

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE HELD VIA THE ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING PLATFORM

21 APRIL 2020

At a virtual Meeting of the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee held on 21 April 2020:

PRESENT:

Dorchester Town Council	Councillors:	S. Biles F. Hogwood G. Jones (Chairman) F. Kent-Ledger R. Major
In Attendance		S. Hosford
	Officers:	S. Newman T. Hedger
Dorset Council	Councillors:	R. Biggs A. Canning L. Fry S. Jones D. Taylor
Ancient & Honourable Guild of Town Criers		A. Chisholm
Blue Badge Tourist Guides		T. Loasby
Dorchester Association		M. Rice
Dorchester Civic Society		T. James
Dorchester Chamber for Business		M. Woodgate
The Keep Military Museum		L. Gardner
Shire Hall Museum		A. King
National Trust (for Max Gate and Hardy's Cottage)		M. Stephen
In Attendance – Dorset History Centre		M. Gayton

25. **APOLOGIES**

No apologies were received.

26. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2020, a copy of which had been circulated, were confirmed and signed subject to R. Biggs being added to those in attendance, the addition of a 'y' to the word 'lotter' in Minute 18 and Honorary being changed to Honourable in the attendance.

27. **DECLARATIONS OF PRE-DETERMINATION**

There were no declarations of pre-determination.

28. **THE DEVELOPMENT OF A HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY**

(i) **Progress Report**

The Committee had before it a progress report from the Heritage Tourism Project Manager on the work that had been completed since the last meeting of the Committee together with the next steps for the project.

Members noted that the real time collection of visitor data was not going to be possible for the foreseeable future and that the shape of the overall offer, and how it was presented, might be different once the outcome of the pandemic crisis was better known. It was reported that there was historical visitor data but that organisations had so far not been willing to share it. There was also the possibility of obtaining the necessary data through online surveys. The Curator of The Keep Military Museum informed Members of the information available through an attitude tracker which tracked consumer sentiment on the impact of Covid-19.

Detailed consideration was given as to whether the project should be held in obedience for six months but it was felt that there were strands of the strategy that could be usefully progressed and that the community and businesses would welcome the emergence of a plan to get visitors to the town as soon as was possible. Members felt that a marketing strategy via social media and other means was important and that this could be something that the Town Council might want to investigate as a part of its immediate response to the crisis.

The Committee concluded that work on the strategy should continue focusing on those strands where the necessary information was available, that further attempts be made to get providers to share their historical visitor data, identify the emerging needs of the sector both now and in the future, digital and other marketing and finalising the work on the assets available in and around the town.

During discussion the Committee supported the idea of an archeological trail around the town as a part of the potential actions to emerge from the plan.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the progress report be noted and that work on the strategy continue.
- (2) That as a part of the Town Council's ongoing response to Covid, consideration should be given as to how some immediate social media marketing of the town's assets, with the aim of informing the community, wider public and potential visitors that the town and its visitor offer are still here and will have lots to offer once this situation is resolved.

(ii) SWOT Analysis

The Committee noted the SWOT analysis which had been prepared by the Heritage Tourism Project Manager. The Chairman requested that any comments or observations on the analysis be forwarded to himself, Clerk or Project Manager.

(iii) Heritage Tourism Audit of Assets – Appointment of Consultants

Members had before them a report by the Heritage Tourism Project Manager on the quotes which had been received from Heritage Tourism Specialists to both review the heritage tourism offer and suggest opportunities for improving the contribution of heritage assets to the overall visitor experience.

The Committee wished to discuss the potential contractors in detail and it was

RESOLVED

That in view of the fact that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the following matters the public and press representatives be excluded from this meeting during their discussion.

The Committee then considered both quotes in detail and the Heritage Tourism Project Manager gave additional details regarding the potential contractors. Members felt that it was very important that the whole of the community was involved in the journey via the workshops.

Following consideration Members felt that submission B was the preferred contractor but that prior to final appointment references be taken up and a presentation be made to the Committee.

RESOLVED

- (1) That submission B in the report is the preferred candidate.
- (2) That the preferred candidate provides contact details for at least two referees where the candidate has worked on similar projects.
- (3) That, prior to confirmation of appointment, the preferred candidate deliver a presentation to the Committee about its proposal and methodology
- (4) That work on the Heritage audit shall not commence (other than any desk based elements) until Coronavirus lock down conditions have been sufficiently lifted to allow public gatherings, such as the workshops proposed in the brief, to take place in real time and space as opposed to a virtual environment.

(The Committee resumed in public session)

29. **THOMAS HARDY VICTORIAN FAIR – 7 JUNE 2020**

The Chairman reported that the THVF would not take place on 7 June 2020. A decision would be taken in the near future as to whether to hold the Fair in September 2020 or postpone it until June 2021.

30. **QUESTIONS**

No questions had been received.

31. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

Chairman.....