

Dorchester Town Council

Management Committee

15th September 2025

Present: Councillors L. Fry, W. Gibbons, F. Kent-Ledger, D. Leaper (Chair), R. Major, R. Potter and M. Rennie.

Apologies: Councillors P. Farmer, J. Hewitt, F. Hogwood and S. Jones.

In attendance:

Councillors S. Biles, J. Germodo, V. Lloyd-Jones and R. Biggs.

Officers: Tony Hurley (Assistant Town Clerk – Corporate), Carl Dallison (Assistant Town Clerk – Outdoor Services) and Matilda Manley (Tourism Development Officer).

12. Declaration of Interests

None.

13. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 14th July 2025, adopted by Council on 28 July 2025, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

14. Proposal for Dorchester Kite Festival in 2026.

The committee considered a report by the Tourism Development Officer on a proposal for a kite festival event on The Great Field in June 2026. The proposal had already been considered by the Dorchester Tourism Partnership and was fully supported. The potential for the event to attract sponsorship and generate income from food vendors was noted. The issue of visitor parking was discussed and the need for careful management highlighted. Cllr Kent-Ledger suggested the potential for a 'park and walk' arrangement be discussed with Dorchester Rugby Club. The benefits of involving the Muslim and Afghan communities in the event were noted.

Resolved:

That the Committee approves the proposal for the Kite Festival in 2026 at The Great Field and that the allocation of funding for this event of £4,000 be considered as part of budget setting process for 2026-27.

15. Outdoor Services – Update Report – Late Summer

The committee received the update report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Outdoor Services). Damage to the 'pop-up' electrical supply boxes in Borough Gardens was noted as was the damage to one of the main gate pillars. A training and development programme of Borough Gardens staff, delivered with the support of Kingston Maurward

College, was outlined. Cllr Rennie congratulated the Gardens staff on their very positive attitude as displayed during the summer's events. Cllr Fry asked if there was the potential for career / pay progression for Gardens' staff and the Assistant Town Clerk stated that this will be addressed in a forthcoming report to Policy Committee. Cllr Gibbons stated that the manager of the pharmacy adjacent to The Great Field has welcomed the installation of a new bench on the Field close to the shop.

With regard to the collapsed section of the wall at Fordington Cemetery, the Assistant Town Clerk stated that planning permission for its rebuilding had been granted and that the contract documentation was being compiled in order that a contractor can be selected. Negotiations with the Mill Street Housing Society were progressing.

Resolved:

That the Outdoor Services update report be noted.

16. Proposed planting of Japanese Maples in Borough Gardens.

The committee received the report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Outdoor Services) on a proposal to create a Japanese maple border close to the fountain in Borough Gardens. The border may comprise up to a dozen trees and that a financial contribution had been kindly offered by the Friends of Borough Gardens.

Resolved:

That the proposal to create a Japanese maple border in Borough Gardens be supported.

17. Allotments Annual Report and Fees for 2026.

The Committee received a report from the Town Clerk (Corporate) on the allotments service and proposed fees for 2026. Although the fees increase was agreed, members did suggest that a more comprehensive review of fees be undertaken during 2026, with comparisons to other councils, in order to inform future fee changes.

Resolved:

That:

- a) the committee notes the update on the management and administration of the council's allotment sites;
- b) the allotment rent, from January 2026, be increased by £1.00 per plot no matter the size;
- c) the water fee, from January 2026, be increased by £1.00 per plot no matter the size;
- d) the practice of charging double fees for non-Dorchester residents continues.

18. Conservation of Council Monuments

The committee received a report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) on the need to undertake specialist cleaning and maintenance to the Thomas Hardy statue at Top o' Town and the benefits and economies of carrying out similar work at the same time on the War Memorial and stone gate pillars at Borough Gardens. Cllr Fry suggested that Dorset Council be approached to enquire whether the war memorial at the front of County Hall could be cleaned at the same time and thereby reduce costs to the taxpayer.

Resolved:

That the committee approves the allocated of £3,718 from the Public Realm reserve for the cleaning and conservation of the Thomas Hardy statue, the War Memorial and stone gate pillars at Borough Gardens.

19. Grant Applications

The Committee considered various requests for financial assistance and it was

Resolved:

- (a) That the decision to award a grant of £300 to the *Sexual Trauma & Recovery Services – Dorset Rape Crisis* towards the cost of volunteer training be delegated to the Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) in consultation with Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee subject to clarification as to the project costs specifically related to the delivery of the service in Dorchester for the benefit of Dorchester residents.
- (b) That no grant be awarded to Dorchester Arts towards the cost of the *Ungrievable Lives* Project.
- (c) That a grant of £440 be awarded to the Durnovaria Silver Band Trust towards the cost of music stand banners.

20. Minutes of Dorchester Arts Board meeting.

The minutes of the Dorchester Arts board meeting were considered by members. The involvement of Dorchester Arts in youth projects, particularly the youth-focused events organised by the council, was queried and it was agreed that Dorchester Arts be asked to provide more information on their plans in this area.

Resolved:

That the minutes be noted.

21. Notes of Twinning & Cultural Activities Panel

The notes of the Panel meeting on 14th July 2024 were considered by members. Cllr Potter stated that, in his capacity as Deputy Mayor, he had been very impressed by the Dorchester Bayeux Society's programme of activities for the visiting party from Bayeux.

Resolved:

That the minutes be noted.

22. **Notes of Member Site Visit on 9th September 2025**

The notes of the Member Site Visit were considered by members.

Resolved:

That the notes be noted.

23. **Cemetery Matters.**

(a) Exclusive Right of Burial and Interments and Burial of Ashes

The report which detailed the Grants of Exclusive Right of Burial for grave spaces and the number of interments and burials of ashes, and the use of the South Chapel, at Dorchester Cemetery since the last meeting of the Committee had been circulated with the agenda.

Resolved:

That the report on the Grants of Exclusive Right of Burial and Interments and Burial of Ashes since the last meeting of the Committee be noted.

(b) Headstones and Inscriptions

The Committee received and noted applications for the design of headstones and inscriptions.

Resolved:

That the action of the Town Clerk in approving designs numbered 5497 to 5508 be confirmed and the Register of Memorials be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Chair.....