



DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Council Offices, 19 North Square, Dorchester, Dorset. DT1 1JF
Telephone: (01305) 266861

Adrian Stuart, Town Clerk

14 October 2020

You are invited to a virtual meeting of the **DORCHESTER HERITAGE JOINT COMMITTEE** will be held in via the **ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING PLATFORM** on **TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2020** commencing at **7.00pm**.

You will be able to join the meeting by using the link -
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83135501264>

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrian Stuart'.

Town Clerk and Secretary to the Committee

Declaration of Interests

Members are reminded that it is their responsibility to disclose pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests where appropriate. A Member who declares a pecuniary interest must leave the room unless a suitable dispensation has been granted. A Member who declares a non-pecuniary interest may take part in the meeting and vote.

Membership

Dorset Council: R. Biggs, A. Canning, L. Fry, S. Jones and D. Taylor

Dorchester Town Council: S. Biles, F. Hogwood, G. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger and R. Major

The following Members may attend and speak but not vote:

A Chisholm (Ancient and Honourable Guild of Town Criers), Mr B Murphy (Duchy of Cornwall), T. James (Dorchester Civic Society), M. Woodgate (Dorchester Chamber for Business), L. Gardner (The Keep Military Museum), L. Poulsen (Dorchester Local Nature Reserve), J Murden (Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society), T Loasby (Blue Badge Tourist Guides) M Rice (Dorchester Association), Maria Gayton or S. Johnson (Dorset History Centre), Martin Stephen or Hannah Jefferson (National Trust (for Max Gate and Hardy's Cottage)), A King (Shire Hall)

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. **MINUTES**

To read, confirm and sign the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 21 July 2020 (copy enclosed).

3. **DECLARATIONS OF PREDETERMINATION**

Members to declare if they consider that they have predetermined or may predetermine in the relation to the following items and to indicate the action they will be taking when the item is considered.

NOTE: It is the responsibility of individual Members to decide whether they have predetermined in relation to an item. Members who make a declaration should leave the room during the discussion and voting.

Members who may wish to take part in the decision making process as a member of another committee, at which the item is to be considered, should decide whether they wish to participate at this stage.

4. **SALISBURY FIELDS – FORDINGTON VICARAGE INFORMATION BOARD**

To consider the first draft of the new information board to be located at Salisbury Fields (enclosed).

5. **HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY**

To consider the following reports:-

- (a) Heritage Audit Progress and Product Development – Draft Final Report by Red Kite Environment (enclosed).
- (b) Strategy Development Progress Report (enclosed).
- (c) Draft Heritage Tourism Strategy – Consultation Outcomes and Proposed Changes (enclosed).

6. **HERITAGE OPEN DAY - 2020**

To receive a report by the Chairman on the success of the 2020 Heritage Open Day (enclosed).

7. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

To note the Committee meeting dates for 2021 as follows:-

- Tuesday 19 January 2021 at 7.00pm
- Tuesday 20 April 2021 at 7.00pm
- Tuesday 20 July 2021 at 7.00pm
- Tuesday 19 October 2021 at 7.00pm

8. **QUESTIONS**

To receive questions submitted by Members in writing to the Dorchester Town Clerk and in respect of which the appropriate notice has been given.

9. **URGENT ITEMS**

To consider any other items that the Chairman decides are urgent.

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE HELD VIA THE ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING PLATFORM

21 JULY 2020

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

PRESENT:

| | | |
|---|--------------|---|
| Dorchester Town Council | Councillors: | S. Biles F. Hogwood G. Jones (Chairman) F. Kent-Ledger R. Major |
| | Officers: | S. Newman T. Hedger |
| Dorset Council | Councillors: | R. Biggs S. Jones D. Taylor |
| In attendance | | Councillor S. Hosford and M. Chutter |
| Ancient & Honourable Guild of Town Criers | | A. Chisholm |
| Blue Badge Tourist Guides | | T. Loasby |
| Dorchester Association | | M. Rice |
| Dorchester Chamber for Business | | M. Woodgate |
| Dorchester Civic Society | | I. Gosling |
| Dorchester Local Nature Reserve | | L. Poulsen |
| Dorset History Centre | | S. Johnson |
| National Trust (for Max Gate and Hardy's Cottage) | | M. Stephen |
| The Keep Military Museum | | L. Gardner |

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Canning and L. Fry (Dorset Council) and A. King (Shire Hall Museum).

2. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED

That Councillor G. Jones be elected Chairman for the remainder of the 2020-21 Council Year.

3. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED

That Councillor A. Canning be elected Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the 2020-21 Council Year.

4. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the special meeting held on 26 May 2020, a copy of which had been circulated, were confirmed and signed.

5. **NEW MEMBER**

Members welcomed Linda Poulsen to the meeting who had been appointed as the Dorchester Local Nature Reserve representative to the Committee.

6. **DORSET HISTORY CENTRE**

The Committee considered amending the terms of reference of the Committee so as to allow a representative from the Dorset History Centre to become part of its membership.

RESOLVED

That the Dorset History Centre be included within the membership of the Committee.

7. **DECLARATIONS OF PRE-DETERMINATION**

There were no declarations of pre-determination.

8. **SALISBURY FIELDS - MOULE INFORMATION BOARD**

Members were reminded that the Committee had previously agreed to a proposal from local resident Mark Chutter for an information board in memory of his grandmother and regarding Reverend Henry Moule and the vicarage to be located at Salisbury Fields. Mr Chutter had produced some text and provided some images which had previously been shown to the Committee, that could be used to form the basis of the information board. The total cost of producing the board in the existing information board style would be around £2,200.

The Committee thanked Mr Chutter for his work and agreed that the text form the basis of an information board at Salisbury Fields but that the amount of text be reduced with additional detail being able to be found through a QR tag on the board. The Curator from The Keep and Councillor David Taylor offered to help revise the text to be agreed by the Dorchester East Members. It was also agreed that the £1,400 which remained in the Committee's reserves for information boards/blue plaques be contributed towards the project with the remaining funds being provided by Mr Chutter.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the text provided by Mr Chutter form the basis of an information board at Salisbury Fields and that the Curator of The Keep Military Museum and Councillor D Taylor help revise the text to approximately 200 words.
- (2) That £1,400 be committed to the project from the Committee's information board / blue plaque reserve.

9. HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY

(i) Progress Report

Members received and noted the progress report of the Heritage Tourism Project Manager which had been circulated with the agenda.

(ii) Heritage Audit Progress and Update

The Committee considered a report by the Heritage Tourism Project Manager which updated it on the progress being made with the Heritage Audit being undertaken by Red Kite. The report also included a progress report from Red Kite.

Members felt that it was important to include information regarding Dorchester as a Market Town as well as the brewery within the work being undertaken.

The report set out a proposal for public consultation which included a mixture of direct email contact to those local individuals and organisations who had an interest in the project plus a Facebook survey which would capture views from people who had visited Dorchester as well as those who had not. There would be an additional cost of £1,275 to undertake the digital survey which could be accommodated from within the Heritage Tourism project budget. Whilst agreeing the consultation process the need to include young people within it was noted.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the progress report be noted.
- (2) That a digital survey be undertaken at a cost of £1,275.

(iii) Draft Heritage Tourism Strategy

Members received a presentation from the Heritage Tourism Project Manager on the draft Heritage Tourism Strategy which had been circulated to the Committee. The draft Strategy had been examined by the Steering Group which had made some comments on the action plan which were set out in the covering report. The report also set out the proposed arrangements for consultation with the community, businesses, business organisations and interest groups.

The Heritage Tourism Project Manager responded to Members detailed questions and comments on the draft Strategy which included the future of a visitor centre, training of volunteers, accommodation provision including camps sites and provision of cycle routes, electric vehicle charge points, electric bike hire etc.

Members felt that the following matters were important to the success of the Strategy:-

- The need for the proposed new post to drive the finalised Strategy forward with an agreed critical path and key performance indicators.
- That the future threat to the natural environment of the proposed housing development to the north of Dorchester needed to be addressed in the Strategy.
- That as many groups, organisations, volunteers, businesses be used as ambassadors for the town.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the draft Heritage Tourism Strategy be agreed for consultation.
- (2) That the outstanding comments from the Steering Group and the Committee be considered at the appropriate stage.
- (3) That the consultation process and timeline, as set out in the report, be agreed.

10. **LETS EXPLORE DORCHESTER PUBLICATION**

The Committee considered a report by the Heritage Tourism Project Manager which set out some options for the 7,500 copy stock of the 'Lets Explore Dorchester' publication presently held in the Council's Depot.

RESOLVED

- (1) That a copy of the publication be given to all 5-11 years olds in Dorchester and nearby village schools at a time away from the start of the new term in September.
- (2) That the publication be offered for sale to the TIC and other interested outlets including attractions, accommodation providers, shops, and cafes for a cost price of £1.65 and a retail price of £2.50. Copies supplied to be “invoiced on net sale” minimising the risk to the outlet, reducing the administration at the Town Council.

11. **QUESTIONS**

No questions had been received.

12. **URGENT ITEMS**

It was reported that the Thomas Hardy Trail board located at Max Gate was in a very poor condition and that a number of the other trail boards were in a similarly poor state. It was noted that the Hardy Trail project was originally undertaken by Dorset County Council and the Committee requested that Dorset Council be asked what its intention was with regard to the future of the trail / boards.

Chairman.....

Fordington Vicarage

Fordington's rich tapestry of history stretches back over 1000 years. St. Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury, was given Salisbury Field by his royal uncle, William the Conqueror. Situated in the field, and surrounded by copper beeches and sycamore trees, stood Fordington Vicarage, dating back to 1222 when St George's Church received its first vicar, Robert de Dorcestre.

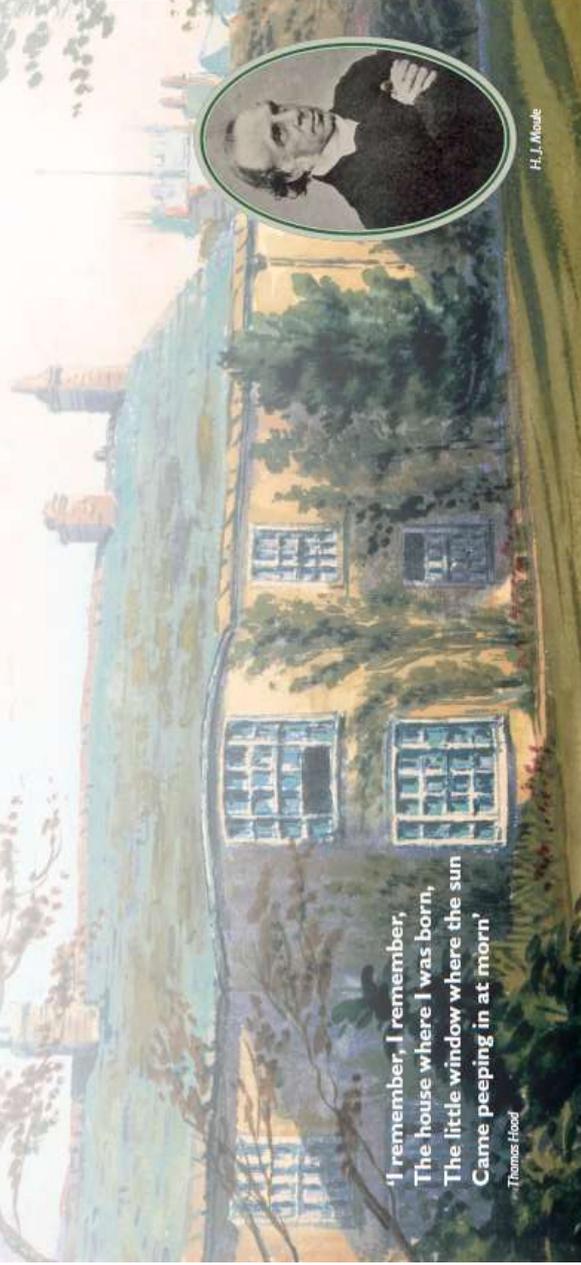
From 1829 to 1880, the famous Moule family lived here. Henry Moule was vicar of Fordington for over 50 years and helped the poor during the cholera outbreaks in 1854 and 1855, inventing an earth closet to help improve sanitation. Henry and his wife, Mary, had eight sons who were brilliant scholars. One son, H. J., became Curator of the Dorset County Museum and an accomplished painter.

The house had strong literary connections during this time. William Barnes gave poetry readings and fellow poet and

novelist, Thomas Hardy, was a frequent visitor. It became a home of Christian education and scholarship, and was fondly remembered by those who wrote about it.

In 1912, the O'Rourke family moved to the house. May O'Rourke became secretary to Thomas Hardy at Max Gate. May typed the dramatised version of 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles'. She often picked flowers from the vicarage garden to place on the Moule family graves in Fordington Churchyard.

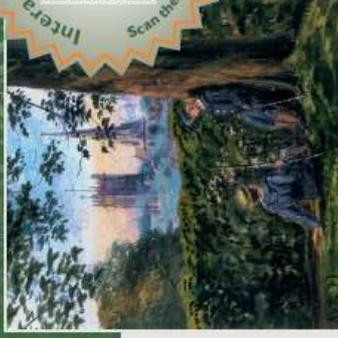
From 1942, the house was an idyllic home to the Damon family for nearly 30 years. Faith Irene Damon, affectionately known as Dolly, with the O'Rourke sisters, fought hard to prevent the demolition of the house in 1971. It made way for social housing and Dolly was the last resident to leave the ancient building. Dolly passed away at the age of 93, in August 2017. A dedication to her is on the bench next to this board.



**'I remember, I remember,
The house where I was born,
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn'**

Thomas Hood

H.J. Moule



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DORCHESTER
HERITAGE
COMMITTEE



DORSET
COUNTY
MUSEUM

DORCHESTER HERITAGE JOINT COMMITTEE - 20 OCTOBER 2020

HERITAGE AUDIT AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

DRAFT FINAL REPORT FROM RED KITE ENVIRONMENT

Background

1. At its special meeting on 26th May 2020, this Committee resolved to appoint Red Kite Environment to carry out a brief to complete a Heritage Audit and to suggest opportunities for improving the contribution of heritage assets to the overall visitor experience.

2. The brief stated its requirements as follows:

"1) The Audit

- a) Review the audit (informal audit referred to in paragraph 1 above) and suggest appropriate additions under each of the four themes (general history, people, places, events).
- b) Identify the assets currently most likely to be attractors to potential visitors to our town.

You should allow for conducting one or more focus groups involving the heritage and history groups and interested parties, and tourism industry in the town at this part of the audit and review.

2) Product Offer and Product Development

- c) Recommend current story lines that will link together heritage assets from across the town, both paid to enter and not, and encourage the visitor to stay longer and/or return to our town.
- d) Recommend areas where new story lines may be developed but which may require some initial preparatory work.

3) Presentation

- e) Recommend best means of presentation and publication (on line) of the audit from its current raw form in order to be of benefit to those interested in promoting and developing Heritage Tourism in the town.

For the purpose of this study, a visitor may be a relatively local resident (living in the county of Dorset) who may be attracted to our town by its offer, or a staying visitor attracted from further afield and staying in or close to Dorset."

3. The original brief specified holding workshops or other public meetings as part of the consultation on and development of the new "visitor product" offer and opportunities in the town. The continued impact of COVID19, social distancing and inability to hold local public meetings rendered this impossible. This Committee therefore resolved (21 July 2020) to fund community research via social media.

Report

4. Red Kite's Draft Final report and recommendations is appended.

Recommendation

5. The Committee is asked to approve the final report, with any minor alterations arising from this meeting being delegated to the Chairman for final approval.

T Hedger
Heritage Tourism Project Manager

Red Kite

Heritage Tourism Audit for Dorchester
Dorchester Town Council



Draft report

October 2020

Heritage Tourism Audit for Dorchester

Dorchester Town Council



Red Kite

Red Kite Environment

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Summary

This audit is the next stage in Dorchester Town Council's ongoing assessment of the town's heritage assets and opportunities. The audit has three aims.

1. It shows the quantity and complexity of Dorchester's heritage assets.
2. It identifies which heritage assets could best support the development of heritage tourism in the town, and makes suggestions about how that development could be best managed for the benefit of Dorchester's economy and its heritage assets.
3. It discusses the possibilities for, and the challenges in, developing marketing and interpretation approaches that could enhance visitor experiences of Dorchester.

The audit of heritage sites and the proposals for developing heritage tourism have been guided by the results of a digital survey of residents and current and potential visitors, and consultation with key organisations. The survey was completed by 276 local Dorchester residents and 116 current and potential visitors from a wider region of approximately 1.5 hours travel time. It was undertaken in September – October 2020.

The audit explains that heritage tourism needs both skilled management and marketing if heritage assets are to become attractive tourism products while retaining their physical and cultural integrity and their authenticity.

Suggestions are made about how Dorchester as a community, trading centre and as an authentic conservation-rich town could benefit from a carefully planned sustainable tourism strategy to boost its income from visitation in this highly competitive field.

1 Introduction

As the county town for Dorset, Dorchester has, since Roman times, been a major commercial and political centre. It has seen settlement since pre-history, with powerful Iron Age tribes, a Roman garrison with walls and aqueduct, invasions by Vikings, Saxons and Normans. This was followed by medieval prosperity with textile trading and manufacturing, catastrophic fires in the 17th and 18th centuries, Georgian redevelopment and then expansion from Victorian times with industry, connected by railways to Southampton, London and Bristol.

Dorchester has witnessed significant events such as the trials after the Monmouth Rebellion, the Puritan emigration to America, and the trial of the Tolpuddle Martyrs. It has also seen a flourishing of arts and culture with its literary and artistic connections through Thomas Hardy, William Barnes and Elisabeth Frink. This has resulted in Dorchester becoming a place with a rich and varied history, a surprisingly homogenous architecture with many stone-built Georgian buildings constructed as a

result of the fires, and, through its location next to the River Frome and its water meadows, a diverse and accessible natural environment.

Dorchester's heritage assets are special because they:

- are relatively unknown and very well preserved
- are complete, in the sense that they include Iron Age, Roman, medieval, and eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth and even twenty-first century sites
- are easy to access
- are all within easy walking distance of the town centre and of each other.
- include a series of major museums which together form a "Museums Mile" in the town centre.
- include both man-made and natural heritage features.

But, like many similar towns, Dorchester is at a key point in its history. It is experiencing strong and conflicting pressures for change. The seemingly inexorable rise of on-line shopping is leading to numerous shop closures, the likely loss of its authentic market town character, loss of jobs and declining local services of many types. The Covid 19 pandemic has accelerated these changes, and currently there is no sign of the pandemic being overcome.

Dorchester is also of increasing interest to national house builders wishing to capitalise on its ability to offer – so far – the now popular uncrowded middle-class lifestyles away from the big cities, yet with direct rail links to London. These possible developments are likely to be of special potential interest to an influx of retired people, attracted partly because of Dorchester's rich natural and built heritage. Some residents believe that Dorchester's economy could diversify into heritage tourism, helping to justify heritage conservation expenditure, re-opening shops, providing jobs and helping to support community services including transport, hospitality, entertainment and health services. This could also prove attractive to younger people – balancing out trends towards an otherwise ageing population.

But other residents are not in favour of tourism, fearing that it could result in over-tourism, and change the character of the town for the worse. They may, or may not, know that these discussions are going on in many small towns across the UK and in Europe generally. They may not know that to attract visitors to small towns like Dorchester will not be easy: tourism is a highly competitive market. Over-tourism could be hard to achieve in Dorchester, and the tourism products need to be special, fashionable, and in line with the expectations of the market. Tourism is also increasingly driven by the opportunity to get new experiences; and experiences have to be designed. Earlier consultancy reports on the Dorchester – Weymouth area show that Dorchester has a specialised, up-market, older and much smaller market than Weymouth. The recent on-line survey for this audit confirms this, but adds that families with children are also interested in Dorchester's heritage.

Finally, those in fear of over-tourism may not know that it can be avoided by careful use of Sustainable Tourism development and management strategies. This concept is described in more detail below.

2 The Heritage Assets list and Heritage Audit

Background

Dorchester Town Council produced an initial listing of the heritage assets of the town and its immediate surroundings in 2019. The listing included places, people, events and general observations about the town and was presented in an Excel spreadsheet. This listing accompanies this document.

The list of heritage assets was compiled from:

- A list of buildings on the Heritage England 'National Heritage List for England'
- A listing of the blue and other plaques in the town
- 'An Illustrated History of Dorchester', by Jo Draper, published by Dovecote Press
- 'The Buildings of England – Dorset' by Pevsner et al (2018 edition)
- Local knowledge of Dorchester and its surrounding area within Dorset

Heritage Audit

In April 2020 Dorchester Town Council commissioned Red Kite Environment (RKE) to develop the initial listing and produce a heritage audit for the town as a supporting document for the Town Council's Tourism Strategy. RKE was asked to identify the key heritage features that could be used to encourage tourism in Dorchester and to suggest ways in which the town's heritage could be marketed and promoted.

RKE staff walked the four town trails and visited many of the heritage sites presented in the heritage listing. These included sites in Dorchester town and in the surrounding area. Photographs were taken of many of these sites and are included in the audit spreadsheet.

Using the list of heritage assets as a starting point a selection has been made of those heritage sites and features that are likely to be most attractive to visitors and tourists, and these have been described in more detail in sheet 5, titled RKE Heritage Audit, of the Excel Spreadsheet. This can be used by the Council and businesses as a reference resource and can be updated as required.

The key heritage sites were selected by a combination of three approaches:

1. Consultation with a list of organisations and individuals, suggested by the Heritage Tourism Officer and the chair of the Heritage Committee. A list of consultees is included in Appendix 1.
2. A digital questionnaire survey of Dorchester residents and people living 1.5 hour's travel time of Dorchester, who were interested in heritage and in the town.
3. RKE's experience in developing interpretation for sites with cultural and natural heritage, and 30 years' experience of sustainable tourism management work in Europe, Asia and the Americas, concentrating on architectural conservation, rural and small-town regeneration, private – public sector partnership creation and protected area management.

3 Audiences

There are no overall statistics for the current numbers of visitors to Dorchester. The Tourist Information Centre (TIC) recorded the numbers of people visiting the centre and figures are available from 2014. The TIC was formally self-contained until March 2017, answered counter enquiries and sold local goods. In April 2017 it moved to the library and ceased having goods for sale. Since moving, fewer people have visited the TIC and this is reflected in the figures. The figures are:

| Year | Visitor Numbers | Counter Enquiries | % locals | % visitors |
|---------|-----------------|-------------------|----------|------------|
| 2014-15 | 173,441 | estimated 25% | appx 40% | appx 60% |
| 2015-16 | 170,311 | | | |
| 2016-17 | 153,990 | | | |
| 2017-18 | | 33,031 | | |
| 2018-19 | | 27,022 | | |
| 2019-20 | | 27,181 | | |

The Blue Sail report of June 2016¹ identified the investment needs for tourism for Western Dorset. It considered that Dorchester has a clear identity as a cultural destination. It is an attractive town with good shopping and eating out facilities, and 'has the potential to become a stronger year-round short break heritage destination.' Its tourism is currently heavily reliant on day trips from holidaymakers staying elsewhere, especially Weymouth, as holiday accommodation is limited, particularly hotels and guest houses.

'Dorchester is a cultural offer, appealing to the highly sought after 'cultural tourist'. These cultural tourists are affluent couples, highly discerning, well-travelled in the UK and internationally, looking for high-quality, unique and meaningful experiences and not prepared to compromise on any aspect of their experience. The environment, food and drink and accommodation offer must all meet their expectations.'

Typical visitors to Dorchester were found to be aged 40+, in socio-demographic groups A and B, living within two hours travel time north and east of Dorset and are looking for:

- Rounded experiences.
- Character, quality, distinctive accommodation (hotels, guest houses, self-catering), independent restaurants and cafes serving quality food, independent quirky shops.
- Historic environment with good public realm and public spaces.
- Distinctive cultural attractions, history, heritage, crafts, local festivals and events.
- Relaxation and time together.

¹ Western Dorset Growth Corridor Development of Tourism Product & Offer, Blue Sail, June 2016

4 The Digital Survey

RKE's original bid proposed running focus groups in Dorchester during the summer of 2020 to gather residents' views and opinions on the heritage of the town. However, the restrictions imposed as a result of the Covid pandemic made it impossible to run focus groups, and two digital surveys were undertaken instead.

Although it was disappointing not to be able to run focus groups and discuss the issues with local residents, the digital surveys gathered more information from a greater number of respondents than would have been possible through face-to-face meetings and also gathered information from previous and potential visitors living within 1.5 hours' travel time of Dorchester.

SurveyMonkey Questionnaires

The survey was carried out using SurveyMonkey, a software company that provides surveys and "back-end" programmes. Two questionnaires were developed; one for Dorchester residents and the other for people from a wider region, approximately 1.5 hours travel time from Dorchester. The wider region survey targeted people interested in heritage and Dorchester, living within 10 miles of the major towns and cities in an arc from Southampton to Exeter. It included Bournemouth, Poole, Weymouth, Shaftesbury, Swindon, Bath, Bristol, Taunton and Yeovil.

The two surveys were designed to be compatible, with some similar questions, enabling the results to be amalgamated where appropriate. The questionnaire questions and the responses to each question are provided in Excel files to accompany this report.

Questionnaire duration and responses

The SurveyMonkey surveys ran concurrently for 4 weeks, from 10 September to 4 October. At least 69,016 people saw one of 5 advertisements on Facebook inviting them to help look after Dorchester's heritage. When the survey closed, a total of 392 people had completed the surveys; 276 local Dorchester residents and 116 from the wider region.

Profile of respondents

The distributions of age ranges for the respondents were:

| Town | |
|-------------------|--------|
| Under 18 | 0% |
| 18-24 | 3.93% |
| 25-34 | 6.99% |
| 35-44 | 13.10% |
| 45-54 | 14.41% |
| 55-64 | 22.71% |
| 65+ | 35.37% |
| Prefer not to say | 3.49% |

| Wider region | |
|---------------------|-------|
| Under 18 | 0% |
| 18-24 | 1.22% |

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| 25-34 | 10.98% |
| 35-44 | 25.61% |
| 45-54 | 26.83% |
| 55-64 | 17.05% |
| 65+ | 15.85% |
| Prefer not to say | 2.44% |

The respondents from the town, therefore, were generally more senior than those living outside Dorchester. Respondents from Dorchester were 94% white/white British, with 3.93% preferring not to say. Respondents from outside Dorchester were 93% White/white British, with 4.88% preferring not to say.

The question that attracted most responses on the Facebook surveys was: Can you spare 10 minutes to help protect Dorchester's heritage? The image that attracted most responses on the Facebook SurveyMonkey survey was of The Keep Museum.

Key findings from the digital survey

The questionnaire responses included tickboxes to answer specific questions and invitations to make comments. The responses of both questionnaires are in the accompanying Excel files. The main points are:

- For Dorchester **residents** the heritage stories that are considered most interesting are Thomas Hardy, followed by Neolithic, Iron Age and Roman sites in Dorchester and the Tolpuddle Martyrs. For the **wider region respondents**, the most interesting heritage stories are Neolithic, Iron Age and Roman sites, historic buildings and architecture and green spaces and wildlife.
- The most popular museums for **residents** are County Museum, Shire Hall and The Keep.
- The museums/exhibitions that would be most recommended by both **residents** and the **wider region respondents** are Shire Hall, County Museum and The Keep.
- The most visited heritage sites by **residents** are Maiden Castle, Maumbury Rings and the Thomas Hardy Statue.
- The sites most likely to be recommended by **residents** are Maiden Castle and the Frome Riverside Walk. The sites most recommended by the **wider region respondents** are Maiden Castle and Maumbury Rings.
- The most popular events attended by **residents** are the Dorset County Show, the Dorchester Christmas Cracker, the Thomas Hardy Victorian Fair and Heritage Open Days.
- The events most likely to be recommended by **residents** are the Dorset County Show and the Heritage Open Days. The events most likely to be recommended by the **wider region respondents** are the Thomas Hardy Fair, the Cider Festival, the Heritage Open Days and the Dorchester Christmas Cracker though the weighted average score puts Dorchester Literary Festival as the most likely.
- The most popular description of Dorchester as a tourist destination is 'Dorchester is perfect for history lovers', followed by 'Dorchester has a great range of nature walks, trails and green spaces' and 'Dorchester is a great place to take children'.
- Comments on potential ways of attracting visitors include:
 - Make more of local produce.

- Support and attract new local independent shops.
- Local pubs and cafes are an attraction, more independent restaurants are needed.
- Create a quality farmers' market that could be 'the beating heart of the town'.
- Make more of history, arts and nature.

Selection of comments

The responses include many comments, some of which are detailed and provide a wealth of perspectives about Dorchester and its heritage. The following is a selection of the more detailed comments from Dorchester residents.

Heritage sites

'The tunnels from Judge Jeffries that run to the old court room and Fordington, I believe. These would make an excellent tourist attraction'

'Places linked to Dorchester's role during WWI: Colliton House; site of prisoner of war camp, with hospital; memorial to German PoWs in Fordington Cemetery.'

'Old hospital site and well in Princess street, Henge in Waitrose car park, Henge in field off Casterbridge Road and Conquers Barrow, Water Meadows. Tunnels under the town.'

Heritage stories

'I think there is a historical/heritage story which is very important because it gives the town its special character and, in a sense, underpins the most significant of the historical developments mentioned above. It is the link between the town and its countryside.'

'The story of the development of the town over the centuries eg main employers such as brewing and local government. How the town has served as the market town for the local area and the connections that were made with the surrounding hinterland including agriculture and associated industries.'

Places to recommend to others

'Athelhampton is interesting but not so child friendly. Maiden Castle is a great walk and fascinating site and Maumbury rings is both strange and convenient to visit! the river walk is lovely, well-used and a best route to the Sun!'

Events

'Dorset County show is without doubt the best Dorchester attraction – a fantastic mix of tradition, commerce, family fun, competition (both agriculture, horticulture and craft), produce, shopping and entertainment – all with a Dorset theme.'

'The independent shops that I have used in Dorchester have excellent service and quality goods and county town butchers and the independent bakery I shop at deserve a special mention...'

‘Dorchester has so much going for it but its Main Street seems to have been left to fall down with empty rundown buildings other than multiple takeaways, whilst money has been spent on opening up new areas drawing people away from the main shopping area.’

5 Key findings of the heritage audit

Primary and secondary sites, people and events

The original Heritage Asset list contained 338 sites, 10 key historic people associated with the town and 28 events within the town and immediate parishes. Thirty new sites, people and events have been added to the original Heritage Asset list.

The heritage audit and the digital surveys have identified the following with potential for interpreting to visitors and residents:

- 22 primary sites and 42 secondary sites
- 3 primary people and 11 secondary people
- 5 primary events and 3 secondary events

Assets in *italics* are additions to the original Heritage Asset list.
Assets with heritage interpretation potential are in **red** font.

The 22 primary sites

Hardy’s Cottage
Max Gate
County Museum
Maumbury Rings
Roman Town House
Maiden Castle
Dorset Martyr’s Sculpture
Drummer sculpture
Poundbury
Kingston Maurward
High East and West Street

Dorset Shepherd
Frome Riverside Walk
Nature Trail
Borough Gardens
Town Walks
Great Field
Shire Hall Museum
The Keep Museum
Fairfield Market
Brewery Square
South Street

The 42 secondary sites

Thomas Hardy Statue
Stinsford Church
South Street Hardy Plaque
Old Post Office war memorial
Barclays Bank
Greys Bridge
Poundbury Hillfort
Roman Wall remains
Henge post holes
Roman Baths
Ceramic panels in Waitrose lift area

Dorchester 700 tapestry
POW camp
Napper’s Mite
German War Memorial
Fordington
Community Orchard and Farm
All Saints wildlife garden
High Street listed buildings
Queen Mother’s Sculpture
Royal Oak Inn
The Old Hospital

Ferrey, Crickmall and Hardy buildings

War Memorial, Lutyens

DTC WW1 memorial

Holy Trinity Church

St Peter's Church

All Saints Church Fordington

Town Pump

Salisbury Fields

Dinosaur Museum

Tutankhamun Museum

Terracotta Warriors Museum

Teddy Bear Museum

Specialist shops

Micro breweries

Delicatessens

Kings Arms

The White Hart

Historic Inns and hotels

Plaza Cinema

Antelope Walk

Primary people

Thomas Hardy

Judge George Jeffreys

Elisabeth Frink

Secondary people

William Barnes

Shirley Page

Tolpuddle Martyrs

Frederick Treves

Cowper Powys

Tom Roberts

Tracy Chevalier

Minette Walters

Rev John White

Henry Moule

Denzil Hollies

Primary events

Dorset County Show

Dorchester Christmas Cracker

Thomas Hardy Victorian Fair

Heritage Open Days

Dorchester Literary Festival

Secondary events

Farmers Market

Cider Festival

Outdoor music and theatre

Urban Tree Festival

6 Developing Dorchester's heritage for tourism

Themes for marketing and interpretation

The sites, people and events are allocated into six themes that capitalise and centre on Dorchester's unique heritage assets or 'selling points'. These themes can be used to plan the marketing and interpretation of Dorchester's heritage assets. They are listed below with key sites, people and events for each theme.

1. Thomas Hardy Country

Hunt down the history and heritage that inspired Hardy's writing.

- *Hardy's Cottage*
- *Max Gate*
- *Thomas Hardy sculpture and plaque*
- *Stinsford Church*
- *Thomas Hardy Visitor Centre*

- Thomas Hardy Victorian Fair
- Dorset Literary Festival

2. Internationally and nationally significant archaeology and history

From henge to hillfort; Romans to rebellion, walk in the footsteps Dorchester's ancestors.

- Maiden Castle
- Maumbury Rings
- Roman Town House
- Judge Jeffreys
- Tolpuddle Martyrs
- Heritage Open Days
- County Museum displays and artefacts

3. A town with centuries of creative thinking

A town rich in beautiful buildings, sculpture and creative thinking.

- Poundbury urban village
- Kingston Maurward
- Dorset Martyrs
- William Barnes
- Elisabeth Frink
- Henry Moule
- Rev John White
- Transition and Fairtrade town
- Heritage Open Days
- Dorchester Literary Festival

4. A compact and green town, close to nature and easily explored by walking.

Amble along avenues relax by the river and take time out in the park.

- Town walks
- Riverside walk and nature trail
- Borough Gardens
- Salisbury Fields
- Great Field
- Urban Tree Festival

5. Marvellous museums

Culture, coffee and cake along a museum mile.

- County Museum
- Shire Hall Museum
- The Keep Museum
- Heritage Open Days

6. Vibrant town with specialist shops and markets, and attractive inns and cafés

Chain stores, small stores, bars, bistros, markets and microbreweries; there's something for everyone.

- Historic inns and hotels

- South Street
- Antelope Walk
- Fairfield Market
- Brewers Square
- Farmers market
- Dorset County Show
- Dorchester Christmas Cracker
- Cider Festival

7 The background and context of heritage tourism

How does tourism work?

Tourism dates back to the eighteenth century. Modern tourism is, however, a post 1950 creation. Since then it has become a national and international fast-growing activity, expanding its visitor numbers and becoming not just one market but many **niche** markets. Heritage tourism is one of those many niches.

The supply side of tourism is essentially about income and profit for its providers. If tourism cannot pay its way it cannot survive. Tourism is no longer a highly seasonal activity, it is year round, and heritage tourism is an especially non-seasonal activity. The market demand side of tourism is, however, very competitive and requires skilled marketing, and relevant and satisfying product development, often including regular product developments and a supply of new events and attractions.

What is Sustainable Tourism?

Sustainable tourism is a concept created in the European Alps in the late 1980s to control and plan tourism, protecting landscapes, townscapes and traditional ways of life from the impacts of tourism's rapid growth. It has since become a world-wide concept backed by research findings and a range of tested management tools. The concept is backed by the UK government, by many other national, regional and local governments, and by industry bodies including the UN's World Tourism Organization and the tourism industry's World Travel and Tourism Council.

Sustainable tourism is a positive approach intended to reduce the tensions and friction created by the complex interactions between the tourism industry, visitors, the environment and the communities which are host to holidaymakers. It is an approach which involves working for the long-term viability and quality of both natural and human resources. It is not antigrowth, but it acknowledges that there are limits to growth. Those limits will vary considerably from place to place, and according to the management practices available. Sustainable tourism planning techniques are used in many National Parks, architectural Conservation Areas, and World Heritage sites. Locally, sustainable tourism policies have been embraced by South Somerset, parts of West Dorset, and West Oxfordshire.

Sustainable tourism's success requires partnership working between tourism interests, local government planning policies and the communities involved. The aspirations and knowledge of tourism businesses, community concerns and natural /

built heritage issues are, following stakeholder consultations, brought together in a sustainable tourism strategy agreed to, and managed by, the local or regional sustainable tourism partnership. An independent broker normally acts as chairperson, with access to independent technical advice as necessary. Research shows that the skills of the broker are central to the success of most partnerships.

Sustainable tourism development and management strategies

Dorchester needs a Sustainable Tourism Development and Management Strategy if it is to create a viable, long term heritage conservation policy which can use tourism revenues to support the local economy. The strategy can be designed to:

- Create a viable long-term heritage conservation policy which can use tourism revenues as a tool to justify the conservation of specific and collective heritage sites.
- Use the income from tourism spending to stop further shop closures, and help re-use empty shops as new retail and hospitality sites.
- Develop new jobs, while helping to preserve existing service sector jobs.
- Stimulate new overnight accommodation provision, providing high levels of locally retained income.
- Reduce reliance on low yield day trip tourism, which can bring damaging impacts to the character and fabric of the town.
- Support and encourage existing and new public transport systems and avoid pressure on town centre car parking.

Research shows that few tourists travel alone, and that successful destinations need more than one market niche. Heritage tourism needs to be backed therefore by quality shopping, food and entertainment / cultural attractions.

Is all sustainable tourism the same?

No – there are many different types. Even mass sun/sea/sand tourism sites can be made *more* sustainable by reducing the emissions of the tourists travelling there, reducing emissions from air-conditioning or heating, using local and or more organic food etc. Of the various forms of more sustainable tourism, a rare type known as Slow Tourism is probably most suitable in Dorchester.

Slow Tourism as a concept grew from the now well established Slow Food movement, and from the less well established Slow Cities concept. It is closely linked to Wellness Tourism, which concentrates on tourism which relaxes people, making them fitter and healthier. Walking and reduced car use is central. Dorchester has excellent easy walking opportunities.

Dorchester is special in that it has two main line railway stations very close to the town centre, linked to London and the South East, and to Bristol and Bath and onwards to the Midlands and South Wales. Older travellers can use Senior Rail Cards. As already noted, much of Dorchester's heritage is within walking distance of

the town centre. There is an adequate public bus service: older guests have free travel on most of these bus services. For some nearby but less easy to reach destinations, vintage bus hire could be set up in summer via Dekkabus in Poole, Shaftesbury and District Motor Services and other possibilities.

The on-line potential tourist survey showed interest in locally produced food, a now fashionable product, closely associated with Wellness Tourism.

Dorchester's brand (see below) could benefit from being the first UK small town destination to link to Slow Tourism. Tourism attracts greatest press and media coverage more easily if it is new and eye catching.

8 Marketing and interpretation for heritage tourism

Creating a Dorchester Heritage Brand

Brand creation has an important role in modern marketing. A brand name can communicate a complex message quickly, an important asset in world of crowded competition. Tourism Destination choices are taken according to the perceived fashion status of a destination. Marketing which stresses the quality, product availability in terms of special experiences to be had, food and drink to be had, and the type of people – tourists and residents – to be encountered and met: all build the Dorchester Heritage Brand. This in turn means that Interpretation techniques must be interesting, satisfying, stimulating, and even exciting. The texts used must suit the niche markets targeted.

Adopt the slogan: *Dorchester: the quiet town that has it all* or a similar slogan with instant impact.

Using Dorchester's unique selling points to create a unique heritage experience

- Interpretation and niche marketing must be sold as something special. Audio transmitted interpretation with fashionable strong voices, and background stimulating sounds – including relevant music – could be used. See for example: <https://soundcloud.com/user-413441929/hidden-currents-tom-lane>.
- The overall brand of Dorchester's tourism should also be different and special, linked perhaps to wellness and environmental awareness. And even heritage can benefit from being presented as the modern thing to see, hear and "enjoy". See the discussion above of slow tourism.
- Social media marketing, featuring a "new" heritage site each month or each season has strong potential.
- Exploit the marketing potential of the Museums Mile concept, first used to good effect in Frankfurt-am-Main – see: https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g187337-d591791-r338259327-Museumsufer-Frankfurt_Hesse.html

The Museumsufer or Museums river bank has now replaced the term mile in official statements, but lives on in the German public mind.

- Marketing should concentrate on the UK market. It is much more difficult to market relatively unknown destinations abroad, and within tourism it is believed that the European market will decline following Brexit.
- Developing a Visit Dorchester website as a standalone feature as well as it being part of Visit Dorset is essential. Personalities featured on the site are important.
- Develop partnership with nearby towns in Dorset, such as Bridport, Lyme Regis, Weymouth to develop ways to cross-promote the towns to residents and visitors.
- The big three Dorchester Museums are a strong selling point. They should be helped to work together – to market themselves and to lead the ideas to develop and manage heritage tourism in the town. Competition between the Big 3 should be discouraged in favour of allowing each one to develop its own special fields following discussions. This will be especially important to support The Keep if the Ministry of Defence reduces its support in any forthcoming post pandemic government spending saving programme. Negotiating to set up joint ticketing of the town's key museums, including the County Museum, Shire Hall and The Keep, may be possible.

Opportunities for interpretation

- Revise and update existing exterior interpretation, including the heritage 'Dora Dormouse' panels and other panels such as those at Maumbury Rings.
- Revise and update the town trails leaflet and develop also as downloadable resources with maps, audio and video on the website.
- Develop a series of downloadable themed circular walks leaflets for excursions into the surrounding countryside.
- Develop a visitor app for Dorchester, suitable for families and adult groups, utilising an existing platform, such as Global Treasure Trails (www.globaltreasuretrails.com).
- Develop a series of short films and interviews with experts and local residents and enthusiasts for the key heritage sites, available as videos and self guiding audio downloads via the website. This could include musical and vocal interpretation based on recent projects in Cork and Dublin. (see earlier website above).
- Develop a range of personal interpretive outdoor tours for small pre-booked groups, similar to the Roman tours offered by Dorchester Roman Tours.

- Develop a wellbeing project of short, themed walks to encourage people to enjoy the green spaces and the heritage of the town, promoting enhancements in physical and mental health.

9 The next steps

The next steps for Dorchester's heritage tourism and interpretation should include some or all of the following:

- Bring tourism, heritage conservation and residents' groups together: form a Partnership.
- Discuss product development and marketing initiatives and priorities.
- Establish an Action Group. This should have a Press Officer with the ability to write and issue Press Releases on a regular basis.
- Get funding to employ a permanent trained Tourism Officer.
- Establish contact with the University of Bournemouth's Tourism Department to establish a working relationship, especially about marketing and about Slow Tourism. Your contact should be Professor Janet Dickinson: she knows about this potential link.
- Set up a Dorchester Tourism Web Site
- Begin negotiations with Great Western Railways and South Western Railways to establish the railways' role in the creation of the Slow Tourism concept in Dorchester, and how this can benefit both all parties.
- Launch a nationally ground-breaking small-town Interpretation and Tourism initiative, geared to boosting tourists retail and hospitality expenditure. This would draw inspiration from successful national projects in the USA, and in Canada, in the 1980s and 1990s.
- Seek funding for the above from post pandemic retail regeneration funds.

Appendix 1

Consultation for the Heritage Audit

Many people have contributed to the audit. We have had face-to-face, telephone, Skype and Zoom meetings and have carried out a digital survey to replace the proposed focus groups.

Face-to-face, telephone, Skype and Zoom meetings have been held with:

- Roger Maughan, Commercial Director, Dorset County Museum
- Abbie King, Director, Shire Hall Museum
- Laura Jayne Gardner, Curator, The Keep Military Museum
- Cathy Lewis, Marketing and Digital officer, Wessex Museums
- Sam Johnston, Manager, Dorset History Centre, with input from other team members including Maria Gayton, Jacqueline Halewood, Luke Dady and Owen Simons
- Janet Schofield, Dorchester and Sherborne TIC manager
- Myles Provis, Dorchester TIC
- Frances Hogwood, Dorchester Town Councillor, Heritage Committee member
- Richard Bradford, tree-co-ordinator for Transition Town Dorchester and the Urban Tree Festival
- Kingston Maurward Front of House staff
- Thomas Hardy Visitor Centre, Front of House staff

We have had regular Zoom progress meetings with Gareth Jones, Chair, Dorchester Heritage Committee; Trevor Hedger, Heritage Tourism Project Manager and Steve Newman, Deputy Town Clerk, Dorchester Town Council.

Prepared for Dorchester Town Council by

Red Kite

We would like to offer our thanks to everyone who provided the information and insights that enabled this work to be carried out. Any errors and misinterpretations in the report are in good faith and remain our responsibility.

Red Kite Environment
October 2020

DORCHESTER HERITAGE JOINT COMMITTEE
20 October 2020
PROGRESS REPORT – FOR INFORMATION

Background

1. In 2015 Dorchester Town Council resolved to include in its corporate plan, intent to:
 - Develop & Implement a Tourism strategy, with a strong Heritage focus
 - Carry out an informal heritage sites audit for the town

This information report updates members on progress made and the current work programme.

Progress

2. Strategy

This Committee approved the Draft Heritage Tourism Strategy for consultation at its July meeting.

The consultation was launched on 27th July with press releases (issued twice to 10 local print and radio organisations), promoted on Facebook (Dorchester Town Council and Love Dorch sites), and via direct invite to individuals and groups for both individual and group response (issued twice). Consultees were invited to complete an online form with both check box and free text response opportunities.

Offers were made to organisations and groups to meet virtually for discussion or presentation about the strategy, and groups were encouraged to circulate amongst their membership. A presentation on the strategy was given to Dorchester Chamber at the end of August.

The results of the consultation, and proposed changes to the strategy are subject of a separate report on this agenda.

3. Heritage -The Dorchester offer

Red Kite environment have continued their work to complete an audit and recommend “heritage products” that appeal too and attract visitors to the town, and have participated in fortnightly progress meetings with the Chairman of this committee, Deputy Town Clerk and Heritage Tourism Project Manager. Their draft final report and a presentation on the report are subject of a separate item on this agenda.

4. Lets Explore Dorchester

At its July meeting, this Committee agreed both conditions of sale of the “Lets Explore Dorchester” publication through appropriate outlets, and to offer copies to Dorchester school pupils aged 5-11 via their schools.

11 schools have been contacted and deliveries already made to made to three schools. Three further schools have requested and received sample copies.

Three outlets have agreed to accept copies for sale, and copies have been available at these locations from the start of August. Some outlets were interested in the booklet, but would not take as they were concerned about the public handling leaflets and booklets at their premises with the possible risk of spreading Coronavirus, and so had removed all literature from public areas.

5. **Next Steps**

- a) Investigate best practice partnership approaches to guide the implementation of the strategy and bring a proposal to the January meeting of this Committee.
- b) Commence job design for the post identified in the strategy and bring a proposal to the January meeting of this Committee.
- c) Recommence a programme of “meetings” with local businesses and potential delivery partners to explore roles each may play on supporting the delivery of the strategy, and approach those not yet contacted because of COVID lockdown.
- d) Meeting with Dorchester BID in early November to discuss what role the BID may be able to play in supporting the strategy.
- e) Investigate potential of Kickstarter fund to support delivery of the strategy and or Heritage audit recommendations, and if appropriate submit application.
- f) Investigate possible collaborative social media activity for early 2021 with key local organisations, particularly those with high social media following
- g) Presentation to Dorchester Civic Society in early November

Trevor Hedger
Heritage Tourism Project Manager

DORCHESTER HERITAGE JOINT COMMITTEE
20 OCTOBER 2020
STRATEGY – CONSULTATION OUTCOMES AND PROPOSED CHANGES

Background

1. In July, this committee resolved to approve the Draft Heritage Tourism Strategy for consultation. The consultation commenced on 27th July and closed on 30th September.
2. An on-line questionnaire with an introduction to the strategy based on the 5 action areas, supported with a brief evidence-based rationale for the interventions was prepared and published on a dedicated page on the town council web site. Participants were invited to indicate their support on a four point scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) and given the opportunity to add comments.
3. Invitations to participate were sent in late July and again in early September, with links to the relevant town council web page, to:
 - a. Neighbouring Parishes (x32) and larger towns (x6)
 - b. Press releases to Dorset Echo, Western Gazette, Wessex FM, BBC Solent, KeepFM, Poundbury Magazine, Dorset Life, Dorchester Voice, Marshwood Vale, Dorset Magazine
 - c. Emails to Arts Development Company, Dorchester Arts, Dorchester Association, Dorchester BID, Dorchester Chamber, Dorchester Civic Society, Dorchester Community Play Association, Dorset Food and Drink, Dorset LNP, Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, Dorchester TIC, Dorset Tourism Association, Jurassic Coast Trust, Keep Military Museum, Poundbury Residents Association, Shire Hall Trustees, Thomas Hardy Country Group, Thomas Hardy Society, Visit Dorset and Volunteering Dorset
 - d. Numerous individuals and businesses (x38)
 - e. All steering group members (x13)
 - f. All town councillors (x20).

Where relevant, each organisation was encouraged to share with its membership, to submit a group as well as individual response, and offered a virtual meeting or presentation on the strategy.

4. A presentation on the strategy was delivered to Dorchester Chamber at its virtual meeting at the end of August. A virtual meeting is planned with Dorchester BID board in early November, as is a presentation to Dorchester Civic Society.
5. 93 responses were received via the online form, including 33 people wishing to sign up to receive future information. Many respondents included extensive comments in the free text areas of the consultation form. 8 respondents also submitted comprehensive email comments. An age, gender and location breakdown is attached at appendix 1. Not all respondents commented on or completed every question.

6. Not all the comments received were directly relevant to this strategy, or the work of this Committee or the Town Council, reflecting perhaps the work of others or the desire to see wider town centre focussed plans prepared.

Responses and Proposed Changes to the Strategy

7. Governance Proposals

The Governance proposals (only) from the action plan were grouped as a single question. There was Strong Agreement with all proposals.

Comments received - 25 (summarised) include:

- Collaboration and joining up the industry, buy in from all stakeholders, and strategy being owned by the town are important
- Clear objectives, not being a talking shop or having vested interests (on the partnership), acting as a group
- Action now
- Structure and evidence fit for purpose
- A myopic focus on the town's past, a better market and focus on food and beverage producers will bring day visitors.

Strategy change proposed – **none**

8. Communication Proposals

There was agreement with all proposals, although 6 respondents disagreed with brand development, and 7 with group travel proposals

Comments received - 23 (summarised) include:

- Support for coordinated and collaborative working and social media marketing, including cultural sector
- Support for joint working and museums collaborating
- Need to reflect long term impacts of COVID in approaches taken
- Get on with it for March '21
- Coach or group travel not seen as beneficial by all
- Explore links and opportunities with twin towns and town twinning with Dorchester Ma
- Dorchester as Dorchester, not a brand
- Brand should be clear
- Strategy has not agreed if we seek more tourists and what sort,

Strategy change proposed – amend group travel action C6 to **emphasise the investigation and evaluation of group travel options rather than a commitment**

9. Community Proposals

There was agreement with all proposals although 6 disagree with volunteer support and 5 disagree with Ambassador programme proposals.

Comments received – 24 (summarised) include:

- Importance of volunteers and using their skills appropriately, an opportunity for young people to be involved in a community programme
- Volunteers being a diverse group including young people
- Volunteers being supported and not treated as unpaid staff
- Engage the blue badge guides
- Clear long-term vision vital
- Central role of TIC as hub for visitors
- Opportunity to create employment for young people through tourism, not stealing jobs through volunteers
- Volunteers not a substitute for dedicated trained professionals
- Residents need to feel proud of the town
- Need a diverse volunteer base to appeal to and attract diverse audiences

Strategy change proposed – **none**

10. Environment proposals

There was agreement with all proposals, although 5 disagree with environmental messages in marketing, 4 with E vehicle charging, 7 with green travel planning and 4 with a local tourism green charter. Particular strong support for championing built and natural environment and improved Wi-Fi access in the town centre.

Comments received – 23 (summarised) include:

- Priority should be to get more visitors as most likely visitors to town will be green
- Issue of quality of accommodation, retail and hospitality offer
- Explore ties with Transition Town
- Enhance town centre environment
- Plastic free not mentioned
- Note the bed spaces available in the wider area
- Some specific capital project proposals both in and adjacent to the town
- This not an opportunity to put everything online
- An opportunity for Dorchester to lead the way
- “Greenness” important to target ABC1 visitors
- Need more better long stay parking, and park and ride, inadequate provision for cars which risks clogging up the town
- Inadequate bus services into the town and public transport
- Sustainability and natural environment are essential parts of the offer
- Quality of the built environment is pivotal. Current traffic levels with resulting air pollution and the state of some listed buildings will deter target visitors
- Do not let environmental issues delay the marketing

Strategy change proposed – **none**

11. Visitor Offer.

Most respondents were in favour of all proposals, with 65 strongly agreeing with reviewing and updating the existing offer. However, 6 disagree with new visitor experiences, 5

disagree with new events including one strongly, and 19 with mystery shopper including one strongly.

Comments received – 26 (summarised) include:

- Build on what is here before adding new, work in partnership
- The offer is hidden
- Look beyond the obvious for new events
- The “new” should not damage the existing
- We need theatre/pop up shops/galleries/café culture
- Question of funding to deliver
- Look for new built attraction, combined tickets/passports for attractions
- Importance of role of TIC
- Enhance shopping experience, with interesting and unique shops
- Target off peak visitors
- Make more of people of note in the town’s history, use their personalities to bring town to life
- Interactive experiences throughout the season
- Roman/barbarian life visitor attraction
- Future “anniversaries” linked to founding of Dorchester Ma. and Rev John White
- Benchmark with competitor towns
- Real visitor data more useful than mystery shopper

Strategy change proposed – Following discussion with the project steering group, and reflecting their own business practices:

Replace the proposal for a mystery shopper exercise with “Monitor visitor experiences over time through user generated content on platforms such as TripAdvisor, Facebook and others”

12. Industry proposals.

There was agreement with all proposals, although 3 disagreed with volunteer support and development.

Comments received – 20 (summarised) include:

- Do not perceive Jurassic Coast as a threat
- Work with existing business support organisations
- Quality library of resources is good, but you need marketing resources/expertise beyond a resource library for business support
- Collaboration is key where there is limited resource
- TIC should have its own visible premises
- Need a comprehensive town website and collaborative social media promotion
- Must be able to compare and measure performance with a consistent and robust methodology
- Get on with the marketing
- Will the business fund/contribute, JV’s?
- Encourage businesses to work together across the visitor economy

- Networking and training for heritage staff
- Promote heritage events
- Quality of events and experiences is important

Strategy change proposed – **none**

SWOT Background paper change – add Jurassic Coast as an Opportunity

13. Individual Comments Received

8 correspondents submitted emails in addition to completion of the online form. Some repeated their own and others online comments while others made additional points as below:

- i. Dorchester as a county town should be emphasised
- ii. Focus on the quality of the entire visitor experience, discover their (visitor) expectations and the realities of their visit
- iii. The importance of the appearance of the town and addressing “grot spots”
- iv. Emphasis on Dorchester having something for all age groups
- v. Making sure the town is accessible both travelling to the town and moving about within the town – public transport, cycling and walking, ensuring DDA compliance
- vi. A glossary of acronyms would be beneficial
- vii. Proposal for local architectural walks
- viii. Inclusion of attractions beyond (say 10 miles) Dorchester {x3}
- ix. “Heritage” at Poundbury/Brewery Square considered OTT
- x. Inclusion of William Barnes, Tom Roberts and Hogarth
- xi. Explanation of colours in the heat map Appendix B
- xii. Some poorly maintained listed buildings
- xiii. The importance of social media, especially for younger (under 55) visitors
- xiv. Produce guides on what can be done in 48 hours in the town to encourage staying visitors
- xv. Have a landscape approach to interpretation and experiences
- xvi. No reference to cost of implementation and benefit derived
- xvii. Focus is on implementation, but the purpose (do we need more tourists, and what sort) is not agreed
- xviii. How does this fit with National Park status?
- xix. Comments on the location of the TIC within the library
- xx. Volunteers reflecting and being aware of the diverse audiences we wish to attract or may visit
- xxi. Support for new bedspaces, local campsite, or Youth Hostel...
- xxii. Explore international links and twin towns
- xxiii. General support for the town councils’ approach to Heritage Tourism, recognition of the importance of tourism to the towns economy and encouraging visitors to enjoy the extent of the town’s heritage
- xxiv. Recognising the benefits to the town of lottery and other funded major investments

- xxv. The importance of civic pride noted in the strategy, noting the general cleanliness of the town, but criticising the poor state of public toilets and lack of disabled/baby changing facilities
- xxvi. A desire to reduce street clutter especially in South Street,
- xxvii. Negative impacts of traffic (pollution, road crossing challenges, inability to appreciate architectural gems and statuary)
- xxviii. Support for social media approach and noting increasing importance as communication tool for under 55's, considered an important target segment for short breaks
- xxix. Importance of "free" publicity via newspapers and TV
- xxx. Recognition that tourism economy includes commercial and not for profit enterprises and activity

Strategy changes proposed –

- Add a glossary of acronyms to the strategy
- Add an explanation of the heat map to the strategy and background paper B
- Add statement about the purpose of the strategy (more day and staying visitors coming to the town and spending more in local businesses, especially out of the peak season) to both the Executive Summary and Section A Introduction.
- Add use of press releases to Communications action C2d (Evaluate opportunities and cost benefits of town promotion via blogs, podcasts, newsletters).
- Add reference to the tourism sector comprising both commercial and not for profit enterprises and activity in section H Governance and Delivery.

Other actions

- Ensure the marketing activity reflects the towns offer for all age groups, explores how to reach out to twin towns and other overseas places with relevant links to the town, and develops "48 hours" itineraries
- Encouragement of providers to include diversity awareness in any work to support volunteer development

Recommendations

14. The Committee is invited to agree the proposed changes to the strategy and supporting documents identified in paragraphs 7-13 above, delegating approval of the of the final wording to the chairman.
15. The Committee was asked to consider the need for a professionally designed summary final version of the strategy produced for online publication and reference. Provisional funding for this (£900) was agreed at the 21st January 2020 meeting of this committee. It is now recommended that the chairman is authorised to agree final wording, layout and imagery for the associated document which is made available via the town council website and elsewhere as a down- loadable pdf.

T Hedger
Heritage Tourism Project Manager

Age Gender and Location Breakdown of Consultation Responses

Gender:

| Male | Female | Prefer not to say |
|------|--------|-------------------|
| 43 | 43 | 7 |

Age

| Under 18 | 18-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65 and over | Prefer not to say |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|-------------------|
| | 1 | 5 | 12 | 20 | 28 | 20 | 7 |

Post Code

| DT1 | DT2 | DT3 | DT4 | DT5 | DT6 | DT7 |
|-----|-----|------|------|----------|-------|-------------------|
| 53 | 17 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| DT8 | DT9 | BH20 | BH21 | Other BH | Other | Prefer not to say |
| 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 9 | 0 |

Dorchester Heritage Open Day 2020 Review

1) Aims

- To ensure that Dorchester Heritage Open Day (DHOD) momentum from 2019 was not lost
- To ensure Dorchester featured in England's Heritage Open Day 2020

2) Objectives

- Build a varied programme of virtual and real heritage experiences in a single package to be delivered on Sunday 13th September.
- Involve key partners in Dorchester's active heritage community
- Deliver a good quality heritage experience, with a legacy potential.

3) DHOD Management & Delivery Team

- Chair of Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee, (DJHC), DTC Cllr
 - Secretary of Dorchester Chamber of Commerce, Member of DJHC
 - Town Crier, DTC Cllr , Member of DJHC.
 - Deputy Town Clerk, Dorchester Town Council, Officer of DJHC
- A full list of DHOD participants is included in Appendix A

4) The Visitor Offer

With the risks and restrictions imposed by the COVID19 pandemic, the main element of the DHOD offer had to be a virtual visitor experience. However, exploration of other HOD experience options did identify two 'live' elements: a) A day of outdoor guided walks around the route of Dorchester's roman walls with readings by New Hardy Players and b) A live all-day broadcast by Keep106 of a special programme of discussion of Dorchester's heritage with live entertainment. This was also put out on a live streamed video by Pageant Productions.

The principal visitor offer was a virtual heritage portal in the form of a webpage embedded within the LoveDorch website. This location was chosen for pragmatic, pre-existing visibility, and for cost reasons. The webpage was accessed at www.lovedorch.com/HOD The landing page was headed by a video of the Dorchester Town Cry by Alistair Chisolm.

The portal displayed a grid of 'tiles' each of which held a link to a selected heritage item. For readability and simplicity of presentation it was agreed to present only 12 core and well-presented heritage items. This also had the benefit of keeping focus and, within the time and money available, to ensure a good level of quality. The heritage items presented were:

- A Story of Dorchester through a pdf assemblage of DTC's existing info panels
- A Google map of many of Dorchester's listed buildings with architectural info and photos provided by the Civic Society
- A virtual tour of Shire Hall developed during lockdown
- A tour of the 'bare-wall' County Museum by director John Murden at its 'topping out' ceremony
- Mill Street memories – a link to the Mill Street Housing Society's archive of photos, documents and residents' memories.
- A video of a whistle-stop tour of the Town Walls walk hosted by Alistair Chisolm
- An interview with the Mayor Richard Biggs and Councillor Stella Jones discussing Dorchester's Civic history.
- The Poppy Trail, the story of Dorchester in WW1
- Poems by Thomas Hardy and William Barnes titled "Hidden Nature"

- x. A pdf booklet of the history of Kingston Maurward

The remaining two 'tiles' were links to the booking site for the guided walks, and to the live broadcast /streaming site.

A number of further simple links to other relevant Dorchester heritage websites were included on the portal page. This included some main participants as well as:

- The National Trust for Max Gate / Hardy's Cottage
- English Heritage for Maiden Castle
- Dorset Council for The Roman Town House
- Visit Dorset for Maumbury Rings.
- The Dorchester association
- Dorset History Centre
- Dorchester Almshouses

5) Delivery project

Preparation for delivery started with an inception meeting on 7th August and continued through the subsequent 5 weeks up to the 13th September.

The project started with recognition of the limits of the project scale given the short amount of time, and the limited staff and financial resources. This led to a project that consisted of seven main strands work:

- Designing, constructing and populating the web portal , plus its hosting
- Approaching key heritage participants and importing their relevant ready-made heritage material
- Creation of some new material to give range and depth to the DHOD experience, but which could be put together comfortably within the time frame, and within budget.
- Designing, COVID risk assessing, and organising the guided Town Walls walks, with booking system.
- Preparing the live Keep106 broadcast and video streaming, including pre-recorded interviews.
- Publicising the Dorchester HOD
- Fundraising and other sponsorship

6) Publicity & Promotion

A variety of channels were used to target a range of audiences;

- Press releases
- Raising awareness by group talks and word of mouth
- Emails to heritage groups, business organisations and others
- Email to schools
- Posters around town
- DHOD Facebook page with regular posts
- A 'teaser' DHOD webpage on the LoveDorch website
- Interviews on Keep106 and BBC radio Dorset
- Keep106 promo on most programmes, with parallel social media activity

7) On the day

Dorchester Heritage Open Day went live at 10h00 on the 13th Sept with:

- The Dorchester Town Cryer at Town Pump with his Dorchester Cry.*
- The guided walks started at 11h00 after the Town Cry. These continued until 14h00.
- The LoveDorch.com/HOD web portal also went live, replacing 'taster' images shown during run-up with active links.
- Keep106 started a 6hr live radio programme with conversations about heritage, outside broadcast and live music.
- Pageant productions started live streaming video of the Keep106 discussions
- Facebook posts continued through the day

**(by pre-arrangement, at the launch of DHOD and the start of the day of guided walks, the Town Crier and his Dorchester Cry was filmed by Viacom for a forthcoming Channel5 documentary about Thomas Hardy and Dorchester hosted by Giles Brandreth.)*

8) Visitor data

- Website: It was not possible within the time and budget constraints to implement a system for counting website visits.
- Broadcasts: Neither was it possible to directly count the numbers of viewers or listeners to the live broadcasts. Keep106 licence states a broadcast area of South centre Dorset with an estimated population over 100,000.
- Live streaming hits: Through the day there was an average 15 viewers at any one time with people coming in and out all day.
- Facebook hits: during the run-up and post DHOH the HOD facebook posts reached 9712 people with engagement from 2360
- Direct visitors: A total of 120 members of the public experienced the guided Town Wall walks, with a further number held on the Eventbrite booking system waiting list, from which guests were taken to back fill a number of late cancellations.
- Direct feedback. There was no survey planned for post HOD through cost constraints.

9) Legacy

The heritage portal created for the 13th Sept remains live (at October 2020), though the link to the walk booking has been substituted. Pre-existing material from participants linked to the portal remains separately accessible. The Dorchester Heritage portal is likely to be moved to a different location as the LoveDorch website evolves.

Material created especially for the portal 'grid' remains accessible namely:

- Town Walls Walk video, Civic Dorchester interviews, map of listed buildings
- The link to Keep106 radio show remains live on Keep106 'listen again', and the pre-recorded radio interview material is retained in archive
- The live video streaming of Keep106 remains accessible on Keep106.

10) Financial appraisal

The majority of the value input to the preparation and delivery of DHOD was time provided for free on a voluntary basis by the management team and the participants. As such there are no invoiced records. The table in Appendix B however gives an estimate of the hours donated to each activity, using notional but realistic hourly rate to give a idea of scale of the donated value.

The total estimated value of Dorchester Heritage Open Day 2020 is over £7500, principally due to an input of over 150hrs of voluntary time.

There were a few items of cash expenditure: webpage and content design, facebook adverts, promotional posters, and payments to the professional Tours Guides during the day, amounting to just over £800.

We are grateful therefore to the financial sponsors: Crickmay Stark Architects, Stay Original (owners of The Kings Arms), Edward & Keeping, whose £750 total sponsorship was able to cover most of the cash expenditure, the balance being covered by DTC.

11) The future

The amount of enthusiasm and willingness to engage shown by all participants demonstrated that delivery of DHOD has a lot of support. Whether that will continue past 2020 in light of COVID effect on people and organisations is to be seen.

It is not clear how widely the DHOD was appreciated by visitors as data is thin. The recent Heritage Tourism Strategy survey has however shown that heritage events are seen by residents as a good thing, which is an encouragement to continue.

The estimated value of the voluntary time input shows that DHOD on this scale may be difficult to replicate, particularly if this year's volunteers feel unable to repeat the commitment for free. If the DHOD needs to move to a contractual delivery basis, this will make a repeat very much more difficult.

Gareth Jones, Chair, Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee

Appendix A) Delivery Participants

- a) Website and web content
 - The Resourcery, with website host and webpage design subcontractors
 - LoveDorch team
 - Civic Society
 - The Keep Military Museum
 - Shire Hall
 - County Museum
 - Pageant Productions/Town Crier
 - Kingston Maurward
 - Mill Street Housing Society
 - New Hardy Players
 - The Thomas Hardy Society
 - The William Barnes Society
 - The Mayor Richard Biggs and Cllr Stella Jones
 - Dorchester Town Council – various officers and their resources

- b) Live events
 - The Town Crier
 - Blue Badge guides
 - New Hardy Players
 - Keep106 Community Radio team
 - Pageant Productions
 - Tatterdemalion band presented by Tim Laycock
 - Cllr Gareth Jones DHJC Chair & radio host
 - Cllr David Taylor - interviewee
 - Tim Laycock, musician and historic re-enactor
 - Town Crier, Cllr Alistair Chisholm
 - Shire Hall Learning Manager - live
 - New Hardy Players Secretary - live
 - Cllr Rennie, Chair Dorchester Almshouses Charity - prerecorded
 - Mill Street Housing Secretary - prerecorded
 - Keep Museum Manager - prerecorded

- c) Interviewees for new material
 - The Mayor & Cllr Stella Jones
 - DJHC Chair, Cllr Gareth Jones

Appendix B: Estimated value of costs of Dorchester Heritage Open Day 2020

Values estimated by taking estimated time spent on each project activity and multiplying by appropriate hourly rates. Cash costs taken as invoiced.

| Item | Value (estd) | Note |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| Project planning & management | 1350 | Team of 4 |
| Participant engagement | 325 | Incl sourcing material |
| Webpage creation & management | 475 | Incl £215 design fees |
| New webpage material creation | 1000 | Inc video services |
| Town Walk event plan & delivery | 905 | Incl £400 guide fees |
| Keep106 broadcast & live stream | 2700 | Keep106 & Pageant |
| Publicity & promo | 860 | Mainly social media |
| Fundraising | 150 | Sponsor recruiting |
| TOTAL | 7765 | |