DORCHESTER NEWS

WINTER 2026

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"The ten hours' light is abating,
And a late bird wings across,
Where the pines, like waltzers waiting,
Give their black heads a toss."

From *At Day Close in November*
by Thomas Hardy

Celebrating a Sensational Summer!

As the evenings draw in and thoughts begin to turn towards cosier nights and the countdown to Christmas, it's easy to forget just how much summer sunshine Dorchester enjoyed only a few months ago. As autumn fully takes hold, it's worth looking back at a season that brought residents and visitors together for a wide range of events showcasing the very best of Dorchester's character and vibrancy.

The Great Field in Poundbury hosted the Dorchester Kite Festival, the annual Dorset Food & Arts Festival and, for the first time, a visit by Circus Cortex, featuring an international cast of acrobats, entertainers and aerial performers.

The Dorchester Kite Festival was the first such event in the town, eventually taking place at the end of July after being postponed from its original date due to poor weather. It was worth the wait: the day drew a crowd of several thousand people from in and around the town to enjoy giant display kites, stunt-flying demonstrations, arts and craft activities, and the unveiling of the brand-new Big Dorchester Kite. The Dorset Food & Arts Festival followed in August, bringing its usual mix of local produce, makers and entertainment to the Great Field.

Meanwhile, Borough Gardens hosted the ever-popular Dorchester Cider Festival, the Love Parks family fun day, the One World multi-cultural festival - a vibrant celebration of the many cultures that call Dorchester home - and the Anonymous youth festival, now in its 16th year, giving a platform to the creativity and talent of our young people.

Elsewhere in town at the very end of the spring, the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee organised the Thomas Hardy Victorian Street Fair and Heritage Open Day, offering a chance to celebrate the rich history that shapes Dorchester's identity today. The Street Fair featured traditional entertainment all along South Street and Brewery Square, with performances by many local theatrical and music groups and traditional rural crafts.

Altogether, it was a summer that captured everything that makes Dorchester special: a town proud of its history, enriched by its many cultures, and full of creativity and talent, young and old. We're now looking forward to 2027 and another busy year of entertainment.

Photos: Josh Keep & Dorsetbays

Borough Gardens Survey

From the events listed above to relaxed Sundays listening to big band music at the bandstand, the Borough Gardens has been at the heart of Dorchester life for many in 2026, and we want to make sure it keeps getting better.

Whether you visit daily or just for special occasions, we'd love to hear about your experience. A short survey can be found at the link or QR code found on the left, and all feedback received will be used to inform our decisions around looking after the gardens and hosting events there in the future.

tinyurl.com/boroughgardenssurvey

A Friendship Renewed: Dorchester & Bayeux

Dorchester's twinning relationship with Bayeux, a friendship dating back to 1959, but with roots in the town's liberation in 1944, continues to go from strength to strength.

In September, the Mayor and Mayoress of Dorchester, Councillor Les Fry BEM and Mrs Julie Fry BEM, travelled to Bayeux with the Town Clerk, Charmaine Denny and Councillor Gareth Jones, the Chair of the Dorchester Bayeux Society. During the visit, they met with the Mayor of Bayeux and two deputies to discuss ways of strengthening the ties between the two towns, with a particular focus on collaboration between their respective sporting societies. The visit also included a poignant moment at the British Cemetery in Bayeux, where Cllr Les Fry laid a wreath in tribute to the soldiers of the Dorset Regiment who are buried there.

The friendship continued closer to home a few weeks later, when the same delegation attended the unveiling of a sign at Bayeux Court in October, detailing the history of the twinning between the two towns. They were joined by Councillors Stella Jones and Mollie Rennie, along with representatives of Magna Housing, before residents welcomed all those present in for tea, coffee and cake in the communal space.

Together, the two visits offered a fitting reminder of the enduring bond between Dorchester and Bayeux, and a hopeful look ahead to how that friendship will continue to grow.

Have Your Cause Celebrated in Flowers

Speaking of Bayeux, its crest was chosen as this year's Borough Gardens carpet bedding display, celebrating the town's long-standing twinning link.

Every summer, the display honours a good cause close to Dorchester's heart, with a design crafted entirely from flowers. The Outdoor Services Team is now planning next year's, and local groups, clubs and societies with a significant anniversary, strong Dorchester connection or national celebration to mark are invited to submit a proposal. If chosen, you'll be asked to supply a logo or crest for the team to bring to life as a flower bed next summer.

Fancy seeing your cause in bloom? Applications should be submitted by **Friday 18nd December**, by email to enquiries@dorchester-tc.gov.uk or by letter. The successful applicant will be notified in January.

Clear Out? Cash in!

Is the loft overflowing or the garage groaning? Dorchester's Sunday car boot sale at Fairfield is the perfect place to turn unwanted items into pocket money.

Sellers can set up from 6.30am, with pitches from £8 payable on the day, and the sale runs until 12.30pm. Better still, the income goes into the Dorchester Market Car Boot Fund, which supports local community groups, so a clear-out helps good causes as well as your cupboards!

Holocaust Memorial Day 2027

Dorchester will mark Holocaust Memorial Day on Wednesday 27 January with an event at the Corn Exchange, hosted by the Mayor of Dorchester, Councillor Les Fry. Held as an informal drop-in between 10am and midday, the event offers the whole community a chance to reflect quietly on the Holocaust and other genocides, and to view displays created by local schools. Visitors are also welcome to light a candle and leave a message of hope for the future.

Results of the 20mph Dorchester Consultation

A big thank you to everyone who took the time to share their views on our 20mph Dorchester consultation. We almost 4,000 responses in total and we're grateful to everyone who took part. The results will be presented at the Planning and Environment Committee meeting on **Monday 2nd November**. They will then be considered at the Full Council meeting on **Monday 30 November**, where members will decide whether to submit an application to Dorset Council.

The Mayor's Diary: A New Regular Feature

Since Councillor Les Fry BEM and Mayoress Julie Fry BEM took up office in May, the civic chains have hardly had a day where they weren't called upon.

The Mayor and Mayoress's diary has included Victorian street fairs and hospital rooftops, sponsored conga lines and Kerala feasts, wreath-laying in Bayeux and a weekend at the County Show.

Our regular Mayor's Diary on the council website brings those engagements to life each month. Among the entries so far, you'll find the twinning visit to Bayeux, charity cheques and fundraisers, new businesses and exhibitions opening their doors, and celebrations for much-loved local organisations.

Above all, the diary is a window into the volunteers, fundraisers and community groups who make Dorchester what it is. Many of the groups featured are always looking for new members, and each month's entry includes details of how to get involved.

Read our snapshots of the Mayor's diary on our news page at **dorchester-tc.gov.uk**.

Support for Local Community Groups

The Town Council is keen to support the activities and projects of our local community groups, and offers grants of up to £500. To be eligible, a project must mainly benefit residents of Dorchester (in the DT1 postcode). Applications can be submitted at any time and are considered by our Management Committee, which meets every two months, so you shouldn't wait long for a decision. Full details of the scheme are on our website.

Over the last year, the grant scheme has helped to provide food parcels for families on low incomes, volunteer training, musical equipment and the specialist cleaning of the William Barnes statue outside St Peter's Church (pictured).

DORCHESTER MARKETS

Wednesday mornings at Fairfield, daily at Cornhill.

Find us on Instagram and Facebook at /DorchesterMarkets

Christmas Markets

Mooch Market
Corn Exchange
Sat 14th Nov, 12pm-4pm

Dorchester Artisan Market
South Street & South Walks
Sun 22nd Nov, 10am-3pm

Poundbury Christmas Market
Crown Square
Sat 28th Nov, 10am-4pm

Dorchester Christmas Cracker
High Street & Corn Exchange
Sun 13th Dec, 11am-4pm

Other Festive Events

Candlelit Advent Carol Service
St Peter's Church
Sat 28th Nov, 4.30pm

Julia's House Christmas Carols
St Mary's Church
Tue 8th Dec, 7pm

Carols in the Gardens
Borough Gardens
Thu 17th Dec, 6.30pm

Free Parking Dates

There will be free parking across all of Dorset Council's town centre car parks on Remembrance Sunday and a number of days in the run-up to Christmas. This does not include on-street parking or privately operated car parks. The free parking days are:

Sunday 8th November
(Remembrance Sunday)

Saturday 21st November

Saturday 5th December
(Small Business Saturday)

Thursday 10th December

...and there's more!

For details of the above events and more, visit **discoverdorchester.co.uk**

Meet Dorchester Youth Council

Dorchester Youth Council (DYC) is a group of young people aged 13 to 19, living in or near Dorchester or attending school here, who work to make sure young voices are heard in the life of the town. Members advise the Town Council on what young people want and need, put on events, support good causes and run their own campaigns.

As an independent community organisation, DYC can apply for funding in its own right, and has raised over £25,000 so far. Members have helped out at Pop-up Pride Dorchester, the Love Parks activity day and the Dorchester Roman Festival, and help to plan and fundraise for the annual Anonymous Festival in Borough Gardens. Campaign topics are chosen by the members themselves, from climate change to sustainable fashion, with a mental health campaign currently in the works.

Along the way, members build skills in leadership, teamwork and funding applications, receive training such as First Aid, and earn volunteering hours towards the Dorset Award.

DYC meets monthly at Borough Gardens House, with a meeting coming up on **Thursday 10th December, 5pm to 6.30pm**. To find out more, or to let them know you're coming along, email Emma Scott at e.scott@dorchester-tc.gov.uk with your name and age. Newcomers are welcome to try a meeting and see what they think.

Upcoming Council Committee Meetings

Full Council
30th Nov • 25th Jan • 29th Mar

Planning & Environment Committee
2nd Nov • 7th Dec • 7th Jan, 1st Feb • 1st Mar

Management Committee
16th Nov • 11th Jan • 15th Mar

Policy Committee
23rd Nov • 18th Jan • 22nd Mar

Markets Joint Panel
2nd Dec • 3rd Feb

Dorset Council

Attend a Dorchester Residents Surgery

Want to know what's happening in your community?

Have a question for your local councillor?

Want to know who does what?

Drop-in at a Residents Surgery at **Dorchester Library** on the **first Saturday of each month**, between **10am and 12pm**.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!
From us all at Dorchester Town Council