

Dorchester's Heritage Tourism Plan

This is our plan to grow
Dorchester's tourism
economy and support
the town's future
vitality through growing
awareness of our rich
and varied past

Shire Hall Museum 1 min
Tutankhamun Exhibition 2
Keep Military Museum 5 mi
Borough Gardens 7 mins
Dorset History Centre 7 m



Dorchester

A place of history



Dorchester has over 6000 years of history, but the history of famous people, places and events associated with the town and its surrounding setting presents opportunities to increase visibility and awareness amongst visitors and residents.



Telling our stories

Telling our stories more widely and well gives us the chance to attract visitors to our town to share our history, and whilst doing so support the town's economy.

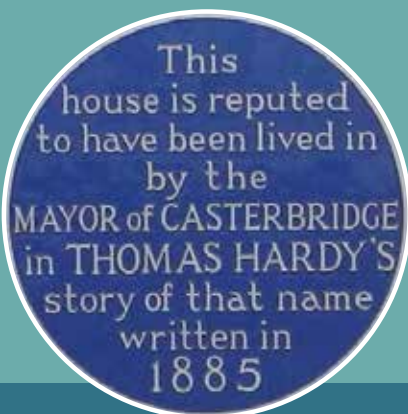
We believe that Dorchester as an historic town has something for everyone throughout the year. We want to encourage more day and staying visitors to come to the town, enjoy their experience, stay longer, spend more in local businesses and give them reason to return time and again.

Dorchester has started on this journey, with new heritage attractions in both the Shire Hall and the new Dorset Museum, plus an established programme of excellent local events in venues such as the Borough Gardens, Maumbury Rings and Corn Exchange; with new events emerging in the town centre - Thomas Hardy Victorian Fair and Dorchester Heritage Open Day.



Our ambition

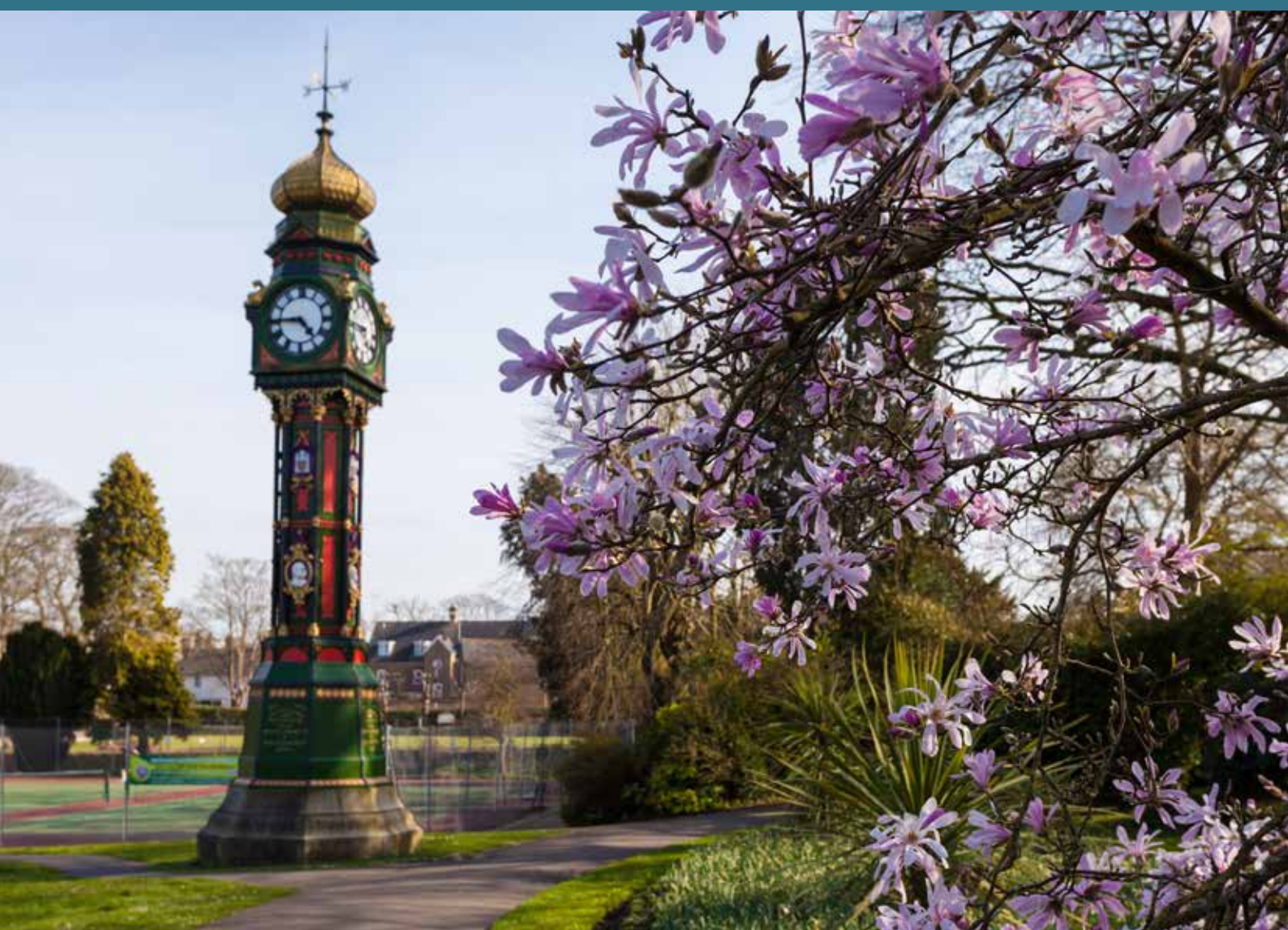
Our plan sets out a way forward to grow the tourism economy to achieve our ambition.



“

To become known as a progressive and welcoming town in Wessex, passionate about and celebrating its wonderful and extensive heritage and its environment and offering an exceptional day visitor experience that encourages repeat visits.

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What we will do



We will:

- Develop a **long-term vision** for Dorchester's tourism activity that suits the needs of heritage organisations, commercial businesses, and residents.
- Create a **universal brand** to underpin collaborative marketing of Dorchester's visitor offer.
- Work up **new visitor experiences** in collaboration with our museums, visitor and tourism businesses, arts and events organisations, and our public sector.
- Support **local business engagement** in tourism including food, retail and accommodation and other services.
- Ensure that **retaining and improving our built and natural environment** runs throughout the plans, and that improvements to visitor facilities and travel options support sustainable tourism solutions.
- Encourage **community participation** including volunteer support to delivering the overall tourism experience.

How will we do it?



We will:

- Support a new wide-ranging Dorchester Tourism Partnership with a mission to deliver this strategy and action plan. The partnership will include representatives from heritage tourism attractions, providers of tourism services, town businesses, public sector and community.
- Work with the partners to develop a brand identity all can use.
- Work to establish a collaborative approach to cost effective and shared town promotion and marketing.
- Support development of new COVID safe ways for our visitors to discover and experience our town and its heritage. This will include digital access to tourist information, new traditional tourism products, as well as innovative digital tourism experience products.
- In particular, we will encourage and support collaborative working on tourism products amongst our museums, tourism businesses, arts & events organisations.
- Work with local regional and national organisations to promote our town.
- Support our commercial and not for profit businesses, and our events organisers to be the best they can be.
- Work with residents and others to encourage volunteer working in support of our heritage attractions and events.
- Develop and promote Dorchester as an environmentally friendly tourist destination, encouraging visitors to minimise car use, and to enjoy the ability to walk or cycle both to and around our town.
- Seek funding opportunities for both the partnership and its members to achieve our objectives.
- Monitor tourism activity as it develops, as well as the overall quality and attractiveness of the whole evolving tourism offer.
- Monitor and promote the health of Dorchester's built and natural assets and the town as an attractive environment.

Our stories

We have identified a set of key themes around which we will develop visitor experiences to tell our stories. These will be broad storylines and will draw on and cross link to all aspects of Dorchester's extensive and varied heritage.

- **Thomas Hardy Country**
- **Archaeology and History**
- **Centuries of Creative Thinking**
- **Compact and Green**
- **Marvellous Museums**
- **Vibrant Town**



What we aim to achieve

Over the next 2-5 years the plan aims to deliver:

- A collaborative and energetic local tourism industry
- A well known and successful Dorchester brand
- New and innovative tourism experiences – attractive to all ages and interests – to complement our existing offer
- Growth in the number of visitors and visitor spend in the town
- Uplift to Dorchester's vibrancy and business health in the town.
- A visibly expanded, more attractive and greener visitor offer

This plan has been prepared by the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee with support from Dorchester Town Council.



To find out more, contact the Dorchester Town Council

www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk/Services/Heritage+Tourism+Project

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