



Dorchester Town Council

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

For information about this agenda contact Adrian Stuart
a.stuart@dorchester-tc.gov.uk

10 March 2020

Agenda for the meeting of the **Policy Committee** which will be held in the **Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, Dorchester** on **Monday 16 March** at **7.00pm**.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

Public Speaking at the Meeting

The Chairman has discretion to allow members of the public to speak at the meeting. If you wish to speak please ask the Chairman before the meeting starts. We ask speakers to confine their comments to the matter in hand and to be as brief as is reasonably possible.

Member Code of Conduct: Declaration of Interests

Members are reminded that it is their responsibility to disclose pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests where appropriate. A Member who declares a pecuniary interest must leave the room unless a suitable dispensation has been granted. A Member who declares a non-pecuniary interest may take part in the meeting and vote.

Membership of the Committee

Mayor R. Biggs and Councillors B. Armstrong-Marshall, A. Chisholm, T. Harries, F. Hogwood, S. Hosford (Chairman) and G. Jones.

1. Apologies, Declarations of Interest & Signing of Minutes
To sign Minutes of the meeting of 20 January 2020, adopted by Council on 27 January 2020.
2. Financial Update at 29 February 2020 A
3. Climate Emergency Update B
4. Council Calendar and Future Annual Town Meetings C
5. To **RESOLVE**
"That in view of the fact that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the following matters the public and representatives of the press be excluded from this meeting during their discussion".
6. Support for Keep106 D

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL
POLICY COMMITTEE – 16 MARCH 2020
FINANCE REPORT AT 29 FEBRUARY 2020

1. Financial Position

- Month 11 spend (Appendix 1) £16k below profile – full year likely to be £20 - £30k below budget (which will be transferred to Corporate Projects Reserve)
 - General savings, plus £10k saving on elections
 - Offset by Outdoor staff sickness (£11k) and poor Municipal Buildings (£9k) and Cemetery incomes (£9k)

- Cash Position

	£000	
Lloyds Bank	254	Nil interest
Payden Global	1,000	c. 1.00% return
National Savings and Investments	710	0.70% interest
Total Cash	1,964	(31 Dec £2,042k)

- Debt over 30 days = £946, 1 debtor (31 Dec £1,049, 3 debtors)
- Payments list 1 January – 29 February 2020 on website. Supporting vouchers can be inspected during normal office hours. **RECOMMENDED** that the Payments list, totalling £208,283,13 is approved

2. Internal Audit

- 2nd Audit report plus officer comments at Appendix 2.
- **RECOMMENDED** that Audit report and officer comments are noted
- **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that in regard to the Strategic and Operational Risk Register considered at Policy Committee on 18 November 2019, the amended high level strategic and operations risks and the registers as a whole be approved

3. Corporate Plan Update

- Update on legacy projects from 2015 plan at Appendix 3
- Headline aims for 2019 plan included in Spring newsletter for consultation
- Developing detail to explain Headline aims in terms of possible tasks

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

MANAGEMENT REPORT AT 29 FEBRUARY 2020

By Spend Type	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Staff	753	692	672	-19
Capital Financing	44	44	44	-0
Other Payments	525	448	439	-9
To Specific Reserves	247	247	247	0
Income	-180	-177	-165	12
Net Budget	1,389	1,254	1,238	-16

By Service	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Allotments	-6	-6	-6	-0
Parks & Open Spaces	160	123	118	-5
Cemeteries	-15	-13	-6	7
Corp. & Dem. Manage.	39	33	32	-2
Cultural & Twinning	38	33	35	2
Municipal Buildings	263	258	268	10
Other Services	95	72	58	-14
Office Team	381	353	338	-15
Outdoor Services	435	401	401	1
Net Budget	1,389	1,254	1,238	-16

Earmarked Reserves with budgeted Expenditure In Year	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Parks Premises	0	0	2	2
Municipal Buildings	6	6	6	0
Vehicles and Equipment	18	18	18	0
Cemeteries	17	17	14	-3
Walks, Trees & Public Realm	20	20	20	0
Art & Cultural	16	16	9	-7
Heritage Project Manager	7	6	7	1
Corporate Projects	10	10	18	8
Net Budget	94	93	94	1

Darkin Miller Chartered Accountants
2019/20 INTERNAL AUDIT OF DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL - FINAL REPORT VISIT 2 OF 3: 13th FEBRUARY 2020
Appendix 1 – Recommendations and Action Plan

Recommendation number	Detail	Pr	Management Response	Resp Off	Due Date
3.2 – Unsigned minutes to be signed	The minutes of the Council meeting of 23 July 2019 are unsigned, although they are noted as having been approved and signed at the following meeting of 30 September 2019. I recommend that all minutes are signed at the next meeting of the council or committee, and that they are then placed on the minutes file. This will ensure that a complete, approved record of the council's business is held.	L	Accepted	AS	28 Feb 20
3.3 – Error in minute reference	Minute 15 of the Policy Committee of 18 November 2019 refers in error to the previous minutes of 17 September 2019 as 16 September 2019. I recommend that the error is amended at the next meeting of the Committee.	L	Accepted	AS	28 Feb 20
3.4 – Minuting of approval of Risk Registers by Council	I checked to see that the minutes record the Council carrying out an annual risk assessment. I found that the Council's Policy Committee reviewed the Strategic, Operational and Opportunity Risk Registers at its meeting on 18/11/19, but that the Council did not specifically minute its approval of the registers (as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015) at the meeting on 25/11/19 when those minutes were considered. I recommend that Council minutes its approval of the Risk Registers at its meeting in March 2020.	L	Accepted	AS	28 Feb 20
5.1 – Discounted invoicing and debt recovery	I checked to see that all income due to the Council is collected. I found that there is £634.14 of older debt (120 days+) and £300 of period 2 debt (60 days+), the majority of which is related to one regular hirer. The hirer has been on a payment plan for over a year but has fallen behind. In an attempt to recover the outstanding monies, the Council agreed to increase the hirer's regular discount so that more of the regular payment went to repay the older debt, but this process will lead to differences in the Council's and hirer's accounts, and could lead to issues with HMRC disclosures. I recommend that the related invoices are amended so that the normal hire charge is charged, but that the Council write off a percentage of the related debt. This will ensure that proper books and records are being kept.	H	Members have monitored the position at Policy Cttee. Recommendation is noted and will be considered against our priority, being to recover o/s debt.	AS/ NH	31 Mar 20
5.2 – Hanging baskets invoicing	The other older debtor relates to a hanging basket customer. The Council provides a set of hanging baskets to BID customers in an arrangement with the BID, with any additional baskets being invoiced directly to the customer. However, as the customer is a BID one, the BID prefer to chase the debts themselves. Delays in dealing with this increase the likelihood that the customer will not pay the debt (so long after service). I recommend that the BID is invoiced for all standard and additional hanging baskets	M	Noted. Only 1 debtor, now cleared. Will agree a way forward with DBiD which delivers a service that meets our shared needs.	AS/ NH	31 Mar 20

	in future, so that the debt management arrangements are clear, and that the Council receives all income due.				
5.3 – Memorial applications forms	<p>I checked to see that income is properly recorded and promptly banked. I noted that one of the memorial samples was on an old form (which contains less information), and one on a new form (which has no space for the date to be noted). The Burials Administrator noted that memorial applications will not be accepted on the old form from 01/04/20, and she has also made a note to include a date box in the new form in order to ensure that the audit trail is complete.</p> <p>I recommend that both actions take place as soon as possible.</p>	L	Agreed	JH	28 Feb 20
7.1 – Signed contracts of employment	<p>I checked to see that all new employees this year have signed contracts of employment with clear terms and conditions. There were three starters on the sample payroll month selected. Contracts were on file for all 3, but only 1 had been signed. 1 employee had signed an appointment letter and list of core duties (which contained key Ts and Cs). The third employee had not signed anything. At the date of the second audit visit, 1 of the 2 unsigned contracts had been signed, and on the other, the staff member concerned had printed their name (there was no space to sign).</p> <p>I recommend that signed contracts of employment are held for all staff in order to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear, and that the contract signature page is amended to ensure that a signature is required.</p>	L	I am content that the documents we hold, being a signed job description linked to the employment contract, constitute a contract. We will review paperwork for new contracts	AS/S N	28 Feb 20

ISSUES OUTSTANDING FROM CORPORATE PLAN 2015 – 2019

Task	Latest Position
Explore opportunities to improve Market operations	Informal Member Briefing to be held in April to explore long term strategy for Markets
Develop & implement (Heritage) Tourism Strategy	Business engagement meetings, and Governance and Structures review concluding; current marketing review and research and data reviews complete. Heritage and Tourism Audit, Vision and Branding exercise in development, Presentation to Dorchester Chamber (11.2.20), then Dorchester BID (14.4.20)
Influence delivery of Traffic/Parking strategy	Currently support for a project has not been confirmed by Dorset Council
Develop Trinity St tennis courts with a Hsg CLT	Awaiting Development Control decision
Support delivery of Great Field	Design of Playground nearing completion Planting programme commenced
Support delivery of improved Arts offer in town	Maltings Arts terminated Inhouse discussion re Arts options commenced
Municipal Buildings (Roof, Lift, Heating)	Incorporated into Arts discussions
Refurbish Cornhill (Town PumpP public realm)	Project Mgr appointed and preliminary officer meetings held
Refurbish South Gate public realm	Not started – Cornhill first
Respond to Local Plan (North Dorchester)	Awaiting next DC Local Plan proposal Member workshop to be scheduled

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**POLICY COMMITTEE – 16 MARCH 2020****CLIMATE EMERGENCY – PROJECTS UPDATE****Municipal Buildings**

1. Crickmay Stark and Martin Thomas Associates have been appointed to undertake architectural and M&E work at the building. This involves close working with several potential suppliers of a biomass heating system and associated fuel.
2. Officers have undertaken third and fourth visits to biomass sites, have met with a local Housing provider and will arrange further opportunities, based on discussions with suppliers, to pick up valuable information on what needs to be in place for biomass to work effectively on the site. Of the five contacts we have made to date four were positive and one negative. Thus far no issues have been identified that cannot be resolved provided the Council is willing to be flexible; the biggest issues are likely to be planning permission and timescale.
3. Separate discussions are taking place regarding the potential to extend the scheme to replace fossil fuel based heating in other properties close to the building, which may increase the upfront capital cost while reducing the payback period for any investment.

Weymouth Avenue Cemetery South Chapel

4. The chapel consumes 12,000 kwh of electricity (3.5t of CO₂) each year on a heating system which aims to mitigate the worst impacts of the weather on the building. The Council is considering future use of the building but, irrespective of this, potential exists to place solar panels on the south face of the building, powering more energy efficient heaters.
5. Advice is being sought from a local volunteer regarding the best option to capture solar energy, while the Council will take separate advice on the best electric based heating system. If a project does go ahead officers will also explore options to sell surplus energy generated off this site, Louds Mill Depot, and any other surplus generating site to the local market.

Working with Community Partners - Weymouth Avenue Recreation Pavilion

6. The Pavilion was built in 2001 and significantly reconfigured in 2018 to provide space for the Boxing Club. It has a gas boiler for hot water and electric heating and lighting. Since the Cricket Club took on the facility in 2017 the main community room has enjoyed far greater use, but this has resulted in substantially higher heating bills, and by default, carbon footprint.
7. We have been in regular discussions with the Cricket Club on this issue and have already supported some minor changes (insulation and LED) that have had a positive impact, but the key issue of heating the building still remains. The Club contacted us earlier this year advising that they were looking at increasing their use of gas to heat the building as this would be cheaper than using electricity.
8. This coincided with receipt of some information regarding the potential to use ground source heat (GSH) from public parks to heat buildings. Accepting the need to provide an alternative to gas a short specification was submitted to a Renewable Energy brokerage website, which generated interest from two GSH specialist suppliers. This has led to the commissioning of first stage technical and tender document work at a cost below £1,000, to produce an Invitation to Tender for the delivery of a suitable scheme.

9. The basics of the scheme are

- Liquid is pumped through a loop of flexible pipes buried at a depth of 1m across a wide area of the Recreation Ground
- The heat from the liquid is “exchanged” to heat up a boiler in the Groundsman’s Store
- Hot water from the boiler is circulated round a new wet radiator system within the building and also provides hot water for showers and sinks
- The electricity used to run the system represents around 20% of that used to heat the current night storage heaters and hot water
- There will be a net reduction in carbon footprint of the site by c. 10 tonnes of CO2 pa

10. Financially

- The scheme requires an upfront capital investment (in the region of £25-£30,000) and there is potential for a grant from Low Carbon Dorset
- It generates RHI payments from Government and also results in reduced electricity and gas bills.
- It is highly likely that the scheme will cover its costs in the medium-long term. In other words if the Council invests up front it should achieve a payback, a long term income, as well as reductions to the Cricket Clubs utility costs and the carbon footprint on site

11. It is **RECOMMENDED** that the scheme is progressed to tender stage, with a budget of £30,000 being reserved from the Climate Emergency Fund.

12. Lessons learned from the project should be available for other sites in the ownership of the Council or community partners and may also be of use for other Town Councils in similar situations. Permission for the piping has been obtained from the freeholder, with whom we will also clarify the potential for solar panels to further reduce CO2 levels.

Working with Community Partners – Grants

Dorchester Youth and Community Centre

13. Some of our community partners are already well on the way to creating strategies to reduce their carbon emissions and two are ready to implement projects.

14. Dorchester Youth and Community Centre are seeking to replace c. 150 lights (strips, bulkheads, emergency and exit, floods, downs and sky lights) across their Lubbecke Way premises, the total cost being £7,500 including VAT. This initiative is taking place before a more comprehensive strategy is being developed. It is estimated that electricity costs will fall by c. £2,000 a year, roughly 4 t.CO2.

15. As a relatively newly created body they have limited reserves available, so are applying to a number of grant giving bodies. It is **RECOMMENDED** that, subject to funding being required, the Town Council offer a grant of £1,500.

Dorchester Municipal Charities

16. Dorchester Municipal Charities are developing a project to replace all lighting in communal areas with LEDs and to replace LED light bulbs in all residents properties, both being parts of a comprehensive Climate strategy which is under development. The Charity is well established with significant reserves, but also with ambitions to expand the number of properties it manages from its current 26.

17. A question that it would be advantageous to answer is how the Council can assist the most vulnerable members of its community, who are arguably also the least able to respond to the climate emergency, to respond to the climate emergency. On this occasion DMC are in a

position to provide staff resources to comprehensively swap over to LED bulbs to facilitate change, enabling us to learn lessons regarding a wider programme.

18. It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Town Council funds the LED light bulbs required in residents addresses, up to a maximum of £200.

Trees and working with Transition Town Dorchester

19. Nationally the drive to plant trees is becoming established as one of the practical community-led responses to the Climate Emergency. Locally the Council has already committed to a review of tree planting on its own green spaces, due later this year, and is also partnering with the Duchy of Cornwall in the development of the Great Field, with 450 heavy standard trees, 20,000 whips which will grow into hedgerows and trees, plus a further 20,000 shrubs.
20. Notwithstanding these initiatives, on its own the Council would struggle to deliver a 20% tree canopy cover for the town; 20% is seen as a realistic target for towns by the Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Committee Network, a Government sponsored body, in their report England's Urban Forests; today Dorchester has c. 13% canopy cover. Setting a tree canopy target will be considered as an issue when the Council next reviews its Biodiversity Strategy, but this should not prevent the Council from proactively working to increase the town's tree canopy in the meantime.
21. In 2019, following meetings to establish the viability of a proposed scheme, the Council's Management Committee awarded a £400 grant to Transition Town Dorchester to lead a programme of community tree planting; c. 500 trees were subsequently planted at Poundbury, to which TTD have since added another 500 with a grant of trees from the Woodland Trust. TTD are now working on developing further tree planting initiatives, both on private land and also through householders, as part of an ambition to plant 20,000 trees, one for every resident, by 2030. The key barriers are money and suitable land and there is clearly potential to work with and support TTD.
22. It is **RECOMMENDED** that £2,000 is allocated to a programme of tree planting initiatives delivered by Transition Town Dorchester, to be released as matchfunding when they are ready to proceed with specific projects related to land within the town.

Consultation

23. Our Spring newsletter highlights the Town Council's ambitions regarding the Climate Emergency and invites comments to the Climate Emergency Preliminary Response document.
24. The Town Clerk has met with representatives of Extinction Rebellion and will work with them to achieve a more detailed response. It is also intended to use the Earth Day event, which the Council is supporting, to generate feedback. The Mayor and Policy Committee Chair attended the XR Peoples Assembly in February.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**POLICY COMMITTEE – 16 MARCH 2020****COUNCIL CALENDAR 2020-21 AND FUTURE ANNUAL TOWN MEETINGS**

1. The draft calendar for next municipal year is attached at Appendix 1. Items to note are:
 - Meetings are on Monday nights unless impacted on by Bank Holidays
 - The February site visit has been moved to April
 - Dorchester Heritage Joint Committee dates fixed and included in the calendar
 - Markets Panel meetings are still subject to confirmation by the Dorset Council
 - The date for the Annual Town Meeting is subject to confirmation later in this report

Annual Town Meeting

2. The LG Act 1972 requires Council to hold an Annual Town Meeting (ATM) between specified dates each year. It is believed that the ATM was included in legislation to ensure that there was an opportunity for residents to question the actions of the governance body, Town or Parish Council or Parish Meeting at least once a year.
3. Some years ago the Town Council formalised its arrangements for public questions, both during or after its Council an Committee meetings, presenting 30 opportunities a year for resident questions in a more timely fashion than that presented by the ATM.
4. Nonetheless the legal requirement for an ATM remains. For 15+ years the Town Council has discharged its legal obligation by holding the ATM after its March Council meeting in place of Public Questions. In recent years a question has been raised whether the Council should make more effort with its ATM.
5. The Town Clerk has requested information from local Town Councils and has included their feedback at Appendix 2. All hold the ATM on a separate evening; all supplement the standard report and question requirements with other opportunities although none of these attempts appear to be particularly successful; in some cases questions are restricted to those that have been pre-submitted. Most of the additional opportunities used elsewhere are delivered by this Council in different ways, through our Community Lunches and Car Boot Grant distribution event, which are not open to the wider community.
6. To summarise
 - Our ATM meets the legislation and we offer more timely opportunities for residents to ask questions throughout the year
 - Other Councils have made attempts to adapt their ATMs into community events, with generally little impact or tangible benefit
 - The issue of our ATM may come up again this year. Members instruction regarding the way the 2021 ATM is conducted are sought

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

APPENDIX 1

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2020-21

	2020								2021				
	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
COUNCIL	18 MM 19 (Tu)		27		28		23		25		22		24 MM 25 (Tu)
POLICY	11		20		21		16		18		15 MS@ 1830		17
MANAGEMENT	4		13		14		9		11		8		10
PLANNING AND ENVIRON		1	6	3	7	5	2	7	4	1	1	6 (Tu)	4 (Tu)
MARKETS JOINT PANEL *		24							20				
HERITAGE JOINT COMMITTEE			21			20			19			20	
SITE VISITS		9 @ 9.30AM		11 @ 4.00PM								13 @ 4.00PM	
CIVIC EVENTS	VE Day Fri 8	Hardy Sun 7					Remem Sun 8				29? ATM		
<i>BANK HOLIDAYS</i>	<i>8,25</i>			<i>31</i>				<i>25/28</i>	<i>1</i>			<i>2,5</i>	<i>3,31</i>

MM Mayor Making ATM Annual Town Meeting MS Mayoral Selection Committee

Meetings will ordinarily take place at 19.00 in the Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings.

* The dates and timing of Markets Joint Panel meetings are still to be agreed with the Dorset Council

ANNUAL TOWN MEETINGS IN DORSET MARKET TOWNS

	Sep.	Contents	Attend.	Worth it?	Other comments
A	Y	Mayors speech Grant recipients invited to speak (new) Questions	V. poor No interest unless Council has upset them	Y?	Better attended historically Community groups invited to speak this year
B	Y	Mayors speech Clerks presentation (video/music) Grant recipients required to speak	Up to 60 Only those who have an issue or are already engaged with the Council	N Outdated	Good for networking but many attendees not from the town Material created used productively at other events Offer light refreshments There are better opportunities to engage – surgeries, pop ups, others events Won't be a major tool in new Engagement Strategy
C	Y	Committee Chairs speeches Chairman's speech Guest speaker (sometimes), e.g, Police, DCC, District Questions (many & varied)	20 – 30 Residents seem to prefer them to Council meetings	N Unnecessary legal requirement	No longer advertise - doesn't affect the numbers
D	Y	Annual reports from a range of organisations including Town Council Awards for community service and grants presented Open session – but to guard against being hi-jacked by single issue groups have standing orders to ensure motions are be tabled in advance.	25-50 but many of these have a reason to be there (e.g. award recipients and those giving presentations)	In part	Held in different venue to keep separate from Town Council meetings. Chairman presides, but other councillors attend on a voluntary basis and sit in audience. A 'feel good' event to celebrate the community, but no relevance in its traditional format as all council meetings have public participation time.

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**POLICY COMMITTEE – 16 MARCH 2020****SUPPORT FOR KEEP 106 IN EXCHANGE FOR TECHNICAL ADVICE AND SUPPORT**

1. The Council has supported local radio for a number of years, primarily through support for the purchase of equipment, both at Ridgway Hospital Radio and more recently during the establishment of the Keep106 community radio station.
2. Keep106 has now been operational for approaching two years, gradually building its audience and volunteer bases. Their biggest issue is reliable cash support for their operational costs and to replace equipment, with sponsorship and advertising becoming harder to deliver in a market where many community groups are fundraising; the station is also looking for regular opportunities to promote the service to end users.
3. Over the last few years Keep106 have provided both PA and radio coverage at a number of Council and town events on an ad hoc volunteer basis, allowing those who can't attend events to stay in touch with what is going on in the town.
4. Historically the Town Council has benefitted from free technical advice and repairs to hearing loops and other PA activity related to the Municipal Buildings. Often this advice comes after events where there have been issues with these systems, with caveats related to the management of the systems. The free advice has been provided by one of the lead volunteers associated with Keep106.
5. It is fair to say that operationally the Council has benefitted more through the goodwill of the radio station and its supporters, but that this has been counterbalanced from time to time by the occasional grant towards equipment; this worked well when the radio station was hospital-based, but as it has grown the lack of clarity over the relationship acts as a barrier to proper planning. Discussions resulting from a recent incident related to the PA system led to the preparation of a mutually beneficial offer, which, if acceptable to the Town Council, could result in a number of informal arrangements being formalised.
6. A fair exchange could be phrased as
 - The Council will
 - Regularly promote Keep106 through its newsletter and other channels
 - Offer a guaranteed grant of £2,500 pa for the next 3 years
 - Keep 106 will
 - Advertise events and press releases prepared by the Council
 - Provide advice and support for PA systems in the Municipal Buildings, including attendance at an agreed list of key events
 - Cover an agreed list of community events each year, providing PA as required

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk