



Dorchester Town Council

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6 May 2020

Agenda for the meeting of the **Policy Committee**, which will be held via the Zoom video conferencing platform on **Monday 11 May 2020 at 7.00pm.**

You will be able to join the meeting at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87600408704>

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 **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 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 confirm that the Chair may sign Minutes of the meeting of 16 March 2020, adopted by Council on 23 March 2020, at the next available opportunity.
2. Financial Update A
3. Response to the Covid 19 crisis. B
4. Request for delegation to accept Tender for the Ground Source Heating contract at Weymouth Avenue Recreation Ground

RECOMMENDED that authority is delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, to appoint a contractor



DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE – 11 MAY 2019

FINANCIAL UPDATE

1. Financial Year End Position 2019-20

- Revenue out-turn (Appendix1), £29,000 below budget

£000

Staff - Outdoor staff sickness offset by non-filling of Planning Clerk vacancy and pensions not taken up	-14
Savings on Elections, Office supply, Apprentice & CCTV budgets	-24
Municipal Buildings & Treasury Incomes below budget	+16
All other under/overspends	-7

- Treasury – our biggest deposit is £1.0M in the Payden Rygel Fund - having performed well for the first 11 months the fund's value fell by 2.0% from Feb 20 to Mar 20 as a result of short term liquidity issues – the Revenue Out-turn takes account of this. The fund had since recovered half (£10k) of its loss by 30 Apr 20
- Reserves @ £1,766,038 (excluding Heritage Joint Committee), £78,000 higher than Budget set in January 2020 due to the Revenue Budget underspend and some minor project delays

2. Internal Audit and Annual Governance and Accounting Return 2019-20

- Final Internal Audit report at Appendix 2. **RECOMMENDED** that Internal Audit report and the officer response is noted.
- Annual Internal Report as required by the AGAR at Appendix 3 – no action req'd
- Section 1 of the AGAR - Annual Governance Statement attached at Appendix 4
- Section 2 – Accounting Statement 2019-20 attached at Appendix 5
- **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that, noting that the Clerk, as RFO, has signed them,
 - The Council consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement
 - The Council consider and approve the Accounting Statement for 2019-20 prior to their submission for external audit by PKF Littlejohn LLP

3. CIL Income

- Payments made quarterly and totalled £44k by 31 Mar 2020 – can be used for capital projects and has been reported as part of Budget report previously
- Advice note received 28/4/20 identifying a new payment of £64k, include 1st instalments (one third of total) for Brewhouse and HMP Dorchester – if completed a further £100k will be received
- For every £10k we get, DC get £12k for Recreation purposes within West Dorset – use of this will be pursued with DC, but emphasises the need for this Council to identify a recreation-based corporate priority

4. Payments Approval

- Payments list 1 Mar – 30 Apr 2020 on website. Supporting vouchers can be provided by the Financial Controller, Nigel Hayes. **RECOMMENDED** that the payments list, totalling £275,066.99 is approved.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

APPENDIX 1

MANAGEMENT REPORT AT 31 MARCH 2020

By Spend Type	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Staff	753	753	730	-22
Capital Financing	44	44	43	-1
Other Payments	525	525	512	-13
To Specific Reserves	247	247	247	0
Income	-180	-180	-172	8
Net Budget	1,389	1,389	1,360	-29

By Service	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Allotments	-6	-6	-6	-1
Parks & Open Spaces	160	160	157	-3
Cemeteries	-15	-15	-16	-1
Corp. & Dem. Manage.	39	39	35	-4
Cultural & Twinning	38	38	49	12
Municipal Buildings	263	263	267	4
Other Services	95	95	78	-16
Office Team	381	381	366	-14
Outdoor Services	435	435	429	-6
Net Budget	1,389	1,389	1,360	-29

Earmarked Reserves with budgeted Expenditure In Year	Bud (Jan 20) £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	7	7	0
Corporate Projects - Wayfinding	10	10	18 [▼]	8
Net Budget	94	94	94	0

**Darkin Miller Chartered Accountants 2019/20 INTERNAL AUDIT OF DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL
FINAL REPORT VISIT 3 OF 3: 21st APRIL 2020 - Appendix 1 – Recommendations and Action Plan**

Rec. number	Detail	L/M H	Management Response	Resp Off	Due Date
10.1 - Adjusted errors	The following errors were adjusted in the draft annual return: 1. Training costs of £3.7k were moved from staff costs to other payments 2. A grant of £6k that partially funds a member of staff was moved from staff costs to other income. The 2018/19 comparatives were restated accordingly.	Info	Noted	NH	Done
10.2 – Year end statement for third parties	I checked to see that debtors and creditors have been properly recorded where appropriate. I found that it was possible to agree 100% of debtor balances back to supporting evidence, but only 21% of creditors. This is because the Council holds £153k of funds on behalf of third parties for which limited third party evidence is available. Whilst the funds are separately recorded on the balance sheet, the Council does not produce a year end statement for each fund to confirm the balance held. I recommend that statements are sent out to third parties at the end of each financial year confirming the balance held by the Council. This will ensure that there is clarity and agreement on the levels of funds held.	M	Agreed	NH	31/5/20
12.1 – Public rights	I checked to see that the Council was compliant with its statutory duties as regards the exercise of public rights during the summer of 2019. I confirmed that the Council had correctly calculated the public rights dates, and I checked the Council's website during the statutory period of public rights to confirm that all required information had been published. The External Auditor subsequently confirmed that, in order to pass the public rights test, a Council needed to provide a website audit trail to prove that the information had been uploaded before the public rights period started, and that it was in place for the duration. The Council does not currently have such a facility on its website. I recommend that the Council considers whether to switch to a website that provides an audit trail.	M	Int. Auditor checks of the website and dates are sufficient to spot problems with information published. The cost of changing the Council's website to provide additional evidence does not provide value for money.	AS/N H	-

Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20

Dorchester Town Council

This authority's internal auditor, acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls to be in operation during the financial year ended 31 March 2020.

The internal audit for 2019/20 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Agreed? Please choose one of the following		
	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. IF the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2018/19, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2018/19 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority has demonstrated that during summer 2019 it correctly provided for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations. SEE ADDITIONAL PAGE			✓
M. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable
			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

09/09/2019 14/09/2019 09/04/2020
11/09/2019 16/02/2020

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

Mrs R Darkin-Miller LLB(Hons) FCA BFP

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date 15/04/2020

*If the response is 'no' you must include a note to state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

Internal Auditor note on test L:

In order to test compliance with the Council's requirement for the exercise of public rights, I checked the Council's calculation of its public rights period, and checked the Council's website during the statutory public rights period to confirm that the required items had been published. I can confirm that the Council correctly calculated the period, and published the correct information on its website. The External Auditor subsequently confirmed that, in order to pass this test, a Council must be able to demonstrate via its website audit trail that all required information was uploaded the day before the public rights period commenced, and that the information remained on the website for the duration of the period. The Council's website does not have this facility. I have, therefore, assessed the test as 'not covered'.



R Darkin-Miller LLB(Hons) BFP FCA 15/04/20

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2019/20

We acknowledge as the members of:

Dorchester Town Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2020, that:

	Agreed		*Yes' means that this authority:	
	Yes	No*		
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>	
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>	
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>	
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>	
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>	
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>	
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>	
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>	
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A	<i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>
			✓	

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DORCHESTER

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2019/20 for

Dorchester Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2019 £	31 March 2020 £	
1. Balances brought forward	365,753	454,494	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	1,388,243	1,463,971	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	329,903	312,144	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	659,822	717,634	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	45,333	43,261	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	924,250	703,675	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	454,494	766,038	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	483,619	893,825	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	8,032,257	8,132,194	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	196,000	162,000	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	Yes	No	The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
		✓	N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2020 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

SIGNATURE

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

as recorded in minute reference:

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**POLICY COMMITTEE – 11 MAY 2020****PRELIMINARY RESPONSE TO THE COVID 19 CRISIS****1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. This report covers a number of non-operational issues related to the Covid 19 crisis. For information on the Council's operational response for its own service delivery during the crisis see the Management Committee agenda of 4 May 2020.

2. EARLY RELEASE OF GRANT FUNDING PAID TO ASSIST CASHFLOW

- 2.1. The Council provides financial support to a small number of partner organisations through its Revenue Budget.
- 2.2. At 21 April 2020 the Town Clerk had accelerated payments to support the cashflow of partners, as follows
- Dorchester Cricket Club - £4,000, being the full year grant
 - Keep 106FM - £2,500, being the full year grant
 - Dorchester Youth and Community Centre - £10,200 being 50% of the full year grant – the remainder will be paid following discussions with the Chief Officer
- 2.3. By agreement, rather than receive a cash grant of £8,500 a year, the Council provides the Corn Exchange for 70 performances organised by Dorchester Arts each year. As the Council has closed the Corn Exchange it is possible that DA will not be able to use all 70 hires. Should that prove to be the case the Council will pay any balance pro rata as a cash grant.

3. COMMUNITY GROUPS PROVIDING DIRECT SUPPORT DURING LOCKDOWN AND THE IMMEDIATE RECOVERY PHASE

- 3.1. A number of existing and new community groups have become established to provide direct assistance to vulnerable groups.
- 3.2. A draft policy is included at Appendix 1 to allow the Council to provide support to such groups in a timely fashion. It is **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the draft policy is adopted.
- 3.3. In order to provide timely support, prior to the adoption of a policy, the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor and 3 Committee Chairs, has already made the following sums available
- Blood Bikes - £250 – to enable the service to continue to provide essential travel services that benefit Dorchester residents
 - Age UK Dorset - £1,000 – additional incidental costs incurred by AgeUK when co-ordinating volunteers to provide services to local vulnerable people
 - Masks4All - £300 – to provide materials to allow local volunteers to create face masks for vulnerable residents and volunteers/workers

- Wyvern Savings and Loans have received a deposit of £500 to a Council bank account to assist the distribution of funds carrying out shopping exercises for residents – the future of the £500 will be decided at the end of the lockdown period

3.4. A number of officers at the Town Council have also been providing technical and practical support for initiatives being delivered by these groups.

4. SUPPORT FOR PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

4.1. Increasingly the Council has become an enabler of services, working with and supporting local community organisations to deliver a wide range of cultural and community services.

4.2. It is immediately clear that a number of the community partners with whom the Council works closely will struggle financially as a result of the crisis. Reasons include disruptions to income streams, extra costs associated with cancellations, mothballing and recommissioning services and anticipated reduced demand for/take up of services when they are re-established.

4.3. A draft policy is included at Appendix 2 to allow the Council to support partners during the recovery phase of the current crisis. It is **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the draft policy is adopted.

5. WIDER PROMOTION OF THE TOWN

5.1. At its meeting on 21 April, the Dorchester Heritage Joint Committee asked that the Town Council give consideration to some immediate social media marketing of the town's assets, with the aim of informing the community, wider public and potential visitors that the town and its visitor offer are still here and will have lots to offer once this situation is resolved

5.2. Since that meeting the Town Council has been a contributor to the launch of a new website, <https://dorchester.services>, which focuses on two immediate needs, to link residents with retailers and other service providers who are still actively trading, and to summarise the help currently available to businesses. Staff will play their part in maintaining the information on this website.

5.3. Looking to the recovery phase, there is an opportunity for the Town Council to use its established communication channels to residents, supplemented by additional social media activity, to specifically encourage residents in the town and surrounding area to return to the town centre and elsewhere within the town, in order to reduce dependence on on-line shopping and support the recovery of local businesses.

5.4. In the first instance the Town Council will look to explore with the Dorchester Chamber and Dorchester BID, the potential to develop a collective message to local residents, as well as build on initiatives such as Totally Locally (totallylocally.org/stuff/), Small Business Saturday (<https://smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com/>) and Independents day (<https://www.indieretail.uk/>).

5.5. There are currently no resources available in house to support this work. Options that the Committee may wish to explore include providing funds to a business community partner to engage a suitable co-ordinator or expanding the remit of the Heritage Tourism Project Manager.

6. BUDGETED FUNDING AND RESERVES AVAILABLE

6.1. Among the resources available to the Council to provide support are

- Revenue Budget 2020/21, which already includes contributions and grants to named partners, plus Grant and Events & Sponsorship budgets
- The underspend of £29,000 from the 2019/20 Budget plus
- The General and Corporate Projects Reserves may be called upon to support longer term initiatives
- Shared responsibility for the Dorchester Car Boot Fund - £15,000
- Non-financial resources, such as buildings, land equipment and staff resources

6.2. These resources will, however, also be required to play a part in delivering the Council's Corporate Plan when the crisis is over, so it is important that the support the Council provides is consistent with its capacity to deliver its emerging longer term objectives.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

RESPONSE TO THE COVID 19 CRISIS

SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS PROVIDING ASSISTANCE DURING THE LOCKDOWN AND IMMEDIATE RECOVERY PERIOD

- 1.1. The Council wishes to support existing and new community groups that are responding to the crisis by providing support to local residents.
- 1.2. The Council will provide assistance to groups
 - Providing direct support to Dorchester residents
 - To meet the additional costs associated with the support provided, over and above normal operating costs OR to ensure that those groups have sufficient funds to remain operational during lockdown and the immediate recovery period
 - So that no group/volunteer should be out of pocket in helping fellow residents
- 1.3. At the end of the lockdown period the Council's officers will prepare a list of groups who have played a role in supporting the community and Members will consider whether they wish to make any additional award
- 1.4. Officers and Members will make the Town Clerk aware of potential opportunities to provide support; the Town Clerk will record details of the opportunity in a suitable form and make recommendations based on their contact with the Group.
- 1.5. **EITHER**

In order to respond to the need for rapid decision making the Council delegates to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor and 3 Committee Chairs, the power to allocate up to £1,000 to organisations. Awards over £1,000 must receive prior approval of the Policy Committee

OR

The Town Clerk will advise all Members of all proposed grants and invite comments Members comments within three days. The Clerk will make a grant award based on the comments, recording the outcome for report to a subsequent meeting of the Policy Committee

RESPONSE TO THE COVID 19 CRISIS

SUPPORT FOR PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

- 1.1. The Council is minded to provide support to partner organisations, should it be requested, whose financial operations have been impacted by the C19 outbreak, and who cannot fully recommence service delivery without assistance from the Town Council.
- 1.2. Partner organisations will have
 - Previously worked with the Council to deliver its corporate aims
 - Previously provided services at a community level within Dorchester
 - A recognised organisational structure; in particular they will not be based around the needs of, or be largely controlled by, an individual
- 1.3. The Council will only provide assistance if there is a proven need. To prove need the partner organisation must have first:
 - Conducted its affairs properly in the run up to and during the lockdown period
 - Taken all opportunities of assistance offered by Government and other agencies
 - Worked proactively with its supporters and beneficiaries to have reduced its financial issues
- 1.4. Assistance may be a combination of the following:
 - Cash support – this might be by way of a short or longer term loan or a direct grant
 - Free use of Property – this might be a rent holiday to an existing tenant or hirer, or the opportunity of free events and support on Council premises and land
 - Promotional support, using the Council’s newsletters or other means of communication
 - Support for another organisation to whom the partner is indebted, or who might be able to provide assistance to the partner
- 1.5. Decisions to provide support will be made by the Council’s Policy Committee, who may use all Budgets and Reserves of the Council in its response.