



Dorchester Town Council

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12 November 2025

Agenda for the meeting of the **Policy Committee**, which will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER** at **THE MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, HIGH EAST STREET, DORCHESTER** on **MONDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2025** at **7.00pm**.

Steve Newman
Town Clerk

Public Attendance and Speaking at the Meeting

The Chairman has discretion to allow members of the public to speak at the meeting. If you wish to speak please **contact the Clerk by 9.00am on the morning of the meeting**. We ask speakers to confine their comments to the matter in hand and to be as brief as possible.

Member Code of Conduct: 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 of the Committee

Councillors R. Biggs, S. Biles (Chair), J. Germodo, G. Jones, V. Lloyd-Jones (Vice-Chair), K. Reid, R. Ricardo, D. Taylor and The Mayor ex-officio.

Agenda

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Declaration of Interests**
- 3. Minutes**

To read, confirm and sign the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 September 2025 (adopted by Council on 29 September 2025). A copy of the Minutes can be found at www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk/The-Council/Committees/Policy-Committee

- 4. Community Hub**

To receive a presentation from Rob Hattersley in regards to a proposal for a townwide community hub.

5. Financial Update – Page 4

To consider a report by the Responsible Finance Officer (enclosed).

6. Strategic and Operational Risk Registers – Page 7

To consider the Council's Strategic and Operational Risk Registers (enclosed).

7. Keep 106 Community Radio – Page 16

At the March Policy Committee it was resolved:-

- (1) That a 2025-26 grant of £10,000 be awarded to Keep 106.
- (2) That Keep 106 be requested to submit future grant requests prior to the Council setting its budget for the following year.

Keep 106 has submitted a further grant request for consideration by the Committee (enclosed).

8. Municipal Buildings Clock Tower – Page 18

To receive an update from the Town Clerk (enclosed).

9. Town Centre Working Group – Page 21

To receive the notes of the meeting held on 3 November 2025 (enclosed).

10. CLT Old Tennis Court Site Legal Agreements

To give consideration to any amendments to the Legal Agreements, which might arise prior to the Committee meeting, in respect of the affordable housing project at the old tennis court site. Should an urgent amendment come forward after the meeting the Committee will be asked to delegate authority to make a decision to the Town Clerk following consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair.

11. Concession Agreement to Operate the Markets

To consider the draft Concession Agreement for Operation of the Market. This Agreement is to be consider by the Informal Joint Markets Panel on 13 November 2025. (circulated separately).

12. Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

To resolve "That in view of the fact that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the following matters the public and representatives of the press be excluded from this meeting during their discussion".

13. Staffing Matters – Page 23 and 24

(a) Market Officer

To consider a report by the Town Clerk (enclosed).

(b) Town Clerk

To consider a report by the Town Clerk (enclosed).

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL
POLICY COMMITTEE – 17 NOVEMBER 2025
FINANCIAL UPDATE AT 31 OCTOBER 2025

1. Financial Position

- Month 7 spend (Appendix 1) £24k Under:
 - £10k over on Sponsorship due to grant to Keep 106 (agreed by Policy Committee).
 - £8k under on Parks Repairs & Maintenance.
 - £6k under on Cemetery Income.
 - £6k over on Vehicle Maintenance due to tractor repairs and servicing.
 - £45k under on staff due to vacancies and lower than budgeted pay award.
 - All other under and overspends net £5k under

- **Cash Position**

Account	Balance as at 31/10/25	Balance as at 31/08/25	Movement	Interest
Lloyds	126,328	65,582	60,746	0%
NS&i	6,859	6,859	0	1.00%
CCLA Deposit	2,075,000	1,475,000	600,000	4.03%
	2,208,187	1,547,441	660,746	

- Second part of precept, £911,469.50, received 26/09/2025, £800,000 transferred to CCLA Deposit account.
- Debtors over 30 days at 31/10/25 = £1,410, 2 Debtors (31/08, £1,620, 2 Debtors).
- Payments list 1 September to 31 October 2025 on website. Supporting vouchers available from RFO.
 - **RECOMMENDED** that the payments list, totalling £336,183.55 is approved.

2. External Audit

- External audit completed, no amendments, comments below, all of which were actioned and completed for the current financial year:

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

To be in line with best practice we recommend that when minuting the appointment of the internal auditor, the council record they have considered the independence of the appointed auditor on an annual basis.

It has come to our attention that in the year under review there was no minute considering the internal audit programme of work referencing any identified risks, as well as no minute to document satisfaction with the competence of the internal auditor.

The internal auditor has highlighted a number of weaknesses and raised a number of recommendations in their supplementary report to the smaller authority. The smaller authority must ensure that action is taken to address these areas of weakness in a timely manner.

- Notice of conclusion of audit and full AGAR on DTC website and office noticeboard.

3. Internal Audit

- First audit report, with office responses attached at Appendix Two.
- **RECOMMENDED** that the report and officer response are noted.

Nigel Hayes

MANAGEMENT REPORT AT 31 October 2025

By Spend Type	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Staff	1,125	678	633	-45
Capital Financing/Debt	15	15	15	0
Other Payments	556	374	395	21
To Specific Reserves	344	344	344	0
Income	-216	-108	-107	1
Net Budget	1,823	1,303	1,279	-24

By Service	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Allotments	-10	1	1	0
Parks & Open Spaces	179	129	125	-4
Cemeteries	-24	-4	1	4
Corp. & Dem. Manage.	42	25	25	0
Cultural & Twinning	71	47	65	18
Municipal Buildings	355	338	340	2
Other Services	-12	33	29	-5
Office Team	582	349	331	-18
Outdoor Services	640	384	362	-21
Net Budget	1,823	1,303	1,279	-24

Earmarked Reserves						
	Balance 1 Apr 25	Contribution	Reserve transfers	Income	Expenditure	31/10/25
	£	£		£	£	£
Municipal Buildings	56,994.27	20,000.00			51,565.99	25,428.28
Front of House	31,642.81	239,000.00	20,000.00		289,901.88	740.93
Vehicles & Equipment Replacement	113,473.22	22,000.00		400.00	45,171.22	90,702.00
Parks Premises	10,053.93	19,000.00			1,469.55	27,584.38
Cemeteries	36,931.25	10,000.00			27,208.73	19,722.52
Play Equipment Replacement	29,714.65	1,000.00		655.00	16,802.28	14,567.37
Great Field Reserve	11,000.00	2,500.00				13,500.00
Climate Emergency Reserve	30,948.70		57,067.60		14,804.49	73,211.81
Public Realm	440,310.47	5,000.00				445,310.47
Christmas Lights	4,420.45					4,420.45
Arts & Cultural Reserve	4,871.85			1,000.00	1,381.38	4,490.47
Apprenticeship Reserve	16,565.43					16,565.43
Planning Advice Reserve	18,498.62					18,498.62
Trees Reserve	13,663.30	20,000.00			6,456.70	27,206.60
Tennis Courts Refurb	10,800.00					10,800.00
Tourism Reserve	33,975.43				5,567.19	28,408.24
19 North Square	11,000.00					11,000.00
DTC Website & IT	1,230.00			1,431.37	2,345.40	315.97
Corporate Projects Reserve	714,958.39	5,082.00	-20,000.00		8,021.00	692,019.39
Graves in Perpetuity	14,010.67					14,010.67
Total	1,605,063.44	343,582.00	57,067.60	3,486.37	470,695.81	1,538,503.60

APPENDIX TWO

Darkin Miller Chartered Accountants
2025/26 INTERNAL AUDIT OF DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL - FINAL REPORT VISIT 1 OF 3: 26th SEPTEMBER 2025
Appendix 1 – Recommendations and Action Plan

Recommendation number	Detail	Pr .	Management Response	Resp Off	Due Date
7.1 – Amend calculation of sickness days and perform monthly check	I checked to see that other payments to employees were reasonable, properly supported and approved by the Council. I found that six members of staff received sick pay in the month tested. 5/6 payments were correctly calculated, but that 1/6 payments had been paid at 7 days instead of the 6.5 days notified by the RFO to the payroll bureau. This did not affect net pay (as an adjustment is made between gross pay and sick pay), but may impact on sick pay entitlement if further periods of sickness occur during the year. I recommend that the error is corrected in the next payroll, and that a quick check is made each month to confirm that the correct entitlement has been recorded in the payslips for the period.	L	Noted and request sent to payroll to correct on next pay run.	NH	Oct-25

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE – 17 NOVEMBER 2025

STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTERS – ANNUAL REPORT

1. The Council manages its risks through a process that concludes in an annual risk review report presented to Policy Committee. The Council's adopted Risk Management Policy, which details the methodology used to assess the risks being faced by the Council, is attached at **Appendix 1**.
2. Using the Risk Management Policy, comprehensive Risk Registers have been developed covering not only strategic risks but also operational risks relating to the key frontline services – such as play areas, allotments, cemeteries and the Municipal Buildings.
3. At its meeting in November 2024, the Committee reviewed and agreed the Risk Registers. In respect of the risk associated with an increase in energy costs, members agreed that the wording should be amended to read 'an exceptional and unexpected increase in energy costs'. However, members did not request the inclusion of any additional risks in the Register.
4. The Council's Risk Registers now contain **8** risks classified as 'high' and **93** risks classified as 'medium', as assessed in accordance with the Council's adopted Risk Policy. The entire register is available from the Town Clerk.
5. Following a review by officers, the identified strategic and operational 'high' risks are set out in **Appendix 2** and include new risks relating to relating to the council taking over the operation of both the Wednesday market and Sunday car boot sale from April 2026. Members are invited to review these 'high' strategic and operational risks.
6. As well as reviewing the highest risks, the Committee is asked to identify any new risks it considers should be included within the Registers, with an appropriate score.
7. It is **RECOMMENDED** that:
 - a) the assessed high strategic and operation risks as set out in Appendix 2 be approved;
 - b) any new risks identified at the Committee be included within the registers;
 - c) the strategic and operational risk registers, as a whole, be approved.

APPENDIX 1 - RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

Risk can be defined as the 'uncertainty of an outcome', primarily relating to a negative threat to business plans or activities. The effective management of risk is a key issue for the success of any organisation or activity, for in many cases it is only by taking risks that progress is made. The importance is to understand the risks that are inherent in a decision. A structured approach to risk management can achieve this by enabling the decision to be made against a background of better information about the potential outcome of a particular course of action. The Town Council has adopted a structured approach to Risk Management.

2. AUDIENCE

This Policy is intended as the primary guidance to the Council and senior management but is made available to all employees.

3. STAKEHOLDERS

It is important to involve stakeholders in the risk management process as this will give access to the widest possible range of views about the potential threats and opportunities affecting the Council and its services. A stakeholder in this context is an organisation or individual who can affect, or is affected by decisions of the Council. Stakeholders will change depending on whether the risk is project-related or more general, but Councillors and senior management will always be involved.

4. AIMS & BENEFITS

The aim of this policy is to develop an awareness of the benefits of risk management within the Council. It also encourages everyone involved to adopt an open and structured approach to risk management. The Council hopes that effective risk management will help to deliver –

- Increased certainty and fewer surprises.
- Better management of threats to cost, time and performance, leading to improved service delivery.
- Taking advantage of opportunities to improve our services.
- More effective management of change.
- Better management at all levels through improved decision making.
- Clear ownership and accountability for risk and its management.
- Better value for money for the Council Taxpayer.
- Easier achievement of Key Performance Indicators by enabling effort to be targeted.

5. PROCESS

The overall process for the management of risk is set out at Annex A.

6. OWNERSHIP

The Risk Policy is owned by the Council and implemented through the offices of the Town Clerk.

7. ASSESSMENT OF RISK

Each risk will be assessed in terms of its probability of occurrence and the potential impact on the Council. The following are the criteria by which each risk will be assessed:

Probability of Occurrence:

Category	Probability	Possible Indicators
Almost Certain (4)	>90% ¹	Frequent Occurrence
Likely (3)	>60%	Regular Occurrence
Possible (2)	>10%	Occasional Occurrence
Unlikely (1)	<10%	Has Never Occurred

¹Risks that are almost certain to happen should be addressed as an issue

Evaluation of Impact:

Impact on Performance	Risk Threat
Major (4)	Financial Impact >£25,000 Fatality / disabling injuries to public or staff / Adverse national media attention / external intervention / total service disruption / extensive legal action against the Council
Serious (3)	Financial Impact >£15,000 Adverse local media attention / extensive public complaints / adverse comments by regulators or auditors / significant service disruption / failure to meet key performance targets / service disruptions / injuries to public or staff / legal action against the Council
Significant (2)	Financial Impact >£5,000 Adverse service user complaints / service disruption / minor injuries and near misses to staff and public
Minor (1)	Financial impact less than £5,000 / isolated complaints / minor service disruption

Priority Ranking:

The ranking of an individual risk is calculated by a simple combination of its probability and impact.

Risk Matrix:

The risk, using the above impact and likelihood ratings, can then be plotted onto the risk matrix and its classification identified:

8 – 16 = High Risk 3-6 = Medium Risk 1-2 = Low Risk

Probability	4	4	8	12	16
	3	3	6	9	12
	2	2	4	6	8
	1	1	2	3	4
		1	2	3	4
		Impact			

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Risk management is only considered to be truly embedded when it functions as part of the Council's day-to-day operations. In order for this to be achieved it is vital that clarity exists to determine the various roles and responsibilities of individuals involved throughout the Council in the risk management process.

To ensure that this level of clarity exists, the Council has established a structure that depicts how Members, Officers and the various Committees, Panels and individuals contribute to the overall risk management process.

Organisational Structure and Summary of Key Roles

Council	• Monitor annual report on risk management activity (via Policy Committee) • Certification of the Council's annual Statement on Internal Control
Policy Committee	• Approve risk management policy and strategy and related documents • Approve content of risk registers and proposed risk mitigation plans and monitor implementation via regular monitoring reports • Monitor annual report on risk management activity • General oversight of the Councils risk management process • Receiving regular reports to review/scrutinise/challenge current and proposed risk management procedures and processes • Give initial consideration to the annual report on the Councils risk management activity • To recommend a risk management framework, strategy and process • Identify, analyse and prioritise risks • Determine responsibilities and actions to control risks • Monitor progress on managing risks against action plans • Review implementation of the of the risk management framework, strategy and process

Town Clerk	• Report to Members and external stakeholders on the framework, strategy and process • Provide advice and support on risk management matters • Maintain the risk management policy, strategy and framework • Produce an annual report on overall risk management activity • Identifying, analysing and prioritising risks • Determining risk management action plans and delegating responsibility for control • Monitoring progress on the management of risks
Staff and other stakeholders	• Maintaining awareness of risks, their impact and costs and feeding these into the formal risk management process • Controlling risks in their every-day work • Monitoring progress in managing job related risks

9. RISK REGISTERS

The Council will maintain computer based Strategic and Operational Risk Registers which will be developed further in order to link with the Council's other corporate documents such as the Performance and Policy Plan.

ANNEX A

RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS

RISK IDENTIFICATION

Risks and opportunities may be identified at any stage and should be included in the Risk Register. Nevertheless, in order to capture as many of the risks and opportunities facing an activity or project methods used for identification could include:

- Brainstorming sessions with individuals, committees or panels and various levels of management. It will be important to include as many stakeholders as possible in these sessions.
- Check lists.
- Questionnaires.
- Learning from other projects, councils and auditors.

As risks are identified they will be recorded in the Risk Register. Each risk must be described in terms of the source of the risk, the consequences if it happens and the effect it would have on the Council's activities or project as the case may be.

RISK OWNERSHIP

Once a risk has been identified, it will be given an owner who is the person best able to manage the risk. The owner will be responsible for all aspects of the management of the risk or opportunity.

RISK EVALUATION

Each risk will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation rules laid down within this Plan. This information will be entered in the Risk Register and will enable prioritisation of the risks within a certain area.

RISK PLANNING

Once each risk has been identified and evaluated actions for dealing with it will be developed. These are known as risk responses and fall into one of four areas:

- **Terminate:** An action that allows the risk to be avoided.
- **Treat:** An action that will reduce the impact and/or the probability of a risk.
- **Transfer:** Is there a stakeholder or another organisation better able to manage the risk?
- **Tolerate:** Accept the consequences if the risk occurs.

The Risk Register will identify the option selected to deal with each risk together with any actions that might be required.

Once the risk responses have been developed the risk owner must then decide which option to adopt. In reaching decisions as to which response should be used, a cost/benefit comparison should be made. For mitigation activities attracting significant cost (> £5,000) results will need to be recorded. It may be that external help is required to help decide the appropriate course of action, in which case the risk owner should record the date by which a decision must be made and the potential consequences if the decision is not taken by that date.

Following the decision to adopt a particular risk response, the owner must ensure that:

- The secondary risks associated with implementing the risk response are assessed and recorded.
- Where one exists the project plan is updated to include the activities associated with the risk response.
- Entries are made in the fields on the risk register detailing the predicted probability and impact evaluation, once the response activities are completed.
- A fallback/contingency plan is developed to address the consequences of the risk happening despite the response activities.

Risk owners must monitor the progress and success of their chosen response to risk on a regular basis. They should review all their risks and provide an evaluation of probability and impact on a regular basis.

REVIEW

The highest priority risks are to be reviewed by the Policy Committee. Risk monitoring will be regularly reported to the Policy Committee.

The effectiveness of the process will be reviewed by the Policy Committee periodically.

APPENDIX 2 - STRATEGIC RISKS SCORED 'HIGH'

Risk	Risk No	Responsibility Officer	Impact and Effect of Deliverables	Probability	Impact	Total	Controls in Place	Risk response	Notes / Actions
Accidental loss/transfer of personal data or confidential information.	S042	TC	Claims against the Council. Damage to public reputation.	3	3	9	New IT contract with Dorset Council with enhanced data security. RFO acts as Data Protection Officer.	Treat/monitor	Consider further control measures. Review security of paper files in council offices and security of personal data on shared drive.
The future policy direction and management arrangements of Dorset Council present risks on which the town's residents rely.	S047	TC	Pressure on the TC to take on additional services or fund services/ voluntary organisations, reduced partnership working, loss of DC staff with experience and knowledge of issue important to Dorchester resulting in significant financial and political implications.	4	3	12	DC Members to monitor and advise the TC of any emerging risks. The TC to input into consultations. Robust Corporate Plan with flexible financial provision to be put in place.	Treat / Monitor	Town Clerk to keep under review via regular liaison with senior management at Dorset Council.
The Town Council extending its service	S052	TC	Providing a poor service, financing significantly higher than anticipated, service failing	2	4	8	Members to carefully consider detailed costed action /	Treat / Monitor	

offer into wholly new activities.			resulting in significant financial damage and reputational damage.				business plans prior to entering into any new service – robustness of plans to be tested by an independent specialist if felt necessary.		
The consequences to the town of a poorly developed Local Plan.	S057	TC	Potential significant damage to the town and its rural surrounds, particularly in respect of development north of Dorchester.	2	4	8	Monitoring the Local Plan process with care.	Treat / Monitor	

OPERATIONAL RISKS SCORED 'HIGH'

Risk	Risk No	Responsible Officer	Impact and Effect of Deliverables	Probability	Impact	Total	Controls in Place	Risk response	Notes / Actions
Inability to maintain profitability of markets.	MAR 001	MO	If the town council's operation of the markets does not generate sufficient profits, then there is the risk that Dorset Council could close down the markets.	2	4	8	Appointment of new Markets Officer to manage the establishment of the town council's operation.	Treat / monitor	Regular financial monitoring by RFO in liaison with Markets Officer (MO).
Dissatisfaction amongst traders.	MAR 003	MO	If there is dissatisfaction amongst traders, particular at the Wednesday market, as a result of the town council taking over the operation of the market, then some may cease to attend/trade. This would reduce the attractiveness of the market and its profitability.	2	4	8	Appointment of new Markets Officer to manage the establishment of the town council's operation and develop positive relationships with traders.	Treat / monitor	Markets Officer to liaise regularly with traders to ensure they are up-to-date on the council's intentions.
Serious incident at Council-run outside event.	OTH 010	TC	Loss of life/injury to public/staff. External criticism. Negative local and national press coverage. Increased insurance premiums.	2	4	8	PLI. Risk assessment prior to event. Produce Event Management Plans where needed and liaise with Dorset Safety Advisory Group.	Treat/ Monitor	
Failure to maintain cemeteries	CEM 001	TC	Reputational damage. Personal upset. Negative publicity. Increase in complaints.	2	4	8	Maintenance schedule for buildings completed. Member site visit of cemeteries. Annual programme of memorial inspections.	Treat/ Monitor	



The local radio station for Dorchester and Central South Dorset

Steve Newman
Town Clerk
Dorchester Town Council
5th November 2025

Dear Steve,

Keep 106, the Dorchester-based local community radio station, has been on air for nearly 8 years providing a 24 hour service seven days a week to Dorchester and central southern Dorset. .

As a not- for- profit Community Interest Company (CIC) it is run entirely by volunteers. In common with many other community radio stations, KeeP106 has recurring and increasing expenses for premises and their associated services, insurance, various annual licences, transmitter rental, maintenance etc. The station needs increased support to keep broadcasting and, while it is working hard to increase its funding from both advertising and sponsorship, it continues to need support.

We offer training to new presenters and broadcasters to continue widening the station's appeal by covering more local issues of interest and concern to our listeners. Several younger members have secured jobs in the wider broadcasting industry.

Dorchester Town Council have kindly supported Keep 106 in the past, partly as a contribution towards our volunteers providing PA and allied services to the Town Council. The attached document shows some of the services provided by the station to DTC and other organisations. As you have recognised yourself this support would have cost a great deal more if provided on a commercial basis.

I would be most grateful if DTC would consider increasing its financial support to the station as it continues to increase its listenership not only to its target audience of the over 50's, many of whom live alone and are of limited mobility, but also across an increasingly wider cross section of the community.

Many community radio stations around the country have had to suspend their operations for financial reasons - something Keep 106 and its directors are doing all in their power to avoid. Although we have secured increased advertising income and other earned income, our costs have risen considerably. Just some examples are that our annual premises rental alone is now over £8000p.a. Adding to this are music and broadcast licences, insurances, aging equipment that needs replacing, plus everyday costs. These costs make me concerned for the future of our only independent and truly local radio station.

An increase in DTC's annual contribution to E20,000 would help the ongoing sustainability of the station and its increasingly valued contribution to the health and wellbeing of the communities we serve. I and my fellow directors would like to thank DTC for your continued support and look forward to working with you on many future projects.

Your sincerely,

Andy.

Andy Worth Chairman Ridgeway Community Radio CIC, Trading as KeeP106

KeeP 106 - Community and Local Radio for Dorchester and Surrounds broadcasting on 106.3FM and on-line at KeeP106.com 24 hours every day - and throughout the COVID years!

Support and coverage - Dorchester Town Council

Carols in the Gardens

VE 80 event

VJ 80 event

Walking Festival

Love Parks Day

Anonymous Festival

Hardy Birthday

Remembrance Sunday service

Holocaust Memorial Day

Informal Town Meeting

The Mayor's Charity Appeal

Ad hoc small events

Promotion, support and coverage - other organisations

Rotary

Lions

Hardy Half Marathon

STAND

Dorset Council Civic events

Dorchester Christmas Cracker

Ridgeway Singers and Band

The New Hardy Players

Dorchester Drama

Dorset Museum and Art Gallery

The Thomas Hardy School

Boptober fund raiser for Children's Cancer Unit

On-air 106.3FM and on-line at KeeP106.com

Interviews - all subjects and interests

Local interest - all subjects and interests

Music, Local musicians - all genres

Traffic and Weather reports, including snow and storm events

7-part radio play written for and produced by KeeP 106 broadcast prior to VE80

Visit KeeP106.com for programme information, Local news, What's On Locally, Listen Again, etc.

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE – 17 NOVEMBER 2025

CLOCK TOWER - APPRAISAL OF WORKS

1. Scope of Works

1.1 Members will be aware that the Corn Exchange bells were taken out of action following an inspection of the wooden beam to which they are attached. The inspection also highlighted some possible water ingress issues higher up the clock tower and Godsell Arnold Partnership (GAP) were appointed to undertake a structural survey. This survey indicated ongoing water ingress and works required to include internal repairs to the timber platforms, timber framing, stone, and metal elements.

1.2 Due to the extent of these works it was necessary to postpone the bell repairs; these will now be included within the broader Clock Tower repair project.

1.3 To carry out the works required, it will be necessary to dismantle the clock mechanism to allow full access to the affected areas. Smith of Derby, who maintain the clock, will be contacted regarding this part of the works.

1.4 The internal issues have been caused by ongoing water ingress, which, from the drone survey, previously agreed by the Committee, appears to stem from splits in the lead roof. Unfortunately, a full assessment and then repair will require an external scaffolding. This will also enable inspection and repair of the glass louvres to the lucarnes (four small dormers), with replacement of defective fixings as necessary.

1.5 Members may remember that some years ago, following a prolonged period of very cold weather, there were some minor incidents of stone failure from the clock tower resulting in fragments falling onto the pavement. Once the scaffolding has been erected it will be possible to establish the works required and incorporated these repairs within the overall project.

1.6 Subject to cost, consideration should also be given to removing the existing mortar repairs around the clock faces — many of which have failed or are failing — and replacing them with stone indents.

1.7 Works will also include redecoration of the clock faces and, if possible, LED lighting to the clockfaces, that are able to change colour to support charity awareness etc.

2. Lead Roof

2.1 The main concern is the condition of the lead roof. From both the drone and visual inspections, the lead appears generally sound apart from the identified fractures. However, full replacement would be a substantial cost — in the region of £25,000–£30,000 excluding any associated timber repairs.

3. Parapet Gutter

3.1 During storm conditions the eastern section of the parapet gutter along the front (south) façade causes water ingress internally. The gutter, sump, and hopper outlets have been cleared regularly, and there appears to be no immediate evidence of lead damage. The internal signs suggest the issue may relate to a very shallow drip between bay lengths (between the two easterly windows) and potentially inadequate lead upstands to the lay boards (at the abuts the tiled roof), which are being overwhelmed in severe weather.

3.2 In addition, the existing sump and hopper arrangement is likely restricting the rapid discharge of water.

3.3 To rectify this issue it will be necessary to increase the fall and drip height, raise the upstand at abutments and install a larger sump and hopper (that the western hopper is substantially larger and performs better).

3.4 As scaffolding will be required, Members may wish to consider including associated works such as redecoration of first-floor windows and localised stone repairs/repointing.

3.5 The most cost-effective approach would be to carry out these works in conjunction with the Clock Tower repairs.

4. Planning

4.1 Although the works are essential repairs, given that the Corn Exchange is a Grade II* Listed Building, a pre-application to Dorset Council will be made.

5. Programme

5.1 As the materials required — particularly lime for external repairs — are weather dependent (no works can be carried out below 5°C and falling), the most appropriate period for the works will be spring to summer.

6. Indicative Timeline:

January 2026: Seek quotations for the works.

February 2026: Return of tenders.

March 2026: Tender evaluation and contractor appointment (allowing for lead-in times).

***June/July 2026:** Commence works on site.

*The work is likely to require four to five months to complete. However, the works could be phased to prioritise external elements and thereby reduce the overall scaffolding period. The works internally will require access to the clock tower via the town hall, so the programme will need to be discussed with Dorchester Arts to minimise disruption to hirers.

7. Recommendations

7.1 That Crickmay Stark Architects be appointed to draw up tender documents and undertake a tender process for the whole of the works set out above.

7.2 That the Policy Committee at its March 2026 meeting consider the evaluation of the tenders and agree the extent of the works to be undertaken.

Steve Newman
Town Clerk

Dorchester Town Council - Town Centre Working Group

Minutes - Monday 3rd November 2025

Present: Cllrs Les Fry (chair), Molly Rennie and David Taylor.

Town council officers: Tony Hurley, Emma Scott, Matilda Manley and Nigel Hayes.

Apologies: Cllrs Janet Hewitt and Frances Hogwood.

1. Minutes of the last meeting were agreed. Tony Hurley reported that a meeting was organised with Dorset Council to discuss the need to improve mobile phone reception in Dorchester. Members also requested that an update be sought from Premier Inn.
2. **Dynamic Dorchester webpages – video testimonials.** Matilda Manley had provided a written update on the roll out of the testimonial videos. The video for Mina's Deli had been very successful on Facebook with over 9,000 views. The video for Wise Owl Toys has just been launched and the final video would be for House of Phaedra. The videos can be viewed at: <https://discoverdorchester.co.uk/business-testimonials/>.

Video	Views on Youtube?	Shared on socials yet?	Facebook views	Instagram views	LinkedIn views
Goldcrest Jewellers	40	Yes	705		
The King's Arms	80	Yes	1,338		
Secret Garden Cafe	78	Yes	1,374		
Cotton Traders	206	Yes	4,559		
Kooky Bloom	90	Yes	4,821		
Every Cloud Boutique	103	Yes	4,500	561 (31 likes)	59
The Fridge	21	Yes	1,100	595 (22 likes 1 comment)	147
House of Phaedra	167	No			
Joey's Family Foods	136	Yes	3,592 views (34 likes, 5 shares)	402 (12 likes)	223 views (9 likes, 3 reposts)
Wise Owl Toys	16	Yes	121 views (2 likes)	29	54 views (5 likes and 1 repost)
Mina's Deli	166	Yes	9,200 views (130 likes, 11 comments, 4 shares)	664 (38 likes and 11 comments)	168 views (6 likes and 4 reposts)

Members requested that the testimonials should be more closely associated with DTC and mentioned in the next council newsletter. Cllr Rennie requested that a round-up of all the actions that the council was taking to support the town centre should be presented to Full Council.

3. **Footfall Data** (<https://discoverdorchester.co.uk/town-centre-footfall-data/>). The latest footfall figures were shared with members. The Sundays of the artisan market, Christmas Cracker, and free parking days were the busiest days of the year in terms of footfall.
4. **HUQ – street data collection.** Nigel Hayes outlined the pros and cons of another type of high street monitoring data – provided by the company HUQ. Jon Bird at Dorset Council had made the town council aware of this new service. It used mobile phone data to track the demographics and spending patterns in a particular location. However, there was a significant cost, especially if a greater level of data is required. The basic level of service would cost approximately £1,000 pa for one street. The council still has two years to run on its contract with Springboard for the footfall counter in South Street. Members asked Nigel to discuss with Dorset Council and potentially other partners, the possibility of drawing together funding to trial the HUQ system in Dorchester.
5. **Shopfront of the Season awards scheme.** Matilda Manley provided an update on the first tranche of award. A winner had been identified and would be announced via a press release soon. It was agreed that the next round of awards (for the Christmas period) would run to the following timetable:
 - Awards will open on 10th November and close on 15th December – day after Cracker.
 - Announce 5 finalists on Tuesday 16th December (PM).
 - Judging takes place on Wednesday 17th December.
 - Overall winner announced by Friday 19th December.
6. **Any other business:**

Cllr Fry mentioned the need for improved signage at the railway stations indicating the best route to the town centre. Cllr Rennie was concerned that any new signage at Dorchester South didn't interfere with the accessibility arrangements on the pavement immediately outside the station. Officers were asked to raise the issue with South West Trains and Brewery Square. It was agreed that a site meeting of the Working Group was needed to consider locations for possible signage.
7. **Date of next meeting.** In January 2025 to be confirmed.