

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE HELD VIA THE ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING PLATFORM

19 JANUARY 2021

At a virtual Meeting of the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee held on 19 January 2021:

PRESENT:

Dorchester Town Council

Councillors: S. Biles
F. Hogwood
G. Jones (Chairman)
R. Major

Officers: S. Newman
T. Hedger
N. Hayes

Dorset Council

Councillors: R. Biggs
A. Canning
L. Fry
S. Jones
D. Taylor

In Attendance

Councillor S. Hosford

Ancient & Honourable Guild of Town Criers

A. Chisholm

Blue Badge Tourist Guides

T. Loasby

Dorchester Association

M. Rice

Dorchester Chamber for Business

M. Woodgate

Dorchester Civic Society

T. James

Dorchester Local Nature Reserve

L. Poulsen

Dorset History Centre

M. Gayton

Keep 106 Community Radio

A. Worth

National Trust (for Max Gate and Hardy's Cottage)

R. Raines

22. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor F. Kent-Ledger (Dorchester Town Council).

23. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2020, a copy of which had been circulated, were confirmed and signed.

24. **MEMBERSHIP**

(a) Keep 106 Community Radio – The Committee considered whether to amend its terms of reference so as to include Keep 106 Community Radio on the list if non-voting organisations to be represented on the Committee.

RESOLVED

That Keep 106 Community Radio be included within the non-voting membership of the Committee and that Andy Worth, from Keep 106, be welcomed to the meeting.

(b) Mr John Smith – Members were informed of the recent death of Mr John Smith who had represented the Dorchester Association on the Committee for many years up to 2018. The Committee noted the work he had undertaken on behalf of the Committee but also his voluntary work in many other areas of the town.

RESOLVED

That the Committee records its appreciation for all the work undertaken by John, not just in respect of the Committee but also his wider community work around the town. Members wished for their condolences to be passed to his wife.

25. **THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE**

The representative from Keep 106 informed the Committee of exciting plans from the New Hardy Players for an indoor production of the Mayor of Casterbridge to be performed as a collaboration with Dorchester Arts. The performance was scheduled for October 2021 and would include film that was being shot in the community. Should there be an issue with indoor performances due to Covid then there would be a film resource.

The Committee welcomed this very exciting project.

26. **CORNHILL CONSULTATION**

Members were informed that the Town Council was working with design company Feria Urbanism to restore Cornhill which had become a lesser version of what it once was and could appear cluttered.

The Committee made the following comments on the project:-

- The Town Pump should retain its integrity and heritage status
- New paving could include a mosaic
- Something be included, whether it was paving or something else, that showed Dorchester's rich history from Henge to the Poundbury development
- Incorporate archaeological finds and a link to the County Museum
- Traffic would continue to be an issue and any mitigations would be welcomed
- Some form or water feature would benefit local wildlife
- Grey concrete blocks for seating were not considered appropriate
- Link up other areas of town such as Brewery Square

RESOLVED

That the comments above be forwarded to Feria Urbanism.

27. **HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY**

(i) Heritage Tourism Project - Progress

The Committee considered a report by the Heritage Tourism Project Manager which updated it on the progress of the project and reported on the next steps.

RESOLVED

That the progress report be noted.

(ii) Heritage Tourism Strategy Governance and Delivery

Members had before them a report by the Heritage Tourism Project Manager which set out proposals, in accordance with the approved Heritage Tourism Strategy Action Plan, for the establishment of a formal local delivery tourism partnership and the appointment of a dedicated tourism officer post within the Town Council. It was noted that the Town Council, as part of its budget recommendations, had included three year funding for a part time tourism officer and a sum of £6,000 per year to be made available to the proposed partnership to support delivery of the strategy.

In regard to the proposed partnership it was felt that membership should include representatives from the youth sector and the disabled sector.

RESOLVED

- (1) That, subject to the comments above, the Partnership terms of reference be agreed.
- (2) That the job description for the Tourism Development Officer be agreed.
- (3) That the allocation of £6,000 per year to the Partnership for use in delivery of the strategy, in accordance with the Partnership terms of reference, be agreed.
- (4) That the Town Council be invited to nominate a Member to sit on the Partnership

(iii) Tourism Budget

The Committee considered a report by the Heritage Tourism Project Manager which proposed a plan to be used to guide investment of the £43,325 remaining budget to fund development work for the strategy.

Members felt that some allocation should be allocated to 'Environment' which may go towards matters such as sustainable tourism or the green ambassador scheme.

RESOLVED

That, subject to some funding being allocated to 'Environment', the budget investment guide be agreed.

(iv) Visitor Experiences

Members considered a report by the Heritage Tourism Project Manager which set out a proposal for the production of a new visitor experience. The project was to work with the Dorset History Centre and Bournemouth University students to produce a circular town centre trail, developed around interesting properties from which stories could be developed, to be supported with rich content and capable of both presentation on the Geotourist app and as a download to print. It was noted that some funding would be required to cover expense and design work.

In response to a question it was noted that the trail would not replace the existing town trails which were proposed to be further developed.

RESOLVED

That the proposal be agreed and that a sum of £1,500 be allocated to the project, of which at least £800 to be for design work, all expenses to be agreed in advance and evidenced.

28. **THOMAS HARDY VICTORIAN FAIR (THVF) - 2021**

The Chairman reported that a first meeting of the THVF planning group had met and discussed proposals for an event on Sunday 6 June 2021. It was presently being proposed that the vast majority of the event would be delivered online due to the uncertainty of what would be possible due to Covid. The Chairman welcomed receiving any ideas for activities from the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the THVF update be noted.

29. **DORCHESTER HERITAGE MAGAZINE - PROPOSAL**

The Committee considered a proposal from Miranda Woodgate (the Resourcery) for the production of a new quarterly Dorchester Heritage Magazine. There would be no cost to the Committee but it was hoped that the Committee would endorse the publication and that the Chairman would write an introduction.

RESOLVED

That the proposed new quarterly Dorchester Heritage Magazine be supported.

30. **DORCHESTER TIC**

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the Town Council’s Policy Committee had agreed that should Dorset Council close the Dorchester TIC, the impacts be monitored and that a review of the need for a dedicated TIC Service should be undertaken prior to the 2022 summer visitor season once the new Tourism Service outlined in the Tourism Strategy had been implemented.

Some Members expressed concern about the possibility of the Dorchester TIC being closed.

RESOLVED

That the Dorchester TIC update be noted.

31. **QUESTIONS**

No questions had been received.

32. **URGENT ITEMS**

Councillor A. Canning suggested two projects that he would like to progress on behalf the Committee, the first was to start work on producing a blue plaque in respect of Gertrude Bugler and the second was to develop a Thomas Hardy poetry trail around the town.

Members felt that both of these projects were worthwhile and should be developed further. In discussing blue plaques it was noted that the one in Colliton Street needed cleaning and the one located above New Look in South Street would benefit from being lowered.

In response to a question the Deputy Town Clerk reported that he proposed to remove the Hardy Trail information board at Max Gate due to its poor condition.

Chairman.....