

Dorchester News

Dorchester Town Council
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Winter 2009-10



QUALITY
TOWN
COUNCIL

What's the problem?

It seems strange to be writing this in what has turned out to be the coldest winter for at least thirty years, but we had a lot of rain before the cold snap really set in.

If you think back you might have noticed some roadside gullies that were blocked and causing local problems.

If you did, let us know and we shall draw the problem to the attention of the appropriate authority.

Our contact details are at the top of the page or you can use the on-line form in the 'Contact Us' area of the Council's website at www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk.

Corn Exchange Improvements

Regular visitors to the Corn Exchange will know that a lot of work was done in the Autumn to completely re-fit the ladies and gents toilets on the ground floor. The work was carried out to an extremely high standard and the greatly improved facilities have been much appreciated by users. The photographs give an impression of what has been achieved but it is difficult to get photographs which do them full justice - the best way to discover just how good they are is to go to an event at the Corn Exchange and see for yourself!



The gents toilets ...



... and, predictably, the ladies!

But that is not the end of the story. Work started immediately after the New Year break to install a platform lift in the Buildings so that wheelchair users and

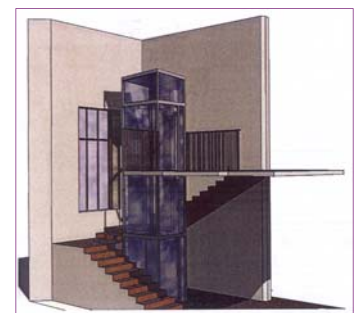
other people who cannot manage the stairs will be able to get safe and dignified access to the Town Hall and Council Chamber. We have been exploring how this could be done for years - indeed, it was the latest investigation which drew attention to structural problems with the main staircase which helped us in our discussions with the listed buildings officer and English Heritage. Even so it was not easy to get consent, and it took a long time and a lot of effort before we finally did.



When the work is finished at the end of May most of the unsightly external pipework will have been removed from the wall facing into North Square and, for the first time in

many years, the window in that wall will be revealed to its full height as the designer intended.

Obviously work of this magnitude in Dorchester's principal public building is bound to create inconvenience and disruption and we are sorry about that. Please bear with us, though, it will be worth it!



A perspective view of the new lift

More grit bins in town

In the Spring 2009 issue of *Dorchester News* we invited people to let us know of locations where additional grit bins were needed in areas which are not usually gritted under the County Council's winter maintenance arrangements.

Perhaps not surprisingly we did not get much response to the invitation, either because the worst areas were covered by the eleven bins which were already in place or because, by the time the Spring issue was circulated, people were admiring daffodils and looking forward to the promised barbecue summer.

The cold weather this year has focussed people's minds on the issue and we have received a number of requests for more grit bins over the winter. Early in January we bought and installed another five, at Eddison Avenue, Fordington High Street, Holloway Road, Poundbury Crescent and Syward Close.

There are a small number of requests still outstanding but we only have a small budget for grit bins so we cannot deal with those yet. Hopefully, though, the sixteen bins that we have now provided will deal with the worst of the problem.

One of the new grit bins at Poundbury Crescent



Friends of the Borough Gardens

The Friends of the Borough Gardens was formed in the 1990s when we started talking about the plans for the refurbishment of the Gardens and they have helped us since in any number of ways. They organise events (they are responsible for one of the summer concerts and for the carol singing in the Gardens just before Christmas), have produced a number of publications helping people to understand the Gardens better or charting their importance in the social history of Dorchester by recording people's memories of and anecdotes about the Gardens or advising us on the value of the many ideas that come up from time to time to make the Gardens an even nicer and more valuable facility. Many of you will probably remember them providing refreshments at selected events before the Gardens were refurbished and The Oasis kiosk was opened.

They have also made more tangible contributions, notably the provision of the seesaw in the toddlers section of the play area and we are very pleased that they have agreed to fund a picnic table to be located near the play area close to The Oasis.

If you would like to know more about the Friends, or are interested in joining, contact their chair, Lorna Low, on 01305 263430.



Friends of West Station

It is fair to say that Dorchester West Station today is nowhere near as bad as it used to be, but it is still not a particularly welcoming or well-maintained place.

The Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership and the Dorchester Area Partnership are working together to try to establish a Friends group to work on a voluntary basis to improve the appearance of the Station by doing occasional litter clearance, weeding and the like to enhance the service already provided by First Great Western.

If you think you can help e-mail admin@dorchester-tc.gov.uk or fill in the on-line form in the 'Contact Us' area of the Council's website at www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk.

Performance and Policy Plan published

The Town Council has recently published its latest Performance and Policy Plan which reviews the achievements of the last year and looks forward to the future.

If you would like a copy call at the Council Offices at 19 North Square or download it from the Council's website at www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk.

Another friend - Sam Fowler

Like very many more people, everyone at the Town Council was very sad to learn of the death of Sam Fowler just before Christmas. We have very much enjoyed our association with Sam since 1998 when he started the enormously successful Swingtime In The Gardens to raise money for Leukaemia Research and the Fortuneswell Cancer Trust in appreciation of the treatment and care which he received while suffering from the disease.



Sam was well known amongst jazz aficionados and he got them to give their services free of charge for years, raising over £40,000 in the process. He will be sadly missed, not just by his family but by his many friends and Dorchester will be a poorer place for his passing.

He had already booked the date for Swingtime 2010 and we expect that it will go ahead in a modified form, not least in tribute to Sam. More details about this and the rest of the summer entertainment programme will be in the next issue.

The next round of play equipment improvements

Some of you will have seen the new equipment at Maiden Castle Road Play Area where we have installed new play structures targeted at both older and younger children and, more recently, a roundabout to finish off the complete refurbishment of the play equipment - all that remains is the completion of a cycle bump circuit following the removal of the old dilapidated skateboard ramp which was made possible by the creation of the excellent new skatepark at Maumbury Cross.

Some of you will also have seen the new sports arena equipment and youth shelter at King's Road Playing Field which is proving extremely popular and well-used. Feedback tells us that a zip line would be just as popular and we aim to install one there during the spring.

Setting aside the skatepark and the Borough Gardens, though, the innovation that has been best received is the outdoor gym equipment which we installed at Sandringham Sports Centre last spring. This has proved so popular that we want to

provide similar equipment in other parts of the town and, as a first step, we shall be installing the same sort of facility in the Borough Gardens later in the year. It will be on the lawn east of the kiosk, near to both the Albert Road gate and the children's play area, so grown ups will be able to get their exercise there as well as children.

The new play structure for younger children at Maiden Castle Road



Council sets its Budget

Dorchester Town Council has set its budget for the next financial year which will see its share of the Council Tax go up from £154.19 to £158.51 at Band D, an increase of 2.8% or £4.32 a year, just over 8p a week.

And that is at Band D, which is the standard way of calculating these things. Most properties in Dorchester fall into a lower band which means that those people pay less, as do people who live on their own, students and those on income support.

The West Dorset District Council collects the Council Tax on our behalf, as they do for themselves, the County Council, the Police and the Fire Service. Of these five bodies the Town Council is the only one which does not get any of its money direct from central government. We have to raise all of the money we need from private residents in Dorchester - we do not even get a share of business rates, although some of the money we spend goes to help businesses. Even so, our share of last year's Council Tax bill amounted to only 9.4% of it, with the County Council getting the lion's share (over 69%) of it.

The budget set by the Council means that we can continue to maintain things to a high standard and continue to improve things that could be better. Some of these things are dealt with in more detail elsewhere in this edition of *Dorchester News*.

If you would like to know more about how we spend your money and the services we provide get in touch with any member of the Council - their contact details are on the back page, visit our website at www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk, e-mail us on admin@dorchester-tc.gov.uk, write to or visit the Council Offices at 19 North Square, Dorchester DT1 1JF or telephone the Office on 01305 266861.

If you are having difficulty paying your Council Tax, or think you might be entitled to some benefit or reduction which you are not receiving, contact West Dorset District Council on 01305 251010 or by e-mail to revenues@westdorset-dc.gov.uk

2012 Community Play

Dorchester Community Plays Association is looking for volunteers to join their 'Dorchester Dig' project which aims to unearth stories from Dorchester's Past between 1890 and 1914.

Dorchester has produced 5 Community Plays since 1985 - more than any other town! The next play is planned for 2012 but before then they need to research widely within the local community, involving as many people as possible, to uncover great stories from this period in our town's history.

Prior to commissioning a playwright to write the sixth Dorchester Community Play they want to gather as much material as possible about Dorchester between 1890 and 1914 for the writer to explore. They are looking for tales about issues that affected people, exciting events, the characters involved, the music of the day, fashions, local businesses and who was who in the community at the time for example.

They need researchers so if you interested in local history you might like to be part of a group searching the Archives at the Dorset History Centre or the County Museum, browsing through newspapers of the day and other records. Or you might prefer to get involved by going out into the community to talk to people and record their stories and recollections.

They want to unearth stories that might have been hidden away in the memories of local families, handed down over the generations.

The Association hopes to uncover stories of real people that will be fascinating to collect and use. Perhaps you are not able to get involved as a researcher but you might have photographs of your ancestors from this period, recollections from family members, old diaries, records of businesses - Goulds, Channons cars etc. the Association would like to hear from you.

Whether you want to help, tell a story or show them a photograph contact Rowan Seymour on 01305 261538 or Robin Potter on 01305 264416

Members of Dorchester Town Council

East Ward

Mark Allwood 29 South Walks Road DT1 1ED	259991
Tim Harries 9 Brookhouse Street DT1 2GL	07970 653796
Stella Jones Syward Cottage, Syward Road DT1 2AJ	264335
Fiona Kent-Ledger 28 Olga Road DT1 2LX	250253
Tony Lyall 13 St George's Road DT1 1PA	266254

South Ward

Carolyn Biggs 20 Bridport Road DT1 1RS	260156
Susie Hosford 1 Meadow Cottages, Martinstown DT2 9JL	880102
Tess James 70 Monmouth Road DT1 2DG	262359
Robin Potter 22 d'Urberville Close DT1 2JT	264416
Molly Rennie 13 Alington Road DT1 1NS	268572

North Ward

Richard Biggs 20 Bridport Road DT1 1RS	260156
Vicki Black 4 Ashington Street DT1 3GJ	261574
Andy Canning 11 Alfred Road DT1 2DW	261592
Kate Hebditch 8 Friary Hill DT1 1JG	268603
Leslie Phillips 17 West Mills Road DT1 1SP	264030

West Ward

David Barrett 41 Holmead Walk DT1 3GE	259269
Anita Harries 9 Brookhouse Street DT1 2GL	261354
Leonard Heath 1 Maen Gardens, Culliford Road DT1 1PU	757313
Trevor Jones Syward Cottage, Syward Road DT1 2AJ	264335
Peter Mann 13 Beech Court DT1 1PZ	266796

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL CIVIL WEDDINGS AND RECEPTIONS

The Municipal Buildings are Grade II listed, are licensed for Civil Weddings and Civil Partnerships and are available for Receptions

For your ceremony the Corn Exchange, Town Hall and Council Chamber cater for 300, 120 and 50 guests respectively and we can offer several room combinations for your reception

There is also a full catering kitchen, full bar facilities and a duty caretaker. For an informal chat or to make an appointment to view any of our rooms please contact us

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High East Street, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1HF
Telephone 01305 265840

E-mail: cornexchange@dorchester-tc.gov.uk

www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk

The Judge's Service

One of the most colourful (but least known) events that help to make Dorchester such a special place to live is the annual Judge's Service (more properly the Official Opening of the Crown Court) which happens in October or November each year. Last year's service took place on the 9th October at St Peter's Church when the President of the newly-formed Supreme Court, Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers in the gold-edged robe behind the Chief Constable, took part with the High Sheriff and a number of other judges and legal officials in a procession to the church from County Hall.

