

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE HELD VIA THE ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING PLATFORM

20 April 2021

At a virtual Meeting of the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee held on 20 April 2021:

PRESENT:

Dorchester Town Council

Councillors: S. Biles
F. Hogwood
G. Jones (Chairman)

Officers: S. Newman
T. Hedger
M. Manley
N. Hayes

Dorset Council

Councillors: R. Biggs
L. Fry
S. Jones

In Attendance

Councillor S. Hosford,
Dorchester BID N. Strudwick

Ancient & Honourable Guild of Town Criers
Blue Badge Tourist Guides
Dorchester Association
Dorchester Chamber for Business
Dorchester Civic Society
Dorchester Local Nature Reserve
Keep 106 Community Radio
Shire Hall Museum
Thomas Hardy Society

A. Chisholm
T. Loasby and J. Wallis
M. Rice
M. Woodgate
T. James
L. Poulsen
A. Worth
T. Edey
M. Chutter

33. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Canning and D. Taylor (Dorset Council), R. Raine (National Trust), E. Metcalfe (The Keep Military Museum).

34. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2021, a copy of which had been circulated, were confirmed and signed.

35. **MEMBERSHIP**

The Committee considered whether to amend its terms of reference so as to include the Thomas Hardy Society on the list of non-voting organisations to be represented on the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the Thomas Hardy Society be included within the non-voting membership of the Committee and that Mark Chutter from the Society, be welcomed to the meeting.

36. **APPOINTMENT OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OFFICER**

The Committee was introduced to Matilda Manley, the newly appointed Tourism Development Officer for Dorchester Town Council, who would be starting on 1 June 2021. Matilda spoke briefly about her background and her excitement for the role.

37. **HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY**

(i) **Heritage Tourism Strategy - Progress**

The Committee considered a report by the Heritage Tourism Project Manager which updated it on progress of the project and reported on the next steps.

RESOLVED

That the progress report be noted.

(ii) **Dorchester Tourism Partnership**

The Committee received the notes of the meetings of the Tourism Partnership held on 16 March and 6 April 2021.

The Project Manager confirmed that the Partnership reported back to the Heritage Committee. Members were pleased to note that the Director of the Dorset County Museum had agreed to be the Chairman of the Partnership and that a young person had been identified to become involved.

RESOLVED

That the notes of the meetings of the Dorchester Tourism Partnership held on 16 March and 6 April 2021 be received.

(iii) **Budget Applications and Grant Applications**

Members had before them a report by the Heritage Tourism Project Manager which set out a revised budget for the six previously agreed strategy action areas. The report also sought support for financial contributions for two projects based around an artist/culture trail and an updating of the Discover Dorchester leaflet. Delegating the decision on

financial support for the proposed projects would enable timely applications to the National Heritage Lottery Fund for the remaining funding.

It was reported that the town WiFi could do with improving as it still seemed patchy in areas. The Chairman of the BID asked that if anyone found areas where the WiFi was not working to let him know as soon as possible.

RESOLVED

That the Town Clerk, following consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, be authorised to agree grant applications and project contributions of not exceeding £2,000 per project.

(iv) Dorchester Tourism Website

The Committee considered a report by the Heritage Tourism Project Manager on the evaluation of tenders received in respect of building a new Dorchester Tourism Website, which was identified as an action in the agreed Tourism Strategy.

It was felt important that those with a knowledge of the town's heritage be involved in the writing of the content for the website. It was noted that any help would be gratefully received and that the website could be developed and updated as and when needed.

RESOLVED

- (1) That tenderer 'C' in the report be awarded the contract for website development.
- (2) That a sum of £7,875 be allocated from the Heritage Tourism budget for the website development.
- (3) That a further £1,800 be allocated towards integration with the Dorchester App.
- (4) That the detail and final purchase of the domain name for the new website be agreed with the Chairman of the Committee following consultation with Website developer and Tourism Partnership, up to a sum not exceeding £250.

38. **SALISBURY FIELDS INFORMATION BOARD**

The representative from the Thomas Hardy Society sought the support of the Committee for plans to formally unveil the Fordington Vicarage notice board in Salisbury Fields as a part of a planned Thomas Hardy Society walk around Fordington. The unveiling would include the Mayor and Town Crier with some entertainment. It was proposed that the unveiling would take place on Sunday 11 July 2021 at 2.00pm.

It was noted that the appearance of some of the buildings along the Mill Stream walk could be improved and the Chairman, Deputy Town Clerk and Councillor S. Jones agreed to walk the area with a view to assessing opportunities for improvement.

RESOLVED

That the proposed arrangements by the Thomas Hardy Society for an unveiling of the information board at Salisbury Fields be agreed.

39. **THOMAS HARDY VICTORIAN FAIR (THVF) - 2021**

The Chairman updated members on the proposals for the event on Sunday 6 June 2021. The vast majority of the event would be delivered online due to the uncertainty of what would be possible due to Covid. There would be some live events which would be ticketed through Eventbrite, there would also be a Victorian Food Fair in the Borough Gardens and music from the bandstand. The Shire Hall Museum would be putting on Victorian craft displays.

The Committee felt that an important part of the event was the annual wreath laying. The Chairman agreed to liaise with the Mayor's Secretary about this aspect of the day

RESOLVED

That the THVF update be noted.

40. **DORCHESTER POETRY TRAIL**

The Committee considered a report from the Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the creation of a Dorchester Poetry Trail working on a provisional budget of £24,000 and made a request to the Committee to support 25% of expenditure to a maximum of £6,000.

Members agreed that a poetry trail was an excellent idea and should be pursued. The Committee felt however that further detailed financial information was required together with the proposed outputs of the project.

RESOLVED

The Committee agreed the project in principle subject to the production of detailed budget information and project outputs.

41. **HERITAGE OPEN DAY 2021**

The Chairman updated the Committee on plans for the Heritage Open Day, to take place in September 2021. The English Heritage Open Day theme for this year was 'Edible England' and a mix of online and live events would be built around this theme. The Chairman invited Members to put forward ideas for the event.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

42. **ROMAN TOWN HOUSE REFURBISHMENT PROJECT – UPDATE**

The Committee received an update on the Roman Town House refurbishment

project. It was noted that a desire line was already becoming apparent at the north west corner of the site where visitors did not wish to walk back to the start of the formal path. It was also felt that the original signage might be reinstated in a more suitable location if it was still available.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

43. **QUESTIONS**

No questions had been received.

44. **URGENT ITEMS**

It was reported that a field north of Dorchester, east of Frome Whitfield Farmhouse had been ploughed for the first time, concern was expressed regarding the oak trees in the area and whether they were protected with Tree Preservation Orders. It was noted that Dorset Council was responsible for Tree Preservation Orders and that the area was located within the boundary of Charminster Parish Council.

The Chairman showed the Committee the first edition of the new Dorchester Heritage Magazine 5,000 of which would be distributed from 2 May onwards. The Committee welcomed this excellent new publication.

Chairman.....