



DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL - ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our Annual report. The Town Council is the parish authority for Dorchester. We are the most local tier of government, and work closely with the county council and the district council. With a population at around 20,000 we provide a range of social and recreational facilities, while also promoting and representing the town with other national and statutory bodies. We provide most of the public open space and sports grounds in the town, three cemeteries, over 300 allotments, we operate the Municipal Buildings and support many of the town's community and civic events. In short we do many of the things that make Dorchester the special place it is, even down to providing the hanging baskets in the town centre.

There are 20 Members on the Council who are elected for a four year term, the most recent period starting in May 2015, the next elections will be in May 2019 with Members elected for five years. The Mayor is elected by the Council every year in May and also acts as Chairman to the Council.

This Council operates a Committee structure with each Committee having specific functions. We have three Committees; Management, Planning and Environment and Policy, and reports from the chairmen on the work of these Committees are set out in this report. Agenda for the Council and its Committees are available online three clear days before meetings, which are held in the Council Chamber (upstairs in the Corn Exchange building) and residents are welcome to attend and speak at any of these meetings.

It is important for us to receive your comments, queries and complaints on the services provided by the Town Council so that we can endeavour to serve you well. The Council welcomes your help to highlight any problems around the town – whether the responsibility of this Council or not – let us know what the problem is. If it's our responsibility we will endeavour to sort it out and if it's not we will contact the appropriate authority on your behalf.

Thank you for your time in receiving and reading this report and we would welcome any response you might make.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David Taylor'.

Town Mayor

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - *Councillor Stella Jones*

The Management Committee has overseen many new Green initiatives this year. We have adopted the Council's first Biodiversity Strategy which clearly sets out how the Council will become more environmentally friendly and sustainable, as a part of this we have introduced non-chemical pest control in the gardens and nursery. A new electric vehicle has been purchased as well as electric tools for the staff. Solar panels have been fitted at the Depot which means the vehicle and tools can be charged with totally green electric.

The Committee was pleased to support Damers School with its aim of obtaining Plastic Free Status for the town. The Committee will now be looking at how it can eliminate single use plastics in its everyday work.

In the Borough Gardens the new tennis courts were opened and have been well received. The greenhouse operation was reviewed and we are now looking at how we can have greater community engagement in that resource.

The fourteen play areas across the town have continued to be looked after and we have installed a swing for wheelchair users at Maiden Caste Road, the first of its kind in the area. We are also in discussions with the Duchy of Cornwall about the development of the Great Field.

A wide range of free access summer events have been provided in the Borough Gardens and Maumbury Rings, and we have allocated a significant number of small and cultural grants.

Last year was the end of the national commemorations of a 100 years since the end of WW1. We commemorated this with a free access community event in the Corn Exchange which included the launch of a 'Poppy Trail' around the town, WW1 food and artefacts and informative lectures. The Council also commissioned a new Sculpture, installed at South Gate junction opposite the War Memorial, which commemorates the centenary of the end of the First World War. A similar sculpture stands in our German partner town Lubbecke. These sculptures are a symbol of the commitment of both towns to work together to promote international peace and friendship.

Improvements have taken place in Poundbury Cemetery including finishing the road network and the building of a new boundary wall. Ongoing work includes the installation of split chestnut fencing around the green burial area and the sowing of wildflowers within. We will also be cleaning and painting the existing boundary wall.

We have continued to support Dorchester Arts using the Corn Exchange, and once we know their future will begin refurbishing the building, starting with a new roof. We have repainted the lobby and continued with usual maintenance. Following many problems we have decided to replace the lift as soon as possible.

I would like to thank all the staff for their work in making Dorchester such a special place.

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE - *Councillor Robin Potter*

The committee meets on the first Monday of every month throughout the year to discuss matters of concern. At every meeting we look at the planning applications that have been submitted to West Dorset District Council (and, from 1st April, to the unitary Dorset Council) and decide on any comment we wish to submit. Many of these applications are entirely satisfactory to us but when we do have concerns, these are submitted by our clerk with our objections clearly set out with reference to the appropriate policies in the local plan. For example, we tried very hard to ensure the retention of the footpath link from the Prison site onto Glyde Path Road but were in the end overruled by those at the District Council. One thing I am (at last!) pleased to report is that the application for a disabled access ramp to Dorchester West Station was broadly welcomed.

We have this year also had major discussions around a number of larger matters. The biggest was to respond to the review of the Local Plan which will oversee development in and around Dorchester for the medium term future. Our principal objection is to policy DOR15, which advocates a very large new development to the North of the town, beyond the River Frome flood-plain. We trust that planners will take on board our concerns about this as the new council proceeds with the review.

The opening of the route along Lubbecke Way to the household recycling centre has caused much anxiety to residents in that area and the committee has been active in helping residents, councillors and our MP persuade the

County Council that measures are needed to regularise traffic through this residential area. We have asked that a new, modern site be provided elsewhere so that recycling can be done more easily, cleanly and efficiently but in the meantime agree with local residents that traffic measures should be introduced immediately to calm traffic movements. The order restricting Victoria Road to access only to stop rat-running has been only partly successful and we are awaiting the results of consultations on any further actions needed.

Inconsiderate parking of vehicles in residential streets around the town is a constant theme. We have pressed for specific measures in a number of areas and several of these have been added to the county's list for action: unfortunately, the list seems to grow faster than any measures appear on the ground! We have been promised a comprehensive review of parking strategy for the whole town once the new council is able to consider it. Perhaps they will also address the inaccuracies in many of the signs supposed to show the number of spaces in our car parks. Particular problems have been highlighted to us recently in the area of High West Street and High East Street. As well as the daytime concern that traffic is often heavy and queuing in these roads, leading to pollution, there has been an increase in anti-social behaviour late at night. We expect the licensing authorities and police to keep an eye out to see what measures need to be taken.

The committee will continue to sit after the elections in May and I wish all those who will be there, whether returning or new members, the interest to examine concerns, the will to address them and the patience to persist when things do not happen immediately. Our clerk, Louise Dowell, will offer her invaluable help and expertise to keep everyone informed and assisted to address matters in a friendly yet correct manner.

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE - *Councillor Gareth Jones*

As the Council nears the end of its cycle the Policy Committee has remained focused on the delivery of our Corporate Plan objectives during the last 12 months.

Early in the year we released funds to enable the creation of an artificial all weather pitch at The Avenue Stadium, which has allowed the site to become the hub for football in the town. This also allowed us to convert changing rooms at Weymouth Avenue into a gymnasium for the Dorset Boxing Club. We also gave grants to both the County Museum and Shire Hall projects.

We are currently supporting Dorchester Ballet and Dance to fund raise to build a new home at our Sandringham site. We have continued to support the Community Land Trust in its plans to develop affordable flats on redundant tennis courts we own in the town centre. We have also supported Maltings Arts in their attempts to secure funding for a new arts facility in the town and have helped the Heritage Joint Committee secure £50,000 of funding from West Dorset District Council to develop a Heritage Tourism Strategy, work on which will start in 2019.

The Committee was able to make significant funding available to improve the town's infrastructure this year; in rapid succession we completed the remaining 3 phases of The Walks refurbishment programme as well as additional paving improvements in South Street, providing new street furniture at all of these locations. We were also delighted to secure funding from West Dorset District Council to match our commitment to remodel the Town Pump area at the top of South Street, and this work should now take place next calendar year.

During 2018 we spent much time in negotiations with West Dorset District Council regarding the transfer of assets and services to the Council. Unfortunately these have proved abortive, although we will seek to reopen discussions with the new Dorset Council as it takes shape from April 2019, with a particular focus on ensuring Dorchester's Markets continue to function properly.

We have continued to pay close attention to our finances. Council Tax for 2019/20 has been increased by 2%, in line with our Medium Term Financial Strategy, and this will allow us to continue to deliver our core services and prepare to take on new services from the Dorset Council in due course. Despite making major allocations from our Reserves for Municipal Buildings and Cemeteries projects we will hand over around £250,000 to the next Council to develop new projects. We have continued to identify more efficient ways of delivering core services, often through partnership working with local community groups.

And finally we have undertaken a review of our corporate governance arrangements, which we can make available to the newly elected Council in May, with suggestions for how they might further strengthen how we operate.

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL OPERATIONAL BUDGET SUMMARY

	2017-18 Actual £	2018-19 Budget £	2018-19 <i>Latest (Wk50)</i> £	Under/ -Over Budget(Wk50) £
Parks & Open Spaces	532,915	582,495	506,781	75,714
Allotments	3,738	3,541	3,682	-141
Municipal Buildings	175,483	187,036	191,507	-4,471
Cemeteries	44,908	56,432	44,248	12,184
Cultural & Twinning Activities	65,444	52,370	68,253	-15,883
Corporate & Democratic Management	204,021	220,174	211,561	8,613
Other Services	100,272	109,029	103,170	5,859
Operational Budget	1,126,781	1,211,078	1,129,203	81,875
Precept	1,296,336	1,388,243	1,388,243	0
Transfer to General Reserves	169,555	177,165	259,040	81,875

The report will be updated when the Council's final position is known. Our draft Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2018-19 will be available at www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk soon after the financial year end.

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCILLORS TO MAY 2019

EAST WARD			
Tim Harries 8 Fordington Hill House DT1 1LZ	07970 653796	Fiona Kent-Ledger 78 Casterbridge Road DT1 2AG	01305 250253
Stella Jones MBE Syward Cottage, Syward Road DT1 2AJ	01305 264335	Tony Lyall 13 St Georges Road DT1 1PA	01305 266254
NORTH WARD			
Barry Armstrong-Marshall 20 Fordington Dairy, Athelstan Rd DT1 1FD	01305 269921	Susie Hosford 1 Meadow Cottages, Martinstown DT2 9JL	01305 880102
Richard Biggs 20 Bridport Road DT1 1RS	01305 260156	Tamara Loakes 3A Holloway Road DT1 1LF	01305 757526
Andy Canning 11 Alfred Road DT1 2DW	01305 261592	Kate Rice Email - katerice321@gmail.com	
Alistair Chisholm 9 Orchard St DT1 1JH	01305 268603	David Taylor 4 Normandy Way DT1 2PP	01305 263382
SOUTH WARD			
Carolyn Biggs 20 Bridport Road DT1 1RS	01305 260156	Robin Potter 22 D'Urberville Close DT1 2JT	01305 264416
Gareth Jones 21 Martel Close, Broadmayne DT2 8PL	01305 854915	Molly Rennie 13 Alington Road DT1 1NS	01305 268572
WEST WARD			
Gerald Duke Grove Hill House, Martinstown DT2 9JP	01305 889480	Trevor Jones OBE Syward Cottage, Syward Road DT1 2AJ	01305 264335
Janet Hewitt 6 Garfield Avenue DT1 2EX	01305 266175	Peter Stein 1 Stowcastle Street DT1 3GF	07777 652034