



DORCHESTER NEWS

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CAROLS IN THE GARDENS



Photo by Finnbarr Webster

We're rounding off a year of community events and festivals in Borough Gardens with Carols in the Gardens on Thursday 18th December. With music by the Durnovaria Silver Band and the Encore Singers, it's a magical opportunity for the community to start Christmas celebrations with traditional carols, refreshments and the bandstand swathed in Christmas lights. This popular event, organised by the Friends of Borough Gardens and the Town Council, attracts hundreds of people every year. The music starts at 6.30pm and lasts for about an hour, and it's free! So do come along – wrap up warm and bring a torch!

Get involved and make your own home-made lantern to add to the atmosphere – you can find DIY instructions at www.discoverdorchester.co.uk/carols-in-the-gardens-2025

TWINNING WITH BAYEUX AND LUBBECKE

Recently the Town Council has renewed its friendship with its twin towns of Lubbecke in Germany and Bayeux in France with the help of our local twinning societies.

In September, Dorchester hosted a visit from party from Bayeux arranged by the Dorchester Bayeux Society and the guests included prominent members of Bayeux Council and its own local twinning society. The guests were made welcome with speeches from Dorchester's Deputy Mayor, Cllr Robin Potter, and the Town Crier, Mr Anthony Harrison. The reception was also addressed by Madame Lidie Poulet, the Deputy Mayor of Bayeux (photograph to right).

Earlier in the summer, Cllr David Leaper travelled to Germany to take part in Lubbecke's celebration of the city's 1250th anniversary.



The Dorchester Bayeux Society which meets on a regular basis throughout the year to share a love of French culture. To find out more about the Society's activities visit www.dorchester-bayeuxsociety.yolasite.com.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2026

Holocaust Memorial Day is a time when we seek to learn the lessons of the past and recognise that genocide does not just take place on its own – it's a steady process which can begin if discrimination, racism and hatred are not checked and prevented. In 2026, Dorchester will commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day with an event at the Corn Exchange on Tuesday 27th January. The event is hosted by the Mayor of Dorchester, Cllr Andy Canning, and all the community are invited to attend. The event will be a less formal drop-in session from 10am until midday and will be an opportunity to reflect on the Holocaust and other genocides, and to look at displays by local schools. Feel free to join us to light a candle and leave a message of hope for the future.

A THANK YOU FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor of Dorchester, Cllr Andy Canning, would like to thank all those in the community who organised or attended one of the many festivals and events in town this summer to celebrate the diversity and inclusivity of Dorchester. The Mayor and Mayoress have enjoyed taking part in wonderful events such as the Pride Picnic, One World Festival, Palestinian Cultural Festival, Ukrainian Independence Gathering and the Malayali Onam Festival, as well as supporting the Dorchester Disabled Club, Space Youth Project and Parkinson's Dance with their fundraising activities. Andy said "this is a town that offers a warm welcome to everyone and where the diversity of the community is embraced – something that I am privileged to celebrate in my year as Mayor".



Dorchester's Mayor & Mayoress

A SUMMER PACKED WITH FUN

Once again, the residents of Dorchester have benefitted from a packed summer of events hosted on the Council's beautiful outdoor spaces and blessed with hot weather.

Borough Gardens has been the focus for much of the town's outdoor entertainment with the Dorchester Round Table's Cider Festival, the One World Festival, the Palestinian Cultural Festival and the ever-popular Anonymous youth festival rounding off the summer.

The Cider Festival is perhaps the biggest event held in the Gardens and attracts thousands of people throughout the day – whilst raising money for local good causes.



Anonymous Festival - Photo by Josh Keep



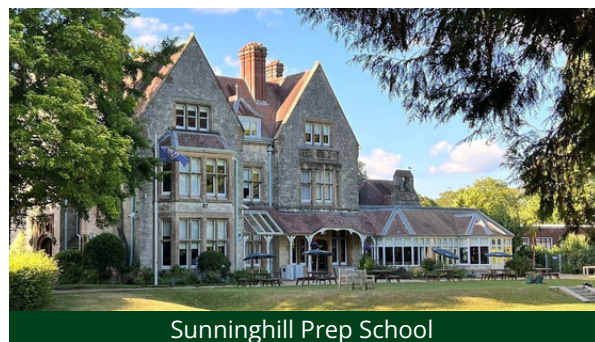
Anonymous Festival - Photo by Josh Keep

An emotional highlight of the Anonymous festival was a moving tribute by many young musicians to Mickey Wills, the organiser of Pop Club, who passed recently. Over the years, Mickey had supported and mentored many of Dorchester's up and coming young musicians and was a key partner in Anonymous for over 15 years.

Many of these events will return for the summer of 2026, so look out for the dates on Discover Dorchester.

HERITAGE OPEN DAY 2025

Dorchester is a town rich in history spanning several thousand years. In September, the council worked with members of the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee to celebrate the town's history as part of the national Heritage Open Day programme. Residents and visitors booked free places on guided walks around the town centre and Poundbury, and tours led by experts in Dorset Museum & Art Gallery, Dorset History Centre and Shire Hall Museum.



Sunninghill Prep School

You could also try your hand at bell ringing up St Peter's Church tower or see Victorian soldiers of the Nothe Fort Artillery in action in Borough Gardens. A particular highlight was a tour of Sunninghill Prep School with Jeremy Pope, the great grandson of Alfred Pope who built the house originally known as South Court in 1893.



Dorchester Science Festival
Photo by Dorset Bays

LOOKING FORWARD TO EVENTS NEXT YEAR

The **Dorchester Science Festival** will be taking place in 2026 between 6th-15th March with a wide range of science-themed activities across different venues in town.

The Festival will include talks, demonstrations, and the opportunity to try some hands-on experiments yourself – with activities to suit all ages. The Festival will also include the flagship Family Science Day offering fun-filled interactive displays for children aged 4+. The events will be free but some sessions may need to be booked – so keep an eye on Discover Dorchester and on the Dorchester Science Festival socials for further details.

A NEW KITE FESTIVAL FOR 2026

Dorchester Town Council and the Dorchester Tourism Partnership are planning the town's first Kite Festival on the 6th June 2026. This community event will not only include a range of family activities and entertainment but also the White Horse Kite Flyers demonstrating many of their huge and beautiful kites including dragons, octopuses and whales. The event will take place on The Great Field as it's a very windy location and ideal for large outdoor events.

The day after (Sunday 7th June) the Dorchester Lions Club will be using The Great Field for their ever-popular Summerfest family fun-day – so it's going to be a wonderful weekend.

More information on both these events will be available in the new year on www.discoverdorchester.co.uk



LOOKING BACK AT DORCHESTER'S PLAY AREAS - A LEGACY OF IMPROVEMENT



The Great Play Park at The Great Field, Poundbury

The town's 15 play areas offer a wide range of equipment designed to cater to children of all ages and abilities. These well-maintained spaces have become beloved gathering spots for families, with regular weekly safety inspections ensuring the safety and enjoyment of visitors.

But it wasn't always this way. The transformation of the town's play areas began in the mid-1980s when the first major wave of refurbishments by the Council brought them up to a reasonable standard. Prior to this, many of the sites had fallen into disrepair, with outdated equipment and concerns over safety.

In 2005, the Town Council undertook a further upgrade of facilities, introducing new play equipment across several locations. This commitment to ongoing improvement has continued ever since, with regular enhancements to meet the needs of the growing community. The latest play area is the newly opened site at The Great Field, officially inaugurated by the then Prince Charles in May 2022. This amazing play area featured bespoke wooden structures that mirror iconic buildings from the nearby Poundbury estate. The Great Field play area has quickly become a favourite destination for families from across Dorchester.

As the town continues to grow, the commitment to providing play areas and open spaces remains at the heart of the Town Council's vision, ensuring that future generations have spaces to explore, play, and connect.



TOWN EVENTS

Free Parking

There will be free parking across all of Dorset Council's town centre car parks in this Christmas. This offer does **not** include on-street parking or privately operated car parks (e.g. Co-Op).

The free parking days are:

Sun 9th November (Remembrance Day)
Sat 15 November
Sat 22nd November
Sat 29th November
Sat 6th December (Small Business Saturday)
Thurs 11th December



Christmas Markets

Dorset Food & Drink Winter Fair
Athelhampton House
8th & 9th November, 10am-3pm

Shire Hall Christmas Market
15th & 16th November, 10am-4pm

Dorchester Artisan Market
South Street & South Walks
Sun 23rd November, 10am-3pm

Poundbury Christmas Market
Crown Square
Sat 29th November, 10am-4pm

Dorchester Christmas Cracker
Sun 14th December, 11am-4pm

Other Festive Events

Carols for Advent
St Peter's Church
Sat 29th November, 4.30pm

Julia's House Christmas Carols
St Mary's Church
Tues 9th December, 7pm

Carols in the Gardens
Borough Gardens
Thurs 18th December, 6.30pm

St Peter's Church has Christmas concerts and services throughout December – visit:
www.musicatstpetersdorchester.org

For more information, visit
www.discoverdorchester.co.uk

A CELEBRATION IN FLOWERS

Looking ahead to 2026, the council's Outdoor Services team is starting to plan for the formal carpet bedding display in Borough Gardens.

Each year the design of the bed reflects the image or crest of a local good cause and is our way of celebrating the contribution of the voluntary sector to the life of the town.



We're inviting proposals from community groups, clubs and societies that have a significant anniversary or national event to mark in 2026 and would like it celebrated in the Borough Garden's floral display.

To be selected, there needs to be either a strong local connection or significant national celebration. The chosen group will be asked to provide a relevant logo which our team can then transform into a design for the flower bed.

Applications need to be submitted to the Town Council by the 19th December 2025 by letter or by email to enquiries@dorchester-tc.gov.uk. We'll notify the successful applicant in late January.

DORCHESTER RESIDENTS SURGERY

Want to know what's happening in your community?
Have a question for your local councillor?
Want to know who does what?
Or simply would like to meet those representing you?

Venue: Dorchester Library
Date: First Saturday of the month
Time: 10am-12pm



COUNCILLOR CONTACTS

Phone and e-mail contact details for Ward councillors for the Town Council and Dorset Council are available on our website.



The Dorchester Town Council website has a brand new look!
A big thank you to Eonic Digital for their design work. See it at:

www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk