



DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

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Steve Newman, Town Clerk

9th October 2024

You are invited to a meeting of the **DORCHESTER HERITAGE JOINT COMMITTEE** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, HIGH EAST STREET, DORCHESTER DT1 1HF** on **TUESDAY 15th OCTOBER 2025** commencing at **5.30pm**.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Steve Newman'.

Town Clerk and Secretary to the Committee

Declaration of Interests

Members are reminded that it is their responsibility to disclose interests where appropriate. A Member who declares any interest must leave the room. A Member who declares a registerable interest as a Council nominee to a partner organisation may first address the meeting as a member of the public.

Membership

Dorset Council: R. Biggs, A. Canning, L. Fry, R. Major and R. Tarr.

Dorchester Town Council: S. Biles, S. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger, G. Jones and D. Taylor.

The following Members may attend and speak but not vote:

Mr B Murphy (Duchy of Cornwall), I. Gosling (Dorchester Civic Society), Vacancy (Dorchester Chamber for Business), M. Woodgate (Dorchester Heritage Magazine), E. Metcalfe (The Keep Military Museum), L. Poulsen (Dorchester Local Nature Reserve), C. Dixon (Dorset Museum & Art Gallery), J. Wallis (Blue Badge Tourist Guides) M Rice (Dorchester Association), Maria Gayton or S. Johnson (Dorset History Centre), R. Raine (National Trust (for Max Gate and Hardy's Cottage)), V. Smith (Shire Hall), A. Worth (Keep 106 Community Radio), M. Chutter (Thomas Hardy Society), S. Wallis (Dorset Council – Archaeologist).

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. **MINUTES**

To read, confirm and sign the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 23 July 2024 (enclosed).

3. **BUDGET UPDATE**

To receive a report from the Finance Officer (report enclosed).

4. **COMMITTEE FUNDING FOR 2025-2029**

To receive a report from the Assistant Town Clerk (report enclosed).

5. **ONGOING PROJECTS**

To received update reports on the following matters:

- a) Millstream Paths information boards.
- b) Refreshing heritage information panels.
- c) Dorchester Sheroes Project.
- d) Roman baths interpretation project.
- e) Feedback from New Hardy Players.
- f) Museums after Dark 2024 update.
- g) Town Pump enhancement proposals from Civic Society (A. Harrison).

6. **HERITAGE OPEN DAY 2024**

To receive a feedback report from the Assistant Town Clerk (report enclosed).

7. **FUTURE PROJECTS**

To discuss the following potential projects:

- a) Water meadows – liaison with Stinsford Parish Council
- b) History of Dorchester – the Civic Society’s Facebook page (A. Harrison)
- c) Heritage information panels on Fairfield public realm area.
- d) Information board proposal for the Moule Institute - in memorial to Reverend Moule of Fordington

8. **HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY - UPDATE**

To receive an update on the work of the Tourism Partnership and Strategy (report enclosed).

9. **DORCHESTER TOURISM PARTNERSHIP – FESTIVAL PROPOSALS FOR 2025**

To receive proposals and funding requests from the Tourism Partnership.

10. **ROMAN FESTIVAL 2025 – PROPOSAL**

To receive a report from the Tourism Development Officer (**report enclosed**).

11. **UPDATE FROM MEMBERS**

To receive updates from members and partners.

12. **QUESTIONS**

To receive questions submitted by Members in writing to the Dorchester Town Clerk and in respect of which the appropriate notice has been given.

13. **URGENT ITEMS**

To consider any other items that the Chairman decides are urgent.

ITEM 2: MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE

23rd JULY 2024

At a Meeting of the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee held on 23rd July 2024:

PRESENT:

Dorchester Town Council	Councillors:	G. Jones (Chairman) S. Jones S. Biles
	Officers:	T. Hurley M. Manley
Dorset Council	Councillors:	R. Biggs L. Fry
Dorchester Association		M. Rice
Local Nature Reserve		L. Poulsen
Dorset Museum & Art Gallery		C. Dixon
Dorset Council - Archaeology		S. Wallis
Thomas Hardy Society		M. Chutter
Dorchester Civic Society		I. Gosling
Shire Hall Historic Courthouse Museum		T. Little & V. Smith
Dorset History Centre		S. Johnston
Blue Badge Tour Guide		J. Wallis

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs F. Kent-Ledger and D. Taylor (Dorchester Town Council), Cllrs R. Major and R. Tarr (Dorset Council), R. White (National Trust), J. Wallis (Blue Badge Guide), A. Harrison (Town Crier) and E. Metcalfe (The Keep Military Museum).

2. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Cllr Gareth Jones was elected as chair of the committee for the remainder of the 2024-25 council year.

3. **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

The election of Vice Chairman for the committee was deferred to the next meeting.

4. **DECLARATION OF PREDETERMINATION**

None were declared.

5. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th April 2024, a copy of which had been circulated, were confirmed and signed.

6. **BUDGET UPDATE**

A report on the budget position as at 1st April 2024 was presented. TH reported that a replacement information panel for the Frink martyrs' statues had been produced. Cllr G. Jones asked that future reprints of the panel include new information from the Dorset History Centre and Dorset Museum.

RESOLVED

That the budget update be noted.

7. **HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY - UPDATE**

Matilda Manley provided an update on the work of the Tourism Partnership. The D-Day 80th immersive theatre trail was considered a great success. The projects funded by the Events & Experiences grants were going well, including the recent comedy festival. Matilda Manley requested support for the allocation of part of the tourism budget for a range of activities including re-prints of the Dorchester Walking leaflet and Cllr S. Biles noted that she often saw visitors in the town making use of the leaflet.

Cllr R. Biggs noted that Dorset Council will be developing its approach to tourism promotion and he also noted that a Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) was in the process of being formed for the Dorset area, however it was good that individual towns were active in tourism development.

Matilda Manley presented a draft Marketing and Visitor Experience plan for the period 2025-2028 which also contained proposals for key events to be organised by the Committee. Given that 2028 would be the 100th anniversary of the death of Thomas Hardy it was proposed that the Thomas Hardy Victorian Fayre take place in that year and in 2026 (thereby reinstating the two-year cycle of Fayres). The committee suggested amendments and additions to the plan including linking the Victorian Fayre to the Thomas Hardy Society conference, celebrating 100 years of women's suffrage in 2028. L. Poulsen recommended that priority 4 of the marketing plan should include specialist tours companies. Matilda Manley agreed to develop the plan for key events further through discussions with partner organisations.

RESOLVED

- a) That the report on the activities of the Tourism Partnership were noted.
- b) That a release of £3,608 from the tourism budget for the museums' passport cards, reprint of the Dorchester Walking leaflet and Google integration on the Discover Dorchester website.
- c) That the draft Tourism Partnership Forward Plan was welcomed but should be developed further through discussions with partners, particularly with regard to proposals for major events, and presented to the next meeting of the committee.

8. **HERITAGE OPEN DAY 2024 - UPDATE**

Tony Hurley presented an update on emerging plans for Heritage Open Day on 15th September 2024.

RESOLVED

That the proposals for Heritage Open Day 2024 on 15th September were noted.

9. **ONGOING PROJECTS**

Updates on the following were received:

- a) **Millstream information boards.** TH reported that the side of the Old Mill had been identified as the preferred location for the final board and the Mill Street Housing Society will decide on giving permission for its installation at its meeting in late July.
- b) **Roman mosaic project.** Matilda Manley presented a draft artists' brief as a way to take the project forward. Claire Dixon reported that Dorset Museum was working on a funding bid for the conservation and presentation of its mosaics and that perhaps the proposed project could be integrated into the bid.
- c) **Dorchester Sheroes Project:** M. Chutter and Anya Pearson presented the results of recent community consultation and reported that the chosen candidate to be celebrated with a statue will be announced at a fundraising event at the end of September.
- d) **Roman Baths Interpretation Project.** Tony Hurley updated the committee on on-going research by Clare Randall of Cotswold Archaeology.
- e) **Refurbishment of Treves Memorial.** Ian Gosling reported on the successful completion of the refurbishment project.

10. **FUNDING REQUEST FROM NEW HARDY PLAYERS**

The Committee considered a request from Shire Hall Museum for a grant towards the cost of further performances of the highly successful Six Men of Dorset play, performed by the New Hardy Players in partnership with Shire Hall and Dorchester Arts. Members were very supportive and agreed to a grant of £600.

RESOLVED

That a grant of £600 was allocated to support performances by the New Hardy Players in September 2024 of the Six Men of Dorset play.

11. **PROPOSAL FOR BLUE PLAQUE AT TOP O' TOWN HOUSE**

Members considered a report from the Assistant Town Clerk regarding a request for support from the owners of the Top o' Town House for the installation of a blue plaque to commemorate the properties former function as the Marabout Camp Commandant. Ian Gosling praised the

restoration of the building and that it was being considered for a Civic Society award.

RESOLVED

That the committee agreed to support the installation of a blue plaque on the Top o' Town House.

12. **FUTURE PROJECTS**

- a) **Water meadows project.** Stinsford Parish Council has responded positively to the suggestion of a meeting to discuss the better interpretation of the water meadows. Both Cllr David Taylor and Ian Gosling were keen to attend the meeting. It was also suggested that the information panel at Hangman's Cottage be redesigned.
- b) **History of Dorchester online content.** Matilda Manley reported that the web-content regarding the history of Dorchester in 15 objects is now online.
- c) **Town Pump enhancement proposal.** Ian Gosling reported on a very positive meeting with Wessex Water regarding the installation of a water fountain in the Town Pump – based on the design in old photographs. Ian will now discuss with Dorset Council's conservation officer.
- d) **Heritage information panels on Fairfield public realm area.** Cllr G. Jones stated that there were on-going discussions with Dorset Council with regard to improving heritage interpretation in the new pedestrianised area of Fairfield.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the project updates were noted by the Committee.

13. **UPDATES FROM PARTNERS**

Dorset Museum & Art Gallery - Claire Dixon reported that in 2025 there would be an Open Arts event to generate additional footfall and income, and benefit local artists. Plans were also being developed for the enhancement of the Victorian Hall.

Linda Poulsen reported on on-going management of the Riverside Reserve and thanked town council staff for their hard work on the site.

Dorchester Association – Michael Rice reported that a new programme of talks had just been announced.

Dorchester Civic Society – Ian Gosling reported that the Derek Beauchamp Awards would be announced in the autumn. Work was on-going to propose that the water meadows be listed as a local heritage asset.

Thomas Hardy Society – Mark Chutter reported that the annual conference would take place soon and that the 2025 programme of talks and events was about to be published.

Dorset History Centre – Sam Johnson reported that the Thomas Hardy archiving project was going well and that fundraising was on-going for the cataloguing of the William Barnes archive.

Dorset Council archaeology service – Steve Wallis reported that the Roman townhouse tours were currently running and that there was a nature conservation regime in place for the land around the townhouse. A new walk was being established to better link the townhouse with the museum.

Shire Hall – Virginia Smith reported on on-going fundraising activities and efforts to increase attendances via a new summer programme of activities. They are planning exhibitions for next year beginning with a photographic exhibition.

14. **QUESTIONS**

None were raised.

15. **URGENT ITEMS**

Chairman.....

ITEM 3: BUDGET UPDATE

Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee Statement of Accounts 2024-25

		Activities	Events
		£	£
	Balance brought forward as at 1st April 2024	5,863.59	7,938.00
Income / contributions in 2024-25:			
01/04/2024	DTC Contribution to activities	3,000.00	
01/04/2024	DTC Contribution to events		8,500.00
Expenditure in 2024-25:			
		Activities	Events
02/04/2024	Wallis Agency - Hosting Town Trail mini-sites	60.00	
03/04/2024	Dorset Council - HOD Road Closures		130.00
19/04/2024	Grassby & Sons - Treves Grant	500.00	
04/06/2024	Rural Market Town Membership	137.00	
08/07/2024	Swift Signs Weymouth - Aluminium Signs	128.33	
24/07/2024	Dorchester Arts Centre - Grant	200.00	
24/07/2024	Shire Hall Courthouse - Grant	200.00	
24/07/2024	New Hardy Players - Grant	200.00	
15/08/2024	Swift Signs Weymouth - Fordington Mill Signage	109.63	
20/08/2024	Advantage Digital Print - 3 x A2 Posters	48.00	
21/08/2024	Swift Signs Weymouth - Maumbury Rings Signs	315.42	
30/08/2024	Swift Signs Weymouth - Garden Restoration Panel	255.57	
02/09/2024	Talk About Trust - Community Room Hire	15.00	
04/09/2024	Dorset Council - HOD Road Closures (credit note)		-130.00
09/09/2024	Swift Signs Weymouth - Kings Arms Signage	116.16	
19/09/2024	Swift Signs Weymouth - Poppy Trail Panel	121.29	
27/09/2024	Joy Wallis - Heritage Day Walks		100.00
		2,406.40	100.00
	Balance	6,457.19	16,338.00
Outstanding Commitments			
	Blue Plaque / Pub Scheme / Information Boards	1,420.00	
	Mill Stream Boards	19.42	
	Available balance	5,017.77	16,338.00

ITEM 4.

DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE – 15 OCTOBER 2024

FUNDING FOR HERITAGE PROJECTS & EVENTS 2025-2029

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This paper sets out a proposal to be submitted to Dorchester Town Council for the provision of annual funding to the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee (DJHC).
- 1.2 If granted by the town council, this funding would enable the DJHC to offer small grants to local heritage projects, undertake its own small projects, and to commission/support an annual programme of heritage-related events.

2. Small project funding

- 2.1 Over recent years, the Committee has provided much needed support to local heritage projects through the use of its £3,000 per year 'activities' budget that it is awarded by Dorchester Town Council.
- 2.2 DJHC has used this activities budget to fund various small projects:
 - New heritage information projects – for example, the Millstream Heritage Project has resulted in the installation of four new panels presenting the social and industrial history of the Fordington/Mill Street area.
 - Refurbishment of heritage information boards. Existing heritage information panels have been refurbished, replaced and updated.
 - Refurbishment of Treves memorial in Weymouth Avenue Cemetery.
- 2.3 Looking ahead at the emerging projects currently under discussion (as reported elsewhere in this agenda) the Committee is likely to receive many requests for small project funding over the coming years.
- 2.3 It is proposed, therefore, to ask Dorchester Town Council to continue with its annual contribution to the work of the Committee via an annual sum of £3,000. This will allow the continuance of the Committee's ongoing projects and allow it to develop new projects.

3. Funding of Large-Scale Heritage Events

- 3.1 The DJHC has endorsed public heritage-based outdoor events held in Dorchester over recent years including the Thomas Hardy Victorian Fair (THVF) in 2023 and the annual Dorchester Heritage Open Day (DHOD).
- 3.2 The budget for each major event has the following key elements is built on top of three main core items:

- The project budget of live outdoor heritage events has in each instance included the cost of a Project Manager which has varied according to the scale of the project between £2,000 and £3,000.
 - For those events which involved a road closure, specifically the THVF, the budget also included the cost fees payable to Dorset Council for the closure of High East and West streets, amounting to around £2,500 each time.
 - Other unavoidable costs for live outdoor events include first aid services, event marshals, and, dependent on scale, security services, toilets and cleansing services. These together can amount to £1500. Event insurance has been provided at zero extra cost within DTC's public liability cover, as the event 'owner'.
- 3.3 The budget for these three core items for each full-scale live outdoor event is likely to be around **£6,000 to £7,000 per event**. However, this figure includes the cost of road closures, something that did not happen for the 2024 event due to the clash with the IronMan cycle race.
- 3.4 At present the THVF is set to be a biennial event, whilst DHOD is annual. This is likely to lead to a core budget requirement of £18,000 to £21,000 for three events over two years.
- 3.5 Over the next three financial years (April 2025 to March 2028), the Committee is invited to consider commissioning and supporting the following major events:
- April 2025 – Roman Festival
 - September 2025 – Heritage Open Day
 - July 2026 – Thomas Hardy Victorian Fair
 - September 2026 – Heritage Open Day
 - Summer 2027 – major heritage event to be confirmed.
 - September 2027 – Heritage Open Day
- 3.6 Given that the Committee is likely to have a significant underspend in the current financial year (2024-25), it is considered that a continuation of the Town Council's current level of funding should be sufficient to enable the committee to support the above events in 2025-2028 if the predicted underspend for 2024-25 is carried forward.
- 4. Recommendations:**
4. It is recommended that the committee submits a request to Dorchester Town Council for the following annual funding for the three-year period:
- £8,500 per annum for major events
 - £3,000 per annum for small projects

**Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate)
Dorchester Town Council**

ITEM 6.

DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE HERITAGE OPEN DAY 2024 – FEEDBACK REPORT

1. This year's Heritage Open Day in Dorchester was held on Sunday 15th September and comprised the following:
 - Free access to The Keep Military Museum.
 - Free 'behind the scenes' tours of Shire Hall, Dorset History Centre and the Dorset Museum (the latter required paid entry to the Museum).
 - Tour of Municipal Buildings – to view building works and civic regalia in the Council Chamber.
 - Tours of the belltower at St Peter's Church.
 - A programme of free guided walks around the town and Poundbury led by Mark Chutter, Joy Wallis and Steve Wallis.
2. The date for the event was chosen to fall within the national Heritage Open Days fortnight but avoid clashing with the Dorset Show. However, the event did co-incide with the Weymouth IronMan event which resulted in some road closures on the eastern side of the town.
3. The programme of walks were all free to attend but required pre-booking via Eventbrite. Most were fully booked in advance and, although not all those who booked turned up, some extra attendees joined the walks on the day.
4. Although the weather was dry, there was a slight decrease in footfall in Dorchester on that day compared to the previous Sunday, even though Saturday 14th September (the day before HOD) had a higher footfall than the previous weekend. It is likely, therefore, that road closures for IronMan had the effect for suppressing footfall in the town on that day.
5. Some feedback from the venues:

Dorset Museum:

- 38 people attending free tours.
- 81 paying visitors – less than typical Sunday.
- Shop sales slightly down.
- Overall evaluation: *It was fine – we were only offering limited free entry to pre-booked tours, and a few people came in wanting free museum entry and were disappointed. Those who attended the events were very pleased though. Overall footfall low this day, likely a mixture of Iron Man & good weather.*

Dorset History Centre:

- Approximately 110 visitors and 6 tours for up to 12 were all full.
- Overall evaluation: *It was a nice opportunity to show some lovely archives and grow audience understanding of our work.*

Keep Military Museum:

- 645 entries (free of charge).

- Shop sales were up, but only due to higher number of visitors. For the amount of visitors, shop spend was lower than a standard Sunday comparatively.
- The day went well but far fewer visitors in town for the event probably due to the Ironman road closures, and fewer places opening for free than in previous years.
- Will only take part in HOD next year if on a different day from IronMan due to problems with volunteers travelling to the museum.

Shire Hall:

- 64 attendees on paid for guided tours.
- Shire Hall doesn't normally open on Sundays so difficult to compare with other weekends. Not get many visitors to café and the shop was not open.
- Overall evaluation: *If we are likely to do this again next year we would have to fundraise to cover costs.*

6. **Recommendation:** The Committee is invited to give its views as to how and when the Heritage Open Day event should take place in future years. In particular, the following could be considered:

- a) **Timing** – in order to avoid clashing with the Dorset Show and IronMan, the event could take place later in September, outside of the national HOD period.
- b) **Venue offer** – the committee may need to consider providing funding to the venues to help cover the cost of free entry.
- c) **Guided walks** – these proved popular and it could be that a greater number across the town could be provided in future.
- d) **More venues** – private properties could be invited to take part.

Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate)
Dorchester Town Council

ITEM 8.

DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE DORCHESTER TOURISM PARTNERSHIP & STRATEGY UPDATE

1. The Tourism Partnership met on 1st October 2024 at The King's Arms. 17 members attended and all participated in the discussion.
2. Notes and slides from the meeting can be found online at:
<https://discoverdorchester.co.uk/about-us/>
3. The Tourism Development Officer shared an update on recent work and shared early data coming through from the new footfall counter on South Street.
4. The Tourism Partnership spent a large proportion of the meeting discussing the Sustainable Tourism Marketing Plan 2025 – 2028 and the Dorchester Tourism Partnership Marketing Action Plan for 2025.
5. The key comments fed back from these discussions are included in the meeting notes and revised copies of these documents are attached for review by the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee.
6. **Recommendation:** That the Committee endorse Sustainable Tourism Marketing Plan 2025-2028 and the Dorchester Tourism Partnership Marketing Action Plan for 2025.

**Tourism Development Officer
Dorchester Town Council**

APPENDIX A – Sustainable Tourism Marketing Plan 2025 – 2028

APPENDIX B – Dorchester Tourism Partnership Marketing Action Plan for 2025

ITEM 8 (a) – Discover Dorchester - Sustainable Tourism Marketing Plan 2025 – 2028

This plan sets out the Marketing Activity of the Dorchester Tourism Partnership for the next three years. Each year a specific Delivery plan will be agreed and delivered by the tourism partnership, based on this plan.

Aims

1. Raise the profile of Dorchester for short breaks
2. Raise the profile of Dorchester for day trips
3. Raise the profile of Dorchester as base for a Dorset adventure
4. Increase the number of visitors via Cruise and Coach
5. (Overarching Aim) Ensure all the actions above result in a measurable positive economic, social and environmental impact on the town.

Background

The Dorchester Tourism Partnership was formed in 2021 and has worked together to achieve the following vision set out in the 2020 Dorchester Heritage Tourism Strategy¹:

“To become known as a progressive and welcoming town in Wessex, passionate about and celebrating its wonderful and extensive heritage and its environment and offering an exceptional visitor experience that encourages repeat visits.”

In the last three years, the tourism partnership has run several targeted marketing campaigns. The success of these campaigns has been evaluated as much as possible and the lessons learnt from these campaigns has been used to inform this marketing plan.

This marketing plan also uses the Visit Dorset Market Segmentation Research (VDMSR)² to help determine who the tourism partnership should target, how to access them, how to attract them, how to engage them, and how to build loyalty. In addition, the VDMSR also helps to inform this marketing plan by setting out some of the perceptions and barriers to visiting Dorset².

Visitor Experience

Bringing people to Dorchester is only half of the story. The Dorchester Tourism Partnership also wants to ensure that visitors find it easy to plan their trip and have an excellent experience when they are here. A complimentary Visitor Experience Plan has therefore also been created for the Tourism Partnership, which aims to:

1. Ensure that visitors get the information need/want before they get here
2. Ensure that visitors get the information they need/want whilst in Dorchester
3. Ensure that visitors feel welcomed in Dorchester
4. Ensure that visitors have an excellent experience in Dorchester

Delivery

3.1.1 Aim 1 - Raise the profile of Dorchester for short breaks

3.1.2 Objectives

- Increase the number of overnight stays for short breaks.
- Increase visitor spend in Dorchester and create a positive economic impact.

3.1.3 Target Audience

- VDMSR “Learning and Luxury” Segment.
- Luxury and Learning - Lovers of the finer things in life – 5-star accommodation, good food, travel and high culture. They avoid tourist hotspots but enjoy the prospect of rest and recuperation by the sea.
- Do a lot of research in advance of holidays.
- 59% still working
- National marketing
- Age 55 + are the primary target but also young professional who don’t have children.
- Couples.

3.1.4 Trusted Messenger - Who do they listen to?

- Will trust official channels (such as Discover Dorchester website, Visit Dorset website or Tourist Information Centres). Will also read luxury magazines and newspapers.

3.1.5 When

- Aim for stay time between March – May and September – November
- Aim to reach audience between February – April and July – October

3.1.6 Barriers

- Distance
- Unpredictable weather
- Associating Dorset with nature but more drawn to heritage

3.1.7 What can Dorchester offer this audience

- Dorchester is very well tailored to this target audience, and it is an easy pitch. It has lots of fine dining, gardens, heritage, museums and performance art.
- Dorchester has some luxurious accommodation options and a spa to signpost and promote
- Dorchester is accessible by coach or train, and you don’t need a car to explore the town once you are here.

3.1.8 Tone of voice

For this audience we want to use a descriptive and elegant passages rather than punchy bullet points to entice the audience in.

We want to sell the experience they can have in Dorchester, so we want to describe perfect weekends here with itineraries.

The language should feel like we are talking to them personally and should feel exclusive.

Examples include:

- *Discover Dorchester, where culture and luxury intertwine. Bypass the usual South Coast tourist traps and explore this exceptional historic Dorset gem.*
- *The perfect blend of restful retreat and cultural getaway, Dorchester provides an ideal setting for an unforgettable escape.*
- *Escape the hustle and bustle of tourist hotspots and find solace in timeless Dorchester.*
- *Relax in one of Dorchester’s luxury hotels, taste premium Dorset produce at one of Dorchester’s exceptional restaurants, rejuvenate at a premium spa.*
- *Immerse yourself in the world of Thomas Hardy, where his literary legacy comes to life.*
- *Explore some of the best-preserved Roman remains in Britain.*

- *Experience the heritage quarter and discover outstanding museums with exceptional exhibitions.*
- *Engage with local music and theatre and uncover a vibrant cultural scene.*
- *Stroll through beautifully maintained gardens, relax in charming public spaces, and enjoy a leisurely pace that invites relaxation and rejuvenation.*

Use of Guides and experts to put out messaging.

3.1.9 Marketing Activity to include:

- **Partners** Photo library showing this target audience enjoying themselves in Dorchester. Partners to work together on exclusive packages like The King's Arms, Monart Spa and Dorchester Arts are already doing.
- **Paid Advertising** in luxury magazines and newspapers rather than boosted social media posts.
- **Video** High quality videos showcasing target audience enjoying time in Dorchester embedded on websites rather than 16:9 social media trending videos.
- **Social Media** Use Discover Dorchester, Visit Dorset, luxury magazine and newspaper social media rather than social media influencers.
- **Radio**
- **Press and PR** Press trips for new exhibitions and heritage highlights. Press invites and press releases for festivals and events.
- **Website** Targeted blogs on Discover Dorchester and Visit Dorset. Ensure this target audience can see themselves on the welcome page. Paid advertising on luxury magazine and newspaper website.
- **Email** Target audience in Enewsletters between February – April and July – October.
- **Print** Paid print advertising in luxury magazines and newspapers.
- **Out of Home (TIPs, digital screens, High Street banners, vehicle livery and poster sites)** London specific out of home advertising only (not a priority for this target audience).

3.1.10 Measures of success

- Collect visitor data from tourism partners (especially accommodation partners) to gather information on spend, age bracket, and where people have travelled from and where people are staying.
- Footfall data from South Street.
- Train ticket sales data from South Western Railway and Great Western Railway.
- Event feedback
- Website traffic
- Car parking spend data from Dorset Council.
- Take up data and figures on exclusive offers.
- Postcode data.

3.2 Aim 2 - Raise the profile of Dorchester for day trips

3.2.1 Objectives

- Increase the number of families visiting Dorchester for the day that live in Dorset

- Increase the number of families visiting Dorchester for the day that are staying in Weymouth, Bournemouth and Poole or West Dorset on holiday
- Increase visitor spend in Dorchester and create a positive economic impact

3.2.2 Target Audience

- Families with children. Living in Dorset and wanting to keep the children entertained and take them on day trips locally.
- Families with children staying in Weymouth, Bournemouth and Poole or West Dorset on holiday.
- Grandparents look for activities with children
- Children themselves – want them to see images and want to come.
- VDMSR “Fun and Relaxation” Segment – 57% female. Fun and Relaxation - Bargain hunters who tend to stick to popular leisure options and holiday destinations. Holidays are about letting go and finding a way to relax, so all-inclusive offers are popular. Little research before trip. Happy to stick to tourist hotspots and have easy life.

3.2.3 Trusted Messenger - Who do they listen to?

- Other parents and friends through personal recommendations or on social media
- Things that come up first in google
- Anything with offers and packages sparks their interest

3.2.4 When

- Aim for visit time - Half Term breaks, Easter Holidays and Summer Holidays
- Aim to reach audience – During the school holidays as both audiences do not plan ahead a great deal

3.2.5 Barriers

- Budget – looking for cheap and cheerful
- Don't travel far
- Will not stray from beach if the weather is good
- More interested in relaxing than learning, but do need to entertain the kids so need activities

3.2.6 What can Dorchester offer this audience

- Dorchester is a cheap, easy and fun day out come rain or shine.
- There is a lot to do here that families will enjoy
- Come by bus or train. You don't need a car to explore the town once you are here. It is easy to walk around.

3.2.7 Tone of voice

For this audience we want to be snappy for the parents. Bold headlines. No waffle. Get the discounts and the ease of access very visible. Emphasise value rather than cheap.

For the children we want them to see exciting images of fun activities in Dorchester so that want to visit. Examples include:

- *Dorchester Family Fun – Big Day Out, Small Prices!*
- *Family Fun on a Budget in Dorchester – Exclusive Deals for a Great Day Out!*
- *Kids Go Wild at Kingston Maurward Animal Park – Free entry animal park and soft play!*

- *Dino-mite Day at The Dinosaur Museum – Great value family tickets and interactive fun for dinosaur-loving kids.*
- *Free Family Adventure at Maiden Castle – Explore the great outdoors and soak in Dorset's history for absolutely no cost!*
- *Tasty Treats at Local Cafés – Enjoy family-friendly dining options with budget-friendly menus for all.*
- *Kids go free at Dorset Museum & Art Gallery – this enormous museum will keep the kids engaged and entertained all day!*
- *Catch all the latest family film releases for a steal at Dorchester Plaza Cinema!*

3.2.8 Marketing activities to include:

- **Partners** Tourism partners to provide offers that the tourism partnership can use to bring in the footfall and spend.
- **Paid Advertising** Paid advertising on parent social media pages and guest blogs on parent blogs.
- **Video** Trending social media videos using key hashtags rather than long form.
- **Social Media**
 - Get paid or free advertising in parent social media groups and pages such as Mums Net.
 - Target family social media influencer for social media and blog content.
 - Set up social media opportunities in the town so that parents share the fact that they are visiting Dorchester on social media.
 - Use of Tik Tok and reels on Instagram for younger parents.
- **Press and PR**
 - Work with social media influencers and bloggers that are already reaching our target audience.
 - Regular press releases to Dorset media outlets about events and offers during holidays.
- **Website**
 - SEO targeted blogs to ensure high google rankings for key searches.
 - Ensure that this target audience can clearly see themselves on the front page and the type of day out they would like to have
 - Try and get blogs and presence on Top 10 lists etc. on Visit Dorset and websites like www.dayoutwiththekids.co.uk and www.letsgowiththechildren.co.uk
 - Encourage visitors to write google and trip advisor reviews.
- **Email**
 - Target Dorset schools at end of term asking them to share cheap and free activities happening in Dorchester during school holidays with parents.
 - Run competitions to get audience to sign up to mailing list.
- **Print**
 - Leaflets with offers that promote cheap and cheerful days out in Dorchester for families with lots of offers distributed around Dorset. Make sure leaflet has train times

and bus times on it so they don't need to look anything up. All the info in one place to make it SUPER easy.

- Leaflets need to be at accommodation sites and in supermarkets. This target audience unlikely to visit a TIC.
- Offer pages in local newspapers.
- Inclusion in other publications such as Visit Dorset Summer leaflets and Resort
- **Out of Home** (TIPs, digital screens, High Street banners, vehicle livery and poster sites)
 - Presence at Holiday Park - Physical stalls with activities and offers - Dora the Dormouse mascot costume that visits holiday parks on popular changeover days.
 - Posters at Holiday Parks in communal areas.
 - Posters at train stations and bus stops in target towns.
 - Street banners.

3.2.9 Measures of success –

- Number of people taking up offers in Dorchester
- Visitor data from tourism partners to gather information on spend, age bracket, and where people have travelled from and where people are staying.
- Surveys at events.
- Number of people sharing social media opportunity that is set up.
- Trip advisor and google reviews.
- Footfall data from South Street.
- Train ticket sales data from South Western Railway and Great Western Railway.
- Car parking spend data from Dorset Council.

3.3 Aim 3 - Raise the profile of Dorchester as base for a Dorset adventure

3.3.1 Objectives

- Get people to book accommodation in Dorchester and use the town as a weeklong base for a wider Dorset adventure
- Get people to spend their evenings in Dorchester eating out and spending in the town on some days too.
- Increase visitor spend in Dorchester and create a positive economic impact

3.3.2 Target Audience

- "Nature and Culture" Segment - Nature lovers with a practical approach to life. They spend their free time exploring beauty spots and historical treasures. Holidays are driven by the destination and activities available and well researched prior to booking.
- 46% of audience are aged 55+ and 33% are aged 35-54
- 62% of audience still working and 29% have children in household.
- Couples.
- Accommodation not important - just a base to explore. However, they do like places with character.
- Coming from South East and East of England.
- Attracted to eco-credentials - Like to eat locally sourced food and support independents.

- Hobbies include walking, visitor attractions, markets, crafting, nature, festivals and events.

3.3.3 Trusted Messenger - Who do they listen to?

- Like to do their own research and lots of it on google.
- Walking sites and ramblers.

3.3.4 When

- Aim for stay time between March – July and September – November
- Aim to reach audience between February – April and July – October

3.3.5 Barriers

- Audience put off by distance, unpredictable weather and not knowing what is here
- Limited bed capacity in the town for expansion in this area

3.3.6 What can Dorchester offer this audience

- Dorchester is in a great position to overcome these barriers with its great public transport links and high number of indoor, rainy-day activities for this active target audience.

3.3.7 Tone of voice

For this audience we want to be informative and helpful for this research loving practical audience. Content that is jam packed with useful information and recommendations rather than descriptive prose. This can be is bullet points, infographics, paragraphs and maps. For this audience we are selling Dorset, not Dorchester.

3.3.8 Marketing activities to include:

- **Partners**
 - Dorchester based accommodation providers to echo and reinforce marketing activity carried out by the tourism partnership to this target audience about using Dorchester as a base for a Dorset adventure.
 - Visit Dorset are a key partner for this target audience because their marketing content will be viewed by people who want to visit Dorset overall and might not have considered staying in Dorchester, therefore would not think to look at Dorchester specific content.
 - Widen partnership that we collaborate with for this aim to other towns and organisations in wider Dorset. Make the most of reciprocal advertising and marketing opportunities.
- **Paid Advertising** This target audience are likely to be National Trust members and/or Ramblers
- **Video**
 - Videos that are more like infographics with maps and top tips. Fast paced but don't have to be short, just no waffle.
 - Embed these videos on websites and on social media
 - Promote nature in Dorchester through videos
- **Social Media**
 - Infographics with maps and top tips
 - Carousel highlights showing a week in Dorset from Dorchester
 - Nature spots in and around Dorchester and beautiful photos of nature.

- Hosting influencers that reach this target audience with partners like Visit Dorset, Lulworth Estate or Jurassic Coast Trust.
- Promotion of walking and cycling opportunities in Dorchester and surrounding areas.
- **Press and PR** Joint press and PR with other towns in Dorset and with Visit Dorset. Press trips.
- **Website** Blogs are jam packed with useful information and recommendations rather than descriptive prose. This can be is bullet points, infographics, paragraphs and maps. Having this content on our website, Visit Dorset and partners websites.
Promotion of walking and cycling opportunities in Dorchester and surrounding areas.
- **Email** Reach new audiences through Visit Dorset and partner enewsletters.
- **Print** Leaflets are not useful for this audience as they plan before they arrive in the county.
- **Out of Home** (TIPs, digital screens, High Street banners, vehicle livery and poster sites) - Posters at train stations along the South Western Railway line.

3.3.9 Measures of success –

- Visitor data from tourism partners (especially accommodation partners) to gather information on spend, age bracket, and where people have travelled from and where people are staying.
- Footfall data from South Street.
- Train ticket sales data from South Western Railway and Great Western Railway.
- Car parking spend data from Dorset Council.

3.4 Aim 4 - Increase the number of visitors to Dorchester for group travel via Cruise and Coach.

3.4.1 Objectives

- Increase the number of group travel visits to Dorchester
- Increase visitor spend in Dorchester and create a positive economic impact

3.4.2 Target Audience

With this aim we are not marketing directly to those visiting Dorchester. Instead, we are targeting the group travel organisers.

3.4.3 Marketing activities to include:

- **Partners** Curate unique and exclusive experiences for cruise and coach that can be shared with group travel organisers.
- **Website** Photo library on website that group travel organisers can use to promote Dorchester as a destination.
- **Email** Circulate a quarterly newsletter for coach and cruise contacts to share new and existing opportunities in Dorchester.
- **Print** Ensure Dorchester leaflets are easy to pick up at Portland harbour
- **Out of Home** (TIPs, digital screens, High Street banners, vehicle livery and poster sites) - Tourist Information Signage at Coach Car parking stops. Clear signposting to TIPs in Dorchester so that group travel groups that are dropped off in town can find them easily.
- Try and get a physical presence down at Portland Harbour

3.4.4 Measures of success –

- Number of Dorchester group travel packages being taken up by group travel organisations.
- Comparing footfall data on days when Cruise ships are in Portland Harbour to days when they are not.
- Reports from partners and tour guides of groups visiting the town.
- Coach parking data from Dorset Council.

3.5 Aim 5 - (Overarching Aim) Ensure all the actions above result in a measurable positive economic, social and environmental impact on the town

Sustainable Tourism

The Tourism Partnership recognises that Dorchester isn't just for visitors. It is important that Dorchester residents and communities feel pride and ownership of the town. A great visitor experience should not create a detrimental resident experience and the number of visitors should not have a detrimental economic, societal or environmental impact on the town.

To measure the economic impact, we will:

Aims 1-4 each have measures to assigned to assess whether the marketing activities have a positive economic impact on the town. In addition to this, the following will also be carried out to measure the social and environmental impact of this marketing plan:

To measure the social impact, we will:

- Ensure regular contact with Dorchester Town Council Community Development Officer who works with lots of different community groups and organisations.
- Monitor community social media groups for any negative impacts of visitor numbers or behaviour noticed.
- Create resident survey annually to understand residents' perceptions and pride of Dorchester as a place to live.

To measure environmental impact:

- Ensure regular contact with Dorchester Town Council outdoor services team.
- Collect Beryl bike user data.
- Collect Train and bus ticket information.
- Engage with Dorchester BID keeper of the walks to monitor litter level observation.
- Car parking data.

- **Prioritising**

Each of the marketing aims in this plan attracts a different target audience/market segment and each of these audiences have a different market opportunity for Dorchester.

The table below shows that the **Nature and Culture** segment and **Luxury and Learning** Segments have the highest spend potential with the least marketing effort required.

The Tourism Partnership will therefore prioritising marketing activity between 2025 – 2028 on these audiences and achieving Aims 1 and 3 of this plan.

Table 1 – Market Opportunity of Dorchester – Data sourced from VDMSR²

	Size of audience	Size of opportunity	Ease of attracting	Spend in Dorchester potential
Nature and Culture	22% (7.0m adults)	High (and off-peak potential)	Easy	High
Luxury and Learning	13% (4.2m adults)	Low (but there is off-peak potential)	Easy	High
Fun and Relaxation	25% (8.0m adults)	Moderate	Moderate	Low
Active and Mindful	20% (6.4m adults)	High	Difficult	Medium
Comfort and Convenience	19% (6.1m adults)	Low	Moderate	Low
Coach and Cruise	Not known at this time	Not known at this time	Difficult – once have got trip set up, no guarantee that people will sign up to go on it. Little control and long lead in time for planning.	Low – Accommodation not in Dorchester. Free food back at Cruise ship or evening meal back at coach hotel.

Key dates and events

There are a number of key heritage highlights that are coming up in the next four years that marketing activity related to our aims should tie in with. These include exhibitions that Dorchester museums will be running that relate directly to Dorchester’s heritage.

Good marketing and press campaigns have a catch, something new, a reason to visit now and not at any other time. Tying our campaigns in with these key dates and events can really help with this.

Each of the museums running the exhibitions will be running their own marketing campaigns. The Tourism Partnership will support their marketing campaigns and put in marketing effort to ensure that the people coming to visit for the exhibitions spend additional money and time in the town generally.

Year	Heritage Highlights
2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience Roman Britain in Dorchester – Roman Gladiator Exhibition at Dorset Museum & Art Gallery • Tolkien and Maiden Castle – Exhibition at Shire Hall Museum • Judge Jeffreys - Exhibition at Shire Hall Museum • Dorchester on TV and film (to compliment The Keep Military Museum exhibition)
2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discover Justice (and injustice) through the ages - Exhibition at Shire Hall Museum • Thomas Hardy birthday celebration
2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience Roman Britain in Dorchester - 90 years since the Roman Town House was discovered 50 years since the Roman baths were discovered (1977)
2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas Hardy - 100 years since Thomas Hardy died

References:

1. Dorchester Heritage Tourism Strategy, 2020 - <https://www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk/docs/downloads/2020-Dorchester-Heritage-Tourism-Strategy-Final.pdf>
2. Visit Dorset Market Segmentation Research, 2023 - <https://www.visit-dorset.com/industry/research/destination-performance/dorset-market-segmentation-research/Perceptions of Dorset> - Past visitors particularly associate Dorset with beautiful beaches, fossils and picturesque market towns. However, only 15% of non-visitors are aware of Dorset’s fossil fame.

In comparison to its competitors, Dorset had a higher percentage of survey respondents associating the county to literary connections and culture, as well as getting close to nature, which suggests these may be drivers for some visitors.

Barriers to visiting Dorset - The main barriers to visiting for previous visitors are distance and unpredictable weather (underlining the fact that Dorset competes with foreign holidays as well as other southern counties).

For non-visitors, distance is again the biggest barrier, followed by not knowing enough about the area and what is on offer.

38% of respondents said that they would not consider visiting Dorset because it was too far to travel.

ITEM 8 (b) Dorchester Tourism Partnership Marketing Action Plan for 2025

		Marketing Target for the month	Heritage Highlights and Key Events (those in bold to be delivered by Tourism Partnership)	Delivery during this month	Budget	Tourism Development Officer Actions during this month	Partner actions during this month	Measuring Success and impact
'24	Oct					Contract Roman Festival Coordinator, Taste of Dorset Festival (£3000 request from Heritage Committee) and Walking Festival Coordinator (£3000 request from Dorchester Heritage Tourism Pot).	Subgroup to review tenders and appoint.	
	Nov and Dec					<p>Create brand identify for Learning and Luxury short breaks, Fun and Relaxation Day Trips, Nature and Culture base for your Dorset adventure.</p> <p>Website refresh to reflect Learning and Luxury</p> <p>Create itineraries for Learning and Luxury Short Breaks</p> <p>Set up January press trip with Dorset Museum & Art Gallery.</p> <p>Create year in Dorchester poster and webpage with events and itinerary suggestions.</p>		Establish baseline of data for start of new marketing plan.
'25	Jan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning and Luxury short breaks 	Gladiator Exhibition at Dorset Museum & Art Gallery (opens 25 th Jan)	<p>Agree brand identify for Learning and Luxury short breaks, Fun and Relaxation Day Trips, Nature and Culture base for your Dorset adventure.</p> <p>Website refresh to ensure that this</p>	Free	<p>Set up Luxury paid for advertising.</p> <p>Working with Roman Festival Coordinator, Taste of Dorset Festival and Walking Festival Coordinator (contracted Autumn 2024)</p>	<p>Subgroup to agree content and imagery for luxury magazine ad.</p> <p>Provide fresh imagery for this target audience.</p>	<p>Write residents survey with Community Development Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record monthly footfall. Record train ticket and parking data.

				target audience can see themselves on the home page, create itineraries and blogs for this audience. Press trip with Dorset Museum & Art Gallery to new Exhibition as part of a learning and luxury weekend in Dorchester.	£500		Input experiences for press trip. Send over Half term experiences and offers for promotion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate tourism partner collected visitor data. Record web and social media stats Record Enewlsetter subscribers. Record Press trip take up and press coverage gained.
	Feb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning and Luxury short breaks 	Gladiator Exhibition at Dorset Museum & Art Gallery	Luxury magazine paid for advertising for a Learning and Luxury Short break.	£2000	Set up paid for advertising for Days out with the Kids. Working with Roman Festival Coordinator and Walking Festival Coordinator (contracted Autumn 2024)	Subgroup to agree paid for advertising for Days out with the Kids.	<p>Carry out residents survey with Community Development Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record monthly footfall. Record train ticket and parking data. Collate tourism partner collected visitor data. Record web and social media stats Record newsletter subscribers.
	Mar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning and Luxury short breaks 	Gladiator Exhibition at Dorset Museum & Art Gallery Keep Military Museum TV and Film Exhibition			Do website refresh for April. Set up Photoshoot for April. Working with Roman Festival Coordinator and Walking Festival Coordinator (contracted Autumn 2024)	Provide details of Easter Offers and activities by 1 st March.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record monthly footfall. Record train ticket and parking data. Collate tourism partner collected visitor data. Record web and social media stats Record Newsletter subscribers.

						Set up Instagram photo opportunity at Roman Festival and introduce Dora the Dora Mascot character.		
Apr (Easter Hols)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fun and Relax Day trips 	<p>Gladiator Exhibition at Dorset Museum & Art Gallery</p> <p>Durnovaria Roman Festival – Saturday 12th April</p> <p>Keep Military Museum TV and Film Exhibition</p>	<p>Website refresh to ensure that this target audience can see Easter Holiday offers and activities easily on the homepage.</p> <p>Paid advertising on www.daysoutwiththekids.co.uk</p> <p>Set up Instagram photo opportunity at Roman Festival and introduce Dora the Explorer Mascot character.</p> <p>Photo shoot with kids enjoying their time in and around Dorchester for us in Summer campaign.</p> <p>Roman Festival Coordinator to deliver event</p>	<p>Free</p> <p>£1000</p> <p>£1000</p> <p>Durnovaria Roman Festival - £5000 to request from Heritage Committee</p>	<p>Do website refresh for May.</p> <p>Write blog for Visit Dorset for May and build relationships with wider Dorset partners to build reciprocal promotional relationships.</p> <p>Working with Roman Festival Coordinator and Walking Festival Coordinator (contracted Autumn 2024)</p> <p>Write and organise blog on Visit Dorset about using Dorchester as a base for your Dorset Nature and Culture Adventure.</p>	<p>Partners to focus on encouraging visitors to share Trip Advisor and google reviews with added images.</p> <p>Provide free access for photo shoot</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record monthly footfall. Record train ticket and parking data. Collate tourism partner collected visitor data. Record web and social media stats Record Enewsletter subscribers Number of people attending Roman Festival and stats on where they have come from, how long staying etc. 	
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature and Culture base for your Dorset Adventure 	<p>Gladiator Exhibition at Dorset Museum & Art Gallery (closes 11th May)</p> <p>Dorchester Walking Festival</p>	<p>Website refresh to ensure that this target audience can see themselves on the home page, create itineraries and blogs for this audience.</p>	<p>FREE</p> <p>FREE?</p>	<p>Delivery of Walking Festival with coordinator.</p> <p>Advertising with National Trust about Dorchester as a base for your Dorset National Trust adventure.</p> <p>Set up posters along South Western Railway line.</p>	<p>Dorchester based Accommodation partners to echo “ Nature and Culture base for your Dorset Adventure” messaging on their websites and social media.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record monthly footfall. Record train ticket and parking data. Collate tourism partner collected visitor data. Record web and social media stats 	

			Keep Military Museum TV and Film Exhibition	<p>Blog on Visit Dorset about using Dorchester as a base for your Dorset Nature and Culture Adventure.</p> <p>Work with Walking Festival Coordinator and ensure festival has a Nature and Culture base for your Dorset Adventure focus – building on the train walks from last year.</p>	Dorchester Walking Festival - £3000 to request from Heritage Tourism Pot	<p>Advertising with National Trust about Dorchester as a base for your Dorset National Trust adventure.</p> <p>Set up posters along South Western Railway line.</p> <p>Social media carousels, reels and infographics to target audience.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record Enewsletter subscribers Number of people attending Walking Festival and stats on where they have come from, how long staying etc.
	June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature and Culture base for your Dorset Adventure 		<p>Advertising with National Trust about Dorchester as a base for your Dorset National Trust adventure.</p> <p>Set up posters along South Western Railway line.</p> <p>Social media carousels, reels and infographics to target audience.</p>	<p>£500</p> <p>£150</p>	<p>Prep for Fun and Relaxation Day Trips August Activities</p>	<p>Send over summer holiday offers for Fun and Relaxation Day Trips August Activities.</p> <p>Sub group to agree summer leaflet and advert.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record monthly footfall. Record train ticket and parking data. Collate tourism partner collected visitor data. Record web and social media stats Record Enewsletter subscribers Hits on National Trust advert.
	July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature and Culture base for your Dorset Adventure 				<p>Prep for Fun and Relaxation Day Trips August Activities and September prep.</p>	<p>Prepare for Summer holidays!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record monthly footfall. Record train ticket and parking data. Collate tourism partner collected visitor data. Record web and social media stats

								<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record Enewsletter subscribers
	Aug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fun and Relax Day trips 		<p>Website refresh to ensure that this target audience can see Summer Holiday offers and activities easily on the homepage.</p> <p>Set up Instagram photo opportunity in town centre and use Dora the Explorer Mascot character at Summer events.</p> <p>Exclusive offers for Holidays Park.</p> <p>Summer leaflet with train and bus times, offers and events.</p> <p>Posters in Holiday Parks.</p> <p>Mums Net advert.</p> <p>Stands in target Holiday Parks on Changeover days with Dora the Explorer.</p> <p>Regular press releases to Dorset media outlets and paid advertising of</p>	<p>£1750</p> <p>£100</p> <p>£500</p>	Delivery of August Activities	Delivery of August Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record monthly footfall. Record train ticket and parking data. Collate tourism partner collected visitor data. Record web and social media stats Record Enewsletter subscribers. Number of people who have taken up exclusive Holiday Park Deal and offers in leaflet. Number of people engaged at Holiday Parks Clicks on Mumsnet advert. Number of people sharing social media opportunity set up in town centre.

				offers in Dorset Echo and West Dorset Magazine.				
	Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature and Culture base for your Dorset Adventure 		<p>Website refresh to ensure that this target audience can see themselves on the home page, create itineraries and blogs for this audience.</p> <p>Specific Autumn itinerary on Discover Dorchester.</p> <p>Build on relationships with wider Dorset tourism partners</p> <p>Arrange press trip for Taste of Dorset and Dorchester Literary Festival</p>	£500	<p>Press trip arrangements and Festival promotion.</p> <p>Create draft 2026 Marketing Action Plan</p>	Help with press trip arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record monthly footfall. Record train ticket and parking data. Collate tourism partner collected visitor data. Record web and social media stats Record Enewsletter subscribers
	Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning and Luxury Nature and Culture base for your Dorset Adventure 	Taste Dorset – Fine dining and Local Produce For Dorchester Literary Festival	Promotions of Taste of Dorset and Literary Festivals	Taste of Dorset Festival - £3000 to request from Heritage Tourism Pot	Finalise 2026 Marketing Action Plan	Review, discuss and agree 2026 marketing action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record monthly footfall. Record train ticket and parking data. Collate tourism partner collected visitor data. Record web and social media stats Record Enewsletter subscribers Number of people attending Taste of Dorset Festival, where they come

								from, how long staying etc.
	Nov		Campaign prep for 2026					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record monthly footfall. Record train ticket and parking data. Collate tourism partner collected visitor data. Record web and social media stats Record Enewsletter subscribers
	Dec		Campaign prep for 2026					Annual report

ITEM 9.

DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE DORCHESTER TOURISM PARTNERSHIP – FESTIVAL PROPOSALS FOR 2025

1. **Festival proposals.** As part of the Dorchester Tourism Partnership Marketing Action Plan for 2025, two festivals have been proposed that the partnership would like to request approval from Heritage Committee for spend out of the Heritage Tourism budget. These festivals are the new Food & Drink Festival and a Walking Festival. Appendices A and B attached have proposals for each of these festivals and requests for spend.
2. **Recommendation:** The Committee is asked to consider these two festival proposals and agree the allocation of funding.

**Tourism Development Officer
Dorchester Town Council**

APPENDIX A – Proposal for Food & Drink Festival

APPENDIX B – Proposal for Dorchester Walking Festival

ITEM 9 - APPENDIX A - Proposal Food and Drink Festival 2025

Dates: Friday 10th - Sunday 19th October 2025

Location: Dorchester and surrounding (to include Kingston Maurward, Summer Lodge, Sculpture By the Lakes, Local Vineyards, Watercress Farm and other local producers surrounding Dorchester) to extend to a West Dorset Food and Drink Festival if other towns get involved.

Aim: Celebrate local food and drink (farming, producers and chefs). To celebrate local farming and food and drink heritage (a big part of our history as a market town and brewing town).

Plan:

- This festival has been inspired by the Taste East Devon Festival: <https://www.tasteeastdevon.co.uk/> and is an expansion of the previous BrewDorch festival.
- The idea is that there are lots of different activities such as walks, feasts, tastings, making sessions, meet the farmer, talks at different locations across the festival area. The Coordinator will collate the schedule and communicate with all the festival partners. The Marketing Role will then promote the festival and raise the profile of Dorchester as a food and drink destination.
- The festival would be seek to be an accessible and litter free event. There would be events for just adults, and events aimed at families too.

Tickets: Each event would be ticketed separately but collated on one platform. Most would be paid for events however, there would be certain events that are free to make sure everyone can be involved in the festival in some way.

Budget: £3000 for festival Coordinator and Marketing costs (to be separated into two roles)

Several private partners have expressed an interest in being involved in the festival and there are opportunities for additional funding to be added to this amount in order to increase the promotion of this festival more on a national scale.

Shire Hall Museum, The King's Arms, the Summer Lodge, Kingston Maurward College and Alastair Braidwood from the Tourism Partnership are willing to sit on a sub-group to steer and oversee this festival. Dorset Food and Drink have also been consulted and would like to be involved in the festival.

The Tourism Development Officer is willing to reach out to other Town Councils in West Dorset to see if they would be willing to match spend and extend the festival out to become a West Dorset festival. A steer from the Heritage Committee on whether to extend to a West Dorset festival is sought from the Tourism Partnership.

Recommendation:

The Tourism Partnership is supportive of this festival and now Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee's approval is sought for the allocation of £3,000 for coordination and marketing of the Festival from the Heritage Tourism budget for the Dorchester and surrounding areas aspect of this festival.

ITEM 9. APPENDIX B – Proposal for Dorchester Walking Festival 2025

Dates: Friday 9th May - Sunday 18th May 2025

Location: Dorchester and surrounding countryside.

Aim: Celebrate our local heritage and local landscape through a wide range of walks over 10 days. To bring new visitors to Dorchester and raise the profile of this area for a holiday.

Plan: The Dorchester Walking Festival has now run for two years. Last years festival was run by Tania Deacon and she enhanced the festival hugely by bringing in train walks and other longer walks and also through her targeted marketing with Ramblers, Walking magazines and dog friendly magazine.

The Tourism Partnership and walk leaders were very impressed with her work.

This year we would like to run a similar festival again and build on the marketing side of the festival to gain even more national coverage and more bookings from people outside of the county.

Budget: £3000 for festival Coordinator and Marketing costs.

Recommendation:

The Tourism Partnership is supportive of this festival and now the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee's approval is sought for the allocation of £3,000 for coordination and marketing of the festival from the Heritage Tourism budget.

ITEM 10.

DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE PROPOSAL FOR DORCHESTER ROMAN FESTIVAL 2025

1. To co-incide with the Dorset Museum & Art Gallery's special exhibition on the 'Gladiators of Britain (a new touring exhibition from the British Museum) which will take place from 25th January until 11th May 2025, it is proposed that the Committee supports a Roman Festival in Dorchester in April 2025. This report sets out the details of this proposal and request the allocation of funding from the Committee's budget for the Festival's planning, preparation and activities.
2. **Date and venue:** It is proposed that the Festival take place on Saturday 12th April and Sunday 13th April 2025. The main venue would be Maumbury Rings but other fringe events would take place in other key locations around the town (see below).
3. **Aims:** The main aims of the event would be to celebrate Dorchester's Roman heritage and help promote the Museum's special exhibition. The festival would also aim to bring new visitors to Dorchester and the Tourism Development Officer would work with local accommodation providers and attractions to enhance the visitor offer.
4. **Proposed activities:** The festival could include the following:

Maumbury Rings: Free activities including:

- Gladiator training sessions
- Flower crowns and goddess area celebrating the Roman Goddess of Flora
- Make a mosaic with tiles
- Gladiator combat displays
- Taste food cooked with Roman utensils from a Roman cookbook
- Roman board games
- Storytelling
- Roman Music
- Portable antiquities Team
- Self-guided Roman Dorchester walk from Maumbury Rings

Roman Town House:

- Pre booked tours of the Roman Town House throughout the day with Dorset Museum & Art Gallery (Paid)
- Roman life reenactors situated on site showing what life at the Roman Town House would have been like.

Roman Walls:

- Work with the design agency *Dead Walk Designs* to create an entrance to Durnovaria at the gates to the town and to promote the festival.
- Roman parade around the walls (like the Beating the Bounds) and down South Street– ask people in advance to join the parade and come as a Roman soldier.

Site of the Roman Baths:

- See a mural on the wall outside of the car park emerge over the weekend showing an artist's impression of what Dorchester Roman Baths would have looked like. Join in with the painting in a paint by numbers section.
- Visit a gazebo on site that shows photographs, newspaper articles and plans of Dorchester's Roman Baths and learn more about Roman baths generally in Roman times.

Roman Aqueduct:

- Guided walks by Steve Wallis.

5. **Budget:** The event will require a budget of £3,000 for the Festival Coordinator and Marketing costs (to be separated into two roles/commissions) and £2,000 for re-enactors and festival activities.
6. **Recommendation.** The Committee is invited to consider the above proposal and, if supportive, to agree the allocation of funds from the Committee's heritage event budget.