

# Dorchester Town Council

## Meeting of the Dorchester Town Council held in the Council Chamber

30 March 2026

Present: The Mayor (Councillor A. Canning) and Councillors R. Biggs, S. Biles, P. Farmer, L. Fry, J. Germodo, W. Gibbons, J. Hewitt, F. Hogwood, G. Jones, S. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger, D. Leaper, V. Lloyd-Jones, R. Potter, K. Reid, M. Rennie, R. Ricardo and D. Taylor.

Apologies: Councillor R. Major.

### 57. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### 58. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 26 January 2026, were confirmed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

### 59. **Police Matters**

Sergeant Ian Schofield updated the Council on the crime statistics and initiatives for Dorchester over the past two months. He also responded to Members detailed questions. Members were pleased to note the increased police officers in the town and agreed that their actual presence in the town on neighbourhood duties be monitored after a few months.

### 60. **Presentations, Communications and Motions**

The Council received a presentation from Emma Teasdale, Litter Free Dorset on the initiatives that were happening around the county. In respect of Dorchester, Litter Free Dorset was working with the Town Council on the Watermark Town project and future opportunities in the town included school engagement, River Frome signage and interpretation, business engagement and helping with a project to make Dorchester the first single use cup free town in Dorset and the UK. The representative also responded to Members detailed questions.

No motions had been submitted.

### 61. **Planning and Environment Committee – 2 February 2026**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 2 February 2026 be adopted.

62. **Planning and Environment Committee – 2 March 2026**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 2 March 2026 be adopted.

63. **Management Committee – 16 March 2026**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Management Committee held on 16 March 2026 be adopted.

64. **Mayoral Selection Committee – 23 March 2026**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

**Resolved**

- (1) That Councillor Les Fry be invited to prepare to fill the office of Town Mayor, and Councillor Robin Potter the office of Deputy Town Mayor, of Dorchester during the 2026-27 Council Year.
- (2) That the minutes of the meeting of the Mayoral Selection Committee held on 23 March 2026 be adopted.

65. **Policy Committee – 23 March 2026**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held on 23 March 2026 be adopted.

66. **Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee – 26 January 2026**

The minutes of the meeting of the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee be noted.

67. **Dorchester Markets Informal Joint Panel – 28 January 2026**

The minutes of the meeting of the Dorchester Markets Informal Joint Panel be noted.

68. **Appointments Panel**

The Chair of the Appointments Panel reported that the Panel had completed the process to appoint a new Town Clerk and the candidate selected was Charmaine Denny.

69. **Calendar of Meetings 2026-27**

The Council considered changing the date of the January 2027 Planning and Environment Committee and it was

**Resolved**

That the January 2027 Planning and Environment Committee be moved from 5 January 2027 to Thursday 7 January 2027.

70. **Outside Body Reports**

The Council received reports in respect of the following outside bodies:-

- Ashley Churchill & Thorner Trust
- Dorchester Almshouses
- Dorchester Arts
- Dorchester BID
- Dorchester Bayeux Society
- Dorchester Lubbecke Society
- Dorchester Toursim Partnership
- Citizens Advice Central Dorchester
- Dorchester Transport Action Group
- Dorchester Youth & Community Centre
- Municipal Buildings Monitoring Group
- South Wessex Community Rail Partnership
- Thomas Hardy Society
- Transition Town Dorchester
- Sawmills Development Association

Reports in respect of the Dorchester Association and Volunteer Centre Dorset would be presented to the next Council meeting.

It was noted that there had not been any DAPTC Larger Council meetings held in 2025-26.

**Resolved**

That the Outside Body reports be received.

## 71. **Update from the Dorset Council**

Dorset Councillors updated the Council on the following matters:-

- Councillor S. Jones reported that Dorset Council had launched its Local Nature Recovery Strategy, a ten year framework aimed at reversing biodiversity decline in the County.
- A booking system had been introduced at the Household Recycling Centre.
- Two new members of Youth Parliament had been elected.
- Councillor R. Biggs reported that Dorset Council was monitoring the effect of the oil crisis on its activities.
- Dorset Council had agreed sixteen affordable housing development sites in the County.
- The Government had committed £20m and further funding had been provided by Dorset Council to establish a new visitor attraction, stone masonry training centre and global diversity beacon on Portland.
- Councillor L. Fry reported on an excellent Dorset Council Chair's Civic Day which had been well attended.
- Verge cutting was to be reduced to twice a year and would be mow and collect.
- A new plaque had been unveiled at County Hall to honour the people of Dorset who were conscripted under National Service.

Council rose at 7.59pm.

Mayor

### Public Question Time

A member of the public asked whether the Council would work with Stinsford and Charminster Parish Council's to commission an independent flood risk report in light of the proposed development north of Dorchester and the recent experience of flooding in the town.

It was reported that the Dorset Council was to obtain an independent study and Councillor S. Jones confirmed that she would find out the latest position.

Further consideration to the matter, including the possibility of bring forward a meeting with Stinsford and Charminster Parish Council's, be given at a future meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee.