

Dorchester Town Council

Management Committee

14th September 2026

Present: Councillors A. Canning, P. Farmer, W. Gibbons, S. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger, D. Leaper (Chair), R. Major, M. Rennie, and D. Taylor.

Apologies: Councillors L. Fry, J. Hewitt and R. Potter.

In attendance:

Councillors R. Biggs, S. Biles and F. Hogwood.

Officers: Tony Hurley (Assistant Town Clerk – Corporate) and Carl Dallison (Assistant Town Clerk – Outdoor Services).

13. Declaration of Interests

None.

14. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 13th July 2026, adopted by Council on 27th July 2026, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

15. Outdoor Services – Update Report – Late Summer 2026

The Assistant Town Clerk (Outdoor Services) presented the update report on the work of the Outdoor Services team. The impact of the very dry weather on plants and trees was highlighted as was the hard work of the team during these difficult conditions. Cllr Rennie suggested that the Chair should write to all Outdoor Services staff to thank them for their hard work over the summer. In addition, a member of the Gardens' team who had helped the police locate a vulnerable missing person was thanked.

Cllr Canning asked about future measures to mitigate impact of very hot and dry weather on the council's open spaces. The Assistant Town Clerk outlined options such as the planting of more drought-resistant species in certain flower beds, the storage of water from the borehole in Borough Gardens, and the installation of structure providing the public with shade in the Gardens play area.

Cllr Gibbons highlighted the recent wildfire risks and asked that all members be notified in future when fire risk notices are placed in the council's open spaces. Cllr Rennie recommended that the council request the police talk to school pupils about fire risks in woodland.

Resolved:

That the Outdoor Services update report be noted.

16. Lower South Street Planter Options

The Assistant Town Clerk (Outdoor Services) outlined the options for the future of the planters / seats at the southern end of South Street. Members supported the retention of seating in this area given the need to help attract visitors given impact of the long-term road closure. It was also proposed that the Dorchester Business Improvement District be approached to request support for future maintenance. Option B was proposed by Cllr Major and seconded by Cllr Jones.

Resolved:

That the Committee agrees to treat the wooden planter and seating elements, remove current plants, except the Birch tree and replace with drought resistant permanent planting. The cost of the plants could be met from existing budget. Town Council staff will water and maintain.

17. Allotments Annual Report and Proposed Fees for 2027

The Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) presented proposals for the allotment fees in 2027. The recommendations were proposed by Cllr Kent-Ledger and seconded by Cllr Taylor.

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 2027 be increased by £1.00 per plot no matter the size;
- c) the water fee from January 2027 be increased by £1.00 per plot no matter the size;
- d) the practice of charging double fees for non-Dorchester residents continues.

18. Proposal for storage unit at Sandringham Sports Centre car park

A proposal for the placing of a storage contained in the car park of Sandringham Sports Centre was presented to the committee. Members were concerned about the impact of the proposals on car park capacity and its affect on other users of the site. It was agreed that consideration of the proposal by the Committee be deferred until the council has consulted with all relevant stakeholders.

Resolved:

That consideration of the item be deferred until following a meeting to discuss the proposals with all relevant stakeholders and involving the Town Clerk, Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee.

19. **Grant Applications**

With regard to grant application from the Dorset Climate Action Network a member of the public had submitted a statement and this was read out to the Committee by the Chair. The Committee considered the requests for financial assistance and it was

Resolved:

- (a) That consideration of the grant application by the AsOne Theatre Company for the cost of venue hire for the Seeds of Hope project be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee subject to clarification on the number of Dorchester-based beneficiaries.
- (b) That no grant be awarded to Loving by Nature CIC for a Saturday art club.
- (c) That no grant be awarded to B Sharp towards the cost of the 'Dorchester Jam' pilot sessions.
- (d) That consideration of the grant application by the Dorchester Disabled Club for the cost of storage shed be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee subject to consultation with relevant stakeholders.
- (e) That a grant of £500 be awarded to the Dorset Climate Action Network towards the cost of transport and equipment for an environmental conference.

20. **Minutes of the Twinning & Cultural Activities Panel**

Cllr Rennie reported that the Lubbecke Society was struggling to re-establish itself and recruit a new chair. Twinning arrangements with Bayeux were being reinforced with a visit by the Society, Mayor and Town Clerk to the town. In future, there was the opportunity for links with Bayeux to be reinforced through the participation of local sports clubs in a coastal running event in Normandy.

Resolved:

That the minutes be noted.

21. **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 since the last meeting of the Committee had been circulated with the agenda. The recommendation was proposed by Cllr Kent-Ledger and seconded by Cllr Jones.

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. The recommendation was proposed by Cllr Kent-Ledger and seconded by Cllr Jones.

Resolved:

That the actions of the Town Clerk in approving designs numbered 5545 to 5555 be confirmed and the Register of Memorials be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Chair.....