



Dorchester News

Dorchester Town Council
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Thomas Hardy Victorian Fair

Dorchester's second Thomas Hardy Victorian Fair, which will celebrate the 180th birthday of one of our most famous residents, takes place on Sunday 7 June, 11.00am - 4.00pm along the High Street.

The fair will be light hearted and fun and there will be a Victorian costume competition for businesses, adults and children.

If you have an idea for an activity or can volunteer for a few hours, please get in touch with Steve Newman at s.newman@dorchester-tc.gov.uk



Last year the Town Beadle led the Council up to Top o' Town to lay a wreath at Thomas Hardy's statue.

Town Centre Improvements

Works start this year on the improvement of the Cornhill, the area around the town pump.

With Dorset Council the Town Council has appointed Fera Urbanism to lead a process of public engagement this Spring, which will lead to the development of a fresh look for the space.

This is the latest project to improve the look of the town centre and The Walks, the most recent being the introduction of new pedestrian wayfinding signage, part funded from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.



Visit our website at www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk

Dorchester gets ready for Spinning the Moon

Tickets are now on sale for Dorchester's record-breaking seventh community play, Spinning the Moon, which takes place from 6 - 18 April at Thomas Hardy School.

With a cast of 150, supported by a full musical team and backstage crew, plus volunteers working on everything from costumes and set design through to fundraising and promotions the play has drawn widely on the skills of the community. Tickets at www.dorchesterarts.org.uk.



Flying the Trans Flag

The Council will again fly a flag on 31 March in support of the area's Transgender community.

Local resident Tyler commented 'Seeing the Trans flag flying in Dorchester makes me feel we can talk about it now, that I'm accepted and that other people know that I exist. I feel like I'm not alone'.



Council Meetings and Annual Town Meeting

The Council's Annual Town Meeting takes place following the Council meeting on Monday 23rd March.

Details for this meeting and the full calendar of Council meetings are available at www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk. Residents are welcome at all Council and Committee meetings and may speak with the permission of the Chairman on any item on the agenda.

Keep up to date with what's on in the town: listen to your volunteer run, not for profit, community radio station from Dorchester, covering central-southern Dorset. Online at Keep106.com



How do you heat a large old building?

Most of the town's residents will know the Corn Exchange and Town Hall; you may have been to a Dorchester Arts event, watched a band or played Bingo; you may be one of the 9,500 who saw the Moon there last July; or regularly play bridge, dance leroc, do pilates or taekwondo, or even been married there.

As a historic listed building it is both hard to adapt and, with its large rooms, uninsulated open roof spaces and single glazed leaded windows, is inefficient to heat. We have already introduced LED bulbs across the site and we are improving insulation where possible.

A key climate priority is to find a different way to heat the site. Our gas boilers produce 60 tonnes of CO2 a year, but are at the end of their life, which gives us a chance to look at different options to heat the building.



Town Council acts on Climate Emergency

The first decision taken by the newly elected Council in May 2019 was to declare a climate emergency, aiming for its activities to be carbon neutral by 2030.

The Council had already started to reduce its carbon footprint; adding a borehole in the Borough Gardens; buying its first electric vehicle and battery powered equipment; charging these from solar panels on the Council's Louds Mill depot roof.

Our Declaration commits the Council to a systematic plan to reduce its carbon footprint and we have now drafted a Climate Emergency Preliminary Response (see our website) which starts to look at how the Council operates its services, how it works with its community partners and how it can support residents, workers and visitors to reduce the collective impact that Dorchester has on the environment.

A plan is in place to move away from the use of fossil fuels (gas, oil, petrol, some of our electricity) in our buildings,

our parks, green spaces and cemeteries and to replace our fleet of vehicles and equipment as greener alternatives become available.

We will also be talking to local community partners (Youth organisations, Sports Clubs, Cultural organisations) about how we might help them to reduce the carbon footprint of their buildings and operations.

Much of the commitment to drive change has come directly from the community itself and we are looking for ways to help groups share their message with you and with businesses and public sector partners (Schools, Hospitals and other Councils) to enable a collective response to the challenge we face.



Our Grounds Team are using new electric vehicles and equipment as we switch across from diesel and petrol

Visit our website at www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk

Council Tax to rise by 2% from April 2020

The Town Council share of the Council Tax will rise by 2% in April, a Band D charge of £196.64, up £3.86 on last year, raising £1.5 Million from the town's local taxpayers.

In setting the budget for 2020/21 Councillors considered a number of specific issues, including:

- £125,000 to deliver projects to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council and its community partners
- £100,000 to be spent to replace the Municipal Buildings ageing gas boiler system with a greener solution

The increase comes as the Town Council waits for a review of discretionary services currently being undertaken by the new Dorset Council. The Town Council has prepared its budget in anticipation that this will result in reduced provision of locally important discretionary services such as public toilets, TICs, support for local arts, museums and community organisations and keeping public areas tidy.

The budget also allows for a number of new projects including the refurbishment of the Cornhill area around the Town Pump in South Street, work on a new Tourism strategy with a heritage focus and the replacement of play equipment at the Centenary Field at Holmead, Poundbury.

A copy of the full budget can be found on our [website](#).

Council honours Trevor

A familiar face returned to the Town Hall just before Christmas as the Council conferred Trevor Jones OBE with the title of honorary citizen in recognition of his 43 years of unbroken service as a town councillor before standing down in May 2019.

During that time Trevor served as Mayor three times, as well as Mayor's Consort to wife Stella on another three occasions.

He also gave long service on Dorset County Council, West Dorset District Council, plus a host of other public bodies, in total clocking up well over 100 years of combined service.



Council plans for the next four years

Since its election in May 2019 the Council has been reviewing and writing its new Corporate Plan, which identifies its priorities for its term of office to 2024. In doing so the Council has considered what it can practically hope to achieve over that time frame and has excluded those things over which it cannot exert influence.

The Council has identified its priorities as follows:

Affordable Housing - to bring forward genuinely affordable housing for the town's workers and objecting to the Dorset Council when developers ignore this need

Community, Culture, Health and Wellbeing - developing our knowledge of our community's needs, particularly the vulnerable; looking after and improving the Council's parks, open spaces and buildings, in particular the Municipal Buildings (Corn Exchange); helping community partners to improve their infrastructure

The Environment - responding to the Climate Emergency; also focusing on making the town centre an attractive place to spend time

Local Economy, Transport and Parking - developing a better knowledge of how our economy works and can be strengthened, in particular Tourism through Heritage. Also working with Dorset Council to agree and implement a transport and parking strategy that resolves the competing demands of residents, workers and visitors

Future Growth of Dorchester - developing our response to the pressure for new housing development emerging through the Dorset Council Local Plan

Governance and Administration - making sure the way we operate remains relevant to the needs of the town

If you are part of a group that would like to discuss any of the above issues in more detail please contact us at enquiries@dorchester-tc.gov.uk and we will arrange to meet with you.

Councillor Surgeries and Contact Details

Ward councillors for the Town Council and the Dorset Council are available at Dorchester Library on the first Saturday of each month between 10.00am - Noon to help resolve any issues you might have. E-mail and phone contacts for all councillors are available on our [website](#).



Visit our website at www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk

Dorchester Science Festival

Our second family science day takes place at the Corn Exchange, 1.00pm - 5.00pm on Sunday 15 March.

Hosted by members of our local science community, your family (suitable for age 4+) can try all sorts of investigations – use virtual reality to see the latest research in crowd perception, discover the invisible world of microbes, explore physics through music – playing a vegetable piano, and much more.

This year also sees a host of brilliant activities run by partners including Thomas Hardy School, Dorchester Library and Waterstones.

For the full programme and updates check out www.facebook.com/DorchesterScienceFestival. Entry is free but you will need to collect tickets in advance at the TIC in Dorchester Library.

Celebrate Earth Day

Plastic Free Dorchester celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day on Saturday 25 April, 11.00am - 4.00pm at Woodlands Crescent, Poundbury.

The day is about inspiring, sharing ideas and showcasing some of the environmental organisations that people can get involved in to make a difference.

You can handle exotic bugs, learn bush-craft skills, hear from some inspiring speakers, and enjoy some delicious food. The UK's most environmentally friendly junk percussionists, Weapons of Sound, will be on hand with some great musical entertainment.

This family friendly event is free to attend, so please go along and be part of the conversation on the environment and climate change.

A Tourism Strategy for Dorchester

With the imminent reopening of the Dorset County Museum, and initially focusing on promoting the wealth of heritage assets in the town, the Council has now commenced work on a plan to bring more visitors to the town.

We are already meeting a wide range of groups with an interest in developing Dorchester's tourism offer. For more information see the [What's New](#) part of our [website](#) or contact our project manager T.Hedger@dorchester-tc.gov.uk.

Visit our website at www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk

Town Events April - June 2020

Sunday 15 March - Dorchester Science Festival
1.00pm, Corn Exchange

Saturday 18 April - Diverse Dorset
11.00am, Borough Gardens

Saturday 25 April - World Tai Chi Day
9.30am, Borough Gardens

Saturday 25 April - Earth Day
11.00am, Woodlands Crescent

Friday 8 May - VE-Day Commemoration
11.00am, Borough Gardens

Saturday 16 May - Health & Wellbeing Picnic
11.00am, Borough Gardens

Saturday 23 May - Street in the Park
2.00pm, Borough Gardens

Sunday 24 May - Durnovaria Silver Band
2.30pm, Borough Gardens

Sunday 31 May - MIND Dorset Mad for Animals
Noon, Borough Gardens

Sunday 7 June - Thomas Hardy Victorian Fair
1.00pm, High West Street

Sunday 14 June - Weldmar Cycle Challenge
All day, Borough Gardens

Saturday 27 June - Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Family Day
Noon, Borough Gardens

Saturday 27 June - Beefest
11.00am The Great Field

Sunday 28 June - Durnovaria Silver Band
2.30pm, Borough Gardens

To keep up to date with programme changes see notice boards in the Borough Gardens and our website.

Maumbury Rings Summer Theatre

Sunday 21 June 7.00pm - MacBeth
performed by The Handlebards

Tuesday 23 June time tbc - Mr Stink
performed by Heartbreak Productions

Tuesday 21 July 7.30pm - King Lear
performed by Miracle Theatre

Sunday 16 August 5.00pm - Alice in Wonderland
performed by Boxtree Productions

All performances are outdoors. Details and tickets at www.dorchesterarts.org.uk, Box office 01305 266926

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