

# Dorchester News

Dorchester Town Council

19 North Square Dorchester Dorset DT1 1JF

☎ 01305 266861

✉ admin@dorchester-tc.gov.uk

Spring 2018

## Annual Town Meeting

The statutory Annual Town Meeting will be held on **Tuesday 27 March**, immediately after the Council meeting scheduled for 7.00pm that evening.

The Council and its three Committees meet on a 2 month cycle, with Council meeting again on Tuesday 22 May and on Tuesday 24 July. Agendas and Minutes for Council and Committee meetings are available on our website.

## Would you like to be a Town Councillor?

Elections take place in May 2019 for the new Town Council. With the town growing and with Local Government Reorganisation on the horizon, the next four year period promises to be both an exciting but challenging time for those elected to deliver the town's services.

If you are considering standing for election in May 2019 and would like to know more about the role of a town councillor please contact the Town Clerk at [a.stuart@dorchester-tc.gov.uk](mailto:a.stuart@dorchester-tc.gov.uk) for more details.

## Borough Gardens Makeover

Preliminary work has started on the conversion of the Bowling Green area at the southern end of the Gardens into two new tennis courts.

With a lot of earth to be moved out and new materials to be brought in the project is now scheduled to open in the early summer.

The new courts will provide an even greater reason to buy one of the Council's £25 fobs that allow year round unlimited use of the tennis courts for a whole family.

At the same time the iconic Gardens clock is under wraps while it is being fully refurbished, which involves stripping back to bare metal for the first time in 100 years, then repainting with new paint designed to last for 10-20 years.

The play fountain now has a new surface, installed at the end of last season, while the Council is also reviewing management arrangements for the refreshments kiosk, with the aim of reopening it by May.



Visit our website at [www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk](http://www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk)

## Draft Community Plan launched for consultation

Community Development Officer, Emma Scott, has been working with local groups and organisations to identify key priorities for the town this year.

Drawing on a "Directory of Community Aims", put together after extensive consultation, Emma has drawn up a list of priorities that include fundraising advice and improved networking and collaboration.

Specific proposals encompass hosting community networking lunches, setting up a health and well-being event and support for a pilot project to offer mental health support to young people.

Emma is also currently supporting the Dorchester Access Group to create an access guide for Dorchester's shops and eateries – to find out more email [dorchesteraccessgroup@gmail.com](mailto:dorchesteraccessgroup@gmail.com).

The Directory of Community Aims offers an extensive list of initiatives going on in the town. It can be viewed in the [What's New](#) section of our website; feedback to [e.scott@dorchester-tc.gov.uk](mailto:e.scott@dorchester-tc.gov.uk) is very much welcomed.

## Great Field consultation sparks ideas for plan

Over the autumn period the Duchy of Cornwall led an exercise to gather views regarding how residents want to use the major new space being made available at the western end of the town. Town Council staff supplemented the drop in events by working with young people from local schools.

The key components of the design are likely to be a major new play space, near to the park entrance of Damers School and a shared pathway network suitable to the needs of foot and wheel-based users.

Other features are likely to include an amphitheatre space built near the western esplanade, seating, planting and further play and free running equipment to encourage movement around the whole space.



## Shire Hall is coming!

Dorchester's new historic courthouse museum on High West Street will be opening in April.

The museum will relate the stories of the many whose lives were changed, in some cases ended, by their experiences in the courtroom.

The £3.5m refurbishment, funded mainly by West Dorset District Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund, has brought a landmark building back to life.

Visitors will visit the cells, in the footsteps of the accused, waiting to discover their fate upstairs. There will be digital interactives, wigs, gowns and hats to try on, and lots of surprises to discover!

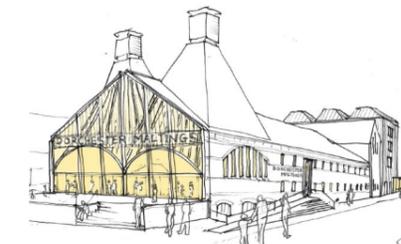
The building has been carefully planned to maximise accessibility for a wide range of needs.

The Shire Hall team are excited to welcome their first visitors. This will be a great day out for all the family – watch out for the opening date to be announced.

## Council helps to fund key Dorchester Projects

In November the Council took an important decision to support three projects that are important to the future of the town.

Maltings Arts is the organisation set up with the aim of transforming and



operating the Maltings building at Brewery Square. They have a long way to go to raise the £10M+ capital needed to deliver the project, but the Town Council has taken an early decision to reserve £250,000 towards the building works, should the rest of the funding be raised. The Town Council will work alongside Maltings Arts to bring potential funders to the table.

Dorchester Town Community Football Club plan to replace the grass pitch at The Avenue Stadium with a new artificial pitch, as well as new floodlighting, at a cost of £0.5M. The Town Council has agreed to match donations coming forward from the local community up to a maximum of

£50,000 and is delighted that the club's Youth Football section has already matched most of this with a £40,000 contribution.

The new pitch will become the football hub for the town, providing training and home match facilities for around 20 teams. It will also free up Town Council land and cash that could be used for other priorities.

Councillors also decided to fund two initiatives to improve the experience of visually impaired visitors to the Shire Hall when it opens, allocating £10,000 to support this project.

These decisions build on the support already provided to Dorset County Museum, approved in 2016.



*Mayor Susie Hosford presents a cheque for £25,000 to Dorset County Museum director Jon Murden towards the £1.4M refurbishment, reopening in 2020.*



## ...and don't forget Dippy

Free tickets are going fast for Dippy's time in the town. To see him before he leaves on 8 May check

[www.dorsetcountymuseum.org/dippy\\_on\\_tour](http://www.dorsetcountymuseum.org/dippy_on_tour)

Visit our website at [www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk](http://www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk)

## How will Dorchester grow in the future?

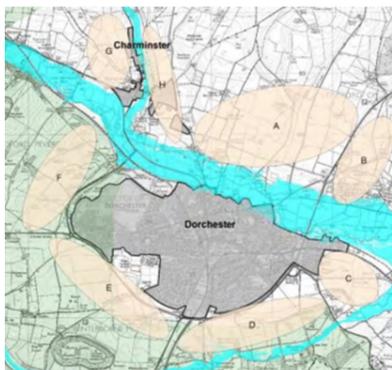
Revisions to the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan require that land be identified for 4,500 extra homes to be built across the area in the next 20 years, with Dorchester a specific target location.

Wherever houses are planned they are controversial; the next extension to the town could be bigger than Poundbury. But at the same time the town needs more homes, particularly for young workers.

Last Autumn the District Council consulted on options for development around the town. Although the greatest impact of growth will be at Dorchester the number of

responses from residents locally was much lower than from other areas of West Dorset.

In May 2018 the District Council will narrow options down and consult on preferred sites to be included in a revised Local Plan.



When the chosen sites have been identified the Town Council will hold an event to collect your views so it can take account of them in its final response.

## Affordable Housing or Play and Open Space?

As a Council one of our priorities is Affordable Homes for Young Workers and this led to the plans to develop the tennis courts adjacent to Trinity Street Car Park.

The Town Council recently decided to work with Magna Housing to consult the public regarding 5 other sites around the town that might be suitable for affordable housing

- Elizabeth Place play area & green space, Victoria Park
- A play area at Poundbury Crescent
- A play area between Mellstock Avenue and Holbaek Close
- A green space between Thomas Hardye Gardens and Sandringham Sports Field (known as Sandringham Annex)
- Fortress Green open space at Celtic Crescent, Castle Park

Consultation has already started to identify the negative impact of developing these sites, as well as the number of properties they might make available for young people.

## Tax to rise 3% to save valued local services

The Town Council share of the Council Tax will rise 3% in 2018, a Band D charge of £189.00, up £5.50 on last year, with smaller increases of 2.0% planned in future years.

The rise will help the Council to reduce the impact of cuts to locally valued services currently run by Dorset County and West Dorset District Councils, who face with increasingly difficult budget decisions and are refocusing available cash onto their statutory obligations.

It is quite possible that DCC and WDDC will disappear in 2019, replaced by a single unitary Dorset Council. Inevitably the focus of the new organisation would be on major services including social care, highways and waste management, leaving Town Councils to play a lead role in safeguarding local services such as public toilets, TICs, support for local arts, museums and community organisations and keeping public areas tidy.

Our main income comes from Dorchester Council Tax payers, we will receive £1.4M in 2018/19. While most of this funds our own services we now have £177,000 a year ready to support at risk District/County services. While this gives us a head start we know it will not be enough to safeguard all services we believe to be at risk.

In discussions about the future we have asked the District Council to share some of the income from car parks and other assets with us to help fund services which are regularly used by visitors to the town.

Town Council services, such as the Borough Gardens, Cemeteries and our Events programme, will continue to be developed as the town grows. We invest money up front to reduce future costs, and look for more efficient ways of delivering services; little wins such as a wood chipper to reduce our green waste, hanging baskets with reservoirs to reduce watering and asking our sports teams to play a greater role on match days; it all helps.

Council has allocated reserves for a number of our own and partner projects during 2018-19, mentioned elsewhere in the newsletter. We are also developing a Community Plan to help local groups working in our community to develop to take on new roles.

This may in turn lead to formal planning applications being made by Magna later in the year.

The Town Council has already decided that play equipment will still be needed on two of the sites if they are progressed and is also concerned to ensure that existing parking arrangements are not worsened.

Visit our website at [www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk](http://www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk)

## KeeP106 to go on air this summer

Dorchester's new community radio station could be broadcasting by late May if everything goes to plan.

OFCOM have allocated the 106.3FM frequency to the not for profit Community Interest Company. The Town Council has agreed to fund the purchase of a new 100w FM transmitter, while the Project Team are still fundraising for other set up and running costs; they recently secured £1,500 from West Dorset DC.

Meanwhile refurbishment works continue at the studio at the historic Little Keep. If you have construction skills that you can lend or material that you might donate they would love to hear from you.

You can join the Keep106 team as a Member (£60, £40 under 18's), with many technical, production and other roles to be filled, although some Members join just to express support for community radio. Further information from [ridgewayradiocic@gmail.com](mailto:ridgewayradiocic@gmail.com)

## Digital Champions

Superfast Dorset are keen to recruit new volunteers to share the enormous benefits that going online can bring to the less IT savvy members of our community.

- Do you love what digital technology can do?
- Do you have time to spare?
- Could you become a digital champion and help others get online?

If so, please register your interest at [www.dorsetforyou.com/superfast](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/superfast) or email [superfast@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:superfast@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

## Town Calendar

Town Crier Alistair Chisholm has spent the long dark nights of winter putting together a comprehensive calendar of town events.

It includes lectures promoted by local societies, arts and school music events, plus the details of the many annual events that are now part of the fabric of the town.

See the [What's New](#) tab of [www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk](http://www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk) for details. Alistair is keen to get links to the calendar from other local websites and social media pages. If you are part of a local club or use social media please share the link with friends and family.

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## Events April-June 2018

**Sunday 22 April - St George's Day Scout Parade**  
2.30pm, Borough Gardens

**Saturday 28 April - World Tai Chi Day**  
9.30am, Borough Gardens

**Sunday 13 May - Durnovaria Silver Band**  
2.30pm, Borough Gardens

**Saturday 19 May - The Lost Tribe of Teacup Turtles**  
2.30pm, Borough Gardens

**Saturday 2 June - Thomas Hardy's Birthday**  
5.00pm, County Hall lawn/Hardy Statue

**Sunday 3 June - Step out for Stroke**  
1.00pm, Borough Gardens

**Tuesday 5 June - Rhymetime in the Gardens**  
Time tbc, Borough Gardens

**Wednesday 6 June - D-Day Commemoration**  
11.00am, The Keep Military Museum

**Saturday 9 June - Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Family Event** - Noon, Borough Gardens

**Sunday 10 June - Durnovaria Silver Band**  
2.30pm, Borough Gardens

*To keep up to date with extra events and changes to the programme please check the notice boards in the Borough Gardens.*

## Dorchester Carnival - Midsummer Madness!

**Saturday 16 June - Town Centre**

The Organising Committee are looking for volunteers, sponsors and participants to help with this year's event, which will include a walking procession between the Borough Gardens, South Street and Brewery Square.

For more information and to keep up to date visit [www.dorchester-carnival.info](http://www.dorchester-carnival.info)

## Outdoor Theatre at Maumbury Rings

**Sunday 3 June 7.30pm - Romeo and Juliet**  
performed by The Handlebards

**Friday 13 July 7.30pm - The Cherry Orchard**  
performed by Miracle Theatre

**Thursday 9 August 7.30pm - Much Ado About Nothing**  
performed by Rain or Shine Theatre Co

Details and tickets at [www.dorchesterarts.org.uk](http://www.dorchesterarts.org.uk),  
Box office 01305 266926

**DorchesterARTS**

Visit our website at [www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk](http://www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk)