Dorchester Town Council

Adjourned Annual Meeting of the Dorchester Town Council held in the Council Chamber

19 May 2026

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

Apologies**:** Councillors J. Germodo, F. Hogwood, S. Jones and D. Taylor.

5. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest reported.

The Town Clerk reminded Members of the need to review their declarations of interest so as to ensure that they were up to date.

6. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 30 March 2026, were confirmed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

7. **Police Matters**

There was no representative from the Police at the meeting.

8. **Presentations, Communications and Motions**

The Council received a presentation from Paul Gleeson, Dorchester Literary Festival, who informed Members on the development of the festival which now attracted nearly 10,000 visitors. Mr Gleeson responded to Members questions and the Mayor thanked him for attending the meeting.

The Mayor thanked everyone for their support at the Mayor Making ceremony held the previous evening.

The Mayor presented Councillor M. Rennie with a gift in recognition of her 40 years continuous service as a Town Councillor. Councillor Rennie thanked the Council.

Councillor M. Rennie also addressed the Council in regard to Dorchester becoming an age friendly town. It was agreed that this matter should be considered at the next meeting of the Policy Committee.

No motions had been submitted.

9. **Planning and Environment Committee – 7 April 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 7 April 2026 be adopted.

10. **Planning and Environment Committee – 27 April 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 27 April 2026 be adopted.

11. **Management Committee – 5 May 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 5 May 2026 be adopted.

12. **Policy Committee – 11 May 2026**

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

Resolved

(1) That the Council approves the Annual Governance Statement for 2025-26.

(2) That the Council approves the Accounting Statement for 2025-26.

(3) That the Council confirms the appointment of Darkin Miller Ltd as the Council's Internal Auditor for the 2026-27 Council Year.

(4) That the Council has no conflict of interest with BDO LLP.

(5) That the Council notes that a procurement exercise will be carried out to appoint an internal auditor for the 2027-28 financial year.

(5) That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held on 11 May 2026 be adopted.

13. **Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee – 14 April 2026**

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

14. **Outside Body Reports**

The Council received reports in respect of the Dorchester Association and Volunteer Centre Dorset.

Resolved

That the Outside Body reports be received.

15. **Annual Business**

The Council considered appointments to Committees, Outside Bodies, its Bank Mandate and whether to adopt the General Power of Competence to the next Annual Meeting.

Resolved

(1) That the appointments to Committees, Joint Bodies, Panels and Outside Bodies as set out in Appendix 1 and 2 be approved.

(2) That Councillor D. Leaper be appointed Chair and Councillor F. Kent-Ledger be appointed Vice-Chair of the Management Committee.

(3) That Councillor R. Ricardo be appointed Chair and Councillor L. Fry be appointed Vice-Chair of the Planning and Environment Committee.

(4) That Councillor S. Biles be appointed Chair and Councillor V. Lloyd-Jones be appointed Vice-Chair of the Policy Committee.

(5) That the Council adopts the General Power of Competence for the period to the next Annual Meeting of Council.

(6) That Councillors P. Farmer, L. Fry, J. Hewitt, S. Jones, M. Rennie and D. Taylor be authorised to operate the Council's bank mandates.

16. **Update from the Dorset Council**

Dorset Councillors updated the Council on the following matters:-

- Councillor R. Biggs reported that Dorset Council Cabinet roles had been modified to deal with the senior leadership changes. The idea was to reduce silo working and work towards a one Council approach with greater focus on inclusive growth and better community engagement.
- The latest Data Sets for each Dorset Council Ward had been published on the website.

- Councillor A. Canning reported that he was stepping down from some of his Dorset Council roles but would continue with being Chair of the Pensions Committee.
- Councillor L. Fry reported that he had been re-appointed as Deputy Chair of Dorset Council and Councillor S. Jones had been re-appointed as Chair of Dorset Council.
- It was noted that double yellow lines would soon be painted outside of the post office in Trinity Street.

It was reported that Councillor R. Potter had taken over as Chair of the Dorchester Transport Action Group.

Council rose at 7.49pm.

Mayor

Public Question Time

In response to a question from a member of the public it was noted that a report would be presented to the July Policy Committee in regard to .gov emails for Members and the Councillors Code of Conduct.

A member of the public felt that it would be good to have live music at the market on market days.

APPENDIX 1

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Management Committee (11 and 11 requests)

A. Canning	P. Farmer	W. Gibbons	J. Hewitt	S. Jones	F. Kent-Ledger
D. Leaper	R. Major	R. Potter	M. Rennie	D. Taylor	

Policy Committee (8 and 8 requests)

R. Biggs	S. Biles	J. Germodo	F. Hogwood	G. Jones
V. Lloyd-Jones	K. Reid	R. Ricardo		

Planning & Environment (no limit - 16 requests)

R. Biggs	S. Biles	A. Canning	P. Farmer	J. Germodo	J. Hewitt
S. Jones	F. Kent-Ledger	D. Leaper	V. Lloyd-Jones	R. Major	R.Potter
K. Reid	M. Rennie	R. Ricardo	D. Taylor		

As Mayor, Councillor Les Fry will be ex officio to the 3 Committees

JOINT BODIES

Dorchester Markets Informal Joint Panel

S. Jones K. Reid M. Rennie

Dorchester Heritage Joint Committee

W. Gibbons F. Hogwood G. Jones* S. Jones D. Taylor

Twinning / Cultural Activities Panel (5 Members plus the Mayor)

J. Hewitt F. Hogwood S. Jones R. Major M. Rennie

APPENDIX 2 - APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES			
Internal Roles			**Appointed 2026-27**
DAPTC Larger Towns Rep			The Mayor S. Biles
Municipal Buildings Monitoring Group (3)			F. Kent-Ledger D. Leaper V. Lloyd-Jones
Youth Council (2)			P. Farmer K. Reid
Charitable Trusteeships			
Dorchester Almshouses (2)			S. Biles V. Lloyd-Jones
Ashley Churchill & Thorner Trust (2)			L. Fry M. Rennie
Other Bodies			
Dorchester Arts (one space plus substitute)			F. Hogwood D. Leaper (substitute)
Dorchester Association L. History & Arch.			D. Taylor
Dorchester BID			J. Hewitt
Dorchester Bayeux Society			M. Rennie
Dorchester Lubbecke Society			F. Hogwood
Dorchester Tourism Partnership			R. Potter
Citizens Advice Central Dorset			D. Leaper
Dorchester Transport Action Group (2)			R. Potter W. Gibbons
Dorchester Youth & Community Centre (2)			J. Hewitt K. Reid
South Wessex Community Rail Partnership (previously Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership)			F. Hogwood

Thomas Hardy Society			W. Gibbons
Transition Town Dorchester (3 from2025-26)			P. Farmer K. Reid D. Taylor
Volunteer Centre Dorset			D. Taylor
Sawmills Development Association (2)			J. Germodo K. Reid