

# Dorchester Town Council

Council Offices, 19 North Square, Dorchester, Dorset. DT1 1JF  
Telephone: (01305) 266861

For information about this agenda contact Steve Newman  
s.newman@dorchester-tc.gov.uk

27 May 2026

**Agenda for the meeting of the Dorchester Markets Informal Joint Panel, which will be held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, THE MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, HIGH EAST STREET, DORCHESTER on WEDNESDAY 3 JUNE 2026 at 2.30pm.**

Steve Newman  
Town Clerk

### **Public Attendance and Speaking at the Meeting**

The Chair has discretion to allow members of the public to speak at the meeting. If you wish to speak please **contact the Clerk by 9.00am on the morning of the meeting**. We ask speakers to confine their comments to the matter in hand and to be as brief as possible.

### **Member Code of Conduct: 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 of the Committee (Quorum 3)**

Councillors P. Dickenson (DC), S. Jones (DTC), K. Reid (DTC), M. Rennie (DTC), R. Tarr (DC), S Williams (DC).

## **Agenda**

### **1. Apologies**

### **2. Election of Chair**

To elect a Chair for the remainder of the 2026-27 Council Year.

### **3. Election of Vice-Chair**

To elect a Vice-Chair for the remainder of the 2026-27 Council Year.

### **4. Declaration of Interests**

To disclose any pecuniary, other registrable or personal interest as set out in the adopted Code of Conduct. In making their decision councillors are asked to state the agenda item, the nature of the interest and any action they propose to take as part of their declaration. If required, further advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

**5. Minutes – Page 3**

To read, confirm and sign the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28 January 2026 (enclosed).

**6. Markets Operation Update – Page 6**

To consider a report by the Markets Officer (enclosed).

**7. Markets Future Vision – Page 8**

To consider a report by the Markets Officer (enclosed).

**8. 2026-27 - Financial Update – Page 12**

To consider a report by the financial Officer (enclosed).

**DORCHESTER MARKETS INFORMAL JOINT PANEL**

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28 JANUARY 2026**

**Present:** Cllrs Simon Christopher, Janet Hewitt, Rob Hughes, Stella Jones, Fiona Kent-Ledger, Kate Reid, Molly Rennie, Roland Tarr and Sarah Williams

**Apologies:** Cllrs Laura Beddow, Dave Bolwell, Jed Germodo, Jill Haynes and Sally Holland

**Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):**

Graham Duggan (Head of Regulatory Services), Steve Gorson (Senior Accountant (Adults)), Nigel Hayes (Responsible Finance Officer), Joshua Kennedy (Democratic Services Officer), Hannah Massey (Lawyer - Regulatory) and Steve Newman (Town Clerk)

**70. Minutes**

The minutes of the last meeting were confirmed and signed.

**71. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest raised at the meeting.

**72. Public Participation**

There were no public questions.

**73. FINANCIAL OUTTURN PROJECTION 2025/26 & PROPOSED BUDGET 2026/27**

The Senior Accountant presented the financial outturn and proposed budget report. He provided details about the current financial situation of the markets and noted that the income was lower than predicted as has historically been the case, although the income was higher than the previous year.

He explained that there was a degree of uncertainty about the markets future financial situation given the upcoming change in the operator, he noted that there would be an increase in staffing costs to facilitate the new market management and also a increase in income due to no longer paying an operator fee.

In response to members questions and comments the Senior Accountant confirmed that the figures would be monitored by Dorchester Town Council during the year and it was anticipated that the maintenance reserve would increase if there was no need to draw upon it.

The panel agreed to note the current projected outturn position for 2025/26 and approved the 2026/27 budget proposals.

**74. FAIRFIELD AND CORNHILL MARKETS OPERATING AGREEMENT**

The Head of Regulatory Services presented the update on the Fairfield and Cornhill markets operating agreement. He explained that the General Licensing Committee at Dorset Council had approved the operating agreement with one minor amendment to clarify that liability fell with the holder of the position rather than the individual.

The Chair thanked the teams at Dorset Council and Dorchester Town Council involved in drawing up the operating agreement for their work in doing so.

**75. FAIRFIELD AND CORNHILL MARKET UPDATE AND INITIAL VIEWS**

The Markets Officer, Dorchester Town Council, presented the updates on Fairfield and Cornhill markets. It was stated that Cornhill market had been running under the operation of Dorchester Town Council since the start of January and there were 18 traders who had signed up, all of whom had the relevant insurance and were registered with the Council.

Conversations were ongoing with traders at Fairfield market to inform them of any upcoming changes involved with Dorchester Town Council taking over the operation of the market, including signage and insurance. More detail would be brought to future meetings in regard to the future approach of the market.

The Market Officer also noted that they were intending to improve signage in the market and would work with teams at Dorset Council to ensure that any signage was consistent with other Council designs.

The Head of Regulatory Services explained that officers had explored the potential options and related costs in dealing with the north Linney's in the market. The north Linney's could either be renovated with as much original material as possible reused at an approximate cost of £115,000 or they could be demolished with the rear wall and floor retained at an approximate cost of £39,000.

Members discussed the two options presented and the associated costs. Members expressed that they believed if the north Linney's were demolished it would be a benefit to have information presented in the area explaining the history of the markets in Dorchester. One member raised concerns about the current condition of the north Linney's and the potential for someone to injure themselves if they were to access the north Linney's in their current condition.

It was proposed by Cllr Kent-Ledger and seconded by Cllr Williams.

Decision: That the panel request that officers continue work in exploring the possibility of demolishing the north Linney's.

76. **Car Boot Fund Panel Update**

The Chair updated the panel on the Car Boot Fund. It was explained that the Car Boot Fund Panel had met in November and received applications for the Car Boot Fund. £11,000 was distributed and only 3 applications were rejected. All applications that were granted, were given the full allocation that was requested.

77. **Dates of Future Meetings**

The panel noted the dates of the future meetings.

78. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

79. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

**Duration of meeting:** 2.00 - 3.10 pm

**Chairman**

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# Dorchester Markets Informal Joint Panel

3 June 2026

## Report of the Markets Officer

### 1. Fairfield

1.1 Since taking over the Fairfield market from April 1<sup>st</sup> this year, Officers have been concentrated on getting all traders registered with Dorchester Town Council (DTC) and making sure all traders are now covered by their own public liability insurance.

1.2 The transition could have been easier, but unfortunately the outgoing contractor went public with some unnecessary statements about the future operation of the markets by the Council. It was thought best not to respond to these statements.

1.3 The Council was able to retain the services of Phil Lacey who previously collected tolls for Ensor's at the car boot, he now runs both the market and car boot and is proving to be a great asset for the market.

1.4 There is an established core group of good traders, fruit and veg, bakeries, butcher, cheese, household goods, flowers, pet food, fish, hardware, watch repairs and many others.

1.5 A card payment system has been introduced by which traders can pay, the machine can then send a receipt to the traders mobile, the aim is to phase out cash payments for pitch fees altogether.

1.6 The aim now is to attract new traders with more artisan goods such as makers, artists, arts and craft, jewellery, clothing etc.

1.7 As we move into the main tourist season it is essential that we now move forward with improvements to the overall site and its buildings.

1.8 Working with Dorset Council, some improvements have already been made such as the lighting in the covered area being replaced by new LED lighting that comes on from 6.00am which enables the traders can set up safely. The traders' toilets are being worked on and work to the adjacent public toilets is underway with new doors and repairs. I have been working on stripping back the Bull Ring building and have uncovered the actual Bull Ring and the original features which I will talk more about when I set out the Vision for the Future of the Markets.

1.9 New signage has been installed throughout the site which has given it a huge lift and people can now see that DTC is now running the market.

1.10 Waste collection for the site has been cut by half and is now down to 2 wheelie bins and we are exploring ways of introducing more recycling measures.

## 2. Car Boot

2.1 The car boot has had a steady start being so reliant on the weather, but as we go towards the summer, improvement is expected, the charges have been held at a competitive rate of £8.00 a car or van (commercial) £15.00. The car boot fund is an essential lifeline for many groups and organisations to be able to access funding to help provide for their groups to survive and help others.

## 3. Cornhill

3.1 DTC also operates the Cornhill Market, and this can now operate 7 days a week. I have had discussions again with DC Highways team and now have an agreement to place stalls in the front of empty shops, which should give the town a lift particularly around the old M&S building.

3.2 Cornhill was being operated (under contract) jointly by 2 traders for the last few years and this proved to be problematic as they were spending more time organising others than sorting their own stalls. The Council has been lucky again to retain one of these; Grant Jones, who runs the vape mobile stall, and is ever present no matter the weather and traders go to him and pay for their pitch.

3.3 The possibility of a new Monday Market on Cornhill is being investigated and discussions are ongoing with traders from around the area. Monday is a day when there are no other markets operating in the area. Cornhill is also difficult for traders who can't keep their vehicles with them, they must move to a car park and pay £6.50, this is why the fees on this market are £20.00 rather than £25.00 on Fairfield, but it still results in no shows if the weather is changeable.

## 4. The Future

4.1 DTC has employed Marc Sweeney as its Markets and Communications Officer working with both the markets and tourism team. His role is to look at promoting the markets by way of social media producing an active market website and all things to do with getting the market at the forefront of all our events, after all the market is an event, it's just that it's a weekly one. This move represents DTC commitment to the market and its succession planning with a view to Marc taking over my role once we get to a position where I can step away.

4.2 Please also see report A Vision for the Future.

Daryl Chambers  
Markets Officer

# Dorchester Markets Informal Joint Panel

3 June 2026

## Dorchester Markets a Vision for the Future

1. Further to the Markets Update report I would like to set out a vision for how Dorchester Town Council (DTC) and Dorset Council (DC) would like to see the market operating in the future and the steps that are needed to get it there with all parties working together, DTC, DC, Traders, Officers and Customers.
2. Set out in the report are initial thoughts and ideas to start a discussion with all parties for additional input to create this document that sets out the future for Dorchester Markets.
3. Fairfield
  - 3.1 The Fairfield site and buildings are owned by Dorset Council; the market and car boot are now operated by Dorchester Town Council by way of a concession agreement. It is fair to say that the site has suffered from a lack of investment over a good number of years. The Panel has previously expressed its concern about this and having expressed those concerns the Panel now has the opportunity to address this for the future.
  - 3.2 It is intended that the main operation of the outdoor market remains the same with the market offer being built up to represent a good balance of traders.
  - 3.3 This also includes the covered area, but to be assessed at a future date, the idea being look at how to make the area look more like a market instead of a stark industrial covered barn.
4. Indoor Market
  - 4.1 The indoor market has a number of options for discussion: -
    - A possible indoor panier type market that opened daily
    - An antique and collectables centre open daily
    - A storage facility
    - Community Social Hub
    - The installation of individual units as workshops for makers and artisans
    - Demolition and move all the market with the walled area
    - Demolition and turn into extra car parking
    - A mix of some of the options above
  - 4.2 If the building is to remain, which is my preferred option, the indoor area needs immediate attention and should be re-cladded on the outside, it is proposed that this is done in metal cladding in a bottle green that softens the appearance with the front elevation to be in vertical timber to look have more of a workshop type feel to it.

4.3 The roof is covered in a cement based corrugated sheeting and represents a low risk from asbestos but should be replaced by a modern equivalent sheeting in the future.

4.4 Once the building is watertight consideration for the inside can be planned, this could involve any or some of the options above.

## 5. North Linney's

5.1 This set of buildings has suffered the most and are in immediate danger of collapse following years of vandalism and a fire a couple of years ago. The area has been fenced off ever since and looks an absolute mess. These buildings need to be carefully taken down, with any reusable materials saved for reuse.

5.2 A decision needs to be taken on this part of the site as to whether the Linney's should be rebuilt or not, but in the meantime, it needs to be taken down immediately before it falls down and causes damage to nearby buildings.

5.3 A number of residents in Great Western Road have submitted a joint statement asking that the north Linney's not be removed due to concerns around privacy, but they be retained and improved. Dorset Council, as the freehold owner will be required to obtain the necessary planning consents and any objections will be considered as a part of that process. The saved roof tiles could also be used to form a tiled coping to the wall raising the wall to ensure privacy.

5.4 The remainder of the saved materials could also be used for improvements to the South Linney's.

## 6. South Linney's

6.1 This building has been subject to ideas in the past for small lockable fronted workshops for various craft and makers and would complement the indoor market area this would enhance the areas offer and attract other visitors.

6.2 This is seen as a long-term plan and until then it is proposed that this space be let as undercover parking places from the east end near the café down creating 12 parking places on an annual licence at £350 per annum adding over £4,200 per year to the market takings until the longer-term plan is realised.

## 7. Toilet Building Lock Ups

7.1 The lock up garages within the toilet building are at present all let by the same family and for now are not seen as a priority for change. It is therefore proposed that for the time being they continue as now but subject to any annual increases in rent.

## 8. Car Park Area

8.1 The designated market area reflects the past times when the market was very strong and thriving but those days are over and modern markets have to adapt, not only the traders by way of offer, but by diversifying and creating a new type of market that offers more, such as makers, growers and more artisan and crafts along with food vendors. The area is controlled by the market

superintendent on the day and we only take an area that's needed for the market and the rest remains for parking.

## 9. Site Maintenance

9.1 It is proposed that an agreement be established with Dorset Council in regard to minor repairs and maintenance which can best be resolved locally by the Town Council as the market operator and then reclaimed from Dorset Council as freehold owner. Some maintenance issues are just taking too long to get done and it is vital for the market's operation that both traders and public can see the site is maintained to a high standard expected of a modern market.

## 10. Future improvements to buildings

10.1 If agreed it is proposed DTC project manage any agreed works to the site. The Market Officer is a qualified Surveyor having a 40-year career in construction, 20 of those in project management with Bridport Town Council delivering several high-level schemes for with values over a million pounds in partnership with organisations such as the Arts Council, Heritage Lottery as well as projects for Dorset Council.

10.2 Wherever possible, and in accordance with Financial Regulations, local companies and trades would be used for the works with the Town Council acting as the main contractor to Dorset Council in line with procurement procedures to deliver improvement works.

## 11. Proposed sequencing for works

- Taking down of the North Linney's (subject to the necessary consents)
- Roof repairs to the Indoor market
- Re-roofing and external cladding to the Bull Ring
- Re-cladding the walls of the indoor market including the Bull Ring
- Full measured survey of the site and buildings
- Planning application for the South Linney's
- Internal improvements to the interior of the indoor market (possible insulation and cladding, led lighting)
- Bull Ring to turn into a visitor exhibition space and tourism Centre with links to the ambassador team with heritage panels showing history of the market
- Create workshops within the South Linney's
- Re-roof the indoor market
- Look to redesign the covered market area
- Works to include repainting walls, railings gates

## 12. Estimated Costs

12.1 To clad the exterior of both the main indoor market and Bull Ring to all elevations except the front elevation that should be vertical boarding giving it a more rural look that in turn will match the workshops proposed for the South Linney's at a cost of £47,260.00 + Vat.

12.2 To replace 32 skylight rooflight panels and 20no damaged sheets £18,880.00 + Vat.

12.3 Total works £66,000 + Vat to be funded £35,000 from Market Panel and £35,000 from Dorchester Town Council = £70,000 + Vat, this to include £4,000 contingency.

13. Recommendation

13.1 It is recommended that the Markets Panel supports this proposal and recommends the funding arrangement to the Dorset and Town Councils.

Daryl Chambers  
Markets Officer

## Dorchester Markets Joint Panel

3 June 2026

### Finance Update 2026-2027 to end of May 2026

#### Overview

Trading for the Wednesday Market, Car Boot Sale, and Cornhill Market in April and May 2026 shows a mixed financial position. While income is broadly in line with the 2025-2026 financial year, a significant net loss on the Wednesday Market is driven up by annual upfront costs (business rates) and delayed labour invoicing.

#### Wednesday Market – April to May

	2025-2026	2026-2027
Income	£13,186	£13,592
Expenditure	£8,790	£17,909
Less Ensors 20%	£879	£0
<b>Net Profit</b>	<b>£3,517</b>	<b>-£4,317</b>

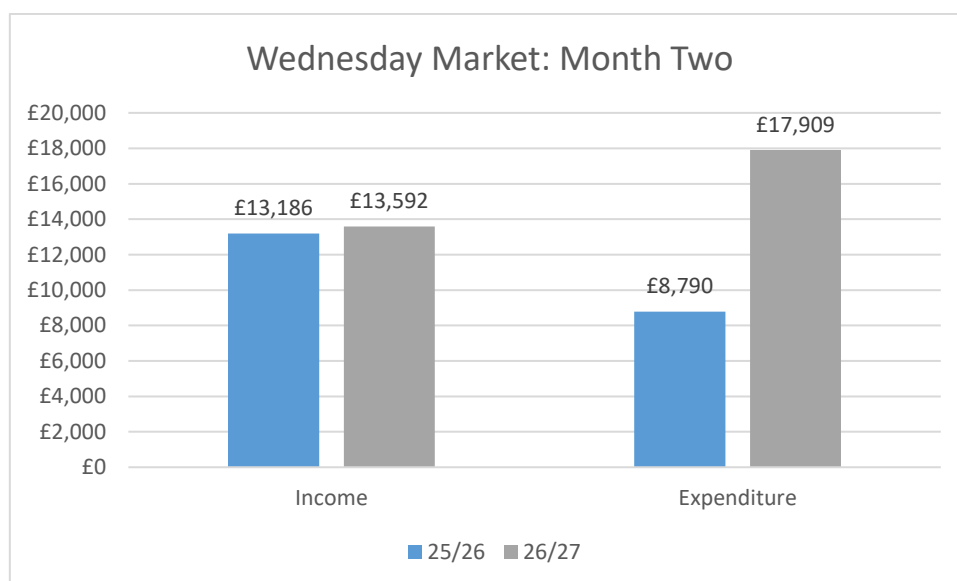


Figure One: Wednesday Market, year on year income and expenditure.

#### Notes:

- Income from 27<sup>th</sup> May not included.
- 2026/27 Expenditure includes full year business rates £9,898.
- Labour costs to be invoiced for May 2026, estimated £900

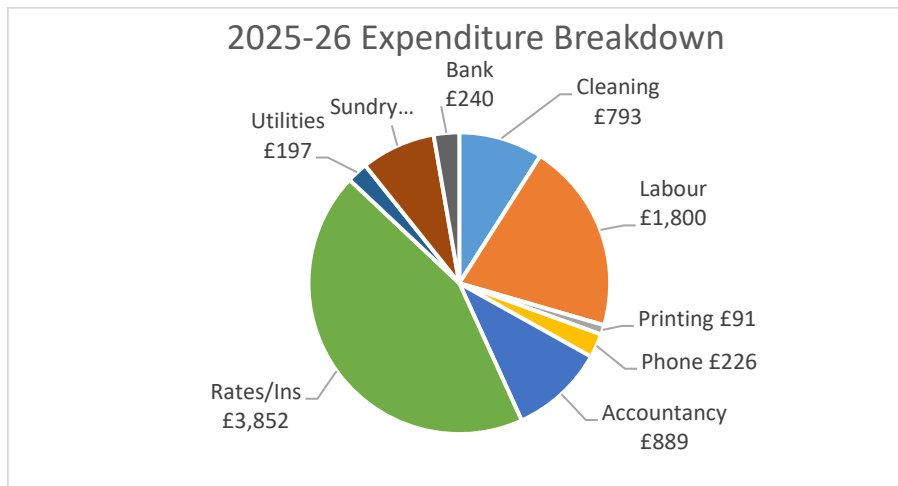


Figure Two: 2025-2026 Month Two Expenditure Breakdown

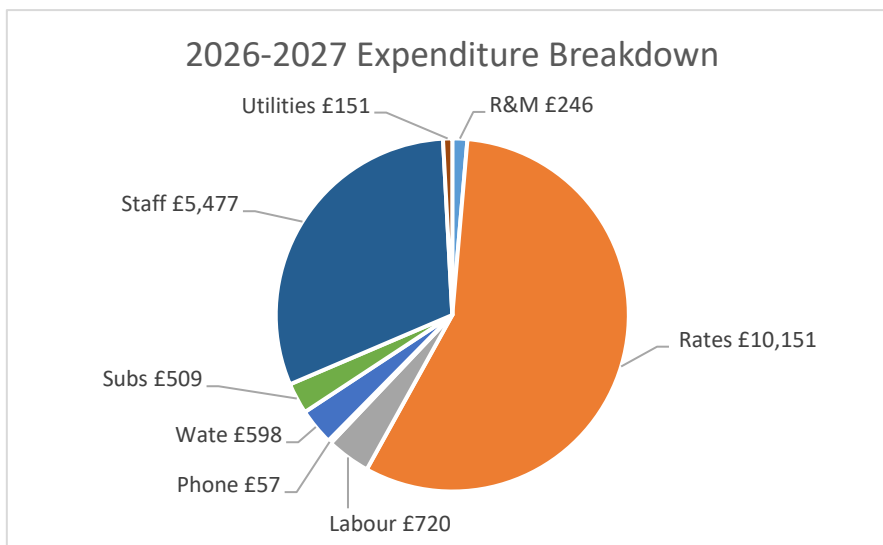


Figure Three: 2026-2027 Month Two Expenditure Breakdown

**Summary:** the Wednesday Market is currently reporting a loss of £4,317 for the first two months of the financial year, largely due to upfront annual charges. Underlying trading income is stable.

**Sunday Car Boot Sale**

	2025-2026	2026-2027
Income	£6,423	£5,762
Expenditure	£1,200	£722
<b>Net Profit</b>	<b>£5,223</b>	<b>£5,040</b>

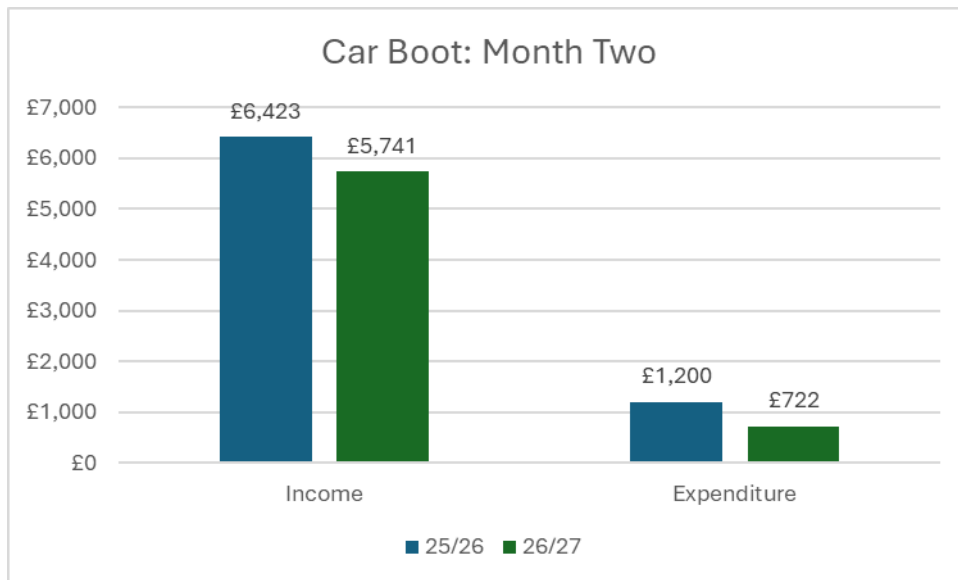


Figure Four: Sunday Car Boot Year on Year Income and Expenditure Comparison.

**Notes:**

- Excludes takings 24/5 and 31/5.
- Labour costs for May 2026 to be invoiced, estimated £900.

**Summary:** The Sunday Car Boot Sale continues to generate a surplus, despite missing late-May income and pending labour invoices.

**Cornhill Market**

	<b>26/27 Budget</b>	<b>Month Two Profile</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<b>Income</b>	£12,987	£2,165	£1,358	-£807

**Summary:** Cornhill Market income for April-May is below budget by £807. No comparative figures from 2025-2026 are currently available.

**R&M Reserve**

At the January 2026 Markets Panel meeting a reserve balance of £93,684 was projected as at January 2026.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That members of the Dorchester Markets Joint Panel note the current financial position as at the end of May 2026, and approve continued monitoring of the following:

1. **Wednesday Market** – The net loss of £4,317 is largely attributable to the upfront annual business rates charge (£9,898). Members are asked to note that this position is expected to improve over the full financial year.

2. **Sunday Car Boot Sale** – The market remains in surplus (£5,040). Members are asked to note that late-May income (24 and 31 May) and pending May labour costs (£900) are yet to be reflected.
  
3. **Cornhill Market** – Income to end May (£1,358) is £807 below the budgeted month-two profile (£2,165). Members are asked to note the shortfall and agree that performance be reviewed at the next panel meeting.

Nigel Hayes  
RFO  
Dorchester Town Council