



DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Council Offices, 19 North Square, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1JF
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Steve Newman, Town Clerk

9th April 2025

You are invited to a meeting of the **DORCHESTER HERITAGE JOINT COMMITTEE** will be held in the **BOROUGH GARDENS HOUSE, CORNWALL ROAD, DORCHESTER DT1 1RG** on **TUESDAY 15th APRIL 2025** commencing at **5.30pm**.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Steve Newman'.

Town Clerk and Secretary to the Committee

Declaration of Interests

Members are reminded that it is their responsibility to disclose interests where appropriate. A Member who declares any interest must leave the room. A Member who declares a registerable interest as a Council nominee to a partner organisation may first address the meeting as a member of the public.

Membership

Dorset Council: R. Biggs, A. Canning, L. Fry, R. Major and R. Tarr.

Dorchester Town Council: S. Biles, S. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger, G. Jones and D. Taylor.

The following Members may attend and speak but not vote:

Mr B Murphy (Duchy of Cornwall), I. Gosling (Dorchester Civic Society), Vacancy (Dorchester Chamber for Business), M. Woodgate (Dorchester Heritage Magazine), E. Metcalfe (The Keep Military Museum), L. Poulsen (Dorchester Local Nature Reserve), C. Dixon (Dorset Museum & Art Gallery), J. Wallis (Blue Badge Tourist Guides) M Rice (Dorchester Association), M. Gayton or S. Johnson (Dorset History Centre), R. White (National Trust (for Max Gate and Hardy's Cottage)), V. Smith (Shire Hall), A. Worth (Keep 106 Community Radio), M. Chutter (Thomas Hardy Society), S. Wallis (Dorset Council – Archaeologist) and Anthony Harrison (Town Crier).

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. **MINUTES**

To read, confirm and sign the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 21st January 2025 (**enclosed**).

3. **BUDGET UPDATE**

To receive a report from the Finance Officer (**report enclosed**).

4. **ROMAN FESTIVAL - FEEDBACK**

To receive a verbal report from the Tourism Development Officer.

5. **HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY - UPDATE**

To receive an update on the work of the Tourism Partnership and Strategy (**report enclosed**).

6. **HERITAGE OPEN DAY 2025**

To receive a report from the Assistant Town Clerk (**report enclosed**).

7. **HERITAGE PLAQUE AT DORCHESTER WEST STATION**

To receive a proposal from the Friends of Dorchester West Station (**report enclosed**)

8. **MOYNTON ROAD COMMEMORATIVE STONE, THOMAS HARDYE GARDENS**

To receive a report from the Assistant Town Clerk (**report enclosed**).

9. **ONGOING PROJECTS**

To received update reports on the following matters:

- a) Roman baths interpretation project.
- b) Town Pump enhancement - update from Civic Society (A. Harrison).
- c) *The Dorchester Story* project update (A. Harrison).
- d) Sylvia Townsend Warner statue project – update (A. Pearson & J. Doak).

10. **UPDATE FROM MEMBERS**

To receive updates from members and partners.

11. **QUESTIONS**

To receive questions submitted by Members in writing to the Dorchester Town Clerk and in respect of which the appropriate notice has been given.

12. **URGENT ITEMS**

To consider any other items that the Chairman decides are urgent.

ITEM 2: MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE

DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE

21st JANUARY 2025

At a Meeting of the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee held on 21st January 2025:

PRESENT:

Dorchester Town Council	Councillors:	S. Biles G. Jones (Chairman) S. Jones F. Kent-Ledger
	Officers:	T. Hurley M. Manley
Dorset Council	Councillors:	R. Biggs A. Canning R. Major R. Tarr
Dorset Museum & Art Gallery		C. Dixon
Dorchester Association		M. Rice
Local Nature Reserve		L. Poulsen
Dorset Council - Archaeology		S. Wallis
Thomas Hardy Society		M. Chutter
Dorchester Civic Society / Town Crier		A. Harrison
Dorset History Centre		M. Gayton
Blue Badge Tour Guide		J. Wallis
Dorchester Sheroes Project		A. Pearson
Shire Hall Historic Courthouse Museum		V. Smith
Dorchester Heritage Magazine		M. Woodgate

40. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr D. Taylor (Dorchester Town Council), Cllr L. Fry (Dorset Council), I. Gosling (Dorchester Civic Society), E. Metcalfe (The Keep Military Museum), R. White (National Trust) and A. Worth (Keep 106).

41. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th October 2024, a copy of which had been circulated, were confirmed and signed.

42. **DECLARATION OF PREDETERMINATION**

None were declared.

43. **BUDGET UPDATE**

An update report on the committee's budget was presented. Maria Gayton urged the committee to consider seeking match funding for its own projects in order to maximise the impact of its budget. Claire Dixon requested that the £400 grant originally allocated to the Museums After Dark project be reassigned to support the Museums Pass initiative.

RESOLVED

- a) That the budget update be noted.
- b) That the grant of £400 allocated for the Museums After Dark project be reassigned to the Museum Pass project.

44. **SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER STATUE PROJECT**

The meeting was joined at this point by Anya Pearson and colleagues from the project and, along with Mark Chutter, provided an update on progress. updated the committee on the project and stated that the author Sylvia Townsend. The project has secured £50,000 towards an estimated total project cost of £60,000. The artist had produced a maquette and application would be submitted soon for planning consent. In response to a query from Cllr S. Jones, Anya Pearson confirmed that Chaldon Herring Parish Council, where the writer lived, had contributed to the project.

It was agreed not to support the project at this stage until it had secured planning permission and any other consents. The project may also wish to apply to Dorchester Town Council for a small grant.

RESOLVED

That a decision on any financial support for the Sylvia Townsend Warner statue project be deferred until more details are available and the design has secured planning consent.

45. **HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY - UPDATE**

Matilda Manley presented an update on progress with the Heritage Tourism Strategy and the work of the Tourism Partnership.

RESOLVED

That the report on the activities of the Tourism Partnership were noted.

46. **ROMAN FESTIVAL 2025**

The Committee received an update from Matilda Manley on the organisation of a Roman Festival in Dorchester in April 2025 to co-incide with the 'Gladiators of Britain' exhibition at

Dorset Museum & Art Galleries in 2025. It was reported that South West Train are offering free poster space on the network to help promote the festival and exhibition. Claire Dixon also mentioned that she was working with the Dorset Bard and they could be involved in the project.

RESOLVED

That progress with the Dorchester Roman Festival were noted.

47. ONGOING PROJECTS

Updates on the following were received:

- a) **Refreshing heritage information panels.** Tony Hurley reported that all the panels at Maumbury Rings would be refreshed before the Roman Festival. In addition, discussions were in progress to locate the Roman gateway heritage panel on the HK Law building at Top o' Town.
- b) **Roman Baths Interpretation Project.** Tony Hurley reported that the project was on hold until a new staff were in place at Dorset Museum for the project to liaise with.
- c) **Town Pump enhancement proposals.** Anthony Harrison reported on the Civic Society's project to enhance the Town Pump and reinstate a water supply were at an early stage, but designs had been commissioned and funding was being sought.
- d) **The Dorchester Story project.** Anthony Harrison reported on the Civic Society's project to develop online content initially about Roman Dorchester with support from a Bournemouth University student and that this material would eventually be hosted on Discover Dorchester. This way of working would be used as a model for presenting the story of other periods in the town's history. Cllr S. Jones asked if they project would look at prehistoric Dorchester and Anthony Harrison confirmed that this might be the case depending on capacity.

Miranda Woodgate reported that she had collected material on the history of Dorchester during the pandemic and would pass this on to the Civic Society. Claire Dixon highlighted the *Bloomberg Connects* app which presented free information on art and museums around the world. Free training was available for developing content for the app but it was a significant commitment (www.bloombergconnects.org).

Cllr R. Tarr stated that the town council had developed heritage interpretative information with Jo Draper and that he had the designs.

48. FUTURE PROJECTS

- a) **Proposal for information board for the Moule Institute.** Mark Chutter highlighted the need for a heritage information panel about the Moule Institute in Fordington and he would come forward with proposals and a possible location (perhaps on the Green).
- b) **Heritage Open Day 2025.** Tony Hurley presented options for HOD 2025 including the closure of High West Street. The committee were supportive of the date of Sunday 21st September (at the end of the national HOD fortnight) but did not want to see such a large

amount of money spent on the road closure. There should instead be a focus on access to buildings and heritage sites that were not normally publicly accessible and that the budget could be used to fund free 'behind the scenes' tours at the museums. Tony Hurley agreed to report more developed proposals to the next meeting.

- c) **Maiden Castle excavation 40th anniversary event.** Michael Rice reported that the Dorchester Association was planning a day school with archaeologist Niall Sharples, who ran the 1985 excavation. The Association had a good track record of running successful day schools and was optimistic that the planned event would prove popular. The committee agreed to allocate £200 to the Association to help with the cost of publishing a programme for the event.

RESOLVED

That a grant of £200 be awarded to the Dorchester Association to assist with the cost of producing a programme for the Maiden Castle excavation 40th anniversary day school.

49. **THE GORGE BUILDING, SOUTH STREET**

The Civic Society updated was noted.

50. **UPDATES FROM PARTNERS**

Shire Hall: Virginia Smith stated that the museum was turning a corner and had plans for the year, including a decarbonisation programme and a crime and punishment in Roman times family activity during the Roman festival. The museum is also hosting an exhibition called *The Magic of Middle Earth* opening at the end of March.

Dorset Museum & Art Gallery. Claire Dixon reported that the Gladiators of Roman Britain was opening that week and there were plans for a Jane Austen exhibition later in the year. The Museum is awaiting a decision on funding for repairs to the Victorian Hall roof.

Dorset History Centre – Maria Gayton reported that the Centre was working a bid for capital funding for an extension.

Thomas Hardy Society. Mark Chutter reported that membership numbers were up.

Miranda Woodgate reported that she had been asked by the Wessex branch of the Council for British Archaeology to organise an event in Dorchester in 2025.

Dorset Council archaeology service – Steve Wallis reported that the Roman townhouse had features in the television series *Digging for Britain*. Recent building works in Colliton Street had revealed further evidence of the Roman town.

The Keep Military Museum. Tony Hurley reported an update from Elliott Metcalfe that The Keep would be closed for the whole of 2025 whilst repairs are undertaken on the roof. In the meantime, Dorset Museum would help to display some of the items from The Keep's collection.

51. **QUESTIONS**

None were raised.

52. **URGENT ITEMS**

None were raised.

Chair.....

ITEM 3: BUDGET UPDATE

DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE – 21st JANUARY 2025 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2024-25

1. **Appendix A**, below, sets out the Committee's income and expenditure to date since 1st April 2024.
2. For the current financial year 2025-26, Dorchester Town Council has allocated to the Committee £3,000 for activities and £8,500 for events.
3. At its meeting in November, the Committee agreed the allocation of £5,000 for the Dorchester Roman Festival in April 2025. In addition, in the coming financial year, there will be a need for expenditure on Heritage Open Day subject to the Committee's decision as to the scope of the event (see report below).

**Assistant Town Clerk
Dorchester Town Council**

APPENDIX A – Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee
Statement of Accounts - Year ended 31st March 2025

		Activities	Events
		£	£
	Balance brought forward as at 1st April 2024	5,863.59	7,938.00
<u>Income and Expenditure 24-25</u>			
Contributions:			
1/4/2024	DTC Contribution to activities	3,000.00	
1/4/2024	DTC Contribution to events		8,500.00
18/10/2024	THVF 2023 Balance		994.04
	Total income 2024/25:	3,000.00	9,494.04
Expenditure in year			
		Activities	Events
	Wallis Agency - Hosting Town Trail mini-sites	60.00	
	Dorset Council - HOD Road Closures		130.00
	Grassby & Sons - Treves Grant	500.00	
	Rural Market Town Membership	137.00	
	Swift Signs Weymouth - Aluminium Signs	128.33	
	Dorchester Arts Centre - Grant	200.00	
	Shire Hall Courthouse - Grant	200.00	
	New Hardy Players - Grant	200.00	
	Swift Signs Weymouth - Fordington Mill Signage	109.63	
	Advantage Digital Print - 3 x A2 Posters	48.00	
	Swift Signs Weymouth - Maumbury Rings Signs	315.42	
	Swift Signs Weymouth - Garden Restoration Panel	255.57	
	Talk About Trust - Community Room Hire	15.00	
	Amazon - Voice Amplifiers HOD		67.26
	Dorset Council - HOD Road Closures (credit note)		-130.00
	Swift Signs Weymouth - Kings Arms Signage	116.16	
	Swift Signs Weymouth - Poppy Trail Panel	121.29	
	Joy Wallis - Heritage Day Walks		100.00
	Thomas Hardy Society - Heritage Tours		100.00
	Victorian Fayre carpenter		256.00
	Grant – Day School Programme	200.00	
	Roman Festival		5,000
	Total expenditure:	2,606.40	5,523.26
	Balance:	6,257.19	11,908.78
	Total Balance as at 31/3/25:		18,165
DTC contributions	DTC Contribution to activities 2025-26	3,000	
	DTC Contribution to events 2025-26		8,500
	Total balance as at 1/4/25:	£9,257.19	£20,408.78

ITEM 5.

DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE – 15TH APRIL 2025 HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY UPDATE

The last Tourism Partnership Meeting was held on 1 April 2025 in the Council Chamber. The meeting was very well attended, best yet! We welcomed new members from Art in Poundbury and Athelhampton House. The following issues/areas of work were discussed:

1. Poundbury representation – Cllr William Gibbons has been working to invite more Poundbury representatives onto the Tourism Partnership. Cllr Gibbons arranged a meeting for Poundbury based tourism representatives which the Tourism Partnership Officer attended. Five new members have joined the partnership mailing list as a result.
2. Spring Campaign update - The Discover Dorchester/Visit Dorset Spring Competition for a weekend in Dorchester has done incredibly well with over 5000 entries. Five new “Weekend in Dorchester” itinerary blogs have been created and shared.
3. Marketing focus for after Easter is “Dorchester as a base for your Dorset Adventure” – promoting staying in Dorchester for a week or longer and exploring the town and the rest of Dorset from here.
4. A large part of the meeting was spent reviewing the three Dorchester leaflets that the tourism partnership has produced:
 - a. Dorchester On Foot Walking Leaflet
 - b. Discover Dorchester 2024 Summer what’s on leaflet
 - c. Generic Discover Dorchester leaflet

Comments on these leaflets have been collated, and a small task and finish group of the partnership are going work on this before the next meeting.

Full notes and slides from the last meeting can be found online at: [The official tourism website for Dorchester](#)

**Tourism Development Officer
Dorchester Town Council**

ITEM 6.

DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE – 15th APRIL 2025 HERITAGE OPEN DAY 2025

1. The Committee has previously agreed that Heritage Open Day in 2025 will take place on **Sunday 21st September** – the last day of the national Heritage Open Day weekend and also within Dorset Architectural Heritage Week. It has also been agreed that the event will not include any closure of High West/East Street.
2. Based on feedback from previous events, the following initial programme of guided walks and tours of heritage sites is proposed for the Committee to consider:

Guided Walks:

Theme	Timing	Guide / capacity	Venue
Poundbury architecture tour	TBC	TBC	TBC
Roman Dorchester walk	10.30am – 12.00pm	Steve Wallis 20 participants	Starting with a talk at the King's Arms.
Roman aqueduct walk	2.00pm-4.30pm	Steve Wallis 20 participants	Starting with talk at PiP.
Hidden Heritage of Dorchester (2 walks)	11.00-12.00 15.00-16.00	Joy Wallis 20 participants	Starting at Town Pump
The life and death of Mary Channing and Martha Brown	11.00-12.00	Mark Chutter 20 participants	Starting at Town Pump
The Moule family and Fordington	12.30-1.30	Mark Chutter 20 participants	Starting at Town Pump
Judge Jeffreys - the Hanging Judge	2.00-3.00	Mark Chutter 20 participants	Starting at Town Pump
National Trust - free guided walk from Hardy's Cottage to Max Gate (and back)	10.30am-3.00pm	National Trust	Starting at Hardy's Cottage.

Heritage venue tours:

Venue	Timing	Guide	Capacity
Corn Exchange and the Council Chamber	Hourly throughout the day.	Mark Tattersall	
Sunninghill	2.00pm	Jeremy Pope	30
Dorset Museum Stores tour and general entry.	TBC	DM&AG staff.	Three tours with 20 per group
Dorset History Centre - bookable tours.	On the hour 10-2pm		
St Peter's Church bell tower	Access throughout the day.	Church volunteers (contact Val Potter).	
Top o' Town House & 51 High West Street		Antionette Weller and John Cobley	There may also be access inside the buildings.
Max Gate (free access)	20 th & 21 st Sept 10:30 – 4:30pm	National Trust	

3. The national theme for HOD 2025 is 'architecture – how we've designed and built the world around us'. Although this is the leading theme for the national programme, it does not need to overly influence the local event and there is a need to celebrate local history and heritage. However, the proposed programme does involve significant local buildings and further work will be undertaken in collaboration with the Dorchester Civic Society to see how access to other significant local buildings can be negotiated and incorporated into a guided tour.
4. The programme of tours will be complimented by the parking of the Hayden Princess Traction Engine in the bus stop outside Dorset Museum – permission for the use of the bus stop has kindly been given by Dorset Council.
5. It should also be noted that the event will benefit from the support from local businesses, including the Kings Arms (providing a free venue for the Roman town introductory talk) and also the new restaurant in Antelope Walk, *Seventy Four*, has agreed to allow access to the Old Oak Rooms as part of a guided tour.
6. **Budget.** The event will require a maximum budget of £2,200 with expenditure comprising the following:
 - £900 – Three free bookable tours of the stores for up to 20 people (£15 per head) and also give free entry to the Dorset Museum & Art Gallery.
 - £300 - Guided walks.
 - £250 for printing and display materials at Dorset History Centre.
 - £500 - promotional materials (posters etc).

- £500 equipment and contingency.

The Committee currently has an available budget of £20,408 for events.

7. The Committee is invited, therefore, to approve the above proposals, make suggestions for additional activities, and allocate a budget of £2,450 to the event.

Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate)
Dorchester Town Council

ITEM 7.

DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE

REQUEST FOR SUPPORT FROM THE FRIENDS OF DORCHESTER WEST STATION

1. **Background.** A national newspaper had identified Dorchester West as the worst station in Britain. As a result, the Friends Group was formed in 2010 by Wally Gundry, a former Mayor of Dorchester. At that time there was just knee high grass everywhere, no beds or tubs – just long grass. Over the years the Friends have worked hard to improve it and continue to do so, the latest project being the production of a history of the station in double royal poster size format to be put up on the station later in the year, the arrangements for which are already agreed with GWR. Copy attached for information. We hope, today, it is a station of which Dorchester can be proud.
2. The line from the west was brought through Dorchester to Weymouth by Isambard Kingdom Brunel and the Wiltshire, Somerset and Dorset Railway. The station itself was designed by Ritson. After the sale of the land between the station and Weymouth Avenue Bridge, the station area is as you see it today. However, the Domino Pizza building, the back of which forms part of the station, is listed as Grade 2 and the station is in a Conservation area.
3. **Proposal.** To have a round plaque. This year is designated as Rail200 and stations up and down the country are seeking to celebrate this in many ways. The station is run by GWR and any project the Friends may have is agreed with it prior to starting. There is nothing on the station to commemorate the opening of the station on 20 January 1857. GWR will not allow a blue plaque and have now passed a preliminary design to their Brand contractors for consideration and agreement. Like many large organisations GWR has a style guide and has signature colours with identifying pantone numbers. Their colours are GWR Corporate Green: Accent Green, Black and White and the Friends design uses these. It may be that the design will need to be worked up in detail and for our history poster we used the GWR contractor and this would involve a cost.
4. **What we are asking of the Heritage Committee.** To work with the Friends to provide a plaque with the Heritage Committee applying for listed buildings consent, obtaining and funding it (maximum estimated budget of £500). The stipulations from GWR are (a) that the position has to be agreed with the Station Manager based at Westbury, and this is in hand, and (b) that GWR erect the plaque and (c) they agree the design.
5. **Why are we asking the Committee** We hope the Committee with their expertise and knowledge will support the Friends by undertaking this challenging project which will further enhance a station which is one of the gateways to historic Dorchester.

Susan Blake, Secretary/Treasurer
Barry Tempest, Chairman
Friends of Dorchester West Station
8 April 2025

ITEM 8.

DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE REFURBISHMENT OF COMMEMORATIVE STONE, THOMAS HARDYE GARDENS

1. A request has been received from Cllr Stella Jones for the Committee to consider supporting the refurbishment of the stone erected in the Thomas Hardy Gardens housing estate to commemorate the previous use of the site as the location of the Thomas Hardy School. The incised and painted lettering on the stone has become faded and eroded and is almost illegible. A photograph of the stone is below.



2. The stone was installed by the developers, Betterment Homes, but its ownership transferred to Dorset Council when the highway was adopted. However, Dorset Council has indicated that it does not have the resources to refurbish the eroded lettering.
3. The wording on the stone is as follows: 'This stone is set on the site of the former Thomas Hardy School since redevelopment commenced in 1996 245 new homes have been constructed by Betterment Properties (Weymouth) Ltd'.
4. A quote for the refurbishment of the letter has been requested from a reputable local stone mason and, if received in time, will be reported verbally to the Committee.
5. The Committee is invited, therefore, to allocate a budget to support the renovation of the lettering on the stone and, if agreed, the work will be commissioned by the Town Council.

**Assistant Town Clerk
Dorchester Town Council**