Council in March with further information.

**972. To receive and consider information from Active Dorset and Public Health Dorset regarding for 'A Movement for Movement'.**

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix D](#).

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Gillingham Town Council adopts the Movement for Movement strategy and signs up as a strategy partner.

Cllr Harris voted against the proposal.

**973. To consider and review the Cemetery Regulations.**

Draft amended regulations had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that the changes included amendments to 6.3 as follows:

*A grave space cannot be purchased prior to the date of death. On payment of the appropriate fee and completion of the relevant form including the signature of the proposed owner, the right is granted for a period of ninety-nine years and the Town Council shall provide the purchaser with an exclusive right of burial deed as proof of ownership.*

Members agreed that Para. 6.3 should read 'a grave space' and not 'a grave'.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Cemetery Regulations, as amended, are agreed and adopted.

Cllr Toye abstained from voting.

**974. To receive and approve the internal auditor's no. 2 of 3 2022/23 report dated January 2023.**

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix E](#).

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to approve the internal auditor's report and management responses dated January 2023.

**975. To consider forming a sub-committee to monitor s106 funding and to approve and adopt the terms of reference.**

The terms of reference had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix F](#).

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that a sub-committee should be formed to monitor s106 funding.

Members agreed that the Town Clerk and RFO should be included as members of the sub-committee.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the terms of reference, as amended, are adopted.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that membership of the subcommittee should include Chair of the Finance and Policy Committee and the lead members of Allotments and Burials, Estate Management, Five Year Action Plan, Sports and Leisure Panel sub-committees, the Town Clerk and the RFO.

**976. To consider having a stand at Gillingham and Shaftesbury Show on 16 – 17 August 2023**

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Gillingham Town Council have a stand at Gillingham and Shaftesbury Show on 16 – 17 August 2023 at a cost of £200.00 to be funded from Budget no. 7555, advertising costs.

**977. To consider and agree the five free parking days for Gillingham in 2023.**

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix G.](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the 2023 free car parking days are allocated to 7<sup>th</sup> May, 10<sup>th</sup> June, 7<sup>th</sup> October and 25<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

It was agreed that the Gillingham Chamber of Commerce should be consulted regarding the free weekday parking in December. Cllr Cullingford and Cllr Potheary volunteered to consult the High Street traders.

**978. To receive and consider a draft calendar of meetings for Civic Year 2023/24.**

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that a draft calendar of meetings, as presented, for Civic Year 2023/24 is approved.

**979. To receive and consider a report on the Christmas opening hours 2023.**

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix H.](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Gillingham Town Council Offices are officially closed from Monday 25<sup>th</sup> December until Monday 1st January 2024 inclusive.

**980. To receive a report on the Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's civic activities.**

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting and was noted. Please refer to [Appendix I.](#) The report was noted.

**981. To receive and note reports from Dorset Councillors, if available.**

Cllr Potheary gave a report. Please refer to **Appendix J.** The report was noted.

**982. To receive matters pertinent to this meeting.**

There were no matters pertinent.

The meeting closed at 8.32pm.

**Notes of a DAPTC Larger Towns and Parishes Committee  
Meeting held on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> February.**

**Author: Cllr Barry von Clemens.**

- Cllr Colin Huckle from Weymouth Town Council was elected Deputy Chair of the Larger Towns Committee.
- The following updates were received from Neil Wedge, DAPTC Chief Executive:
  - a) Members discussed sustaining DAPTC representation from member councils and participation in meetings. Neil Wedge is writing to encourage member councils to attend DAPTC meetings. It was noted that the Larger Towns meetings and the Eastern Area meetings are well attended. The letters will include information packs with an offer of briefing sessions by Neil Wedge.
  - b) May 2024 Media Campaign – ‘Serving Your Dorset Community’. A snap poll has indicated that the forthcoming election in May 2024 could be worse than the 2019 election for the number of candidates standing for local elections. It was noted that several councils are currently carrying vacancies. In a snap poll sent out by DAPTC which had 50 responses, just under 80% feel they will have uncontested elections.
  - c) A media company has been asked by DAPTC to do a draft media campaign for councils to use with a Dorset twist. DAPTC would like to use local councillors as part of the media campaign material asking them to do short videos about their roles as a councillor. DAPTC hopes to fund this using collective purchasing power to put this together sharing the cost between those councils who use it.
  - d) Shared Prosperity Fund Partnership Group – DAPTC Representation. Neil Wedge is now sitting on the small working group and the first meeting was to look at terms of reference. Neil will keep towns informed of any available funding opportunities that come up in the future.

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Minute no. 970(f)

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**Gillingham Transport Forum Report**

**Notes of a meeting held on Wednesday 25 January 2023**

**Author: Cllr Barry von Clemens.**

- Options on providing a circuit bus service in the town were discussed and Belinda Ridout reported back on her correspondence with Southwest Coaches. The group will continue to work on this option to establish if it is financially viable and the operational viability of such a project.
- The group agreed to explore what monies might be available for transport in the town.
- The group felt that it needed to establish a better understanding of perspective service users for a bus service and the peak times that it would be needed.
- The group is to explore with Southwest Coaches how best to promote current services in the town as there are concerns that from what has been seen so far there is a low usage at certain times.
- The group is to get updated information on the current footfall at Gillingham train station to establish if it has returned to pre-covid numbers or even increased. It is felt that the train service is an integral part of any transport plan, and this information needs to be up to date.
- Next meeting Wednesday 1 March 2023

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Minute no. 971

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**Gillingham Town Council**

**Report on *A Motion for the Ocean***

***Information taken from the Ocean Conservation Trust Website***

**Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk**

**The Ocean Conservation Trust**

Over 25 years ago, a group of marine scientists, educators and divers came together to create a charity that would showcase some of the habitats and animals found in a healthy and vibrant Ocean.

What started with a vision to create the UK's National Aquarium, led that team on a journey to expand the Aquarium's ethos beyond the coast of Plymouth, to a charity working around the world towards a healthier Ocean.

The charity's work is centred around people and positive action. They are focusing on inspiring Ocean advocacy through connections with nature, combined with ground-breaking work protecting and restoring vital Ocean habitats.

The team of marine biologists, educators, communicators, researchers, ecologists, oceanographers and divers are Ocean optimists. They work tirelessly to connect people to the Ocean and influence pro-Ocean behaviour.

COP26 has had a raft of Ocean-themed events, showing that the tide is turning on Ocean neglect. With 2021 being the start of the UN Ocean Decade, The Ocean Conservation Trust want to support local and national governments to take action to improve Ocean health.

**Ocean Recovery Declaration**

The Ocean Conservation Trust is proud to have been part of creating a model for a UK first 'Ocean Recovery Declaration' and are really pleased to see that Plymouth City Council are the first to officially debate their own version of it.

A model 'Ocean Recovery Declaration' – or ***Motion for the Ocean*** – seeks to help all local governments #thinkocean and identify ways they can make a difference. The model can be integrated with their climate emergency response, whether they are coastal or inland.



The **Ocean Conservation Trust** are asking ALL local Councils to recognise that the world Ocean is a fundamental part of climate regulation and that it must be considered as part of an effective climate emergency response. It is vital to ensure that local Councils commit to supporting a more ecologically healthy sea and to rethink how Ocean is taken into account in planning and decision-making at local level.

In July 2022 Blandford Forum Town Council became the first inland council to pass the '**Motion for the Ocean**', a model motion of pledges declaring an urgent need for Ocean Recovery and committing councils to embed ocean recovery in their strategic planning and decision-making processes and to grow ocean literacy and marine citizenship in their regions.

Inland communities have an important role to play in ocean recovery through acting as the custodians of the rivers, waterways and tributaries that run through our towns and villages on their way to the sea.

It is proposed that Gillingham Town Council agrees to adopt the ***Motion for the Ocean*** and pledges to:

1. Report to Full Council within 6 -12 months on the actions and projects that will contribute to protection and recovery of the River Stour and its tributaries<sup>i</sup> and the nature and wildlife that they support within the Gillingham Town Council area. *Please note that tributaries are included in the actions even if not stated in the subsequent pledges.*
2. Embed protection and recovery of the River Stour in all strategic decisions, plans, budgets, procurement and approaches to decisions by the Council (particularly in planning and regeneration, skills and economic policy), aligning with climate change mitigation and adaptation requirements, and considering ocean-based and river-based solutions in our journey towards a carbon neutral and climate resilient future.
3. Ensure that local planning recommendations support ocean recovery by embedding the protection and recovery of the River Stour in the Neighbourhood Plan at the earliest opportunity.
4. Ensure that the Town Council's Climate Change and Carbon Management Plan strives to support ocean recovery through a focus on the protection and recovery of the River Stour.
5. Work in partnership with other Town and Parish Councils along the Stour and local community groups, clubs and other organisations that have a recreational, economic or other interest in its protection and recovery.
6. Grow ocean literacy and marine citizenship in Gillingham, including:
  - a) Ensuring primary school aged children in Gillingham are encouraged to engage with the River Stour first-hand - striving to include home-schooled children;
  - b) Promote sustainable and equitable access to the River Stour through physical and digital experiences for all residents.
  - c) Through these actions, embed understanding of the 'source to sea' approach and how all people, wherever they live, impact and are impacted by ocean health.

7. Use the Town Council website and other communications channels to update on the River Stour recovery progress and signpost to ocean literacy development opportunities and marine citizenship pledges.
8. Encourage Dorset Council to introduce filters to their drains, to prevent items from polluting the county's rivers and tributaries.
9. Lobby the Government asking them to put the ocean into net recovery by 2030 by:
  - a) Ensuring Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities have the resources they need to effectively research and monitor our growing number of marine protected areas, and to set and enforce appropriate fishing levels that support local economies and deliver environmental sustainability.
  - b) Work with coastal communities to co-develop marine policy to ensure it delivers equitable and sustainable outcomes in local placemaking.
  - c) Appoint a dedicated Minister for Coastal Communities.
  - d) Stop plastic pollution at source by strengthening the regulations around single-use plastics and set standards for microfibre-catching filters to ensure that all new domestic and commercial washing machines are fitted with a filter that captures a high percentage of microfibres produced in the wash cycle.
  - e) And by listening to marine and social scientific advice to update the Marine Policy Statement and produce a national Ocean Recovery Strategy which will:
    - i. Enable the recovery of marine and river ecosystems rather than managing degraded or altered habitats in their reduced state.
    - ii. Consider levelling up, marine and river conservation, energy, industrial growth, flood and coastal erosion risk management, climate adaptation and fisheries policy holistically rather than as competing interests.
    - iii. Develop a smarter approach to managing the health of the entire ocean that moves beyond Marine Protected Areas and enables links to be made across sectors towards sustainability.
    - iv. Establish improved processes for understanding the benefits of ocean and river recovery, leaving no doubt the links between this and human lives, livelihoods, and wellbeing.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- **That Gillingham Town Councils agrees and adopts the *Motion for the Ocean Pledge***

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Minute no. 972

## Gillingham Town Council

### A Movement for Movement has been launched!

A Movement for Movement is the new long term physical activity strategy to be used across Dorset's Integrated Care System (ICS), helping us to tackle inactivity and create a movement for movement across Dorset and BCP.

The strategy, developed by Active Dorset and Public Health Dorset with partners across the ICS, sets out how all organisations in the ICS can help tackle inactivity and enable all of us to move more. It is our shared approach for enabling all of us to move more across BCP & Dorset. The strategy builds on what we already do well and recognises that there are opportunities to do more, as well as setting out key themes for making change that we can all apply to our own decision making.



A Movement for Movement has been approved and endorsed by both the BCP and Dorset Health and Wellbeing Board. Read 'A Movement for Movement' by visiting:

[A Movement for Movement | Active Dorset](#)

### Who is the strategy for and how to use it:

- The strategy is intended to guide action by ICS organisations.
- That action can be implemented at different levels:
- By organisational leaders who might take a strategic decision that can increase movement levels.
- By teams or services within an organisation who identify opportunities to increase movement through their work or within the team.
- By individuals within the ICS workforce who want to help build a workplace culture that makes movement part of everyday life.
- The strategy is publicly available, but the general population are not the intended audience for the messages it contains.
- The strategy is intended to inform and guide communications with the general population by organisations. For example, by ensuring social media content emphasises the value of all movement not just sport and exercise.

## Ways to support the launch.

### 1. Sign up as a partner

The best way you can lend your support to the strategy to make sure your organisation or service is signed up as a strategy partner. Sign up to join our movement and tell us in a sentence or two how your organisation will help create a movement for movement in Dorset and BCP. We'll add your logo as a supporting partner on our website and make sure you receive updates on the strategy as it develops.

### 2. Download assets and add banners or logos to your website, social media profiles or emails.

Help us raise awareness and create a Movement for Movement by adding the assets to your marketing and communications.

### 3. Start a conversation about how your team, service, organisation or work with external partners can help build A Movement for Movement.

- How often do you move?
- What opportunities do you have to enable or empower other people to move?
- Do you make decisions at work which offer opportunities to 'design in' movement to make it part of everyday life? You might be designing a whole new building or just organising a meeting that could include a break for a walk: there's opportunities at all scales.
- How can you influence others who you work with and invite them to join in?

### 4. Social media activity

- Social media activity would really help us to raise awareness of the strategy with everyone working across Dorset and BCP.
- Post about the strategy on your organisations social media channels, either using the template posts below, or create a post of your own using the wording from the strategy and the assets provided.
- Share your personal support for the movement on social media. You could share your own opinion and thoughts on the strategy, what resonates with you? What is more challenging? Or tell us how you move every day, post a picture of you walking your dog or cycling to work. Whatever way you're choosing to move, share it with us.

## Social media

Use the hashtag *#movementformovement*

Tag us in your posts [@active\\_dorset](#) and [@HealthyDorset](#)

**Full Council – 27 February 2023**

**Minute no. 974**

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**GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

**Internal audit report 2022/23 (Visit 2 of 3)**

**Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023**

**Report author: R Darkin-Miller**

**Introduction**

This report contains a note of the audit recommendations made to Gillingham Town Council following the carrying out of internal audit testing on site on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023.

The audit work has been carried out in accordance with the 2014 Appendix 9 of the 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioners' Guide', as amended by the later IA sections of the AGAR.

An internal audit covers the review of the operation of the Council's internal control environment. It is not designed to review and give full assurance over every transaction carried out by the Council. Instead it enables the auditor, following the sample testing of a number of different types of transaction, to give an opinion as to whether or not the control objectives are being achieved across a range of financial and governance systems.

**Audit Opinion**

As this audit report is an interim one, no audit opinion is offered at this stage.

The report issued after the final visit for 2022/23 (which will be in May or June 2023) will contain the audit opinion for the year.

The following areas were reviewed during this audit visit:

1. Payments
2. Risk Management
3. Budgetary Control
4. Bank Reconciliation

**Audit Recommendations**

Recommendations made during the audit are shown in appendix one to this report.

Recommendations are graded as follows:

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Significance</b>
High	Either a critical business risk is not being adequately addressed or there is substantial non-conformity with regulations and accepted standards.
Medium	Either a key business risk is not being adequately addressed or there is a degree of non-conformity with regulations and accepted standards.
Low	Either minor non-conformity with procedure or opportunity to improve working practices further.

The number of recommendations made at this audit visit, and their priority, are summarised in the following table:

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Number</b>
High	0
Medium	1
Low	0
Information	0
TOTAL	1

I would like to thank Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk; Jill Ezzard, Assistant Town Clerk; and Debra Edwards, Responsible Financial Officer for their assistance during this audit.

## Appendix 1 – Recommendations and Action Plan

Recommendation number	Detail	Priority (Low/Medium/High)	Management Response	Responsible Officer	Due Date
5.1 – Include trigger point for cash receipts	<p>I checked to see that security controls over cash are adequate and effective. I noted that a new procedure has been put in place to process the small volume of cash and cheque receipts that the Council receives during the year. The procedures require that all amounts are properly receipted and secured until banking, with a fortnightly or monthly check and reconciliation, but they do not contain any trigger point in the unlikely event that a larger sum of money is received.</p> <p>I recommend that a trigger point is added to the process notes, to require that anyone processing a single receipt in excess of e.g. £50, or receipts which take the value of the amount held over e.g. £50, should notify the RFO (or, in their absence, the Town Clerk or Assistant Town Clerk), in order that the funds can be promptly banked.</p>	M	A trigger point will be added to the process notes, to require that anyone processing a single receipt in excess of £50, or receipts which take the value of the amount held over £50, should notify the RFO or, in their absence, the Town Clerk or Assistant Town Clerk, who will ensure that the funds can be promptly banked.	RFO	31.01.23

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Minute no. 975

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## GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

### The s106 Monitoring Sub-committee

#### Terms of Reference

- All members of the sub-committee must abide by Gillingham Town Council's Code of Conduct.
- The sub-committee does not have any delegated powers.
- Membership of the sub-committee will be reviewed by the Finance and Policy Committee.
- Membership should include the Chair of the Finance and Policy committee and the lead members of Allotments and Burials, Estate Management, Five Year Action Plan, Sports and Leisure Panel sub-committees, *the Town Clerk and the RFO*.
- All members of the sub-committee are eligible to vote within the group.
- Members of the sub-committee should elect a lead member.
- The sub-committee will meet as and when deemed necessary by the lead member. Meetings may only take place when a minimum of 3 members are present.
- The lead member of the sub-committee will produce and submit regular written reports to the Finance and Policy Committee with recommendations, including budgetary and financial implications, when necessary.
- The sub-committee will monitor the s106 funding and report all findings to the Finance and Policy Committee.



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Minute no. 977

## Gillingham Town Council

### Report on Dorset Councils Free Parking Policy

Author: Jill Ezzard, Assistant Town Clerk

#### 1. Background - Information received from Dorset Councils

Dorset Councils will give a total of **6 free parking days** in Dorset Council car parks each year. This is made up of the following:

- At the request of the Town or Parish Council free parking in all Dorset Council car parks for **four** days each year, for events which generate valuable footfall for that town. These four days cannot be used in December.
- At the request of the Town or Parish Council free parking in all Dorset Council Town Centre car parks for that town on **one** weekday in December
- Free parking in all Dorset Council Town Centre car parks on **Small Business Saturday** in December. Please note that Small Business Saturday takes place on 2 December 2023.

No other days in December will be considered unless the Town Council or Local BID is willing to meet the cost of the lost income at an amount to be calculated by the Council's parking team based on average weekend costs for that time of year.

#### 2. Proposal

The Council should consider the following town events, for the 2023 allocation of four free car parking days:

1. Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May – Coronation Procession and Picnic
2. Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June – Gillingham in Gear
3. Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October – Annual Carnival
4. Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> November – Festive Lighting

The Council should consider one weekday in December for free parking.

#### 3. Recommendations

- That the 2023 free car parking days are allocated to 7<sup>th</sup> May, 10<sup>th</sup> June, 7<sup>th</sup> October and 25<sup>th</sup> November.
- That ----- is allocated as the weekday in December for free parking.

**Full Council – 27 February 2023****Minute no. 979**

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**Gillingham Town Council****Christmas Opening Hours 2023****Author: Assistant Town Clerk****1. Introduction – Public Holidays over Christmas**

A few staff members have asked for Christmas holiday dates to be agreed at the start of the leave year (April to March), so that they can plan their annual leave.

The dates highlighted are public holidays for 2023/24.

**Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> December****Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> December**Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> DecemberThursday, 28<sup>th</sup> DecemberFriday, 29<sup>th</sup> December**Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024**Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 – business as usual**2. Proposal**

Proposed Christmas working arrangements for Gillingham Town Council are:

**Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> December – public holiday****Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> December – public holiday**Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> December – statutory leaveThursday, 28<sup>th</sup> December – statutory leaveFriday, 29<sup>th</sup> December – Staff to take annual leave**Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 – public holiday**Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 – business as usual

All staff will use their two statutory leave days on Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> December and Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> December and will be required to take annual leave on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> December as per the staff handbook.

**3. Recommendation**

- **That Gillingham Town Council Offices are officially closed from Monday 25<sup>th</sup> December until Monday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 inclusive.**

Mayor’s Report February 2023

**Blandford Civic Day**

On Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> January, Deputy Mayor Cllr Barry von Clemens and I were invited to Blandford’s Civic Day by the Mayor and Mayoress of Blandford Forum. We visited the community fridge, a successful project set up by the council. We went on to visit the family-owned company, Bristol Maid - Hospital Metalcraft, a factory on Blandford Heights Business Park. The company makes hospital equipment including cabinetry distributed over the whole country and Europe; an extremely successful business and one that Blandford are extremely proud to promote. Our next visit was to nearby Iracraft, a business originally set up in Shaftesbury by the JCB Brothers. Iracraft makes all the chromed hydraulic steel poles used for making JCB diggers. What an interesting tour and history.



After a lunch at the Royal British Legion, we listened to a very interesting talk by the Blandford Town Clerk. The highlight of the talk was Blandford’s involvement in Motion for the Ocean. They have become the first inland council to become part of the countrywide project, aimed at being mindful about what is thrown in our rivers and ultimately ending up in the oceans. I was personally very moved by this issue, which prompted our move towards engaging Gillingham to become part of the project, especially as we are a town that is not sited on just one river but three.

We were then escorted to the Town Museum for a tour, finishing with afternoon tea and cake hosted by the curators of the museum.



## Tour of the town with the Neighbourhood Policing Team

On Friday 27<sup>th</sup> January, the Deputy Mayor, Town Clerk and I accompanied Sgt Matt Bradley, Inspector Turner and PCSO Vicky Biggs around the town to point out areas of concern regarding crime. The tour was informative and of benefit to both the police and the council.



## Visit to Tops Day Nursery

On Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February, I visited Tops Day Nursery in Gillingham as part of National Storytelling Week. I received a wonderful welcome and had the great pleasure of reading to the children.



## Visit to Le Neubourg - France

On Friday 10<sup>th</sup> February, I travelled to our twin town Le Neubourg, to help organise the next twinning visit to Gillingham in May 2023. The Town Mayor, Isabelle Vauquelin, extended an invitation to myself as Mayor of Gillingham and the president of Gillingham Town Twinning, David Lloyd and his wife Ellie, to a private tour of the town's castle built in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century. The town has been awarded an extremely generous grant by a Heritage Fund, equivalent to our National Trust, to restore the building. The project will take several years and will eventually become a museum for the town of Le Neubourg.



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**Full Council – 27 February 2023****Minute no. 981**

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**Report for Gillingham Town Council****Author: Cllr Val Potheary**

Dorset Council's budget of £348m for 2023-24 was approved by councillors at the Full Council meeting on 14 February. This continues the council's commitment to maintain frontline services, without the need for cuts to balance the budget. This year's budget setting exercise took place against a national background of extreme pressures for councils. The pressures include the high level of inflation which affects the cost of delivering council services, and also the continued growth in need for social care services as a result of the ageing population.

The overriding aim has been to protect the essential frontline council services on which local residents and businesses rely. The proposals do include a council tax increase; however, it has been kept to the minimum possible despite the high level of inflation and we continue to provide a range of support for those residents hardest hit by the cost of living.

**Cost of Living Help**

We have set aside £2M from our reserves to help residents with the cost-of-living crisis. This is a one-off allocation and we will use this to target financial support in the short-term and include some longer-term solutions to issues such as the challenge of energy costs for residents through property improvement schemes. More details next month.

**Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding is now open for applications**

The government's Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding (EBSS Alternative Funding) is now open for applications. The EBSS Alternative Funding is a payment of £400 to households who do not have a direct relationship with an energy supplier and therefore were unable to previously receive it. This includes residents living in park homes, houseboats or off the electricity grid or who pay for their energy through a landlord, housing manager or site owner. Applications can be made through an online form on the government website. Once approved, the funds will be distributed by Dorset Council.

Applications are now open to those residents who were unable to receive support under the original Energy Bills Support Scheme due to them not having a direct relationship with an energy supplier. Residents will be required to provide bank details as part of the online form which will naturally cause some nervousness. You will never be asked to apply for EBSS Alternative Funding by email or text and will never be sent a link to apply."

Applications can be made through the government form, which can be found by searching 'Apply for energy bill support if you do not get it automatically' into the gov.uk webpage search bar or through an online search engine.

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The form is now open for applications until it closes on 31 May 2023 at 23:59pm. Payment may take around 6 weeks following a successful application.

For residents who are unable to complete the form online, please contact the governments helpline on 0808 175 3287. This will be open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm.

For other cost of living help residents can visit our webpage at <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/cost-of-living-help>

### **Second home report to be given extra opportunities for consideration.**

Dorset Council has taken the decision to defer their “Council tax premiums on second homes and empty properties” report to allow more councillors to be involved before a decision is made. It will be discussed at Cabinet tomorrow.

### **Flu**

All primary school children and some secondary school children are eligible for the flu nasal spray vaccination this year, which is usually given at school. Information about school immunisations can be found by visiting: [www.dorsethealthcare.nhs.uk/schoolageimms](http://www.dorsethealthcare.nhs.uk/schoolageimms) Parents and carers of children aged 2 and 3 are encouraged to get a free vaccine for their child. This flu vaccine is also a nasal spray with no needles involved.

Most young children will not have encountered flu yet, particularly as it was largely kept at bay by COVID-19 restrictions in the past few years. This means they will not have built up any natural immunity to the virus, so it is particularly important for them to get a flu vaccine this year.

Dorset residents can find out more about who is eligible for the flu vaccine and how to get one by visiting [www.nhs.uk/flu](http://www.nhs.uk/flu)

### **National Empty Homes Week 2023: Monday February 27th to Sunday March 5<sup>th</sup>**

Cllr Val Potheary.