

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE

19 JANUARY 2015

At the Meeting of the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee held on 19 January 2015:

PRESENT:

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| Dorchester Town Council | Councillors: | T. James (Vice-Chairman – in the Chair) F.E. Kent-Ledger |
| | Officer: | S. Newman |
| West Dorset District Council | Councillor: | J. Dunseith |
| Dorset County Council | Councillor: | R.M. Biggs |
| Dorchester Association | | J. Smith |
| Dorchester Civic Society | | A. Rowley |
| Dorset Natural history and Archaeological Society | | Dr J. Murden |
| Blue Badge Tourist Guides | | J. Bryant |

29. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from S. Lloyd-Jacob (West Dorset District Council), Councillor D. Roberts (Dorchester Town Council), Councillors D.J. Barrett and A. Canning (West Dorset District Council) and C. Hebditch (Dorchester Local Nature Reserve).

30. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2014, a copy of which had been circulated, were confirmed and signed.

31. **DECLARATIONS OF PRE-DETERMINATION**

Dr J. Murden reported that he was now a Trustee of the Shire Hall Project.

32. **STREET PRIDE CAMPAIGN**

Members considered information regarding the 'Street Pride' campaign instigated by Civic Voice a national charity that worked to make the places where everyone lived more attractive, enjoyable and distinctive. The Street Pride Campaign aimed to make a difference in reducing street clutter. The Committee supported the aims of the campaign but expressed concern as to whether anything could actively be achieved – the issue of 'A' Boards within the town was

highlighted as an example of clutter and despite a policy having been produced by the County Council no enforcement had been undertaken. The representative from the County Council reported that the County Council had produced a document on street clutter and were positive about not having excessive signage etc.

The representative from the Civic Society also expressed concern about whether joining the campaign would achieve anything bearing in mind the financial restraints being faced by the relevant authorities. He proposed to raise the issue at a future meeting of the Civic Society to see if it wished to become more involved with the campaign.

It was reported that the two large signs at the top of South Street were a good example of street clutter and Members felt that, as a test to see what could be improved, the County Council be contacted to see if improvements could be made to the size, location etc of these signs.

RESOLVED

- (1) That an attempt be made to improve the signage at the top of South Street.
- (2) That the representative of the Civic Society arrange for the Street Pride campaign to be discussed at a future meeting of the Society.
- (3) That a report be brought to the next meeting of the Committee on progress made with improving the South Street signage and the latest situation regarding 'A' Boards. That report also to include as background information the County Council guidance on Street Clutter.

33. LET'S EXPLORE DORCHESTER PUBLICATION

Members considered and agreed that the Committee's Let's Explore Dorchester publication be entered into the Association of Heritage Interpretation and the Museums and Heritage Awards (small projects category) at a cost of £55.

34. MAUMBURY ROAD SIGN

The Committee was pleased to note that the 'Amphitheatre Terrace' sign located on the wall of the end property at Maumbury Road (No. 19) had now been refurbished and re-erected.

Members felt that if any other old named terrace signs were identified in the town it would be worthwhile refurbishing them. It was noted that some of these signs were in stone and if this was the case then it could be a good project for the student stonemasons based at Poundbury.

35. **MILL STREET MEMORIES PROJECT**

The representative from the Dorchester Association updated the Committee in respect of progress with the Mill Street Memories project. He was pleased to report that lottery funding had been achieved so as to enable brass plaques to be inserted into the pavement in the same way as the other Town Trails. It was noted that the next public meeting about the project was to be held on 2 February at St George's Church hall at 2.00pm. Previous public meetings had been very well attended.

Once the project was complete all information would be past to the History Centre.

36. **EXTENDING THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee had before it a report by the Deputy Town Clerk asking whether the Committee would consider expanding its terms of reference so as to support the Town Council's vision, as set out in its emerging Corporate Plan, to be 'respecting of but taking advantage of our heritage and environment'. One of the Council's key actions in aiming to achieve this was to 'start discussions about a shared tourism vision with interested heritage partners and business representatives'. For this to be achieved a group would need to be established and the Heritage Committee already included a number of the interested parties but would need to be expanded to include other organisations many of which would be from the commercial organisations.

Members were also circulated with a paper prepared by the Local Nature Reserve representative setting out some additional considerations regarding the possibility of including culture and arts, the number of different organisations that would need to be involved and an idea in respect of an annual forum. It was also felt that it would be beneficial to involve new developers of important sites to the town, such as the developer of the former Prison site, in order that they might become more active in the town.

The Committee was supportive of expanding its terms of reference to include business organisations and Dorchester Arts. It was noted that Museum funding was now delivered through the Arts Council. Suggestions were put forward with regard to how an expanded forum could work which included the proposed annual forum, using Members connections to include / connect with others, straightforward extension of membership etc.

Members felt that it would be useful to have a more detailed report to the next meeting on the options available for including additional organisations. The report to include a list of those projects previously undertaken by the Committee.

RESOLVED

- (1) That a more detailed report be prepared for the next meeting of the Committee on the options available for including additional organisations. The report to include a list of those projects previously undertaken by the Committee.
- (2) That the Artistic Director of Dorchester Arts be invited to the next meeting of the Committee.

37. **CHARLES STREET DEVELOPMENT**

The Committee noted that a petition to West Dorset District Council, signed by approximately 4,000 people so far, had been organised by Defend Our Rich Cultural Heritage (D.O.R.C.H) demanding that the District Council 'Ensure that a full archaeological investigation is carried out at the Charles Street redevelopment site before work commences'.

Members were very concerned that the District Council had employed consultants, Cotswold Archaeology, to provide a report which assessed the site as being of only 'medium' importance, despite the fact that it was bounded on one side by the remains of Dorchester's Roman bath-house, and on another by a unique and internationally important Neolithic henge monument. The report also appeared to contain many factual errors and omissions, and its 'fitness for purpose' had been questioned by an internationally renowned and respected archaeologist. Cotswold Archaeology had admitted that the assessment had been 'refined in order to reduce expenditure and maintain the economic viability of the development scheme'. The Committee felt that showed a complete lack of respect for Dorchester's important archeology and requested that the concerns be raised with Dorset County Council's Senior Archaeologist.

RESOLVED

That the concerns of the Committee, as set out above, be forwarded to the Senior Archaeologist at Dorset County Council.

38. **UPDATES**

The representative from the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society reported that work on a public art trail in Dorchester would be commencing shortly.

There were no additional updates in respect of Plaques, Tourism Signage and High East Street.

The representative from the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society updated the Committee in respect of the County Museum's HLF bid. £265m had been bid for nationally with the HLF only having £55m to allocate. HLF Trustees were to visit the Museum on 13 March and a decision was expected on 28 April.

39. **URGENT ITEMS**

No urgent items were raised.

40. **QUESTIONS**

No formal questions had been submitted.

41. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

A date for the next meeting of the Committee would be circulated to Members following consultation with the Chairman.