

# DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

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

#### Steve Newman, Town Clerk

8<sup>th</sup> October 2025

You are invited to a meeting of the **DORCHESTER HERITAGE JOINT COMMITTEE** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, HIGH EAST STREET, DORCHESTER DT1 1HF** on **TUESDAY 14<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2025** commencing at **5.30pm**.

Town Clerk and Secretary to the Committee

Steve Newman

#### **Declaration of Interests**

Members are reminded that it is their responsibility to disclose interests where appropriate. A Member who declares any interest must leave the room. A Member who declares a registerable interest as a Council nominee to a partner organisation may first address the meeting as a member of the public.

#### Membership

Dorset Council: R. Biggs, A. Canning, L. Fry, R. Major and R. Tarr.

Dorchester Town Council: S. Biles, S. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger, G. Jones and D. Taylor.

The following Members may attend and speak but not vote:

Mr B Murphy (Duchy of Cornwall), I. Gosling (Dorchester Civic Society), Vacancy (Dorchester Chamber for Business), M. Woodgate (Dorchester Heritage Magazine), E. Metcalfe (The Keep Military Museum), L. Poulsen (Dorchester Local Nature Reserve), C. Dixon (Dorset Museum & Art Gallery), J. Wallis (Blue Badge Tourist Guides) M Rice (Dorchester Association), M. Gayton or S. Johnson (Dorset History Centre), R. White (National Trust (for Max Gate and Hardy's Cottage)), V. Smith (Shire Hall), A. Worth (Keep 106 Community Radio), M. Chutter (Thomas Hardy Society), S. Wallis (Dorset Council – Archaeologist), Giles Keating (Athelhampton House), and Anthony Harrison (Town Crier).

#### 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 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2025 (enclosed).

#### 3. **BUDGET UPDATE**

To receive a report from the Finance Officer (report enclosed).

#### 4. HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY - UPDATE

To receive an update on the work of the Tourism Partnership and Strategy (report enclosed).

#### 5. PROPOSED INFORMATION PLAQUE FOR SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER

To receive a report from M. Chutter (report enclosed).

#### 6. PROPOSED BLUE PLAQUE FOR 51 HIGH WEST STREET, DORCHESTER

To receive a report from M. Chutter (report enclosed).

#### 7. PROPOSAL FOR THOMAS HARDY VICTORIAN FAYRE 2026

To receive a report from the Assistant Town Clerk (report enclosed).

#### 8. **ONGOING PROJECTS**

To received update reports on the following matters:

- a) Heritage Open Day 2025 feedback update from Assistant Town Clerk (report enclosed).
- b) Town Pump enhancement update from Civic Society (I. Gosling).
- c) The Dorchester Story project update (J. Doak & A. Harrison).
- d) Thomas Hardy statue (M. Chutter).
- e) Moule Project (M. Chutter and M. Gayton).
- f) Roman Baths interpretation project.

#### 9. **UPDATE FROM MEMBERS**

To receive updates from members and partners.

#### 10. **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.

#### 11. **URGENT ITEMS**

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

#### **ITEM 2: MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

#### **DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE**

#### 22nd JULY 2025

At a Meeting of the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee held on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2025:

#### PRESENT:

Dorchester Town Council Councillors: S. Biles

L. Fry

Officers: T. Hurley

M. Manley

Dorset Council Councillors: R. Biggs

S. Jones D. Taylor

C. Dixon Dorset Museum & Art Gallery **Dorchester Association** M. Rice Local Nature Reserve L. Poulsen Dorset Council - Archaeology S. Wallis Dorchester Civic Society / Town Crier A. Harrison **Dorchester Civic Society** I. Gosling **Dorset History Centre** M. Gayton Blue Badge Tour Guide J. Wallis

Dorchester Heritage Magazine M. Woodgate
Thomas Hardy Society M. Chutter
KeeP 106 / New Hardy Players A. Worth

#### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr G. Jones, Cllr F. Kent-Ledger, Cllr R. Major, R. White (National Trust) and V. Smith (Shire Hall Historic Courthouse Museum).

#### 2. **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

As the chair (Cllr G. Jones) had given his apologies for the meeting a chair was elected to stand-in during his absence. Cllr Sue Biles was nominated by Cllrs S. Jones and seconded by Cllr L. Fry and unanimously elected by members as chair for the meeting.

#### 3. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2025, a copy of which had been circulated, were confirmed and signed.

#### 4. **DECLARATION OF PREDETERMINATION**

None were declared.

#### 5. **BUDGET UPDATE**

An update report on the committee's budget was presented by the Assistant Town Clerk.

#### **RESOLVED**

That the budget update be noted.

#### 6. **HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY - UPDATE**

Matilda Manley presented an update on progress with the Heritage Tourism Strategy and the work of the Tourism Partnership. The Partnership's review of tourism leaflets had resulted in a future focus on a two-sided 'teaser' leaflet and a more detailed Town Guide. The Partnership has also agreed to support a new Kite Festival in 2026, with the Roman festival likely to return in 2027. Mark Chutter suggested that future Dorchester Arts' brochures could highlight the new tourist information point in the Corn Exchange. Cllr Stella Jones asked how tourism leaflets were being promoted/distributed at train stations in the region. Matilda reported that she was working with Southern Railways and GWR to place tourism posters at stations in the region and there would hopefully be interactive information on a new digital screen in Dorchester South Station. It was agreed to investigate which company was responsible for distributing tourism leaflets at stations in the region.

#### **RESOLVED**

That the report on the activities of the Tourism Partnership was noted.

#### 7. **PROPOSAL FOR MOULE PROJECT**

Mark Chutter and Maria Gayton presented their outline proposal for a project to celebrate the life and achievements of Reverend Moule and which would be the subject of a funding bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The project could be multi-disciplinary (e.g. history, science and music) and involve a range of partners. Cllr S. Jones stated that there already information plaques/signs about Moule in Fordington and the replica of the water closet in Dorset Museum, however the plaque that used to be on the Moule Institute was in storage somewhere a could be reinstated close to the site of the Institute. M. Manley suggested that the project could link with the annual science festival in Dorchester. Cllr S. Biles suggested that the project could be developed further via a small task & finish group and the following volunteered to join the group: M. Gayton, M. Chutter, A. Worth, Cllr S. Jones, and Cllr S. Biles.

The Task & Finish Group would report back to the next Committee meeting with a refined project proposal and suggested funding sources.

#### **RESOLVED**

That a Task & Finish Group be established to develop the Moule interpretation project further.

#### 8. HERITAGE INFORMATION PANELS

The Assistant Town Clerk presented proposals for the replacement of a weathered heritage information panel outside The Keep. It was also noted by Cllr Taylor that the Poundbury Camp information panel had been damaged. It was agreed that both panels should be replaced using the Committee's budget.

#### **RESOLVED**

That both 'The Keep & Marabout Barracks' and 'Poundbury Camp' heritage information panel be replaced.

#### 9. **ON-GOING PROJECTS**

Updates on the following were received:

- a) Heritage Open Day 2025. Ian Gosling noted that the Civic Society would have a stall at the Town Pump on HOD. Andy Worth mentioned that the New Hardy Players would be performing at Max Gate on that weekend.
- b) **Town Pump enhancement proposals**. Ian Gosling presented the Civic Society's plans for the restoration of the Town Pump. The work would depend on the condition of the iron pins within the structure and a cover meter survey was being commissioned to 'scan' the structure. The cost of the survey would be £580.

#### **RESOLVED**

That a grant of £580 be allocated towards the cost of the cover meter survey of the Town Pump.

- c) *The Dorchester Story* **project**. Ian Gosling reported that the students had completed their research and it will be uploaded to Discover Dorchester by October.
- d) **Sylvia Townsend Warner stature project**. Mark Chutter reported that the statue will be unveiled on Cracker Night followed by a reception at the Kings Arms.
- e) **Moynton Road commemorative stone**. The Assistant Town Clerk reported that Grassby's Memorials had offered to refurbish the stone at their own expense given the family's long association with the Thomas Hardy School. This generous offer by the Grassbys was welcomed by the Committee.

#### 10. UPDATES FROM MEMBERS

**Riverside Reserve**: Linda Poulsen reported on conservation work at the reserve and recent incidents of anti-social behaviour.

**Dorchester Association**: Michael Rice circulated the Association's autumn lecture programme.

**Thomas Hardy Society**: Miranda Woodgate reported on the Society's War Poetry conference at the Dorford Centre from 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> November followed by a concert at St Mary's Church. Mark Chutter asked if there could be a discussion at the next meeting regarding the reorientation of the Thomas Hardy statue at Top o' Town so that it would face the Walks rather than the road

**Dorset Museum & Art Gallery**. Claire Dixon reported that Austen exhibition was going well and overall attendance is up compared to previous years. In the autumn, there will be a Dorset Open Art exhibition in partnership with Dorset Visual Arts. Works to the Victorian Gallery roof will take place in 2026.

**Cllr Richard Biggs** reported that as a result of establishing a Local Visitor Economy Partnership, Dorset Council and BCP Council will be funding a destination management plan.

**Dorset History Centre** – Maria Gayton reported on plans for Rail 200 conference and ongoing work on a funding bid for capital improvements. Research on Dorchester in Boston would be reported to the next meeting.

**Dorset Council archaeology service** – Steve Wallis reported that the annual cleaning of the Roman town house mosaic was planned.

**Dorchester Civic Society**: Ian Gosling, in response to a question from Cllr S. Jones, reported that the society was involved in surveying the water meadows with the aim of enabling Dorset Council to designate them as a Local Heritage Asset.

#### 11. **QUESTIONS**

None were raised.

#### 12. **URGENT ITEMS**

None were raised.

#### **ITEM 3:**

### DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE – 14<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2025 BUDGET UPDATE

- 1. The table below sets out the Committee's income and expenditure to date since  $1^{\text{st}}$  April 2025.
- 2. For the current financial year 2025-26, Dorchester Town Council has allocated to the Committee £3,000 for activities and £8,000 for events.

	Budget report 2025-2026		
		Activities	Events
		£	£
	Balance Brought forward as at 1st April 2025	6,257.19	11,908.78
	Income & Expenditure 2025-2026		
Income			
01/04/2025	DTC Contribution for activities	3,000.00	
01/04/2025	DTC Contribution for events		8,000.00
Expenditure			
•	Rowena Taylor Graphic Design - DD Passport + Poster		
01/04/2025	Design	150.00	
14/05/2025	Advantage Digital Prints Ltd - Museum postcards	621.54	
	Wallis Agency - Website Hosting for town trail mini-		
27/05/2025	sites	410.00	
06/08/2025	Rural Services Partnership Ltd - Membership	143.85	
13/08/2025	Friends of Dorchester West Station - Grant	500.00	
	Tudor Rose Masonry & Conservation - Cover meter		
30/09/2025	survey for the town pump	580.00	
06/10/2025	Heritage Open Day (expenditure to date)	1,834.12	
	Expenditure sub-total:	4,239.51	0.00
Balance		5,017.68	19,908.78
		3,027.00	
Commitments			
	Blue Plague/Pub Scheme/Information Boards	1,420.00	
	Mill Stream Boards	19.42	
	Available Balance	3,578.26	19,908.78

3. Future allocations from the Committee's budget will include the Thomas Hardy Victorian Fayre, replacement of heritage information panels, and developing new interpretive material.

Assistant Town Clerk
Dorchester Town Council

#### **ITEM 4:**

# DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE – 14 OCTOBER 2025 DORCHESTER TOURISM PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The last Tourism Partnership meeting was well attended. It was hosted at The Duchess of Cornwall Inn and Anthony Woodhouse joined us for the meeting. A new representative from English Heritage joined the meeting. Dorset Hideaways have now joined the Dorchester Tourism Partnership but were unable to attend this meeting. The following items were discussed/mentioned:

- Tourist Information Point is now open at Corn Exchange.
- Website hits are down as more people are using Chat GPT. This is not unique to DiscoverDorchester.co.uk
- Two-sided 'teaser leaflet' is now printed and going out for distribution around Dorset and bordering counties.
- Tourism Partnership are reevaluating the Town guide. This was going to be a booklet that people collect from in and around Dorchester with maps, walking routes, cycling routes, attractions guide, shopping, heritage info etc. Some questioned whether this much print is sustainable. Others questioned the size and cost of the design and print.
- Events:
  - Dorchester Walking Festival to run again in 2026 from 2<sup>nd</sup> May to 10<sup>th</sup> May. This avoids Isle of Wight Walking Festival and includes the May Day Bank Holiday.
  - Kite Festival on Great Field in approved for 6<sup>th</sup> June 2025.
- The current campaign focus for the tourism partnership is to promote Dorchester as a base from which to explore Dorset "Explore Dorset from the Heart".
- Hardy 2028 project update given and tourism partnership happy with developing plans.
- Tourism Partnership will be hosting a popular social media influencer during 2026 February
  Half term. A mother and son who are very interested in British history and the Royal Family.
  They are English Heritage members and National Trust members. 167k followers on
  Instagram. 78.8k subscribers on YouTube.
- The partnership discussed areas for action and marketing focus next year. Ideas included: Cruise ships, Dorchester's links with Bayeux, stop of in Dorchester on the way to Cornwall, how welcoming the people in Dorchester are.

Full notes and slides from the last meeting can be found online at: https://discoverdorchester.co.uk/about-us/

Tourism Development Officer Dorchester Town Council

#### ITEM 5

# DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE 14<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2025 SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER STATUE – INFORMATION PANEL

1. The following text is proposed for the information panel to be mounted on the side of Hotter shoe shop in South Street next to the Thomas Hardy board, adjacent to Barclays Bank.

Here is the statue of Sylvia Townsend Warner (1893 - 1978). The sculpture was designed and created by Denise Dutton and commissioned by Visible Women UK in partnership with the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee. The statue was crowdfunded by the public in 2024 and the committee consisted of Anya Pearson, Mark Damon Chutter, Tabitha Schofield and Nicole Brugger.

Sylvia Townsend Warner was a trailblazer for the LGBTQ+ community and lived openly with her partner Valentine Ackland in East Chaldon and Frome Vauchurch in Maiden Newton from the 1920s onwards. Both women formed an eclectic and bohemian mini-Bloomsbury group alongside artists such as the Powys family and Elizabeth Muntz. Warner was a musicologist, a novelist and poet. Her most notorious book is 'Lolly Willowes' (1926) which is a feminist response to witchcraft.

Warner was often in Dorchester. There is an extract from her diary dated 1942 when sadly the writer Virginia Woolf(1882-1941)passed away in Lewes in Sussex:

'At Boots Library the young woman put into my hands Woolf's last book. And I received an extraordinary impression how light it was, how small, and frail. As though it was the premature-born child, and motherless, and literally, the last light handful remaining of that fall and abundant woman. The feeling has haunted me all day .'

Ackland died in 1969 and Warner in 1978. Their love for each other was enduring. This is the first non-royal statue of a woman in Dorchester. Warner is now elevated to her rightful place alongside Thomas Hardy and William Barnes. For more information, please visit the Townsend Warner Gallery at the Dorset Museum and the archives at the Dorset History Centre.

Poem 'Drawing You, Heavy With Sleep'

2. The Committee is invited to lend its support to the creation of the information panel as described in this report.

Mark Chutter September 2025

#### ITEM 6.

# DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE 14<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2025 REQUEST FOR BLUE PLAQUE FOR 51 HIGH WEST STREET

- 1. The owners of 51 High West Street have asked if the Heritage Committee would kindly provide a blue plaque as the building once belonged to Thomas Hardy. The owners have called it *Thomas Hardy Town House*.
- 2. The property has been renovated by its new owners, John Cobley and Antoinette Weller, and the Thomas Hardy Society have validated the link between Thomas Hardy and the property.
- 3. The proposed wording for the blue plaque is as follows:

**THOMAS HARDY (1840–1928).** Owned by the Poet and Novelist, during the period in which he wrote A Changed Man, seated at the front window. This house is uniquely named by its actual street address in his work.

- 4. The committee last purchased a Blue Plaque to commemorate the Reverend Moule and a similar 15" cold cast GRP plaque will cost approximately £700. However, the owners of 51 High West Street have stated that the planning consent for the restoration of the property does not allow for the use of plastic materials for exterior fittings. The proposed plaque could, therefore, be fabricated in cast aluminium within a £700 budget, with the property owner taking responsibility for installation.
- 5. The Committee has an amount allocated in its budget for the purchase of blue plaque (£1,400) and with the Committee's consent this can be used to purchase the plaque.
- 6. **Recommendation**: That the Committee agrees to fund the fabrication of a Blue Plaque for 51 High West Street, as set out in this report, to commemorate the property's links with Thomas Hardy.

Assistant Town Clerk
Dorchester Town Council

#### **ITEM 7.**

#### DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE – 14<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2025 PROPOSAL FOR THOMAS HARDY VICTORIAN FAYRE

- 1. The Committee has, for many years, led on the organisation of the biannual Thomas Hardy Victorian Fayre held in High West / East Street. The Fayre has always taken place on a Sunday typically the day after the ceremony to lay a wreath at Thomas Hardy's statue to commemorate his birthday.
- 2. The last time the Fayre was held was in June 2023 and it was agreed with the committee not to hold the event in 2025 but instead to delay it until 2026 and then for the next fayre to take place in 2028 as part of the celebrations of the hundredth anniversary of Hardy's death. This would re-instate the two-year cycle and provide a lead-up to the 2028 celebrations.
- 3. It is proposed, therefore, that the Fayre takes place on Sunday 31st May 2026.
- 4. The key costs for organizing the event will include:
  - c. £2,500 for the road closure and diversion signage.
  - c. £3,000 for an event organiser
  - c. £1,000 for security
  - c. £500 for first aid
  - c. £1,000 promotion and publicity
  - £2,000 for activities and entertainment.

In addition, there will be costs associated with entertainment, re-enactment groups and activities.

- 5. When it was last held in 2023, the Fayre cost almost £10,000 but this was offset by sponsorship of approximately £4,500.
- 6. It is proposed, therefore, that the Committee agrees a budget of £10,000 from its Events budget (which has a current balance of £19,908). However, where possible, sponsorship should be sought to offset the cost.
- 7. With regard to the content of the event, there should be an emphasis on authenticity and quality with a focus on arts, crafts and rural skills/trades.
- 8. Recommendation: It is recommended that the Committee:
  - a) agrees the date of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2026 for the Thomas Hardy Victorian Fayre;
  - b) allocates £10,000 to the event from the Committee's events budget;
  - c) agrees the procurement of the services of an event organiser to oversee the planning and implementation of the Fayre.

### ITEM 8 (a)

#### DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE – 14<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2025 HERITAGE OPEN DAY 2025 - EVALUATION REPORT

1. Heritage Open Day 2025 took place on **Sunday 21**<sup>st</sup> **September** – the last day of the national Heritage Open Day weekend and also within Dorset Architectural Heritage Week. With the agreement of the Committee, the programme for the day comprised the tours and talks as set out in the tables below – they also include an estimate of attendances and information from the Eventbrite booking system as to where attendees travelled from:

#### Walks & talks:

Poundbury architecture tour architecture tour 40 participants	Theme	Guide / capacity	Attendance	Page views on	Travelled from
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The life and death of Mary Channing and Martha Brown  Martha Brown  2 Weymouth 2 Radlett 2 Kyle of Lochalsh 2 Hackney 1 High Wycombe 1 Calgary  5 Dorchester 2 London 2 Ferndown 2 Bristol 2 Bridport 2 Bournemouth 1 Weymouth	Roman Aqueduct	Steve Wallis	16	265	5 Dorchester
The life and death of Mary Channing and Mark Brown  Mark Brown  Mark Chutter  20  169  5 Dorchester  2 London  2 Ferndown  2 Bristol  2 Bournemouth  1 Weymouth	Walk	20 participants			3 Swanage
2 Kyle of Lochalsh 2 Hackney 1 High Wycombe 1 Calgary  The life and death of Mary Channing and Mark Chutter 20 169 5 Dorchester 2 London 2 Ferndown 2 Bristol 2 Bridport 2 Bournemouth 1 Weymouth					2 Weymouth
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Channing and Martha Brown  2 Ferndown 2 Bristol 2 Bridport 2 Bournemouth 1 Weymouth	The life and	Mark Chutter	20	169	
Channing and Martha Brown  2 Ferndown 2 Bristol 2 Bridport 2 Bournemouth 1 Weymouth	death of Mary	20 participants			2 London
Martha Brown  2 Bristol 2 Bridport 2 Bournemouth 1 Weymouth					2 Ferndown
2 Bournemouth 1 Weymouth	_				
2 Bournemouth 1 Weymouth					2 Bridport
1 Weymouth					·
					1 Weymouth
					1 Reading

				1 Poole
				1 Fulham
				1 Cawsand
The Moule	Mark Chutter	20	142	3 Dorchester
family and	20 participants			2 Southampton
Fordington				2 Poole
				2 Manchester
				2 Hugh Wycombe
				2 Ferndown
				2 Bournemouth
				1 Taunton
				1 Swindon
				1 Cawsand
Judge Jeffreys -	Mark Chutter	50	203	5 Southampton
the Hanging	20 participants			4 Poole
Judge				3 Dorchester
				2 Dewsbury
				2 Bridport
				1 Manchester
				1 Cookstown
Keeping it Clean.	Philip Browne	25	198	12 Dorchester
Dorchester's	Talk with			5 Weymouth
sewers & water	capacity for c.30			2 Taunton
supply.				2 Manchester
				2 London
				2 Bournemouth
				1 Yeovil
				1 Cawsand

## Heritage venue tours:

Venue	Guide / capacity	Attendance	Page views on Eventbrite	Travelled from
Corn Exchange and the Council Chamber	Mark Tattersall and DTC 3 tours	c.80		
Sunninghill Prep School	Jeremy Pope & David Newberry 40	40	293	18 Dorchester 5 London 2 Wimborne 2 Weymouth 2 Portsmouth 2 Poole 2 Bristol 2 Brent 2 Bournemouth 1 Southampton 1 Dundee 1 Cookstown

Dorset Museum	2 x store tours: 12 each 2 x gallery tours: 20 each	64	386	10 Weymouth 10 Dorchester 8 Fulham 5 Southampton 4 London 4 Ferndown 4 Verwood 4 Bournemouth 2 Portsmouth 2 Bognor Regis 2 Newport 1, Exmouth 1 Yeovil
				1 Yeovil 1 Caerphilly
Dorset History Centre	DHC staff 5 x store tours	51	Booked directly with DHC	2 000. p
Shire Hall Museum	SHM staff 2 x tours: 20 each	38	Booked directly with SHM	

#### **Drop-in events:**

Venue	Offer	Attendance
St Peter's Church bell tower	Tours of tower every 30 minutes 12.00 until 4.00pm	c.60
Nothe Fort Artillery in Borough Gardens	Display in the Gardens from 10.00am – 4.00pm.	n/a

- 2. It should also be noted that the event will benefit from the support from local businesses, including the King's Arms (providing a free venue for the *Dorchester Old & New* introductory talk) and the PiP at The Great Field.
- 3. Particular credit is due to Joe Doak and Anthony Harrison for running the Dorchester Civic Society stall at the Town Pump throughout the day. They had displays of old maps of the town and other heritage information, and attracted a lot of interest from passers-by and those gathering to join guided walks.
- 4. **Budget**. A budget of £2,450 was agreed for all aspects of the event although it was delivered for a total cost of £1,815, not including the staff and volunteer time.
- 5. An invitation to provide feedback has been sent to all those who booked via Eventbrite. In addition, ad hoc feedback has been received via a variety of sources (e.g. emails to Sunninghill School and comments to walk leaders) and all has been extremely positive.

- 6. Although the booking system worked well, the fact that the events were all free did mean that some of those who had booked did not turn up although in most cases their places were filled by those joining on the day.
- 7. If the event is to run again in 2026, then the following are recommended:
  - It is important that there are sufficient tours and events that don't require pre-booking (e.g. Corn Exchange and St Peter's bell tower).
  - The guided walks were very popular but there needs to be flexibility for participants to join on the day if those who have booked don't turn up.
  - 'Behind the scenes' tours are very popular, as are tours of notable buildings not normally accessible to the public (e.g. Sunninghill).
  - Better planning of itineraries for those who want to attend more than one event during the day and would like time to get from one venue to the other.
- 8. The event was a great success and could not have been achieved without the hard work and goodwill of range of partners and volunteers.
- 9. In 2026, national Heritage Open Day is between 11<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> September. The Iron Man Race takes place on 20<sup>th</sup> September and the County Show is likely to be on 6th September, so the most likely date for Dorchester heritage open day will be 13<sup>th</sup> September but this will be confirmed with the Committee early in 2026.

Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate)

Dorchester Town Council