



DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL - ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our Annual report. The Town Council is the parish authority for Dorchester. We are the most local tier of government, and work closely with the county council and the district council. With a population approaching 20,000 we provide a range of social and recreational facilities, while also promoting and representing the town with other national and statutory bodies. We provide most of the public open space and sports grounds in the town, three cemeteries, over 300 allotments, we operate the Municipal Buildings and support many of the town's community and civic events. In short we do many of the things that make Dorchester the special place it is, even down to providing the hanging baskets in the town centre.

There are 20 Members on the Council who are elected for a four year term, the most recent period starting in May 2015. The Mayor is elected by the Council every year in May and also acts as Chairman to the Council.

This Council operates a Committee structure with each Committee having specific functions. We have three Committees; Management, Planning and Environment and Policy, and reports from the chairmen on the work of these Committees are set out in this report. Agenda for the Council and its Committees are available online three clear days before meetings, which are held in the Council Chamber (upstairs in the Corn Exchange building) and residents are welcome to attend and speak at any of these meetings.

It is important for us to receive your comments, queries and complaints on the services provided by the Town Council so that we can endeavour to serve you well. The Council welcomes your help to highlight any problems around the town – whether the responsibility of this Council or not – let us know what the problem is. If it's our responsibility we will endeavour to sort it out and if it's not we will contact the appropriate authority on your behalf.

Thank you for your time in receiving and reading this report and we would welcome any response you might make.

Town Mayor

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - *Councillor Kate Rice*

The Management Committee has had another busy year and I would like to thank all of the staff for their hard work and dedication, this includes the guidance and hard work of the Deputy Town Clerk Steve Newman, the Town Hall Keepers, Gardens staff, Cemetery staff, the Outdoor Services team led by Carl Dallison and all that work at the North Square Office.

Dorchester's jewel in the crown is the Borough Gardens and again much work has gone into looking after and improving this wonderful asset in the centre of our town. This past year has seen an extension to the planting of snowdrops, the creation of a fernery, the opening up of the site lines through the Gardens by the removal or trimming of shrubs and new permanently planted beds at the Cornwall Road entrance. Making a temporary appearance this year was Dippy in the form of a carpet bed. Some work to the permanent structures has also taken place including re-painting of the clock, new safety surfacing of the splash pool and improvements to tarmac paths. We also said goodbye and thank you to Re-think who have been running the kiosk for the past ten years and, at the same time, hope to welcome a new community group in the near future. And finally, construction on the new tennis courts has started; the completion date will be in plenty of time for the summer season.

Many events were held in the Gardens this year and there were also some wonderful events at Maumbury Rings including the open air cinema, Anonymous Youth Festival, Love Parade and the Town Council's Music day. It is amazing to think that over 20,000 local people have attended these events over the summer.

Dorchester Arts continue to call the Corn Exchange home until they can move to the Maltings. This means that the Corn Exchange is very busy with a great variety of entertainment. The Council has continued to make improvements to the building including re-painting all the external woodwork and essential stone work repairs to the Town Hall windows. We have replaced the big heavy curtains with blinds which have made the room even brighter. There are still repairs that will need to be completed and we have made funding available for this.

Working together with other organisations within our community is essential, and the Committee was pleased to work recently with Dorchester Cricket Club, for them to develop further by taking on a lease for the Weymouth Avenue Pavilion. Adaptations to the buildings recently completed have also meant that the Dorchester Boxing Club now also have a secure future. We have also been working with the Duchy of Cornwall in respect of the consultation events for the facilities to be provided at the Great Field, the outcome of which is looking very exciting.

We are pleased to have supported the reopening of Dorchester Youth & Community Centre; the centre is now a charitable trust and helps support young people by way of youth work and a safe friendly environment for them to enjoy. We have also supported many other local community groups by way of small grants, recipients include Dorchester Food Bank, Try This, Carnival, You Trust and many more.

Finally, I would again like to thank all of the staff and Councillors of the Town Council, for their endless guidance and their positive vision for the future. Thank you.

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE - *Councillor Robin Potter*

Our monthly meetings have been as busy as ever, with our ongoing business to comment on any planning applications within the Town and pass these comments to the District Council, who make the decisions. In the main, there has been agreement between the two councils and, even where there has not, our concerns are looked at carefully by officers and members of West Dorset. Many of these applications are for small developments such as extensions to existing houses or for changes to the labelling as shops change hands but there are also larger schemes such as the latest phase of Poundbury or Brewery Square.

There have been several pieces of work concerning traffic around the Town Centre, such as the completion of measures designed to make it clearer that the whole of South Street is a pedestrianised zone. These seem to have been effective in that far fewer vehicles are in this area when they shouldn't be, though there are still some offenders who need reminding! The most obvious work was to remodel The Junction and move the pedestrian crossing of South Walks Road to the Western side of the war memorial, making a much better connection for pedestrians moving between South Street, Brewery Square and Fairfield Car Parks. Work at Great Western Cross has also greatly enhanced pedestrian access to properties near Dorchester West Station and The Range, though we still await the long-promised ramp for disabled access to the Bristol-bound platform. Works in High West Street also seem to have helped things there a bit, even when Dippy caused a large increase in footfall accessing the County Museum.

We still await, however, any movement on a Town-wide parking strategy, which means that many residents continue to have problems outside their houses.

The committee is always open to hear presentations from groups with information to impart and again this year we have heard on several occasions from representatives of the County Council and The District Council about their thoughts for the future. We know that the latest review of West Dorset's local plan is due soon and I have met with representatives of Stinsford and Charminster parish councils, our neighbours to the North, as we expect proposals for development to the North of Dorchester to be included. The move of Damers school to Poundbury has also sparked our interest in what use will be made of the site vacated.

We have had some success by inviting a representative of the Duchy of Cornwall in order to try and sort out the linking of Lubbecke Way through to St. Georges road and managed to get promises from the Duchy and the County Council that this would happen soon.

As I write this, together with the continuing development at Poundbury and Brewery Square, thoughts concerning the Fairfield Market site, Charles Street car park, Damers School's previous site and 'North Dorchester' are around,

though no definite proposals on these are yet in the public domain. When they are, the committee will give them, as it does any large or small development in the town, its full consideration after hearing from anyone who wishes to contribute to us.

But none of this could happen without the contribution of members of the committee who give up their time to be well briefed before any meeting and come to have their say. It is even more important to recognise the enormous help given to us by our clerk, Louise Dowell, in preparing our agendas and minutes and providing excellent professional and gently helpful advice at and between our meetings.

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE - *Councillor Gareth Jones*

For Policy Committee 2018 has been yet another year of considerable activity and progress in both Policy and Financial matters.

In terms of financial management the committee has continued to support permanent reductions in our annual operating costs, and brought a balanced budget to Council for the coming year achieved with a modest rise in precept.

The committee has also supported development of a medium term financial plan which should see both a continuing reduction of historic borrowing, with levels of general and earmarked reserves established to cover anticipated needs consistent with best practice.

Policy committee continues to support management of a Corporate Projects Reserve to reflect Council's aspirations contained within our Corporate Strategy, and to move the council to a stronger position to meet the anticipated service delivery challenges likely to result from LGR.

In addition to the finance activity, the Policy Committee has continued to monitor and develop the Council's Corporate Strategy with its suite of broad themes of Economy, Housing, Traffic & Highways, Community & Culture, Environment & Heritage/Tourism.

Projects continued, achieved or launched in 2017/2018 include:

- DTEP, particularly junction improvements and paving of lower South St
- delivery of new tennis courts, freeing up land for affordable housing
- assisting in the establishment of a community land trust
- grants to partners improve their infrastructure, from which we have already given support to Dorset County Museum, Shire Hall, Maltings Arts and Dorchester Football Club.

Projects for continuation or launch in 2018/2019 include:

- Affordable housing and Recreation strategies
- Heritage & Tourism Strategy with investment in new Town signage
- Community Plan , through the work of our new Community Officer
- DTC strategy & positions on the future developments & growth of Dorchester

Importantly, the Policy Committee and indeed the Council is regularly monitoring developments in Local Government Reorganisation, and has recently ratified its presence at the West Dorset Towns Programme Board to help shape the way in which devolution of services will take place.. This will allow us to move purposefully on the opportunities and threats that LGR may present.

Policy committee and indeed Council has done considerable work in strengthening its Financial and Strategic Policies & projects this year, and I am confident that as a council we will continue to work to develop our role and capabilities to contribute to this town's future, and make a real difference for its communities.

Finally I would like to thank the Town Council's staff for all their good work in putting Policy Committees decisions into practice.

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL OPERATIONAL BUDGET SUMMARY

| | 2016-17 Actual £ | 2017-18 Budget £ | 2017-18 <i>Latest (Wk50)</i> £ | Under/ -Over Budget(Wk50) £ |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Parks & Open Spaces | 581,490 | 559,377 | 530,988 | 28,389 |
| Allotments | 3,254 | 5,324 | 4,167 | 1,157 |
| Municipal Buildings | 140,240 | 184,272 | 177,735 | 6,537 |
| Cemeteries | 66,894 | 54,355 | 45,356 | 8,999 |
| Cultural & Twinning Activities | 63,076 | 54,008 | 63,801 | -9,793 |
| Corporate & Democratic Management | 210,632 | 212,095 | 205,116 | 6,979 |
| Other Services | 24,627 | 128,903 | 102,401 | 26,502 |
| Operational Budget | 1,090,213 | 1,198,334 | 1,129,564 | 68,770 |
| Precept | 1,297,659 | 1,296,336 | 1,296,336 | 0 |
| Transfer to General Reserves | 207,446 | 98,002 | 166,772 | 68,770 |

The report will be updated when the Council's final position is known. A full Financial Statement 2017-18 will be available at www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk soon after the financial year end.

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCILLORS TO MAY 2019

| EAST WARD | | | |
|---|--------------|---|--------------|
| Tim Harries 8 Dunnabridge Street DT1 3TQ | 07970 653796 | Fiona Kent-Ledger 78 Casterbridge Road DT1 2AG | 01305 250253 |
| Stella Jones MBE Syward Cottage, Syward Road DT1 2AJ | 01305 264335 | Tony Lyall 13 St Georges Road DT1 1PA | 01305 266254 |
| NORTH WARD | | | |
| Barry Armstrong-Marshall 20 Fordington Dairy, Athelstan Rd DT1 1FD | 01305 269921 | Susie Hosford 1 Meadow Cottages, Martinstown DT2 9JL | 01305 880102 |
| Richard Biggs 20 Bridport Road DT1 1RS | 01305 260156 | Tamara Loakes 3A Holloway Road DT1 1LF | 01305 757526 |
| Andy Canning 11 Alfred Road DT1 2DW | 01305 261592 | Kate Rice Email - katerice321@gmail.com | |
| Alistair Chisholm 9 Orchard St DT1 1JH | 01305 268603 | David Taylor 4 Normandy Way DT1 2PP | 01305 263382 |
| SOUTH WARD | | | |
| Carolyn Biggs 20 Bridport Road DT1 1RS | 01305 260156 | Robin Potter 22 D'Urberville Close DT1 2JT | 01305 264416 |
| Gareth Jones 21 Martel Close, Broadmayne DT2 8PL | 01305 854915 | Molly Rennie 13 Alington Road DT1 1NS | 01305 268572 |
| WEST WARD | | | |
| Gerald Duke Grove Hill House, Martinstown, DT2 9JP | 01305 889480 | Trevor Jones OBE Syward Cottage, Syward Road DT1 2AJ | 01305 264335 |
| Janet Hewitt 6 Garfield Avenue, DT1 2EX | 01305 266175 | Peter Stein 51 Woodlands Crescent DT1 3RQ | 07777 652034 |

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