



# DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Council Offices, 19 North Square, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1JF

Telephone: (01305) 266861

**Steve Newman, Town Clerk**

17<sup>th</sup> July 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 22<sup>nd</sup> JULY 2025** commencing at **5.30pm**.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Steve Newman'.

Town Clerk and Secretary to the Committee

## 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 15<sup>th</sup> April 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. **PROPOSAL FOR MOULE PROJECT**

To receive a report from Maria Gayton and Mark Chutter (**report enclosed**).

6. **HERITAGE INFORMATION PANELS**

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

7. **ONGOING PROJECTS**

To received update reports on the following matters:

- a) Heritage Open Day 2025 – update from Assistant Town Clerk.
- b) Town Pump enhancement - update from Civic Society (I. Gosling).
- c) *The Dorchester Story* project update (J. Doak & A. Harrison).
- d) Sylvia Townsend Warner statue project – update (J. Doak & Mark Chutter) (**report enclosed**).
- e) Moynton Road commemorative stone (T. Hurley)

8. **UPDATE FROM MEMBERS**

To receive updates from members and partners.

9. **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.

10. **URGENT ITEMS**

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

## ITEM 2: MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

### DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE

15<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2025

At a Meeting of the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2025:

#### **PRESENT:**

Dorchester Town Council	Councillors:	S. Biles G. Jones (Chair) F. Kent-Ledger
	Officers:	T. Hurley M. Manley
Dorset Council	Councillors:	R. Biggs R. Major R. Tarr
Dorset Museum & Art Gallery		C. Dixon
Dorchester Association		M. Rice
Local Nature Reserve		L. Poulsen
Dorset Council - Archaeology		S. Wallis
Dorchester Civic Society / Town Crier		A. Harrison
Dorchester Civic Society		J. Doak
Dorset History Centre		M. Gayton
Blue Badge Tour Guide		J. Wallis
Shire Hall Historic Courthouse Museum		V. Smith
Dorchester Heritage Magazine		M. Woodgate
Thomas Hardy Society		M. Chutter (attended online)
Athelhampton House		G. Keating
Dorchester Sheroes Project		A. Pearson

#### 53. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr S. Jones, Cllr L. Fry, I. Gosling (Dorchester Civic Society), R. White (National Trust) and A. Worth (KeeP 106),

#### 54. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025, a copy of which had been circulated, were confirmed and signed.

#### 55. **DECLARATION OF PREDETERMINATION**

None were declared.

56. **BUDGET UPDATE**

An update report on the committee's budget was presented.

**RESOLVED**

- a) That the budget update be noted.

57. **ROMAN FESTIVAL FEEDBACK**

Matilda Manley circulated a summary of key facts about the festival and its impact on the town. 68% of visitors to the festival had come from outside of Dorchester.

**RESOLVED**

- b) That the feedback report be noted.

58. **HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY - UPDATE**

Matilda Manley presented an update on progress with the Heritage Tourism Strategy and the work of the Tourism Partnership. The plans for the Spring promotional campaign were presented to the Committee.

**RESOLVED**

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

59. **HERITAGE OPEN DAY 2025**

Tony Hurley presented updated plans for Heritage Open Day in Dorchester on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September. Virginia Smith indicated that Shire Hall could be open to the public on that day. Cllr David Taylor also offered his services for any guided walks. Joy Wallis had agreed to lead various walks and was currently working to get access to buildings and sites that were not normally open to the public.

**RESOLVED**

- That the proposals and budget for Heritage Open Day 2025 be agreed.

60. **HERITAGE PLAQUE AT DORCHESTER WEST STATION**

Tony Hurley presented a request from the Friends of Dorchester West Station for a grant of up to £500 for a heritage information sign to be installed at the station. It was considered by the committee that the project would be supported subject to its agreement to the wording/content and suggestions were made for information that the sign could include – such as photographs from the Dorset History Centre on the movement of German prisoners of war through the station in the First World War.

## RESOLVED

That a grant of up to £500 be awarded to the Friends of Dorchester West Station for its heritage information sign project subject to the Committee agreeing the wording.

### 61. MOYNTON ROAD COMMEMORATIVE STONE, THOMAS HARDYE GARDENS

Tony Hurley reported on a request from Cllr Stella Jones for the Committee to support the renovation of the commemorative stone on Moynton Road in Thomas Hardy Gardens. A quote had been requested from a stonemason for the re-carving of the lettering. The Committee discussed the matter and considered that funding should be requested from Betterment Homes or The Old Hardyans before the Committee considers the matter further.

### 62. ONGOING PROJECTS

Updates on the following were received:

- a) **Roman Baths Interpretation Project.** Tony Hurley reported that the project was on hold until a new member of staff was in place at Dorset Museum for the project to liaise with. It was reported that a public request had brought forward several local people who remembered working on the excavation, and had photographs of the site, and their memories were going to be recorded by the Dorset History Centre. The long-term aspiration to partially excavate an area of the baths was discussed although the challenges this faced were considered. The delay to the publication of the excavation report was also discussed.
- b) **Town Pump enhancement proposals.** Joe Doak reported on the Civic Society's project to enhance the Town Pump and confirmed Wessex Water's commitment to re-establishing a water fountain/dispenser in the structure. An update on designs were awaited from Crickmay Stark.
- c) **The Dorchester Story project.** Joe Doak reported on the Civic Society's project to develop online content initially about Roman Dorchester with support from a students from Bournemouth University. Initial drafts should be available by May and would eventually be hosted on Discover Dorchester.
- d) **Sylvia Townsend Warner stature project.** It was confirmed by Anya Pearson that the £60,000 target for the project had been reached and that further funds were being collected for both the on-going maintenance of the statue and for the cataloguing of the author's archive in the Dorset History Centre. Mark Chutter expressed his thanks to Visible Women UK for their support for the project.

### 63. UPDATES FROM PARTNERS

**Dorchester Association:** Michael Rice provided an update on the summer school in 17<sup>th</sup> May and offered to circulate the programme.

**Athelhampton House:** Giles Keating reported on a project to record recitals of fifty of Thomas Hardy's short love poems for You Tube and for their to be a launch event at Athelhampton on 9<sup>th</sup> May.

**Thomas Hardy Society:** Miranda Woodgate reported on the Society's new monthly newsletter and offered to circulate subscription details. Mark Chutter added that the study day had been a great success and that the Birthday Weekend conference in late May would include a performance of *A Beautiful Thread* at Stinsford Church.

**Shire Hall:** Virginia Smith stated that the museum currently has a Tolkein exhibition called *The Magic of Middle Earth* and more events were programmed for later in the year.

**Dorset Museum & Art Gallery.** Claire Dixon reported that the Museum's financial position had improved but there was still much to do. It was understood that the Arts Council would be reviewing its national portfolio funding soon. The Jane Austen exhibition would open in the June and an events programme was being planned with commercial sponsorship. The Museum was involved in the consultation on the future management of the World Heritage Site. The repairs to the Victorian Hall roof would commence in the autumn and extend into 2026. The new museums' passport had been launched, with Committee funding, and ordered the public a discount if visiting several museums.

**Cllr Richard Biggs** reported that Dorset had been given approval by Visit England to establish a Local Visitor Economy Partnership and this would open up the opportunity for further government funding.

**Cllr Roland Tarr** noted that a key element to the history of Dorset was its fishing ports / industry and links with Newfoundland.

**Cllr David Taylor** highlighted the forthcoming anniversary of the established of the Dorchester near Boston in the United States in 1630 and offered to bring a report with proposals for marking this anniversary. Claire Dixon highlighted that this period of history was particularly complex given the impact of the new settlement on the indigenous Massachusett people.

**Dorset History Centre** – Maria Gayton reported on the new 'From the Stacks' monthly sessions which were aimed at opening up the collections to the public. Future events hosted by the Centre included a performance by the Wyvern musicians, a talk on the Drax estate by Paul Lashmar, and a women's history research event in June. Details of all these events to be circulated to the Committee.

**Linda Poulsen** reported that on the planned felling of trees in the Riverside Nature Reserve as a result of ash die-back disease. She also suggested that the town council could help to publicise the Environment Agency's water quality testing results for the Frome.

The Assistant Town Clerk reported that a request had been made by Ian Gosling that Dorset Council consider opening to the public part of the County Hall car park to assist visitors to the nearby museums. Cllr Biggs reported that this would not be possible as the car parks were in high demand by staff, especially as other public sector organisations were relocating to County Hall.

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

Matilda Manley reported that **The Keep military museum** was apply to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a resilience grant to assist with outreach whilst the museum is closed for repairs.

64. **QUESTIONS**

None were raised.

65. **URGENT ITEMS**

None were raised.

Chair.....

### ITEM 3: Budget Update

#### DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE – 21<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 2025 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2024-25

1. The table below sets out the Committee’s income and expenditure to date since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.
2. For the current financial year 2025-26, Dorchester Town Council has allocated to the Committee £3,000 for activities and £8,500 for events.
3. At its meeting in April, the Committee agreed the allocation of £2,450 for the Dorchester Heritage Open Day in September 2025. In addition, in the coming financial year, there will be a need for expenditure on heritage information panels subject to the Committee’s approval (see item 6 below).

**Assistant Town Clerk  
Dorchester Town Council**

Statement of Accounts – as at 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2025			
		Activities	Events
		£	£
	Balance Brought forward as at 1st April 2025	6,257.19	11,908.78
<b>Income &amp; Expenditure</b>			
Contributions in Year			
01/04/2025	DTC Contribution for activities	3,000.00	
01/04/2025	DTC Contribution for events		8,000.00
		3,000.00	8,000.00
Expenditure in Year			
01/04/2025	Rowena Taylor Graphic Design - DD Passport + Poster Design	150.00	
27/05/2025	Wallis Agency - Website Hosting for town trail mini-sites	410.00	
		560.00	0.00
<b>Balance</b>		8,697.19	19,908.78
	Total Balance		28,605.97
<b>Outstanding commitments / allocations</b>			
	Blue Plague/Pub Scheme/Information Boards	1,420.00	
	Mill Stream Boards	19.42	
	Heritage Open Day 2025		2,450
	<b>Available Balance</b>	<b>7,257.77</b>	<b>17,458.78</b>

## ITEM 4:

### DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE – 22 JULY 2025 DORCHESTER TOURISM PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The last Tourism Partnership meeting was not as well attended as the previous. It is a very busy time of year for tourism partners though, so this is understandable. The following items were discussed/mentioned:

- A new Tourist Information Point is opening at The Corn Exchange very soon. Thank you to Dorchester Arts for hosting this.
- The Leaflets task and finish group have reviewed our printed leaflets. As a partnership we have decided to switch to two different printed tools:
  1. **Two-sided Teaser leaflet** that will go out to places outside of Dorchester to inspire people to visit:
    - **Side one – to inspire families to visit Dorchester** - Bring the whole gang to Dorchester for wonderful days out packed with play, discovery, and adventure in award winning museums, attractions, awesome historic sites and beautiful open spaces. Make some unforgettable family memories today!
    - **Side two - to inspire couples to visit Dorchester** - Discover the charm of Dorchester, Dorset—a vibrant destination rich heritage and culture. Explore unique shops and indulge in mouth-watering food and drink in this historic Roman town that inspired the world-famous novelist and poet, Thomas Hardy.
  2. **Town Guide** – A booklet that people will be able to collect from in and around Dorchester with maps, walking routes, cycling routes, attractions guide, shopping, heritage info etc.
    - The Partnership discussed what festivals we would like to run in 2026. The following is proposed:
      - Dorchester Walking Festival to run again in 2026. Tourism Partnership were pleased with this year’s festival.
      - Heritage Committee to run Roman Festival every other year (next one in 2027)
      - Thomas Hardy Victorian Fair 2026 - run by Heritage Committee
      - A new Kite Festival on Great Field in May 2026
    - 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”. This is a campaign that will be continuing into the Autumn.

Full notes and slides from the last meeting can be found online at: [The official tourism website for Dorchester](#).

**Tourism Development Officer**  
**Dorchester Town Council**

## ITEM 5:

**DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE**  
**22<sup>nd</sup> JULY 2025**  
**PROPOSAL FOR NATIONAL LOTTERY HERITAGE FUND BID RE: THE MOULES**

NLHF Investment Principles, and how a project re: Reverend Moule and his associates may address these.

Looking at how Moule changed attitudes, changed Fordington, and embodied qualities such as charity, perseverance, self-sacrifice and recycling / managing natural resources – not least with the invention of the earth closet.

Below are each of NLHF's investment principles, along with ideas about how this project can address those.

### **1. Saving heritage**

Conserving and valuing heritage, will ensure heritage remains accessible, relevant, sustainable and valued.

Heritage at risk: We will commit funding to protect, conserve and revitalise heritage of all kinds that is in poor condition or at risk of loss, decline, damage, neglect or of being forgotten – ensuring it is valued and better understood.

Invest in places: Heritage has a unique role in bringing people together where they live, work and visit. We will increase people's connection with the heritage of their local places through targeted investment in our historic and natural environment.

Revitalise and maintain: We will invite proposals to work with us to develop the skills, capacity and innovation to sustain and manage heritage. We will identify opportunities for revitalising diverse types of heritage.

Our project can address this principle:

- The story of the Moule's and their contribution to Fordington is in danger of being lost. Their story is relatively well-known amongst Dorchester / Dorset's local historians and older people – but is not represented in Fordington and is in danger of being forgotten within this generation.
- Our project will inform local people about the social context for the Moule's – Victorian, and into Edwardian period, their connections with others including Thomas Hardy, their poor reception in the parish, their fight against cholera and eventual acceptance, their ideas and lifestyle.

- We will work with a local school and the Rev Moule's parish church, St George's, to build and demonstrate an earth closet, teach the science behind it and maintain it as a display and learning feature in Fordington, building the capacity and knowledge to interpret and teach the closet for years to come.

## **2. Protecting the environment**

Supporting nature recovery and environmental sustainability.

Environmental footprint: We will support heritage projects that reduce adverse environmental impacts and help heritage to adapt to our changing climate. If projects involve construction, we will encourage restoration, conservation and reuse, rather than new build.

- Mitigation: We will collaborate to bring natural, built and cultural heritage stakeholders together to identify and mitigate climate risks to heritage and involve people in bringing about positive behaviour change.

We can address this investment principle by:

- We will draw attention to the earth closet – Rev Moule's invention, and its potential use for eco-sanitation - possibly making an earth closet for demo, linking with river water quality and Moule's fight against water borne diseases. DMAG have both an original and replica earth closet so would be a natural partner on this aspect. We will work with a school partner to demo the science of earth closets, raise local awareness of their properties and look to twin our project, or DHC, or DTC with an earth closet toilet (St George's is already twinned, so we can build on that).

## **3. Inclusion, access and participation**

Supporting greater inclusion, diversity, access and participation in heritage.

We will support organisations to ensure everyone has opportunities to learn, develop new skills and explore heritage, regardless of background or personal circumstances.

Involve a more diverse range of people in heritage, investing in volunteering, heritage careers, co-creating projects, leadership, governance and developing knowledge and skills.

Enable organisations to remove barriers to access and participation, particularly for people who are under-served by heritage.

Support all communities to explore and share their heritage, with a focus on making the stories of our four nations more inclusive of everyone's heritage.

Accessible digital heritage resources: Support greater use of digital technology to make heritage more accessible and enjoyable, and promote better access to heritage information, enabling projects to increase impact and reach.

Our project can address these principles:

- Based in Fordington parish, historically the parish contained very poor housing and grinding poverty, separated from Dorchester, Fordington was seen as a community, home to many pubs, non-denominational churches, and various heavier industries (foundry, mill). 25 years after Moule's death, the Mill Street Mission was formed to address this ongoing poverty and poor housing. The Mill St Housing Society would be a project partner – helping to tell the story of Fordington, and connecting the project with the many current local social housing tenants.
- The Rev and Mrs Moule were dedicated to the welfare of their poorer neighbours, and it is within the spirit of this project to share the story of this Victorian clergyman and parishioners with current residents, especially those who are younger and may not have heard the story, those on low incomes and families and children
- We will engage with local people – encouraging research, learning from available publications, sharing information, learning and perspectives at informal hyper-local events.
- Providing opportunities for people on low-incomes to help shape the project, contribute to it and enjoy the outcomes is key to our plan.
- We will ensure that project information and outcomes are shared with all relevant partners' websites, we will establish a Facebook page to share our project in a fun way and let people know about events and activities. Some project materials (e.g. new research, and photos) will be lodged at DHC for posterity, becoming available through our online catalogue.

#### **4. Organisational sustainability**

Strengthening heritage to be adaptive and financially resilient, contributing to communities and economies.

We will support organisations to develop the skills and capacity to ensure a sound long-term future and encourage new heritage investment that benefits communities and economies.

- Support financial sustainability: We will continue to offer funding to build resilience, providing organisations with capacity and expertise to develop their long-term organisational and financial plans.
- Support heritage skills development: We will collaborate with partners to identify opportunities to build capacity, skills and expertise in heritage, to contribute to thriving communities and economies.
- Provide flexible funding: We will offer flexible financial support in the early planning stages of projects for preparatory analysis and activities. We will also make available follow-on funding for time-limited periods on completion of significant capital projects to help embed operational stability.
- New finance and investment: We will champion the use of more diverse income sources such as green finance and commercial approaches and help build the capacity and skills needed to deliver this.

Our project can address this investment principle:

- We will be upskilling members of the community, teachers and housing providers – there will be a range of volunteer roles varying from researcher to story-teller, photographer, social media guru, events support. All of these will be promoted to local communities in informal ways, accessible training provided (e.g. near people's homes, in informal settings where they feel comfortable, in trusted settings such as St George's Hall, a local school and Mill St Housing's community room. Our aim to leave a network of individuals, connected to the heritage partners, to carry forward an annual event for children
- Applying for this grant is part of DTC's journey towards seeking greater amounts of grant-funding. The process will allow both officers and local partners to develop their understanding of the NLHF grant process and leave our community with greater skills towards future projects, including a plan to celebrate Thomas Hardy on the anniversary of his death in 2028. DTC's Heritage Tourism Committee will have gained skills in funding applications, project management and evaluation and community engagement. The Committee in turn supports Dorchester's heritage tourism offer, which contributes to the town's financial resilience, encourages businesses and footfall to the town.
- Dorchester contains much new housing, and spreading an understanding of our town's past, its great characters and sharing events helps to connect people with shared interests, build pride and interest in our environment and help community integration.
- During the project, we will investigate other funding streams and how they might support the sustainable outcomes from the project e.g. The Community Fund | Wessex Water, or Home - Dorset Community Foundation

Our project could include the following activities:

- Community outreach, engagement and establishment of a small steering / research group
- Partnership with a local school – to include visits into school, a school visit to Fordington, a joint project around the understanding of an earth closet
- Partnership with Mill St Housing and Magna to reach local social housing tenants
- Co-design of a Moule information board to be sited in Fordington near the former Institute
- Partnership with music service or similar to compose and perform a Moule song
- A partnership with St George's – perhaps a service of thanks for the Moule's – to be followed by a children's party at the church hall to celebrate Moule's bday (late Jan) – invites to local pupil premium children. The hope to establish the party as an annual event
- Social media re: Moule and his life and times
- A short, fun children's film about Moule and the earth closet to be reused at the annual children's party

#### **Budget ideas:**

- Requires a part-time project lead / co-ordinator for several months
- Hire of spaces
- Volunteer expenses

- Reprographics, item loan, volunteer / resident training, research from DHC and DMAG
- Interpretation board design, production and siting
- Professional fees for tasks or teaching – social media, photography / film, specialist construction of replica equipment, music
- Party expenses (food, drink, an entertainer / story-teller, hall hire, modest goodie bag) -

**Next Steps:**

- Discussion with DTC , heritage and tourism committee – their support and match-funding essential
- Informal discussions with potential project partners and communities
- Establishment of a bid-writing group (2/3)
- Make a project enquiry to NLHF
- Complete bid and submit early Autumn 2025

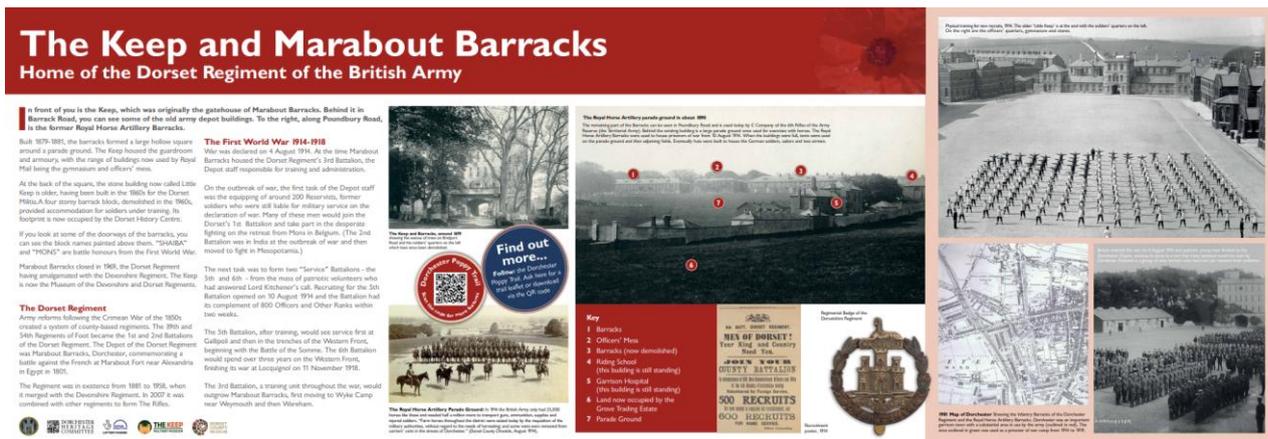
**Maria Gayton – Dorset History Centre**

**Mark Chutter**

ITEM 6

DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE
22nd JULY 2025
HERITAGE INFORMATION PANELS

- 1. The following provides a brief update on various issues relating to the Committee's heritage information panels located around Dorchester.
2. The Poppy Trail panel relating to the German Prisoner of Way Camp is located outside the former Magna offices on Poundbury Road. Given the plans for the redevelopment of the site for key worker housing, the Town Council has contacted the development company, Prime PLC, to express concern about the security/safety of the panel during the works. Prime PLC has responded providing reassurance that the information panel and its mountings will be removed and stored safely on site until they can be reinstalled by the company when the development is completed.
3. The large Poppy Trail information sign outside The Keep Military Museum, relating to The Keep and Marabout Barracks, is in need of replacement. It has suffered from sun damage and general wear and tear. This is large, prominent sign (see image below):



The cost of re-producing this panel is quoted as £288 plus VAT. It is requested, therefore, that the committee give approval to this expenditure.

Assistant Town Clerk
Dorchester Town Council

**ITEM 7 (d)**

**DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE  
22<sup>nd</sup> JULY 2025  
UPDATE ON SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER STATUE**

See image below of current maquette for the Sylvia Townsend Warner statue.

