



DORCHESTER NEWS

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DORCHESTER STUDENTS LEARN ALL ABOUT DEMOCRACY!



Democracy Day is an event held annually by Dorchester Town Council to give local children an insight into the role of local government and to look at issues important to young people in the town. This year we were joined by 27 pupils from St Osmund's School and Dorchester Middle School at Shire Hall Museum.

The day included visiting council recreation facilities and the war memorial, a tour of Shire Hall's cells and courthouse, and learning about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We were joined by the Chair of Dorset Council, Cllr Stella Jones, and the Mayor of Dorchester, Cllr Robin Potter, who presented certificates to all the students who took part.

We hope that some of the young people might even be inspired to become local councillors themselves one day.

HONORARY CITIZENS

The Town Council is proud to celebrate the achievements and dedication of three long-standing public servants. At a ceremony in February at the Corn Exchange, the town council created three new Honorary Citizens of Dorchester.

In front of an audience of friends and family, Alistair Chisholm (award winning Town Crier for 27 years, former Mayor and town councillor), Tim Harries (town councillor for 37 years and three times Mayor) and Dennis Holmes (Town Clerk for 26 years) were honoured for their significant contribution to the community.

The current Mayor of Dorchester, Cllr Robin Potter, congratulated the three new Honorary Citizens and thanked them for all their hard work and dedication to the town for over five decades. Alistair, Tim and Dennis are well-known to many residents and they continue to play their part in the life of the town.



TOWN EVENTS THIS SPRING

Dorchester Roman Festival

12th & 13th April - Maumbury Rings

Poundbury Easter Market & Easter Egg Hunt

20th April, Crown Square

Easter Egg Rolling Competition

21st April, The Great Field, Poundbury

Dorchester Artisan Market

Monthly from 27th April, Town Centre

The Script's The Thing 2

3rd May, Venues Across Dorchester

VE Day 80th Anniversary Beacon Lighting

8th May, Salisbury Field

Street in the Park Music Festival

10th May, Borough Gardens

Dorchester Walking Festival

10th - 18th May, Across Dorchester

VE Day 80th Anniversary Music

11th May, Borough Gardens

Dorchester Vegan Market

17th & 18th May, Maumbury Rings

TENNIS FOR ALL

With a generous grant from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) the Town Council has resurfaced two tennis courts at Borough Gardens ensuring they are now in top condition.



DT1 residents can access the courts for just £35 a year, while non-DT1 residents can enjoy the courts for £50 a year. This household membership provides access for up to 6 hours of play per week, although pay & play is also available via the ClubSpark booking system.

Mayor of Dorchester, Councillor Robin Potter, said "We are thrilled to see the Borough Gardens' tennis courts fully resurfaced. The support from the Lawn Tennis Association has been invaluable in helping us achieve this".

The Town Council is also working with the charity Sport in Mind to provide free tennis sessions at Borough Gardens for those struggling with their mental health. The free drop-in sessions are every Thursday at 2.00pm and you don't need to book. The Sport in Mind coach, Clive Stowe, is specially trained and will provide all equipment. For more information contact: info@sportinmind.org

WALKING FESTIVAL



Now in its 3rd year, the popular Dorchester Walking Festival is returning from 10th to 18th May with varied programme of guided walks suiting all tastes and levels of ability. For the Festival, the Town Council is working with some of the most knowledgeable walk leaders in the county to showcase Dorchester and the surrounding countryside of West Dorset.

The Festival has something for everyone, with walks for keen hikers, relaxed wanderers, and curious explorers. Places on the walks needs to be booked – so please visit the [Discover Dorchester website](https://www.discoverdorchester.com) for more information.

DORCHESTER ROMAN FESTIVAL

Imagine sitting in a real Roman amphitheatre, hearing the roar of the crowd and witnessing Roman gladiators fighting in the arena. You can experience all this for free at Dorchester's spectacular Roman Festival on Saturday 12th and 13th April 2025 in Maumbury Rings.

This amazing new festival has something for everyone - train like a gladiator, witness gladiator fighting, make mosaics, take part in Roman ceremonies, march with Roman soldiers, see real Roman archaeological finds and interact with Roman Living Historians.

In addition to the activities in Maumbury Rings, there will also be Roman Dorchester guided walks, tours and talks to book over the weekend, including on Friday 11th April. The festival also coincides with the fantastic new Gladiator of Roman Britain exhibition at Dorset Museum & Art Gallery running until 11th May 2025.



For a full programme for the Roman Festival, please visit the [Discover Dorchester website](#).



LOOKING BACK – INSTALLING DORCHESTER'S BEACON

In 1988 the country commemorated the 400th Anniversary of the victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588. As part of the commemoration it was proposed that there should be a co-ordinated national beacon lighting and the Council decided that Dorchester should play its part.

There was no historic evidence of a beacon in Dorchester and the Council decided that the best place to put one would be Salisbury Field – not because it was a sensible strategic location for a beacon but because the space lends itself to organising wider celebrations.

The beacon was constructed by apprentices at Winfrith Atomic Energy Establishment and British Telecom kindly agreed to install it which resolved a considerable headache! The representation of the Town Seal on the sign attached to it was originally painted by students at Hardy's School while it was still on South Court Avenue.

The large attendance at that initial beacon lighting, and at all other lightings since, vindicates the decision to put it there – after all, we no longer rely on a chain of beacons to pass on signals!

VE DAY 80TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

As part of the national celebrations to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE Day - the end of the war in Europe, the town council will be holding a VE Day beacon lighting event on Salisbury Field on the evening of Thursday 8th May. In advance of the beacon lighting at 9.30pm there will be a programme of music and entertainment. Then on Sunday 11th May there will also be a VE Day themed afternoon of music in Borough Gardens – so bring a picnic and enjoy the fun.



TOWN'S PART OF COUNCIL TAX RISES BY 2%

The Town Council's share of the council tax will rise by a below inflationary 2% in April. A band D property will pay £214.54 annually, an increase of £4.21 for the year. This will raise £1.82 million from the DT1 taxpayers. DTC have long had a policy of small and steady 2% increases meaning that the taxpayer is less impacted at times of higher inflation, whilst also not impacting the long-term financial position of the council.

Councillors considered a number of issues when setting the budget for 2025/26, including:

- A £23,000 increase for Employer National Insurance contributions as a result of Government changes.
- The appointment of a Finance Apprentice, giving the opportunity for a local person to train and gain a qualification.
- The appointment of two part-time members of staff in preparation for Dorchester Town Council taking over the running of Dorchester market.
- An increase in the annual grant to Dorchester Youth and Community Centre, from £21,200 to £28,000 to support their important work with young people.
- A new £4,000 a year grant to People Need Places for managing wildlife areas on The Great Field.

The full budget can be viewed on our website.

Dorchester Councillors' Residents Surgery



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

Where: Dorchester Library
When: First Saturday of every month 10.00am – 12.00pm

For more information call: 01305 224440



ALLOTMENTS

Interested in growing your own food? Did you know that Dorchester Town Council has allotments sites around the town and often plots become available. Plots can vary in size, with half and quarter plots suitable for anyone without the time to take on a full-sized plot. You need to live in the DT1 area to be eligible. If you would like to join our waiting list then please contact admin@dorchester-tc.gov.uk

BOROUGH GARDENS KIOSK

The popular refreshment kiosk in Borough Gardens will be operated by a new company for 2025.

Following a selection process, the council has chosen the company Temple of Refreshment as the new operator who have successfully run the kiosk at the National Trust's Stourhead property for many years. Director, Chris Puxley, is looking forward to offering a great range of hot and cold refreshments and excellent coffee.

NEW BENCH FOR THE GREAT FIELD

The Town Council is celebrating the recent installation of a new seat at The Great Field located on the grass opposite the doctor's surgery on St John Way. This new bench is regularly used by people waiting for others in the doctors or pharmacy or taking a breather when walking across this beautiful open space.

This is the first of two seats approved for this area by the council's Management Committee and was donated by a local family with the council installing it on a new base.



Please contact us if you would like to donate a seat for the second available site at The Great Field - the successful request will be the first acceptable application received. The council is not currently accepting requests for seats elsewhere on The Great Field but would welcome the donation of seats for Poundbury Cemetery.

COUNCILLOR CONTACTS

Phone and e-mail contact details for Ward councillors for the Town Council and the Dorset Council are available on our website, www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk

