



DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL



BOROUGH GARDENS

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE PLAN

2020-2030

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Revision 5

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Foreword

This management plan follows on from the previous 10-year Borough Gardens Management Plan that was developed as part of the Heritage Lottery Funded improvements to the gardens in 2007. The plan was then held over for a further 2 years due to Local Government Re-organisation within Dorset and the potential for effects on services that, at the time, was un-clear.

The former plan was heavily focussed on the needs and outcomes from the HLF award and in the main it sought to safeguard the infrastructure of the gardens and their future, (plus securing the grant monies) by being prescriptive and detailed about many issues that are now out of date such as the structure of the Council and responsibilities within that, political arrangements at a local level and future projections over the life of the plan.

This plan is significantly different from the old plan in that its action plan and general ethos is designed around the Green Flag Award criteria which are viewed to be a very good guide to effective management and maintenance of Open Spaces, Parks and Gardens.

The political map in Dorset changed in 2019 with a move to a single tier authority “Dorset Council”, with the Town Council on the next tier. As part of this process some services previously delivered by the West Dorset District Council (which ceased to exist 31/3/19) potentially could have been taken over by Dorchester Town Council. At the time of writing no services have been transferred (the full potential extent of this is still unclear) therefore internal structures, services provided and cost centres remain the same at the Town Council.

The “on the ground delivery” within the gardens remains in steady state with a business-as-usual approach revolving around and steered by this new plan and this will continue into the future.

For the purposes of Green flag judging and to keep judging documents as light as possible all appendices referred to in the main text will be supplied separately at the time of judging in an evidence folder of supporting information which will be available on the day of judging or in advance, at the judge’s preference. This will include appendices to this original document plus other relevant information such as up to date site inspection forms, staff training examples and 2022/2023 events programme etc.

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Introduction

The main objective of this plan is to set out a clear vision for the long term horticultural and recreational role of the Dorchester Borough Gardens. The plan explains the context to the overall management and maintenance strategy for the Borough Gardens together with the aims and objectives for their future.

The plan is a working manual for use by Dorchester Town Council and its staff and is a guide to contractors (where applicable) to ensure understanding so that all management activities share the same objectives and subsequent outcomes.

The Borough Gardens provide a rich horticultural heritage. Research has identified the historical significance of the Gardens as an example of a late 19th Century municipal landscape, designed by William Goldring, and an important public open space in the context of the Dorchester's development. It is the historical and aesthetic experience of the gardens that distinguish them from other types of green space in the town.

The strategic importance of the Borough Gardens in enhancing the quality of life, serving recreational needs and improving Dorchester's urban environment has been recognised in this plan and is fully supported by it. By implementing the plan, the council aims to further raise the level of horticultural excellence in the management of the Gardens, such that the visitor experience is high quality and the heritage and ecological value of the gardens are both safeguarded and increased in a sustainable manner.

Vision for the Borough Gardens in Dorchester

A key aspect of this plan is to have a clear vision for the Gardens and how they will be used and implemented directly through staff with the necessary skills working in co-ordination with one another. Our vision is:

The effective management and conservation of the Borough Gardens to provide an attractive and enjoyable area of open greenspace and historic features of interest, that contribute to the recreational, leisure, educational and cultural needs of Dorchester's community and visitors.

In the 10 years of this plan everyone in Dorchester will have access to:

- A high-quality traditional garden staffed by gardeners and park keepers in daylight hours, with features such as mature trees, structures, ornamental planting, seating, toilets and a kiosk.
- Open, welcoming and well managed grass areas, with formal beds and borders and some protected wildlife habitats, which promote sustainability and support biodiversity.
- Well-kept and well-maintained, imaginative play, sport (tennis) and community facilities.
- Well organised events throughout the year.

1 Background

1.1 Target Readership

This document is primarily intended to inform the public and to assist members of the Town Council in their consideration of the various issues affecting the management and maintenance of the Gardens. It will be used by all staff and contractors involved in the garden's maintenance and future development.

The plan is also intended to be used for the purposes of ongoing Green flag applications and judging and will be made available to anyone who wishes to read it and also will be present on the Borough Gardens page of the Town Councils web site.

The Assistant Clerk Outdoor Services (ACOS) is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of this plan are reviewed and updated annually. The Head Gardener (HG) is responsible for ensuring that onsite work is carried out in a structured and timely fashion and that it is of high quality.

1.2 Monitoring and Review

The plan aims to establish a consistent strategy for managing and maintaining the gardens and the associated buildings over a period of 10 years (2020-2030).

The plan will be reviewed annually. Any necessary changes will be made to it, shown in Red and arrangements put in place for their implementation including, if necessary, changes to the physical and financial resources allocated to the maintenance of the Gardens.

Each aspect of the plan shall be reviewed and updated in accordance with the following table:

Item	Frequency	Responsibility
Management Plan (Whole Document)	Annually	Assistant Town Clerk Outdoor Services
Management and delivery Strategies	Annually	ATCOS
Biodiversity Policy	As and when required	ATCOS
Waste Management Policy	As and when required	ATCOS
Events Programme	Annually	Assistant Town Clerk(corporate)
Maintenance Programme	Annually	ATCOS and H Gardener

2 The Existing Site

2.1 Introduction to the site

Dorchester Town Council own the freehold of the Borough Gardens and the adjacent Bowling Alley and West Walks. It also owns two tennis courts, located to the east of West Walks, these are, at the time of writing, subject to a planning application for change of use to affordable housing to rent for local people this being a priority for the Town Council for delivery within Dorchester.

Both the Gardens and the Walks are listed as Grade II, in the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England, and both are within a designated Conservation Area. Two of the structures in the Gardens are listed as Grade II. They are the Bandstand (1898) and adjacent park benches, and the Clock Tower (1905). The Gardens are extremely important to the people of Dorchester in terms of providing urban open space for relaxation, contemplation, play, exercise and for social functions.

2.2 Location & History

Dorchester Borough Gardens are situated approximately 250m south of West Gate at the western end of High West Street see Fig 1 pg. 10. The 4-hectare site is approximately rectangular shaped on plan, and is bounded to the north by Albert Road, to the west by Cornwall Road, and to the east by the early 18th Century West Walks. To the south, the site is bounded by a footpath, which links Bowling Alley Walk to the east with Cornwall Road to the west. The Borough Gardens were originally designed by William Goldring (plantsman, designer, editor of 'The Garden' and President of the Kew Guild) and were opened on 30 July 1896. The original design, heavily influenced by the 'Picturesque' style and to a lesser extent by the 'Gardenesque' style, had no formal sports provision. It provided for fairly sparse planting amongst lawns and a curvilinear footpath network in the style of a 'Jardin Anglaise'. Goldring's design was further enhanced during the early years of the Garden's existence by the addition of the Gregory Memorial Fountain (1898), the Bandstand (1898), the Tirah Obelisk (1899) and the Clock Tower (1905)



Borough Gardens circa 1900.

The formal sports areas comprising tennis courts and a bowling green (closed for some years before conversion to two new tennis courts in 2018), and the children's play area were added during the inter-war period, these were less sympathetic to the original design and significantly changed the character of the Gardens.

During the Second World War the most significant change within the Gardens was the construction of an Air Raid Precautions water tank at the northern end which was then modified for use as a children's paddling pool (removed as part of the 2007 HLF project). The most detrimental change, however, was the removal of the majority of the perimeter railings for munitions purposes. (Replaced as part of the 2007 HLF Project)

Fig 1 Borough Gardens Location Plan



2.3 Heritage lottery Fund Restoration Project 2005-7

Among of the principal drivers for the HLF restoration scheme were the unsympathetic modifications which were made to the Gardens between the wars, which made significant and undesirable changes to the original design concept. This was the case for example, with the northern pair of tennis courts, (located south of the Bandstand in the area which is now the picnic bowl lawn) these were subsequently removed as they did not allow optimum use of the Gardens for formal events and also restricted the amount of available space for informal recreation.

The original layout of serpentine paths, contoured terraced lawns and structures were still in existence or discernible, however, some sections were in a poor condition. Many historical views were lost or deteriorated due to ill -considered planting or new structures and all remaining required conservation. Shrubberies, planting displays, understorey and groundcover plantings were mostly in poor condition, over-mature or lost. Much of the original planting framework remained but a lot of it needed judicious management, and some of the mature trees in particular needed removing due to decay.

The Gardens had also suffered from vandalism. The fountain for example, had been targeted by vandals after the gardens were officially closed at the end of the day. The structure also suffered from the fact that it had been erected on unstable ground, which meant that it had slipped to one side.

Borough Gardens House was in a poor state of repair due in part to instability but also due to the lack of care by the last tenant of the flat on the first floor and poor tenancy management.

The gardens had also suffered from a historic lack of investment. Whilst this had been addressed in the years running up to the bid in revenue terms, it had left a backlog of capital work which it was not possible to undertake in the foreseeable future, even given the then recently increased revenue resources.

The council was committed to maintaining all the facilities in Borough Gardens to a high standard and understood its obligation to protect both the historic capital investment made in the gardens and their heritage value, but the overall capital cost of complete renewal was beyond the council's reach.

2.3.1 The restoration project outcomes

The project provided for a widely-based restoration of the gardens. In brief it:

- Furthered the original intent of creating pleasure gardens for the health and recreation of the inhabitants, and promoted the vitality of the Gardens and their future as a public open space.
- Revitalised the planting and returned it to a state closer to the original design concept and achieved a balance between historical restoration, enhancing ecological diversity and furthering people's use and enjoyment of the Gardens.
- Repaired and restored Borough Gardens House to provide community facilities on the ground floor and a residential flat on the first floor.

- Provided new toilets and a refreshment kiosk on the site of the previous paddling pool.
- Completely redesigned and revitalised the children's play area to provide a stimulating range of play activities sensitively designed within the context of the Gardens taking advantage of the varying levels on the site.
- Removed the northern pair of tennis courts and returned the area to lawn; this improved the setting of the bandstand and the clock tower and enhanced the suitability of the gardens for a wide range of entertainment and community events;
- Repaired and restored the fountain.
- Reinstated the boundary railings.
- Improved the surfacing of the paths within the Gardens and removed some of the more inappropriate surface treatments used in various areas in the past.
- Improved and standardised the park furniture.

Although the design, construction and planting in the Gardens relates to a specific date, the original project brief allowed for further garden features to be integrated in future years with the aim of trying to preserve the gardens' heritage value but also to try to keep them relevant to modern day users with a wider range of needs which was a very challenging aspiration. It was therefore not considered appropriate to carry out a complete restoration of the Gardens back to their exact original form of 1896.

Today, the Borough Gardens retain their late 19th Century layout and features, together with its design framework and some of its structural planting.

2.3.2 Post Lottery Additions

Ongoing effort is put into trying to keep the gardens relevant to as wide a cross section of the community as possible this saw the delivery of exercise equipment in the gardens in 2010, renewed in 2022 and installation of an outdoor table tennis table in 2013.

2.3.3 Tennis Courts

In 2018 the southern area formerly a bowling green was converted to all weather tennis courts. The Bowling Green had finally fallen into disuse in the mid 2010's as a result of the construction of a purpose-built bowls centre with outdoor green and indoor rinks elsewhere in Dorchester. The new facility meant players went there rather than using the gardens green (the associated club moved too) and use ceased. The former bowling green was put to use as a putting green with little success so the decision to convert to tennis was made. This was particularly timely as it allowed for the freeing off of the two older red shale courts adjacent to the gardens site for development as affordable flats for Dorchester workers.

2.4 The significance of the Gardens and Adjacent walks

Since 2001 the Gardens have been listed as Grade II in the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England and are also designated as a Conservation Area. The full listing description is reproduced in Appendix B

The eastern boundary of the Gardens abuts the 18th Century West Walks, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and is also included in the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England as Grade II. The site is typical of the surrounding area in that it contains notable Roman remains including burials and Roman wall. The full listing description is reproduced at Appendix C.

Additionally, the clock tower and the bandstand are Grade II listed buildings. The full listing description is reproduced at Appendix D.

The Gardens are deemed to be of great significance to the people of Dorchester in terms of providing valuable greenspace within the town for quiet relaxation and offering numerous social functions during the summer months. They are located very close to the western edge of the Town Centre, immediately outside the old Roman town boundary and are therefore easily accessible to the population of the town and its numerous visitors.

Dorchester is comparatively well provided with open space in, or close to, the town centre much of this is connected by the Town Walks which were laid out along the lines of the Roman town walls, they are closed to traffic providing easy pedestrian access. The Gardens represent a pleasant oasis, well used for a wide range of activities at all times of the day and in all seasons. The site acts as an important walkway for many people travelling to and from the town centre.

In recent years the Gardens have been used increasingly for a wide range of public entertainment, usually, but not exclusively, of a musical or festival type character. The Council encourages the use of the Gardens by local charity and community organisations for raising funds or awareness, and it also organises its own programme of events. The Gardens are also used as the major venue for free arts events during the year.

2.5 Ownership

Dorchester Town Council owns the freehold of the Borough Gardens and the adjacent Bowling Alley and West Walks.

Note: - *The purchase deeds dated 24 June 1895, which deal with purchase of the land forming the now Borough Gardens state that, "the Corporation shall maintain and use the site as a public walk or pleasure ground".*

2.6 Policies and Strategic Context – Former West Dorset District Local Plan

The Gardens are situated within a Conservation area and West Walks, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, runs inside the western boundary. Under the West Dorset District Local Plan the Gardens are protected by policies governing Landscape, Conservation & Design and Recreation. The Local Plan was adopted in July 2006, and provided the land use policy framework that will guide development in the area until 2016. Due to the re-organisation of local government the plan was not renewed as a new Dorset area plan will be produced by the new Dorset Council. It is not anticipated that the garden's designations will change significantly. (Appendix E)

Under the Plan the following policies apply to any development affecting the Borough Gardens and/or the Town Walks and their immediate surroundings:

Policy SA6 Landscape of Local Importance

Policy SA16 Historic Parks and Gardens of International and National Importance

Policy SA7 Green Corridors

Policy SA19 Alterations, Extensions, and changes of Use of Listed Buildings

Policy SA20 Settings of Listed Buildings

Policy SA21 Protection of Character or Appearance of Conservation Areas

Policy SA22 Demolition within a Conservation Area

Policy SA23 Sites of National Archaeological Significance

Policy C7b Retention of Open Space and Recreational Facilities

Policy C3 Local Centres

2.7 Byelaws

The Borough Gardens and Town Walks are subject to the following byelaws made by the Dorchester Town Council under Section 164 of the Public Health Act 1875, and Sections 12 and 15 of the Open Spaces Act 1906:

Byelaws – Pleasure Grounds, Public Walks and Open Spaces, 18 May 1992. The Council adopts a fairly relaxed attitude to their enforcement, usually only acting when a breach of the byelaws is perceived as presenting a threat to the safety of users of the Gardens or their fabric.

Byelaws – Consumption of Intoxicating Liquor in Designated Places, 16 July 2001.

These byelaws are reproduced in full at Appendices F and G.

3 A Welcoming Place

The Gardens have a very strong design and character which make them a very attractive and enjoyable place to visit. By maintaining high standards of both management and maintenance this will continue to be the case.

3.1 The Welcome

Due to its traditional design and planting much of the Gardens is now not visible from the adjacent roads due to significant tree and shrub growth. Whilst this growth does offer screening from traffic and to some extent noise when physically in the gardens it does also prevent casual viewing of the gardens from outside. Similarly, traditional gated entrances lead through large overarching shrubbed areas giving a closed and less attractive feel when viewed from outside.

The Council wished to encourage more visitors to the gardens by improving “the Welcome” for those not familiar with them and to this end the following actions were put in place.

3.1.1 Boundaries

- Creation of “glimpses” in the existing perimeter shrubbery to provide tantalising views of key features such as the Bandstand, Play area, Kiosk, Memorial and annual beds. These will maintain the screening effect for users within the park but allow for people outside to view in.
- Reduction of overhanging Holly (*Illex aquifolium*) and Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) in both width and height to reduce overshadowing of the adjacent footway and make the boundary less visually imposing.
- Cleaning and maintenance of perimeter railings will take place at regular intervals. The original paint quality specification of the railings was high and as at 2019 the paint is still corrosion free but some growth of algae makes them appear discoloured. Cleaning took place in 2020,2023 and is scheduled for 2026
- Banners are allowed for Town Council events held in the gardens but otherwise, banners and fly posters are removed immediately to maintain a neat appearance.

3.1.2 Gateways and Access

- Having railings on all 4 sides, access to the gardens is gained via 7 formal gateways. These all have functioning gates and are locked each evening at park closing time. In four instances the gates are simple single leaf openings constructed from similar material to the railings. The remaining three are vehicular double leaf access gates, two of which are decorative carrying the Town Council crest and supported on formal Portland stone pillars. The final gate is adjacent to Borough Gardens house and provides vehicular access to the Councils on site nursery. In 2018 a new pedestrian access was created on the other side of the house to allow continued access in the south west corner, the intention being to close the vehicle access other than for service vehicle so avoiding the mix of

vehicles and pedestrians in the nursely area which was not ideal on safety grounds.

- Where shrubs and low tree branches were dominating entrance areas these were pruned in 2018/19 to improve the sense of personal safety, re-instate vistas originally envisioned in the overall plan for the site, give a more open and welcoming feel, encourage entering the gardens and to allow for safe access and egress.
- The gardens have an overall vertical change in level of approx. 4 m. The original design by Wm Goldring accommodated this creating by gently sloping pathways throughout the site, these are still present. The only exception is the access point directly from Mid-West Walks, which, previously, being a defensive wall, (and now a scheduled ancient monument) is higher. Access is accommodated by steps c/w handrail. Once in the gardens, path contours are gentle, manageable and paths are wide enough to facilitate wheelchairs and mobility scooters. Similarly, the play area is accessible and sloped.
- Skateboarding and cycling are not allowed in the gardens to prevent issues with safety on the path network. Cycling to the gardens is encouraged and two cycle racks are provided near entrances where they can be easily seen from inside the gardens and on entry.
- Vehicles are banned from the gardens unless by specific permission (usually restricted to service vehicles or for loading and unloading before and after events). Vehicles that are allowed on site must use hazard lights, are restricted to speed and also are required to use a banksman for any reversing manoeuvre. This is directly overseen by the Head gardener on site. The on-site electric vehicle is fitted with and is required to use an audible alarm when in motion and uses hazard lights when reversing.

3.1.3 Notice Boards

Three notice boards are present adjacent to the main access points from each adjoining footway. The notice boards were installed in 2013/14 having been funded and supplied by the Friends of Borough Gardens. They comprise large opening Perspex fronted boards, headed with the Town Seal and "Borough Gardens" they are in good condition and are maintained by the gardens staff. Posters for, events in the gardens being organised by the town council or Friends of or events in other town council sites are permitted.

Inside the gardens the Town Council favours a low-key approach to signage to avoid visual clutter and the perception of "thou shalt not" type management which can be off putting. Signs are as small as is reasonable and kept functional such as directions to toilets etc. Small signs are also located adjacent to entrances informing visitors of garden rules such as no cycling etc.

3.1.4 Access for All

All Paths in the gardens are hard surfaced comprising either tarmac, sandstone paving or brick pavements. Surfaces are laid to gentle slopes and cambers where appropriate. Where steps do exist, alternative routes are provided. Surfaces are in good condition and are maintained in a safe condition by regular sweeping and pressure washing where moss or algae may develop, especially in the surrounds to the fountain where spray also increases water on the surface.

Trip Advisor review of Borough Gardens

[A walk with a wheelchair](#)

“Mum loves to visit. Watches the youngsters play and we often get a good cup of tea. Easy to push her around.”

Accessible toilets are provided in two locations, at each end of the Gardens by the Kiosk and tennis Pavilion respectively.

Borough gardens house also contains an accessible toilet and being twin level the actual house itself features an internal accessible lift adjacent to the stairs.

3.1.4.1 Raised Table/ Access Improvements 2019

A large capital improvement project was completed in early 2019 outside the main Cornwall Road gate at the junction with both West walks, Cornwall Road and Princes Street. The area was problematic with 3 roads meeting and the main vehicular and pedestrian access to the gardens also opening into the area. To resolve this a jointly funded project was developed with Dorset County Highways and the Town Council, the project comprised: -

- Re-alignment of both footways to both reduce ease of turning right (which was a known shortcut) and also significantly reduce the width of the carriageway which was very wide and so difficult for disabled users or people who could not walk quickly to safely cross.
- Installation of a raised bench in the highway to slow traffic speeds and ease crossing in wheeled buggies etc
- Installation of bollards to protect pedestrians.
- Re surfacing of the entire new wider footway in front of the gardens, changing from tarmac to more attractive paving so improving the appearance of the gardens entrance.



Junction Before works, main garden access gate bottom right.



Junction after access improvement works, note wider footways, paved entrance, raised table and narrowed road width.

Significant benefits for the work included: -

Reduced traffic flow

Reduced traffic speed

Improves sightlines.

Greater pedestrian safety

Significant improvement in safe disabled access to gardens both when crossing the road to them or via new footway works.

Much improved visual appearance of the entire area.

3.1.5 Getting There

- The gardens are located adjacent to the town centre and as such are easily accessed via the pedestrianised Bowling Alley Walk.
- Buses stop at the nearby Top of Town roundabout and outside the nearby public car park at Fairfield. The main bus stops that serve Dorchester are located in the nearby Trinity Street in the town centre where again pedestrianised access can be gained via Bowling Alley Walk.
- There are two train stations in Dorchester, Dorchester south being approx. 500m and Dorchester west being approx. 300m from the gardens. New directional wayfinding signage including the gardens is located on the approach road to and from each.
- There is no public parking on site. On street parking is available in west walks on the western boundary and in the streets to the east of the gardens. A large pay and display car park is located approx. 150 m south of the gardens with specific directional signage from there to the gardens.
- Walking to the gardens is encouraged by good directional signage and cycling is encouraged by the provision of cycle racks within the gardens, these being located as near to gates as possible whilst remaining in view from the main grass to allow for casual supervision.

3.1.5.1 Town Centre Wayfinding Scheme

The town centre wayfinding scheme was implemented in mid / late 2019.

The Town Council developed, with assistance from the Dorchester Joint Heritage committee, a wayfinding scheme for central Dorchester to address signage issues.

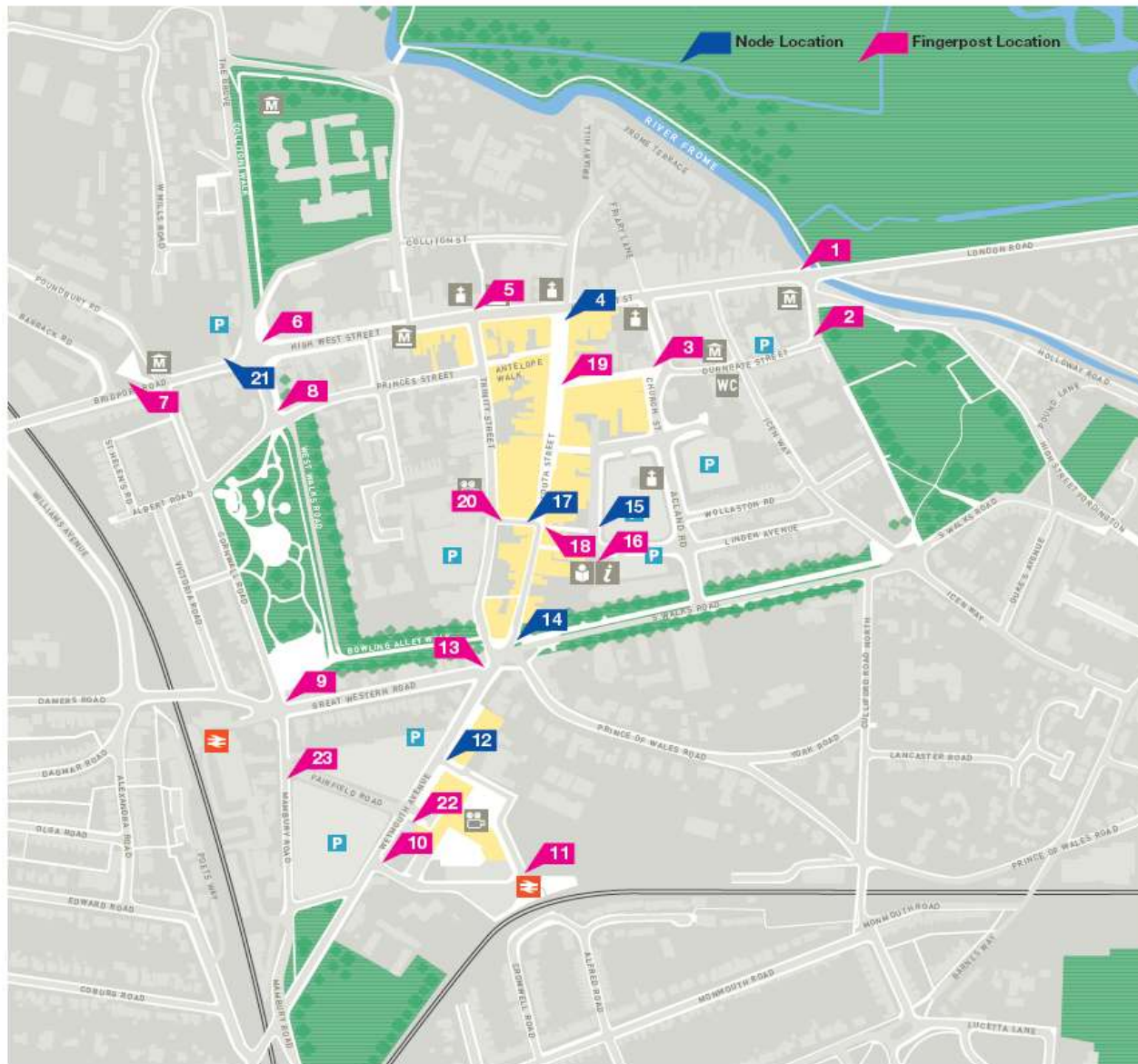
Following a successful grant application to the European Fund for Rural Development, along with funding from the council itself, the £93,000 scheme was implemented across the town centre. It provided for 17 finger posts and 6 map-based nodes. (See following pages for details)

The Borough gardens featured on these posts and nodes clearly signposting from adjacent areas, car parks and town centre locations.



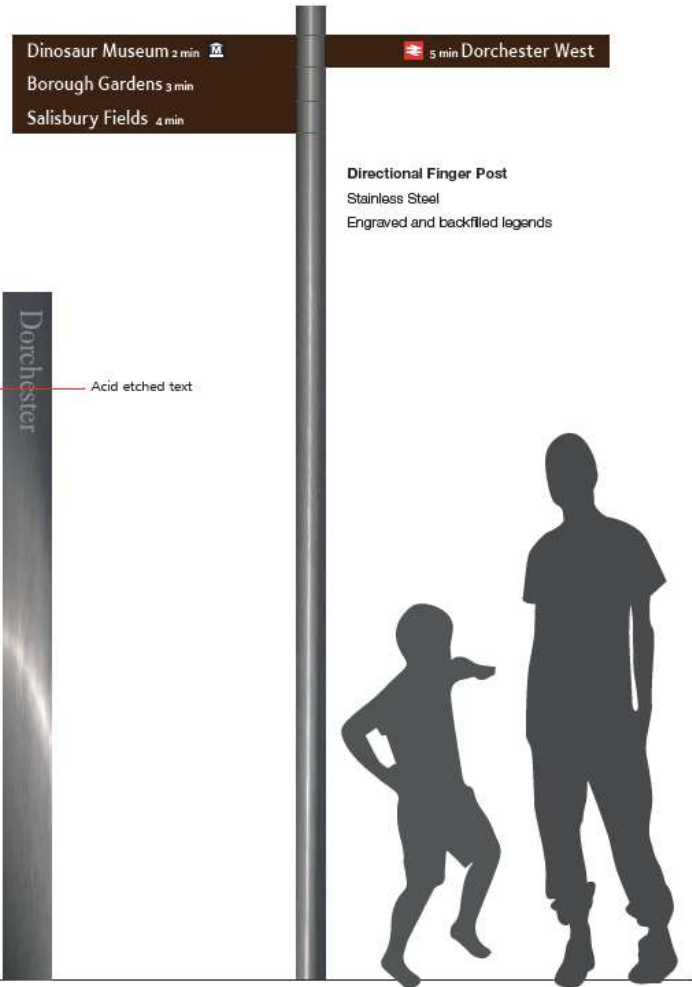
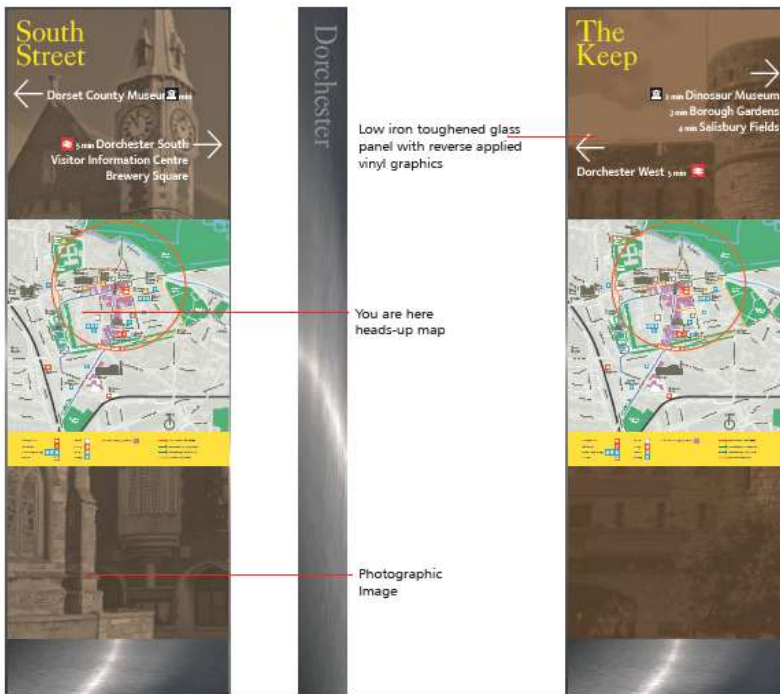
A town Centre Node in South Street showing map and directions to Borough Gardens.

Sign Locations



Concept Sign Design

Node with Town Map
 Stainless Steel
 Reverse applied graphics behind glass panel



4 Healthy, Safe and Secure

The restoration of the Borough Gardens and House provided new facilities for use by members of the public, community groups and organisations. The Kiosk, now a popular summer service, provides refreshments, Baby changing and toilet facilities for all users of the Gardens. The children's play area provides a modern facility for play. The suitability of the Gardens for informal activities and organised events is greatly enhanced by the existence of the picnic lawn areas, seating and borders of both shrubs and annuals. The HLF restored Bandstand offers a focal point for many organised events throughout the year. Further recent additions include the provision of Gym equipment and an outdoor table tennis table.

Aim

To provide and maintain, safe, high quality visitor facilities for users of the gardens.

Objectives

To carry out inspection and maintenance of all publicly accessible buildings and facilities to ensure a safe and secure standard to benefit visitor enjoyment.

To have well-maintained toilet facilities, ensure litter is collected daily and bins are emptied at a frequency which avoids build up or spillage of litter and to provide good clean seating in the right places.

4.1 Facilities on site

The gardens host a range of facilities that are available for the public to use. As mentioned previously, the gardens are listed for their heritage value and as such any development has to be in keeping with both the heritage and character of the gardens. The gardens are limited in available space making inclusion of new widely varied features quite difficult. The gardens play a part in wider town provision of facilities which is detailed in following sections where relevant.

4.1.1 Play area

The play area is located in the upper North West corner of the gardens, handily located adjacent to the Kiosk and accessible toilets building. It was completely redeveloped in 2009 as part of the HLF project. It is comprised of the following equipment:

- Swings x 4
- Cradle Swings x 2
- Splash Pool
- Waltz Roundabout
- Rockers x 2
- Multi Play Climbing Frame
- Bank Slide
- Spring Seesaw
- Mini Carousel
- Slide
- Monkey Bars

In addition, the play area also has the following infrastructure: -

Fencing
Litter Bins x 3
Seats/Picnic Tables
Footpaths/Grassed Areas
Signs
Gates x3
Wet Pour Safety Surfacing
Steps
Raised planters
Drinking Fountain

The play area is structured with play equipment for younger ones enclosed by a raised planter which does not close off but subtly divides it from equipment designed for older children also allowing shaded seating and easy supervision in the toddler area. The wider play area is structured over three tiers so allowing for open play on grass and rolling on banks etc interspersed with items of equipment.



4.1.2 Outdoor Gym and Table Tennis Area, renewed 2022 (23 revision)

This area is located on the northern boundary of the gardens a little distance from the play area so as not to encourage use by children. It is adjacent to the Kiosk and accessible toilets.



The gym site comprises the following equipment placed within a Notts Sward safety surfaced area. Whilst critical fall heights are very low (less than 800 mm) the safety surface helps to prevent erosion of the former grass surface and does provide some softening of any accidental fall. It is comprised of the following equipment: -

- Exercise Bike
- Double Squat push
- Double sit up bench
- Double Slalom skier
- Double pull up/pull down
- Waist twister
- Table tennis table

Table tennis bats and balls are available for use from the kiosk when it is open or at other times available from gardeners on site, otherwise users need to bring their own equipment.

4.1.3 Fountain

There is a marble fountain in the north-east area of the Gardens. It is 16ft high with four seated lions backed by fern leaves supporting a 7'6" diameter basin, a column of three carved birds below a 4' diameter basin above, and an inverted scalloped basin with cherub and cornucopia on a flowered column at the top. It was donated by Charles

Hansford in memory of G.J. Gregory JP, his brother-in-law and five times Mayor of Dorchester, and was officially named the Gregory Memorial Fountain. At the time of writing some of the spouts including the topmost one is not working due to damage. The cost to repair is currently in excess of £10,000 and as such is not yet a priority for the council.

The fountain is surrounded by an Indian sandstone paved area with a spoked wheel pattern of inset cobbles.



4.1.4 Bandstand.

The centrally located bandstand was donated by Col. W.E. Brymer MP as a permanent memorial of Her Majesty Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee and in acknowledgement of kindness received by him from Dorchester townspeople. It was designed by G.J. Hunt, the Borough Surveyor, and built by Messrs. T. MacFarlane and Co. of Glasgow for £200. It is constructed of cast iron sections and is one of many around the world supplied by the famous T. MacFarlane Saracen Foundry. The iron work is capped by a lead roof which on the underside has a timber "ceiling" to which electric lighting was fitted at a later date. The bandstand and its surrounding benches are listed structures, they were repaired and re-painted as part of the HLF improvements and were subsequently re-painted in 2017. The bandstand is still the focal point for live music and other events which take place in the Gardens over most weekends during the summer

including many music events, cake sales, the occasional marriage photos and choral recitals.

There is a cellar below the bandstand which is below ground and accessed by some steps to the eastern side of the structure, the cellar is damp and serves a limited function as a temporary store for materials to be used in events etc.



4.1.5 Kiosk

The Kiosk located at the northern end of the Gardens sells a range of light snacks and drinks. The building was erected as part of the HLF project in 2009; it comprises of both the kiosk and public toilets with baby changing for the northern end of the gardens. The building is built of concrete block faced with timber, it has a flat GRP roof and is supplied with both mains water and electricity. The kiosk is open every day in the summer and at some weekends during the winter. **The kiosk franchise is out for tender at the time of 2025 revision.** The kiosk itself is licensed out to operators who are responsible for all internal equipment and fittings, the Town Council is responsible for all structural and external maintenance and repair.



Borough Gardens Kiosk and Toilets

4.1.6 Toilets

The Building housing the kiosk referred to above also houses public toilets for use by visitors to the gardens. They are completely separate from the Kiosk and are managed and maintained by the Town Council. The building comprises separate gents, ladies and disabled user toilets. The toilets are open 7 days a week. Handwashing facilities which can be very resource hungry are delivered via Wallgate automatic delivery machines this allows for easy dispensing of water soap and drying in as efficient a manner as possible. Toilets are mains water supplied urinals are waterless. The disabled toilet has an automated door open/close facility via button/radar key, to facilitate easy access for all users.

4.1.7 Borough Gardens Clock

Immediately south-west of the older tennis courts stands the early C20 clock tower (listed grade II). Standing on a granite base, the octagonal cast-iron shaft is surmounted

by a square-section clock tier with four clock faces, which is in turn surmounted by pediments and an onion dome with an elaborate weathervane. The clock tower was built by Messrs. T. MacFarlane and Co. of Glasgow and cast at the Saracen Foundry as was the Bandstand. It is painted in red, green, and gold and is ornamented with panels bearing the Borough arms and an inscription recording the gift of the clock to the town by Charles Hansford in 1905. The clock was majorly restored as part of the lottery project but in 2017 the paintwork had become faded and began to slump as a result of so many layers of paint overlaying the original cast iron framework of the clock. The clock used to be clockwork with a large pendulum pit still being present inside the structure however this was replaced by an electrical clock motor.



4.1.8 Northern tennis courts

Situated adjacent to the Clock Tower, the northern tennis courts comprise two painted tarmac surfaced courts surrounded by galvanised chain link fencing accessed by a

automated gate. These are the oldest of the tennis courts on site having been installed in excess of 20 years ago. **The surface was renewed in 2024 after receipt of grant monies from the lawn Tennis Association and, as a result, is in very good condition.**

4.1.9 Southern tennis courts

Situated on the southern boundary of the gardens the two new permeable hard surfaced tarmac tennis courts are located on the former Bowling Green. The courts, drainage and fencing were installed in early 2018 at a cost of approx. £160,000, the works had to accommodate removal of the old bowling green, the very restricted vehicular access to the southern end of the gardens, the presence of sub terranean archaeology that had to be inspected and the location of the adjacent scheduled ancient monument, being the old town wall / embankment of west walks. (See section 7.2 heritage value).

The council runs the tennis courts on the basis of a single **£35** per annum family membership which gives access to the electronic booking system to reserve a court which can then be played on for free. No equipment is hired on site.



Northern tennis courts

4.1.10 Tennis Court Toilets

The old Bowls pavilion located adjacent to the new northern tennis courts can be seen in the photograph on the previous page. It was converted to become a toilet facility approx. 8 years ago. The building is of rendered brick and tile construction and now houses toilet facilities for the southern end of the gardens. Facilities comprise disabled access toilet complete with auto door opening and handwashing facilities very similar to the toilets located at the kiosk section 4.1.6.1. The toilets are closed from November through to the end of March due to lower demand in the gardens, otherwise they are open whenever the gardens are open.

4.1.11 Borough Gardens House

Borough Gardens House is situated at the south west corner of the gardens. The former nurseryman's home/ building was extensively repaired as part of the HLF improvement project, it comprises two floors plus a cellar and is of brick and slate construction. The upper floor is a separate two bedroomed flat which is owned by the Town Council but is managed and maintained by the Dorset Council under their private leasing scheme, as such the Town council has no day-to-day involvement in the operation or maintenance of the flat.

The ground floor comprises of an entrance hall, disabled toilet facility, toilet and handwashing facility, lobby, kitchen and a main community meeting room. and operates as a facility for hire by the community, private businesses and government organisations to hold meetings, events and gatherings. Public access is only available when the room is in use for a specific event such as art shows etc. A small lift provides disabled access to all of the ground floor rooms.

The cellar is currently used for materials storage by on sit staff, this will be reviewed as part of the wider review for the south western corner of the gardens due in 2022-23.

The building has the benefit of all mains services and internet connection. Hiring is by enquiry to the town councils' main office.

2024 Revision: Borough gardens house community room continues to be used as a temporary mess facility for staff to use as it offers suitable C19 control measures such as ventilation and distancing. Internal decoration has been delayed until this is no longer the case due to increased wear and tear. Plans have been drawn up for extension to enlarge the existing office/mess room building for completion early 2024. See section 12:3. This will allow the room to return to community use.

2025 Revision these works were completed in 2024, the house is now available for community use again.

4.2 Maintenance and Inspection Regimes

Common Elements to Inspection Regimes

	Play Area	Outdoor Gym	Fountain	Bandstand	Kiosk	Clock	Tennis Courts	All Toilets	Borough Gardens House
On-site staff carry out daily visual inspections. Any defects found are reported to the head gardener.	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
Sweeping up of leaves and debris is done weekly except during periods of heavy leaf fall when frequencies will increase.	✓	✓	✓				✓		
Electrical supplies and fittings are inspected every two years to comply with fixed wiring regulations.			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Fire safety equipment checks are carried out every 6 months via the council's contractor.					✓			✓	✓
Legionella checks are carried out by the Head Gardener or operator, weekly	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓
COSHH assessments of cleaning chemicals used. Reviewed annually	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓
Power washing occurs at regular interval through the year to prevent a slip hazard forming. <u>Chemicals are not used.</u>	✓	✓	✓				✓		
The council aims to resolve or make safe any items identified as other than "Low" or "Very Low" risk within 24 hours of reporting.	✓	✓							

4.2.1 Unique Maintenance and Inspection Regimes

In addition to the common elements of inspection regimes, there are procedures that are unique to each facility.

Facility	Regime
Play Area	<p>In addition to daily Head Gardener checks, weekly checks are carried out by a ROSPA trained inspector who will undertake a thorough visual inspection which is recorded on the Councils monitoring sheets. On finding faults, after temporarily making safe or closing the play area if necessary, faults are reported to the Outdoor Services Manager who will arrange for the council's maintenance operator to inspect and either close off, make good or order parts for repair from manufacturers as required.</p> <p>Mechanical inspections are carried out on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>An annual audit and risk assessment is carried out by an external inspection company which takes into account all aspects associated with the play area and results in a risk-based report showing any issues discovered.</p> <p>Painting of any equipment that is starting to show light rust, significant paint damage or appears shabby will be done on an as and when basis to maintain a good visual appearance which helps to deter graffiti and minor damage. This work is carried out by the Council's outdoor services team.</p> <p>The splash pool play feature comprises of several water jets triggered by a pressure pad in the rubber surface. The water supply comes from the on-site bore hole which is risk assessed and analysed externally by the Dorset Council environmental health team as part of their private borehole drinking water supply inspection and testing regime. The water then goes to soakaway so removing the need for re-circulation and treatment. A local contractor checks and inspects the system weekly through the summer when it is in operation.</p> <p>The drinking fountain is supplied by the mains system and is checked monthly by the Head Gardener for temperature as part of legionella risk control, should the temperature exceed the maximum permitted then the fountain is taken out of use. Water from the fountain runs to soak away.</p>

Outdoor Gym	The equipment and safety surfacing are inspected and maintained under the same regime as the play area (see above). The only further addition being regular removal of fallen leaves from the surface which can on occasions cause a slip hazard.
Fountain	<p>Water for the fountain comes from the onsite borehole and is re-circulated via a filter and dosing system.</p> <p>The fountain operates all year round except in very cold weather. The upper section is closed off after dark by a programmed timer which reduces electricity use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fountain and pumping system’s filters and dosing equipment are serviced by an external specialist contractor, weekly in the summer and fortnightly in the winter. • On-site staff carry out daily visual checks and remove any debris or leaves that are in the water to prevent contamination and blocking of grilles and filters.
Bandstand	No unique procedures.
Kiosk	PAT testing of all appliances is carried out by the operator. Routine maintenance of the wood cladding is carried out “off season” and usually comprises a simple pressure wash and treatment with clear preservative.
Clock	Clock mechanism - specialist annual maintenance visit carried out by Smiths of Derby.
All Tennis Courts	Courts will be re-painted on a 7-year cycle.

4.2.2 Borough Gardens House Cleaning Regime

The cleaning regime works for the Borough Gardens house are to include the above common and unique checks plus:

Deployment of slippery floor warning signs.

Washing of all floors.

Cleaning of all sanitary fittings and application of cleaning chemicals.

Cleaning, checking and replenishment of hand washing materials, checking and replenishment of toilet rolls.

Washing /cleaning of any other surfaces as required.

Vacuum cleaning of carpets.

Checking of lighting function.

4.2.3 Toilet Cleaning Regime

The toilets receive a visual check from the on-site staff at the point of cleaning which is when the gardens are opened and then at least once again in the winter months and twice again in the summer. Any defects found are reported to the head gardener, if they can be resolved by on site staff they are dealt with on the day or the structure is closed off / made safe until appropriate contractors or open spaces maintenance staff can make good the problem.

The daily cleaning regime works are to include above visual checks plus:

Deployment of slippery floor warning signs.

Washing of all floors.

Cleaning of all sanitary fittings and application of cleaning chemicals.

Cleaning, checking and replenishment of hand washing gel in Wallgate dispensers.

Checking and replenishment of toilet rolls.

Washing /cleaning of any other surfaces as required.

Checking of lighting function.

Removal of any litter /debris present.

Once a month an external contractor carries out a deep clean to the building.

4.3 Security

The gardens have a value beyond traditional formal green space, offering a range types of space and activities. Research has indicated that these spaces are most popular with the general public as they are perceived as safe places and in addition parents tend to prefer the children's play spaces situated in them. The Borough Gardens are no exception and the council will as much as is possible through appropriate management ensure the sense of security, safety and thereafter, wellbeing, for all users. The provision of facilities that are clean, safe and in good order is key to giving an air of security and quality to the gardens. Section 4.1 has detailed the maintenance and inspection of built features and section 5 will detail maintenance, repair and inspection regimes for the soft landscaped elements of the gardens.

Aim

To ensure a safe and secure Gardens for the users during the hours of opening.

Objectives

- To maintain the boundary railings in a sound state so as to allow for closure and opening of the gardens at dusk and 07:30 respectively and to provide a clearly defined boundary effective during the day and particularly at night.
- To maintain a close working relationship with the Community Support Police Officers so as to tackle unsocial behaviour swiftly and encourage them to patrol through the Gardens daily.
- To ensure the gardens are staffed, when open, 7 days a week with gardens staff during the working days and park keepers outside of those hours.
- To design out perceived unsafe areas and manage the vegetation both to help maintain the sense of personal security of the gardens (maintain sightlines in sensitive areas) and to react rapidly to safety issues e.g., remove bottles, needles, as soon as they are found.
- To work with users (walkers, cyclists, skateboarders, bowlers, tennis players etc), of all ages, to encourage good practice in the gardens and sports facilities to ensure all users can enjoy their experience.
- To work with dog owners to encourage responsible dog ownership and good practice.

4.3.1 Personal Security

The Gardens are open to the public on every day of the year (including Christmas Day) from 7.30am to 9.00pm or dusk whichever is the earlier. Occasionally they are open for special events after dark but this is very much the exception since most events take place during the summer months. Maintaining a sense of personal security within the Gardens is of great importance to the Council and several measures are in place to help maintain this.

4.3.1.1 Staffing

The gardens are staffed during all opening hours. During normal working hours at least one of the full-time gardens staff will be on site. Outside of normal working hours and at weekends a Park Keeper will be on duty their final job of the day being the clearance and locking of the gardens.

4.3.1.2 Closure

The gardens are closed at dusk every evening after the park keeper has ensured all users have left, the robust gates and railings have helped to make this a very effective practice in terms of preventing potential gatherings of youths, drinkers and vagrants during dusk and into dark.

4.3.1.3 Shoplink

Park staff are provided with both a mobile telephone and are also equipped with shop/pub watch radios which are connected to both other businesses within the town and the police, so they have the facility to call for assistance should it prove necessary.

4.3.1.4 P.C.S.O.

Police community Support Officers routinely visit the gardens and close working in the past has developed very good co-operation, facilitated mainly by calling via Shoplink or mobile phone outside of routine visit times. This practice has been very successful especially where aggressive or antisocial behaviour develops and the park staff cannot reason with the individuals concerned or where drug paraphernalia is discovered and requests made for patrols in certain areas at certain times to solve the problem before it becomes established.

It is particularly pleasing to note that there is no evidence of offences against the person taking place in the Gardens.

4.3.1.5 Graffiti Policy

Graffiti where present can give a visual air of neglect to a site which in turn leads to an increased sense of insecurity for some users. The Town Councils policy is that wherever possible Graffiti will be removed upon discovery within the gardens. Given the heritage character of the site this will be irrespective of the content or style of the graffiti itself.

4.3.1.6 Maintenance of shrubs and sightlines.

During the life of the previous plan, although the impact of large shrubs etc adjacent to paths, near entrances and in borders was acknowledged as being an obstacle to increasing the sense of security within the park little was done to actively address this issue. In 2019, with a change in staffing, this was given a priority by the Head Gardener and ACOS.

A substantial amount of work was done to improve this element as shown in before and after photographs below and overleaf.

Northern tennis Court boundary.



Children's play area boundary



Main Cornwall Road Gate Entrance



Fountain Access Steps



4.3.2 Social problems

One of the main issues for consideration and concern was, and still is, user/people management and this issue is considered in more detail below.

The council was aware that the gardens were used, from time to time, (usually, when they are officially closed) by some people as a convenient venue for drug dealing / taking, etc. but this does not pose an immediate problem to others as the gardens are closed. The effective combination of regular contact with the police, based on staff promptly reporting finding any evidence of overnight drug taking or dealing and the provision of high-quality perimeter railings and gates have ensured that this activity has now ceased.

4.3.3 Conflict of use

There are occasional issues concerning conflict of use between pedestrians, particularly elderly pedestrians / parents with young children and skaters or cyclists who are not always as considerate as might be wished. More often than not, it is comparatively easy to deal with this issue when formal events are taking place (though it can result in some abuse or contention), but it is less easy to tackle when the gardens are sparsely populated. The riding of bicycles and use of skateboards is not permitted within the gardens. The Park Keepers and gardening staff enforce this rule but use their discretion where young children on cycles with stabilisers or using scooters are concerned. Cyclists and skateboarders can cause damage to infrastructure and plantings, to help with alternative provision Dorchester Town Council has provided skateboarders with a large dedicated skateboarding facility at Maumbury Cross some 400 m away which has seen a large drop in visits to the gardens by those using skateboards and BMX bikes. Ball games are permitted so long as the activity is carried out reasonably and away from flower beds and other garden users. Ball games are stopped when they are causing a nuisance to other users or when damage is likely to occur to plantings and those wanting to play ball directed to Maumbury rings field some 500m away.

Signs are present in the Gardens explaining clearly which activities are permitted and which are not. To avoid the appearance of a control culture and visual clutter these are kept deliberately small and to a low number, it is fortunate that Dorchester is small and a high proportion of visitors to the gardens are repeat visitors and families so these rules are generally within the public consciousness and well observed.

Dog walking is not currently a major issue but it is handled sensitively and, when necessary, firmly by on site staff. Dog control orders exist that cover the gardens. Dogs are not permitted in the children's play area, gym and tennis courts. Dog walkers may exercise their dogs within the gardens so long as they are on a lead; they must clear any dog mess left behind by their dogs. Specific "dog waste only" bins are provided near two of the five entrances but dog bags/waste can be deposited in any bin in the gardens.

5 Well Maintained and Clean

Users of Borough Gardens enjoy the grassed areas, flowerbeds, shrub beds, landscaped areas and other key soft landscaped features in the gardens in large numbers. As part of provision of the gardens Dorchester Town Council places a high priority on the quality of that provision which is in the main achieved by quality maintenance operations and a strong team focus on standards and personal responsibility.

Aim

To maintain and further improve the management and maintenance standards within the gardens.

Objectives

- To manage waste effectively.
- To maintain all hard and soft landscape elements in the safest manner possible and in keeping with best horticultural and arboricultural practice.
- Ensure staff understand their roles and the part they play in delivering a quality experience for users of the gardens.
- To provide up to date efficient and safe equipment for staff to use

5.1 Litter and Waste management

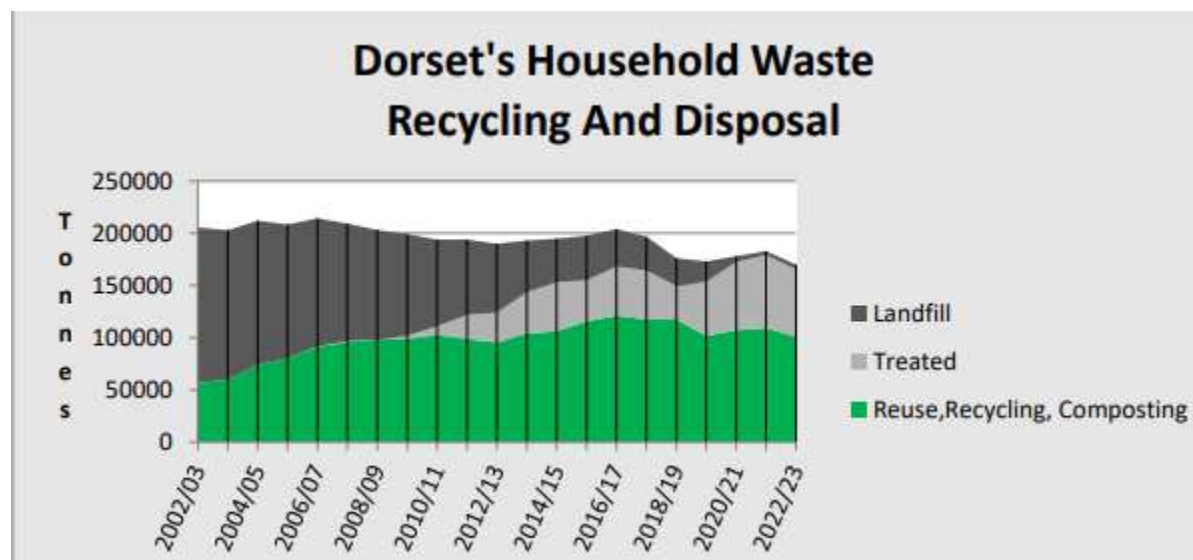
The management principles underlying all waste both collected and produced within the areas controlled by Dorchester Town Council and its associated working practices are covered within the councils' Waste Strategy (appendix item G). This strategy was based around the *Waste Hierarchy Guidance produced under regulation 15 of the Waste Regulations 2011*. Where that overarching document is applied to the gardens the following site-specific elements apply.

5.1.1 Litter and waste recycling

The gardens staff collect any litter found as an ongoing part of their working day. It is fortunate that the gardens are secure so fly tipping is not a problem and also users tend to be respectful of the gardens and do not drop a large amount of litter. Each morning a member of staff is specifically allocated toilet cleaning and litter collection as a duty to present a clean garden as early as possible. Combined with this is the changing of bin liners and emptying of other bins. In the summer months this can be repeated several times daily especially when events are held, one of the main duties of Park Keepers who work outside normal works hours and weekends is to carry out this function to ensure standards are maintained in evenings and at weekends.

Numerous litter bins are located throughout the gardens to provide a collection facility the policy being to have a bin near to any areas of seating, main features, in the play area and near entrances/exits. All bins are lockable, large enough to enable easy use and servicing and also have lids to prevent birds from pulling out contents. Bins specifically for dog waste exist near entrances and people can also deposit dog waste in other bins on site.

The on-site staff transfer litter collected to bulk commercial waste bins located in a specific screened area within the gardens and operated by Dorset Council, waste is collected and taken to a local “Murf” (Multi-Reuse Facility). **With a composting and recycling rate of 59.1% in 2022/3 Dorset Council was the number 1 ranked disposal authority nationally.**



2025 revision The Murf facility separates the various elements of the waste for recycling which along with other measures helps to prevent land fill as can be seen in the diagram above currently landfill is used for only 2% of overall waste collected.

5.1.2 Two Minute Litter Pick

In 2019 the town council decided to support the wider national “2 Minute litter Pick” initiative which was being promoted by Litter Free Dorset. Within the agreement, an eye-catching board with positive messages about not dropping litter is supplied along with litter pickers. Organisations involved then undertake to: -

- Position the board in a suitable spot that has been assessed as being easily accessible and in a location where litter is generated by the public.
- Keep the board maintained and manged and supplied with bags to enable members of the public to do a voluntary litter pick.
- Provide a bin nearby so litter collected can be disposed of properly.

The council decided that education of children in environmental matters was important so the board is located between the children’s play area and the toilets / Kiosk and has proved popular with parents and children. It has become a novel way to teach children both not to drop litter but also about putting something back into the community in which they live by giving a little of their time.



L to R The Mayor Richard Biggs, Carl Dallison Outdoor Services Manager, Iain Adshead Head Gardener, Sophie Colley Litter Free Dorset, locate the new two-minute litter pick board.

5.1.3 Events

The gardens host many events throughout the summer, some are organised by the council and others by external organisations. The council is very much aware of the hierarchy of waste and how that can be applied across third party events and as such requires organisers of larger events to undertake a waste assessment, where it is likely the event will generate significant visitor numbers and general waste organisers must provide trade waste bin facilities again operated by Dorset Council so recycling can be achieved. Where an event may generate waste specific to it, organisers must consider how waste can be reduced.

e.g., One of the main events in the gardens is the annual cider festival attracting some 4000 + people which used to use single use plastic glasses, this was changed in 2018 and the festival now sell a durable container which can be re-filled, there is a no-container no refill policy and this has seen a dramatic reduction in waste generation.

5.1.4 Green Waste

All Green waste generated by operations on site is shredded, chipped or composted and then re-used on site in accordance with the DTC Waste Policy.

5.1.5 Surface water and Sewage

Sewage and surface water generated by the onsite toilets blocks, gardeners mess facility and Borough Gardens House return to the mains sewage system for treatment in Dorchester.

Waste water from drinking fountains and the play area is drained to earth via a soakaway as do all other hard surfaces and roofs.

Surface water from the path network is collected by gullies which soak away to underlying chalk. Gullies are emptied annually of any accumulated detritus

5.1.6 Re-use

As part of normal operations, the nursery could potentially produce a large amount of waste plastic. Cleaning and re-use of trays and pots allows them to be used again year on year so reducing waste which is again in keeping with the wider waste policy.

Used peat free compost from hanging baskets etc is re-used via two routes either composting on site or composting at the council's main depot, both venues see re-use in the gardens (see section 6.1.5 Composting)

The council moves waste on vehicles and as such is required to hold a waste carrier license current licence number - CBDU118276

5.2 Horticultural Maintenance

Within this section of the plan the soft landscape facilities available for the public to use are detailed along with inspection regimes etc to ensure they remain in good condition for users to enjoy.

The delivery of horticultural maintenance is provided by the in-house team based on site, when there is a large volume type operation to be carried out or larger projects to be delivered, additional colleagues will be brought in from the outdoor services team. Specialist operations are let out on an ad-hoc basis to specialist contractors where necessary e.g., Arboricultural works.

5.2.1 Grass areas

Many grass areas exist within the gardens, they can be broadly classed as amenity type grass being cut approx. weekly with no clipping collection. Cutting is via ride on rotary machine, battery powered brush cutters and blowers. The three main areas of grass comprise: -

- Putting green lawn, so named because of the historic green that was located in this area. It is a medium sized grass area located adjacent to the Children's play area. It is at the highest point in the gardens so enjoys a good sunny aspect and view over the entire gardens and offers easy casual supervision of children in the play area so it is popular as a location for family picnics. Recycled plastic picnic benches are provided in this area and it is also usually used as a food and eating area for bigger events.
- Main lawn, located to the north of the bandstand this lawn slopes down to the south eastern corner and offers a wide sunny open area with great views of the bandstand. The lawn has island annual beds and a limited number of semi mature decorative trees. The lawn is used heavily as a viewing point for events focussed on the bandstand or as an activity area for multi feature events.
- The Bowl Picnic Lawn, this area is the site of the former lawn tennis courts removed many years ago, it is a very flat area to the south of the bandstand. Although it has a drainage system it is prone to holding water in the winter due to it being the lowest point in the gardens. It is popular for picnics and has several picnic tables and also houses the human sundial which is always popular with younger children. It is also heavily used during events due to it being central in the gardens easily accessed and flat.

Other grass areas exist around the gardens and in the main provide a border to island and perimeter shrub beds although some are large enough to hold stalls etc when events occur and are very often used by people enjoying the sun when on lunch breaks from nearby offices and businesses.

5.2.2 Bulb Areas

There are plantings of bulbs in both annual beds and some shrub borders, comprising mixtures of winter, spring and summer flowering species e.g., *Cyclamen hederifolium*, *Narcissus*, *Tulipa* and *Allium*. Three main bulb planted areas existing in lawns.

Snowdrop lawn, located on the boundary with west Walks near the main entrance from Cornwall Road the lawn comprises an elongated triangular area having a very shallow slope. Planting currently comprises native Snowdrops *Galanthus nivalis*. There is the potential to develop this area further with the introduction of other species to compliment such as *Eranthis hyemalis*. Once sufficient time has elapsed after flowering for the bulbs to recover, the grass then returns to routine cutting regime. The area has a vista down to the fountain and is popular as a picnic/ lunch spot in the summer months.

Daffodil Lawn, the plantings of various *Narcissus spp* are sited in a lawn adjacent to the children's play area. Grass growth is weak due to the dense shade created by the canopy of a mature *Fagus sylvatica 'Purpurea'*. The plantings have been carried out over several years by volunteers from the Macmillan Charity to create a contemplative memorial area.

Camassia lawn, created in late 2019 and located in the north western corner of the gardens the lawn comprises a grass bank adjacent to a path access to the southern gate on the boundary with West walks. The area is densely planted with *Camassia caerulea* bulbs and over planted with large flowering crocus to extend the flowering season. The grass will usually be cut and collected in late July and then return to routine cutting.

5.2.3 Annual beds

The gardens have several beds that are planted twice annually with bedding plants grown in the on-site nursery by the gardens staff. Due to the historic nature and character of the gardens the beds are in keeping with the sites character and an integral part of its offer to the public. Designs are planned and planted by the on-site staff. Changes were made to the extent of area put over to bedding towards the end of the life of the last plan to reflect, as much as possible, a move to a more sustainable ethos for the gardens. Reductions have been made to what is now considered a more suitable level whilst retaining their historic relevance in the landscape.

5.2.4 Carpet Bedding

A single formal carpet bed is located on the eastern boundary of the gardens. It is a circular bed located on a grass bank which gives the opportunity to view the bed more easily and fully than if the ground were flat. The bed is used annually in the summer to display a logo or design selected by the Council's management Committee. In winter it is planted with annuals and bulbs. Designs selected usually favour a local matter/ organisation or a large national event.

5.2.5 Grass Free Lawn

Located adjacent to the carpet bed described in 5.2.4, the grass free lawn was created to demonstrate an alternative to grass that can be planted to provide: -

- Flowers
- Colour
- Nectar for pollinators
- Habitats

A lower amount of CO2 produced during maintenance in comparison to grass

The former bowling green used to house this feature, it was moved to allow for tennis court installation in 2017, it was lifted as turf would be and relocated. Conceived as a mayoral project and installed by the friends of Borough Gardens who still undertake maintenance and top up plantings, the bed also has an explanatory board to help people who wish to consider this as an alternative.

5.2.6 Shrub beds

Being an important part of the original design for the gardens, the shrub beds remain largely as they were. They are located on two of the four perimeters which provide significant visual and sound screening from the main road adjacent. Originally the perimeter and island shrub beds were planted in tiers, despite the lottery improvements this has over time been lost and the resulting effect was to have beds that appeared overgrown and had little horticultural interest though are of high visual value.

Work commenced in 2019 to remedy this situation by the reduction and pruning back of overgrown and over mature specimens to the facilitate, over the coming years, re-introduction of desirable species of varying heights.



Cornwall Road boundary border bed showing first area to be pruned back and replanted with species to create tiers of foliage as intended under original planting concept.

This work was very well received by users of the gardens as it very quickly led to a feeling of active maintenance and management across the entire site.

5.2.7 Fernery

Introduced in 2016, on the site of a former overgrown shrub bed located adjacent to the northern tennis courts. The site is split level being divided by a short wall of random rubble construction which adds interest. Several larger trees and shrubs were retained to add height and an air of maturity. Several different species of ferns were introduced including *Adiantum hispidulum*, *Blechnum 'Penna-marina'* and *Dryopteris 'Wallichiana'* along with several larger specimens of *Dicksonia antarctica*, *Narcissus 'Thalia'* were also underplanted to give interest to the area in the late winter and early spring.

A further addition to the border to add to the “air of decay” normally associated with ferneries took the form of stone mason student, apprentice pieces made by local college students that were aged in compost before being located within the ferns. Pieces reflect such subjects as Tudor roses, circles and gargoyles.

The resident hedgehog population in the gardens are catered for in many locations and here in particular can be seen wood piles which are placed over hedgehog boxes to provide shelter for them and for winter hibernation.



Newly planted Fernery 2017

The fernery was planted through “Geotex” membrane to suppress weeds in the area, this is covered by wood chippings from the gardens tree and shrub pruning works.

5.2.8 Mediterranean Bed.

This bed was stripped of old overgrown shrubs and replanted in 2014. A raised seating platform was created and a feature seat installed to take advantage of the view through the gardens from the tennis courts. By 2019 the planting had lost some of its theme and

interest so renovation work started to improve the bed. Works included removal of overgrown and not in keeping species, general pruning, removal of perennial weed and taking of propagation material to grow on and replant.

Plantings of summer flowering Allium bulbs took place in 2019, species include caeruleum and stipitatum.



Mediterranean Bed Borough Gardens

Works to replace some of the planting with “hot” coloured perennials will take place in 2025

5.2.9 Scented Border

Replanted in 2015, the scented border is located adjacent to the fountain steps it contains examples of shrubs that produce scent usually as part of flowering. The border does not contain roses which are located in other borders in the gardens. Pruning is designed to promote growth that will favour flower production.

5.2.10 Hedges

Several Hedges exist in the gardens located on the southern boundary, nursery boundary, fountain area and the fountain vista seating bay. All hedges are treated the same being trimmed three times annually. All hedges were previously allowed to become too large and were trimmed back hard in 2019, it is expected their growth will re-establish in a more managed form over the first half of the life of this plan. Individual hedges are of one species, including Lonicera, Ligustrum, Buxus and Prunus. Where ever possible staff do not cut hedges at bird nesting time unless there is a safety risk to users of the gardens and they also make inspections of the hedges for wildlife before cutting commences at other times.

5.2.11 Nursery

The modestly sized on-site nursery is located in the south western corner of the gardens. It comprises of a twin range of glass houses, a small individual greenhouse, several cold frames, standing out ground and potting shed. The twin range are heated to provide frost protection in winter and growing temps from April onwards. A new propagation section was created for the 2020 season after councillors decided to retain the nursery following a review into its future. This decision was based upon the opportunities it offered in terms of both staff development and public interest, civic pride, heritage value within the gardens and to ensure security of supply and quality of annual plants produced.



5.3 Horticultural Quality Control

Both the Outdoor Services Manager and Head Gardener are fully trained horticultural professionals and have significant experience in the field. By specifying staff with these skills, standard setting in terms of quality can be established for other staff, which in turn ensures quality of provision. Daily inspections of the gardens and checks on staff quality of work by the Head Gardener are coupled with routine but ad-hoc visits by the Outdoor Services Manager. In this way both programmed and random sampling checks for quality can be achieved.

Social media generally for the Town Council and specifically the Borough Gardens Facebook and Trip Advisor pages are actively monitored by the OSM and comments reviewed for any maintenance issues they may bring up. This gives an invaluable external user overview which is helpful in both standards setting and also identifying gaps in provision.

As contractors are not used for routine operations, maintenance specifications are not used within the gardens. To set minimum standards the maintenance frequencies detailed in appendix: Item A apply.

5.3.1 Monitoring and Review

The Management Plan including the Performance Specification document will be regularly reviewed and monitored. It is the responsibility of the Assistant Clerk Outdoor Service with the involvement of the Head Gardener to review these documents on an ongoing basis. The ACOS will amend /review the plan on an annual basis.

The ACOS and Head Gardener (HG) will meet at least twice weekly and at other times when necessary to over view progress of work and standards in the gardens. The HG will monitor the work achieved within the gardens and greenhouses as part of their normal routine. 'Walkabout' meetings will discuss both present and upcoming work and standards and monitor progress. Any alterations to timings, standards or quantities will be agreed at the meetings and actions taken to update specifications if necessary.

5.3.2 Staffing

The on-site team are key to the quality of any maintenance works carried out and to this end work in the last two years of the previous plan and continuing into this plan centres around the following aspects.

- Increasing team and individual skills
- Increasing staff involvement in maintenance decisions
- Increasing the sense of personal responsibility
- Recognising achievements/ Annual reviews

Good communication between staff is always a prerequisite to achieving good outcomes. When this is combined with the above and a good understanding of the Management and Maintenance Plan, a consistent strategy for all staff to manage and maintain the Gardens over a period of 10 years is established.

5.3.3 Skills and Training

Personal skills and training of staff has the highest priority in both initial selection and in regard to ongoing professional development. Staff without skills cannot deliver quality, the council has delivered on a training programme designed to “up skill” existing staff and has restructured to enable pay progression as part of that. In addition, the expected skills required for new posts have increased and this is reflected in the person specifications at the recruitment stage.

The Head Gardener is responsible for ensuring practical skills are passed on to any of the on-site staff by on the job/task demonstrations, coaching and monitoring. To further support on the job training the council will where possible and relevant, provide both encouragement and financial support to facilitate formal horticultural training over and above any legislative training requirement placed on the council e.g. safe use of equipment etc.

The target for the council is to achieve training to at least level 2 in horticultural practice for all staff working at the gardens who are able to undertake formal training. This target is currently met.

Routine mandatory training is provided for all staff at commencement of employment if they don't already possess the relevant certificates, this comprises, in the main, health and safety matters to ensure staff are aware of how to work safely e.g. Induction on site, Manual Handling and Working at Height.

Additional training delivered for staff to carryout routine operations includes: -

Horticulture level 2 minimum
Pesticides application PA 1 and PA6
Chainsaw use, crosscutting and maintenance
Safe use of ride on, pedestrian mowers, Brush cutters, Hedge trimmers
Play equipment inspection 1-day course
Chipper and shredder safe operation
First aid
MEWP Training

Continual professional development and refresher training is also routinely provided on an annual basis to ensure staff remain current with latest working practices specific training needs and desires are discussed as part of the annual appraisal system.

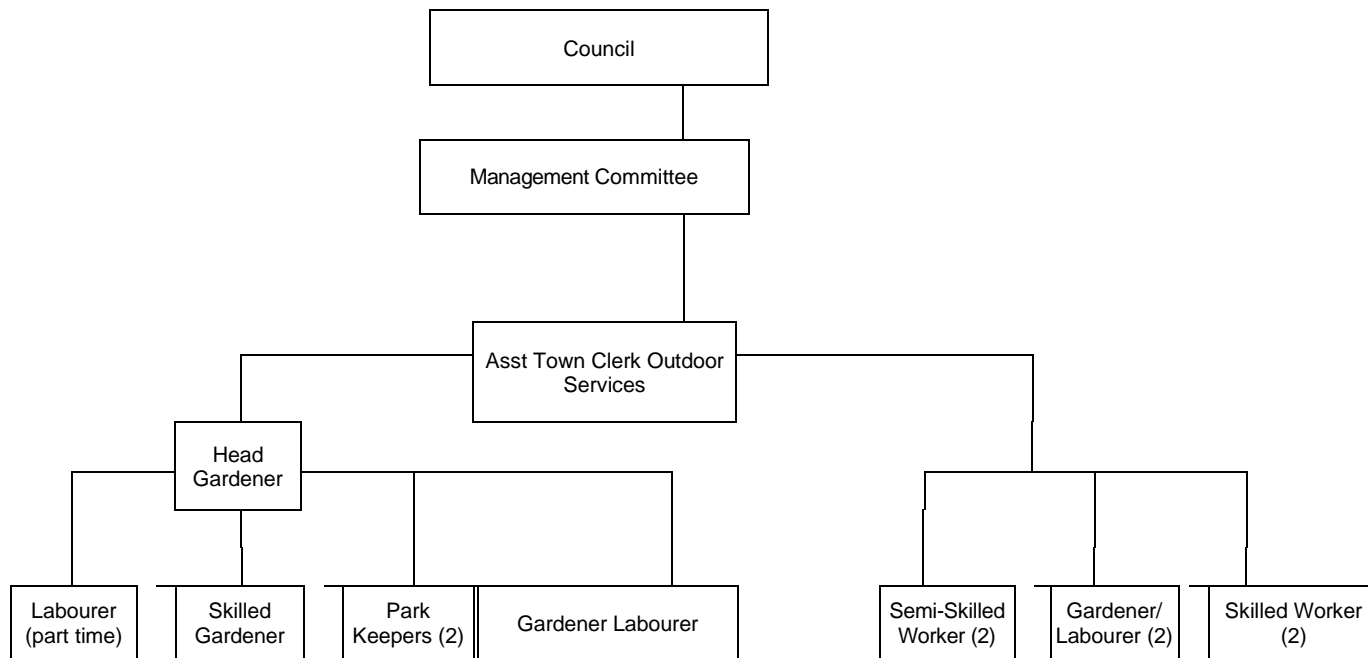
5.3.4 Management Structure

The staff based and working at the Borough Gardens are, the Head Gardener, Skilled Gardener, Gardener/Labourer, Garden labourer (part time) and Park Keepers x2. The role of the Head Gardener entails him overlooking all staff based at or visiting the Gardens including contractors who are instructed to report direct to him upon arrival before starting works.

All Town Council outdoor services staff are responsible to the ATCOS who will, when necessary, move staff from outside areas to work within the gardens to cover peaks and

troughs at busy times, or to replace staff during absences for sickness or leave. They may also be called upon for any specific construction or maintenance tasks.

An organogram showing the Management Structure for the Borough Gardens on the left and open spaces team on the right.



Volunteers – The Borough Gardens also take on temporary and semi-permanent Volunteers from various sources, the Gardens at present has one semi-permanent volunteer in place.

5.3.5 Staff Appraisals

A formal appraisal system exists where staff meet with the Head Gardener to discuss their progress against previous targets, problems preventing good working, personal achievements and targets for the coming year along with any additional or desired training needs. These are done on a one-to-one basis and the opportunity is taken to have a wide-ranging discussion about how the working environment can be further improved to allow for an increase in the standard of work delivered in the gardens. Similarly, the Head gardener has an appraisal with the ATCOS.

5.3.6 Team Briefings

Routine team briefings occur at least monthly lead by the HG, subjects will vary but will be based around Standards, working practices, safety, customer focus and quality.

5.4 Arboricultural Management

The gardens feature around 140 trees (not including small sub shrub sized specimens) at varying stages of maturity giving a very high-quality appearance to the gardens. Specimens vary in age from circa 100 years to recently planted heavy standard trees. The Council places a high value on its tree stock and it is specifically mentioned within the councils Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2023. Items of relevance specifically to the gardens tree stock are as follows:

“The Borough Gardens host the widest variety of tree species as well as the highest number in a single location. All the trees there have been deliberately planted and tend to be non-native species which reduces their biodiversity value in term of habitat and food but their contribution is still large. There is a healthy mix of ages of tree and planting density.

With the exception of some specimens of pleached Lime in Borough Gardens, maintenance in the form of cutting and pruning is very much limited to remedial work to dead, diseased, dying or mechanically problematic material.

Town wide there is a replacement ratio of trees that have been felled or died but kept standing, if possible, of two for every one lost.”

In addition to the above the council also has a Tree management Policy 2016 this document sets out the councils’ management objectives for trees across the town. It is a broad document, extracts relevant to the tree stock within Borough gardens are shown below:

- Trees are important features in the landscape. They help to create an attractive environment, making the Town a better place to live, work, study and visit. They bring colour and contrast, screen unsightly structures, give privacy and soften the hard lines of streets and landscapes.
- The Town Council recognises its obligations when undertaking works to trees in conservation areas (including Borough Gardens) and will liaise with Dorset Council tree Officers prior to performing works on any tree within a Conservation area.
- The Council will seek to ensure that tree works are carried out to the highest standards. In carrying out tree works, any third-party contractor working on trees over which the council have a responsibility, will ensure that pruning conserves the overall amenity value, form and shape of the tree and all tree works must be carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998 – Recommendations for Tree Work. Particular pruning specifications may or may not be appropriate for trees of different ages, species, health and condition, or even between trees of the same species depending on their condition, age and environment. Clear and acceptable pruning objectives are necessary in advance of approval of a pruning specification.

5.4.1 Tree Inspections

The aforementioned policy details when and how tree inspections will be carried out:

The council works on a risk-based approach to tree management: a programme of inspection identifying and prioritising potential hazards and desirable works. The cycle of inspection for trees is set according to their location and area of risk.

Highways trees and those adjacent to the highway and any located over high impact target zones (in the case of Borough gardens, the play area and seating for example) are considered to be highest priority. The subsequent inspection frequency cycle is determined by a number of factors including road category, traffic/pedestrian use, incident history, local knowledge and the presence of features within the target (fall area). Tree defects likely to cause a hazard are identified and the appropriate work is undertaken to remove the hazard.

The following categories will be used when prioritising tree works:

Priority	Response
Priority 1: Urgent Public Safety *	Within 24 hours Exclude public or carryout works.
Priority 2: Non-urgent but essential work	Between 1 to 6 months depending upon risk and time of year
Priority 3: Desirable	12 months where possible
Non-priority	No action proposed

* Surveyors have the contact numbers for both the Head gardener and the ATCOS. They are instructed to make contact immediately should any Priority 1 issues be discovered. On site staff will then either cordon off if in extreme cases close the gardens until remedial works can be arranged. The council has the ability to call on both Dorset Councils Arb team and /or a local tree contractor to effect prompt works. Inspection up to 2020 was by a paper-based system which, whilst offering the advantage of being relatively quick and simple, was not sufficiently thorough to meet the policies requirements. In 2019 a software system produced by Pear Ltd was trialled and purchased for use. Surveys using this system were carried out in early summer 2020 and then repeated at frequencies determined by the new base line survey.

See also section 12:2 Ash Die Back Plan 2023

5.4.2 Tree Strategy Borough Gardens

Trees are very important within the gardens and as such consideration has to be given as to what role they play and how this will be maintained over the life of this plan.

5.4.2.1 Mature trees

Several mature specimens exist within the gardens, having being planted many decades ago they now dominate certain areas providing a visual sense of scale and impact. These include *Fagus sylvatica*, *F.s. "Purpurea"*, *Tilia spp* and *Pinus*. Because they have such an important role in the gardens, maintenance works avoid disturbing or compacting rootzones and any work on the trees is carried out by professional arborists and kept to a minimum to ensure they continue to flourish in the gardens for as long as possible. Original planting positions were prudent so few problems are associated with the location of these older trees. Planting was intended to create either feature ornamental trees at key points and as specimens in lawns or to demark the perimeter boundary. There are no woodland areas within the gardens.

See also section 7 for information on wildlife and biodiversity in reference to trees on site.

5.4.2.2 Semi-mature trees

The gardens have many examples of semi-mature trees of a range of species including *Aesculus*, *Liriodendron*, *Fraxinus*, *Sorbus* and *Acers*. These plantings help to support the structure of the gardens and complement the existing mature trees. In some locations it will be possible to allow these to grow to maturity with a view to replacing some older specimens but this is not possible in all cases. These plantings will be maintained wherever possible at current density levels and range of varieties by ongoing management and the planting of replacement younger trees.

5.4.2.3 Young trees

Many young trees were planted as part of the lottery funded re-development. These took the form of heavy standard containerised specimens and were planted in locations where it was hoped they would grow to replace the mature specimens as they came to end of life. It was however not a very successful strategy as they were, on many occasions, planted too close to the existing trees and suffered from shading almost immediately leading to distorted or weak growth. This has demonstrated how carefully new tree locations have to be selected. It is the case that new trees cannot be planted, immediately adjacent to mature specimens to eventually replace them. As a result, selected specimens within the semi mature stock will be maintained to allow them to develop as specimens in the future and replanting will only take place after felling where appropriate.

Young tree planting will usually be limited to direct replacement in locations where existing trees fail or die and have to be removed quickly. Species selection will be determined by historic relevance in the gardens, soil type, wildlife benefit and consideration of the predicted climate for the locality going forward.

Only stock produced in the UK will be selected for replanting, evidence of bio-security at the nursery will be a requirement as will production using peat free media. If relevant, stock from local/regional indigenous populations will be used if available.

5.4.2.4 Lime trees

A Planting of pollarded Tillia exists in the form of individual specimens located in a circle around the bandstand. These are recorded under the heritage listing for the bandstand along with the accompanying benches, and as such, are protected.



The pollarding, as much as is possible, retains the trees in a small and clean enough form to not compromise views of the bandstand. Pruning is carried out annually in the winter. Some specimens exhibit previous tree care operations such as filling cavities with cement which compromise their strength so the trees have all new growth removed each year to keep canopies as light as possible. Due to listing when significant failure occurs and/or the structure is significantly compromised these trees will be removed and replanted with Tillia spp.

A row of similarly pollarded Tillia spp is present on the southern boundary of the gardens adjacent to Bowling Alley walk, these are not formally listed and are at an end of life. The replanting plan is to keep with the original design intention to replace with Lime or Hornbeam and to pleach the specimens into box shapes to add an interesting linear feature to the boundary whilst still allowing views (above the existing hedge and under the new canopy) into gardens from the footway. **Works**

the
anticipated summer/Autumn 2025

Pollarded Tillia, Bandstand, Borough Gardens

5.4.2.5 Storm Safety

A closure procedure exists for the gardens in windy conditions. Where the forecast predicts wind in excess of 45 mph a review takes place to raise staff awareness. Where speeds are predicted to be 60 mph plus or an amber weather warning for wind is released by the Met Office which covers the Dorchester area the gardens will be closed. This is a dynamic process with wind monitoring by Head Gardener or who will ultimately make the call of when to close.

The public are cleared from the site, gates closed and locked and signs placed on them informing the public of reasons for closure. Safety instructions to staff are given by Head Gardener and placed on staff “WhatsApp” group for Park Keepers to see before commencement of shift, which gives them safe access and safe working information.

5.5 Building and Infrastructure maintenance

The provision of well-maintained and safe buildings and infrastructure is a key part of overall management for the gardens. Section 4, "Safe and Secure", details maintenance and inspection regimes for various facilities which the public are encouraged to enjoy. This section focusses mainly on structures that staff alone access and infrastructure that is used by all. The town councils' aims and objectives are stated in section 4 and the same ambition applies to the areas covered within this section.

5.5.1 Staff facilities and Storage

The Lottery funded improvement project included within its plan, improvements to staff facilities and storage within the gardens.

5.5.1.1 Staff facilities

As part of the project, the old mess facilities were converted to storage and a new mess facility containing seating, personal and PPE stowage, kitchen facilities, a toilet and shower were created in a new building. It is of brick construction with a tiled roof, electrically heated with a water supply direct from the on-site borehole.

The building is small barely providing sufficient amenities for the on-site staff. The building also doubles as the Head Gardeners Office. The building is cleaned at least weekly in addition the following maintenance checks are carried out.: -

- Fixed wiring tested at 3 yearly intervals. (External Contractor), PAT Testing (EC)
- Monthly legionella temp testing and cleaning of shower head. (Head Gardener)
- Annual replacement of U.V sterilising light on Borehole water supply (EC)

See section 12.3 for details of building extension project 2023-4

5.5.1.2 Storage

The project facilitated storage by the creation of new mess facilities for staff, whilst this was an improvement it is still not ideal and work in 2023 will focus on the relocation of materials currently stored in the renovated cellar below Borough Gardens House.

In the meantime, the cellar is tidied by staff as required access steps swept and kept clear. Safety checks include: -

Monthly firefighting equipment checks, weekly alarm testing. (H.G)

Six monthly fire alarm servicing. (E C)

Monthly emergency lighting checks, annual testing and certification (E.C)

P.A.T testing every two years (E.C)

Fixed wiring tested at 3 yearly intervals. (External Contractor)

Six Monthly intruder alarm servicing (E C)

The cellar has electrical power supply and also houses the main router for the free Wi-Fi system used in the gardens.

The other main storage facility within the gardens is the garage which is located within the nursery area. The garage has electrical power and light. In the past space was occupied by machinery required for the maintenance of the bowling green. Since it has been removed this machinery and equipment has been withdrawn so facilitating movement of equipment from the cellar to the garage which is far more suitable as it is at ground level, has good working space and headroom. Maintenance and cleaning is as for the cellar.

It is clear however that storage is still not ideal and a move must be made to using the garage for frequently and routinely accessed items and the cellar for materials that have a less frequent more periodic use. This will be achieved in 2020 with the Head gardener tasked with completion.

The review of the south western corner of the gardens scheduled for 2021 will take into account the shortcomings of current arrangements.

Some limited very short-term storage exists in the cellar under the bandstand, this is limited due to the damp conditions to temporary storage of materials e.g., chairs and tables, overnight in a secure place where they are to be used for weekend events.

5.5.1.3 Inspection and fault reporting

The Head Gardener is responsible for routine inspection of these facilities on at least a weekly basis with an emphasis to staff that they should also take responsibility and report any issues on discovery to the H.G.

Depending on the nature of the fault the following reporting procedures apply: -

- Immediately dangerous, i.e., electrical or structural faults, problem is isolated physically from staff and reported to Outdoor Services Manager for specialist contractor repair.
- Routine non-dangerous repairs, i.e., damaged fittings, problem reported to Head Gardener. Direct repair effected or report to OSM for repair by Open Spaces team or contractor.

5.5.2 Gardens Infrastructure

5.5.2.1 Path Network

All paths within the gardens are hard surfaced using either tarmac, block pavements or paving slabs. As of time of compilation, the network is in good condition with no loose surface, significant fretting or potholes. Root heave has affected path surfaces in three areas, this has been patch repaired. **Further heave patch repairs were undertaken in early 2024 at the princes street entrance and adjacent to the rose garden in late 2024.** The paths are inspected by the Head gardener as part of the daily walk of gardens and any defects are noted. The frequency of checking and permanent manning of the site means faults developing can be remedied easily when minor or larger works such as the above programmed in to affect a wider repair. In the event of sudden failure, the layout of paths is such that the section can be closed and a diversion /alternative route

put into place. The life span of tarmac surfaces is significantly increased by the restriction of vehicle access in the gardens. Only small service vehicles and light vans used by contractors are allowed to access the gardens as part of normal working. Paths are swept or cleared of debris using a blower at least twice weekly intervals with more frequency during seasonal or drought leaf fall.

Areas of block and stone paving prone to the development of algae and or moss are known to the staff and area pressure washed to remove the hazard.

5.5.2.2 Seating and Bins

Where appropriate seating and bins located in the gardens are of a construction type and style to suit the character of the area of the gardens in which they are placed.

Broadly, seating is divided as follows:

- Traditional style wooden park seats
- Formal cast metal ended seats using a casting mould that is in keeping with the original design used in the gardens.
- Re-cycled plastic type picnic benches.
- All metal accessible integrated picnic benches and table.

Litter bins are again sited to try to fit in with local site character and broadly divided as follows:

- All wooden exterior cylindrical bins with cigarette stubbers.
- Cast metal, traditional style square bins
- All metal Dog waste bins.

Checks and repair regimes are as per path network on previous page. Maintenance in the form of rubbing back and treatment of wooden slats and surfaces occurs every two years. Rubbing back and painting of metal surfaces occurs every 5 years.

5.5.2.3 Fencing and Gates

As mentioned in section 4.3 the gardens have high quality secure perimeter fencing. The bespoke designed scheme was installed as part of the lottery funded improvements. It was supplied by Alpha Rail and is of mild steel construction which was galvanised and hot dipped powder coated in an anthracite grey finish. Until the coating degrades significantly there is no need to apply any paint to the railings other than ad-hoc repairs or to cover over any hard to remove Graffiti.

Three of the sites' individual gates were not specially manufactured as part of the above programme and these are in varying states of condition. The two oldest gates require shot blasting back to base metal, priming and repainting as do the twin gates by the nursery. This work will be programmed into the action plan.

Maintenance is limited to Trii-annual cleaning as described above.

5.5.3 Equipment Maintenance

Only equipment used by staff and volunteers to maintain the gardens is referenced in this section.

5.5.3.1 Machinery and Equipment

All equipment in the form of hand tools, stand-alone machinery, ride-on type cutting equipment and vehicles is subject to several health and safety requirements these are listed below: -

- **The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER)** and as such several obligations to ensure a safe working environment for both the operator and members of the public using the gardens.
- The Control of **Vibration at Work Regulations 2005**, protecting machine operators from harmful vibrations.
- The Control of **Noise at Work Regulations**, protecting machine operators and those nearby from harmful levels of noise.
- **Manual Handling Operations Regulations**, affecting those who either carry, transport or use machinery/equipment/supplies
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Regulations**, providing guidance on protection to users from hazards.
- **The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations** placing an obligation to ensure operations are assessed for risk and that operators receive appropriate training.
- **Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations**, ensuring only properly designed and constructed equipment is supplied for use.

Notwithstanding the above, overarching legislation under the **Health and Safety at Work Act** of 1974 also applies to staff and volunteers carrying out all operations within the working environment. Similarly, the **Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations** have overarching principles and requirements to **ensure** the environment in which people work and rest is safe.

Responsibilities

Staff working on site are instructed by the head gardener in regard to their personal responsibilities in relation to the above regulations. In short these include: -

- Inspection of equipment for faults before use
- Observing any exclusion areas or quarantined equipment
- Reference to and understanding of PPE and risk assessments
- Use of PPE provided
- Fault reporting
- Following safe working practice procedures and safe storage principles
- Avoiding working where a member of the public or colleague could be put at risk

- Reporting any accidents or near misses.
- The need to use signage or barriers to raise awareness or exclude when carrying out some operations.

The Head gardener is responsible for ensuring that all on-site staff and volunteers understand their personal responsibilities and, in addition:

- Ensuring Risk assessments, safe working practice documents and COSHH information are readily available.
- Carrying out dynamic risk assessment of works to be carried out.
- Ensuring any faulty equipment is removed from use and either disposed of or repair organised via the Outdoor Services manager (OSM)
- Contributing to reviews of risk and PPE assessments
- Presenting equipment for service.
- Requesting P.P.E. for staff
- Carrying out annual appraisals
- Identifying training requirements to be relayed to OSM
- On site supervision, ensuring only trained staff carry out operations and that any contravention of H and S regulations is quickly dealt with.
- Ensuring safe storage of equipment.

The Assistant Clerk Outdoor Services is responsible for ensuring health and safety compliance, that all staff are appropriately trained and that equipment is suitable for purpose. Also, specifically, but not exclusively:

- Procuring staff training, personal protective equipment, machinery and equipment and subsequent fault repair and servicing.
- Production of risk and PPE assessments, safe working procedures and COSHH lists.
- Supervising and checking of on-site behaviours and practices.
- Staying up to date and disseminating health and safety information.
- If necessary, commencing any disciplinary action required as a result of breaches of H&S procedures
- Investigating any accidents or near misses.
- Providing materials and resources to allow all others to meet their own and the Councils H & S responsibilities.

6 Environmental Management

Aim

To Ensure that Borough Gardens has as positive effect on the wider environment as possible whilst retaining its features both landscape and built and maintaining them with as low an environmental impact as is possible. The original character of the site continues to be, wherever possible, strongly evident to visitors and the gardens are retained in a similar condition into the future.

Objectives

- To follow the recommendations and actions detailed in the Council's Biodiversity Statement and Action Plan 2018-2023.
- Conservation and minimalisation of treated water, fossil fuels and materials to reduce their overall use in the gardens
- The cessation of the use of pesticides within the gardens with the exception of potential use to combat invasive plant species e.g. Japanese Knotweed
- Cease the use of peat and peat-based products within the gardens.
- Ensure the Gardens and its tree and plant population is best positioned to meet the predicted change in climate for the Dorchester area of Dorset.
- Reduce noise and atmospheric pollution in the gardens by utilisation of electric vehicle and battery powered equipment.

Dorchester Town Council produced a [Biodiversity Statement and Action Plan](#) in 2018 which considered a wide range of issues and how the Town Council can effect change in a positive way. It is a cross cutting document which can be viewed using the hyperlink above, italicised extracts in the following sections indicate where they are applicable to the Borough Gardens.

6.1 Water and Energy

“Water supplies are used in numerous buildings and outdoor facilities (mainly parks, open spaces and gardens) managed by the Town Council. The majority of this water is treated mains supply potable water supplied through the existing mains water supply by Wessex Water. The production, treatment and supply of water is a significant consumer of energy and also places demand upon clean water supplies which are increasingly under demand pressure.”

In an effort to reduce the use of water for the reasons above several actions have been taken within the Borough Gardens

These are listed below.

- Assessment, audit and monitoring of all water accounts to understand water use
- Installation of an on-site borehole to supply water to the children's play water feature, fountain, mess facility and to be used for irrigation in the gardens.
- Installation of waterless urinals in Toilet Blocks
- Circulation system for fountain to reduce water use and timers to limit energy use to daylight hours only.
- Reduction in amount of annual bedding and selection of shrubs which require less water e.g. Mediterranean bed.
- Use of irrigation tubes with newly planted trees, use less and more efficient.
- Introduction of deep cultivation and organic matter in annual beds to reduce water requirement by improving both soil texture and structure.

These actions have seen an **82% reduction** in mains water use 2015-2019

“Energy supplies are used in numerous buildings and outdoor facilities (mainly parks, open spaces and gardens) managed by the Town Council. The use of energy in the form of gas and electricity is widespread. Both these energy sources are relevant to biodiversity as the production of either, unless by renewable means in the case of electricity or Bio-gas, result in emissions of CO2.”

In an effort to reduce the use of energy for the reasons above several actions have been taken within the Borough Gardens.

- Replacement of old petrol service vehicle used in the gardens with a new battery powered electric truck (1 of 2 the council operates)
- Replacement programme for all two and 4 stroke powered equipment, with battery powered hedge trimmers, blowers and strimmer's (in use from 2019)
- Offsetting as much as possible the un-avoidable use of electricity by installing solar panels on main depot roof resulting in generation capacity of 17,000 units per annum. Total electric use in gardens 2019 was 22,000 units.
- Use of room and water thermostats, time clocks and insulation in Borough gardens house facility.
- Use of Led or energy saving lighting in all facilities.
- Change in growth methods for annual bedding plants in nursey, plugs to be bought in rather than seedlings germinated resulting in less gas being used due to houses not being heated to a high level.
- Change in species grown to allow for cooler overwintering of stock plants.

During the life of this plan use of these energy resources will continue to be monitored and where possible further energy saving initiatives will be implemented.



Proud staff mark the arrival of the councils second electric vehicle to complement their battery powered equipment.

See also section 12.4 for Solar and air source project at Brough Gardens House and Greenhouses. 2024 revision

6.2 Maintenance Operations

Wherever possible all maintenance materials and chemicals are to be of as low an environmental impact as possible in terms of both production and use. Similarly, all materials used in the maintenance of buildings or equipment are to be where possible:

- Recycled e.g., Picnic benches
- Re-used e.g., Plastic plant pots
- Sustainable sources e.g., FSC timber.

6.2.1 Use of Chemicals and Fertilisers

Chemicals **will not be used** in the gardens as part of routine maintenance for paths, shrub beds hard surfaces etc. Use is to be restricted to occasions when a chemical is the only realistic solution to resolving a serious/ harmful problem, as a guide these instances would be limited to:

- Treatment of woodworm in structural timber in buildings
- Treatment with fungicide to prevent harmful rot in structural building timbers

- Insecticide to combat an infestation of alien and harmful insect species
- Herbicide to combat the growth of Invasive plant species, the growth of which would be an offence under the “***Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019***” e.g., Giant Hogweed. (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)

6.2.2 Cultural Practices

In order to maintain high standards of cultivation whilst reducing or ceasing the use of fertilisers and chemicals cultural practices must change the following principles will be followed over the life of this plan.

- The use of biological control in the nurseery and sticky traps replaces the use of insecticides
- The use of Nematodes replaces slug pellets within the gardens.
- Mulching of shrub beds and more frequent manual weeding standards of maintenance have replaced the use of herbicides for weed control in shrub and annual beds.
- Routine pressure washing of vulnerable surfaces replaces the use of moss killer and algicides
- No Lumbricides to be used under any circumstances.
- Any fertilisers used on site will be organic. No fertiliser to be applied to lawns or shrub beds.

6.2.3 Composting

The shredding and composting of all organic material from the gardens is carried out on site. All woody material is shredded and returned to shrub beds as mulch. Softer non-lignified material is shredded if necessary or simply deposited into the on-site composting area. This area does not provide enough compost for the gardens need so away from the gardens an area has been set up to produce compost in larger quantities for use as a soil conditioner for the annual beds in the gardens.

The annual beds in the gardens have suffered from very poor soil structure for several years. The soil is very low on actual humus content and cultivation pans exist both of which are contributing to high summer water demand, restricted plant growth, high weed contamination and significant rotting of plants in the winter period due to high spore levels and high soil water levels where drainage naturally through the profile is inhibited.

A process of double digging, some soil removal and replacement with mature compost * will commence in Autumn 2020 to reduce these problems, approx. 30 % of beds will be left fallow and cultivated over the winter period. Partial work over 3 years will enable the maintenance of a display and deliver improvements. It is anticipated that this will reduce water requirement and disease and improve nutrient uptake and drainage.

**The compost is made using a combination of bulk compost generated from open space teams green waste (a reservoir for mycorrhizal fungi), Biochar charcoal, local horse*

manure and “Blooming Amazing” soil conditioner, which also acts as a mild 7:7:7 organic fertiliser. This material is a by-product from the local biogas plant (2 miles away) and is the digestate material (post anaerobic digestion) produced after gas generation. The original material is clean shredded sweetcorn.

This use ceased in 2024

6.3 Waste Minimisation

Waste can be simply described as any material that is no longer required that is to be disposed of by the user.

Waste can take many forms e.g., green waste, office waste, electronic equipment, metals, water/effluent, process residues and hazardous materials. The Town council already has a policy and plan document.

“Waste Management Overview and Action Plan 2016”, can be found by clicking on [Waste review](#) (see bottom of Agenda document)

The document covers all the operations carried out by the town council and considers how all waste is handled. With relevance to the Borough gardens, the underlying waste management hierarchy principles apply.

Where actions specific to the Borough Gardens are contained in the plan they are detailed below.

- Green waste generated at the Borough Gardens is to be composted on site wherever possible. This will reduce double handling, transport costs and ECO Composting costs and have a positive environmental impact.
- The use of a shredder to reduce woody shrub material generated in the gardens is to be investigated. There is a potential efficiency in terms of reduced transport and Eco Composting costs plus an environmental benefit, increased staff time to shred material has to be considered. (shredder was purchased and is in use)
- Tree prunings generated by staff and contractors should wherever possible be chipped, stored and re-used as a mulch to suppress weeds in shrub beds at the Borough Gardens. There will be reduced costs as currently contractors are paid to remove from site. There will be environmental gain as the mulch will improve the soil within the large established shrub beds within that gardens where soil fertility and texture is being negatively impacted by previous cultural operations and the removal of organic matter.
- Sharps should be disposed of via existing PHS contract if possible.
- Electronic equipment should be segregated in storage into working and obsolete, non – working to enable re-use in the wider community or for donation to organisations which undertake that work.

Since the plan was produced in 2016 all these items have been actioned and will be continued and expanded upon wherever possible for the life of this plan.

6.3.1 General litter

The aforementioned plan also stated the following:

- 1 The handling of litter collected from open sites should be reviewed. There is a need to reduce the amount of side bags to a minimum as there is a comparatively large charge for these items, double handling occurs and there are increased transport and labour costs. The review should consider appropriateness of bin locations, bin types, whether re-cycling type bins are appropriate and whether the continued provision of purpose-built dog bins and collection bags is necessary. The size and grade of polythene bags used for collection should also be considered.
- 2 The items within recommendation 4 above should be applied to the Borough Gardens with a specific aim of introducing recycling bins for the public to use.
- 3 An 1100 litre recycling bin (serviced by DC) should be stored at the Gardens to allow for a streaming of recyclate from the bins in recommendation 5. This will reduce overall waste from the site currently going for disposal to landfill.
- 4 A further 1100 litre general waste bin (Serviced by DC) should be placed at the Borough Gardens to prevent double handling of Litter/waste bags which currently are transported to the Louds Mill Depot and often result in side bag collection due to bins at Louds Mill being full.

Items 1, 2 and 3: After consideration of the use of recycling bins and segregated bulk collection bins it was decided not to create a separate waste stream for this material. This decision was influenced by the waste management recovery system now in operation by Dorset Council and changes to world markets for clean recyclates. See table in item 5.1.1 Litter and Waste Recycling.

6.4 Peat Use

As a wider understanding of the part peat bogs play in the removal of CO₂ from the atmosphere is coupled with the important part they play in many ecosystems it becomes clear that the continued use of peat and peat-based products is not sustainable nor desirable.

To reflect this, the use of peat and peat-based products within Borough Gardens is to be maintained at as near to zero as is possible. Currently the following measures have been taken.

- Use of peat free compost for plant production in the on-site nursery.
- No media containing peat to be used in the gardens
- Specification of hardy nursery stock and containerised trees in peat free compost.

The only material used that contains peat is the small amount of rootzone compost into which seeds are sown to produce commercial plug plants for growing on. This is currently estimated to be less than six bags of compost per year. The plugs are bought in to avoid the heating of the greenhouses to germinate and grow on seeds in late winter so avoiding cost and CO2 production.

The Council will continue to try to source these plugs in a peat free medium in the future.

6.5 The Gardens and Climate Change

Extreme weather events in the period 2010 onwards have led to a wider general concern about climate change and how it will affect the environment in which all life exists. In 2019 Dorset Council started to hold meetings with other local authority officers to start to collate approaches and strategies concerning the effect of climate change moving into the future. One of the major benefits from that work was the raising of awareness of the following document

“UKCP18 Science Overview Report November 2018 (Updated March 2019)”

See document [UKCP18 Science Overview Report November 2018 \(Updated March 2019\)](#).

The report: _

“Provides a new set of climate projections and tools to access climate data. The major innovations in UKCP18 include the use of new observations of weather and climate, inclusion of a more recent generation of climate models from around the world and the results from latest Met Office global and regional climate models.”

The projections provided in this report will be used to help steer decisions made regarding the maintenance and upkeep of the gardens moving forward over the life of this plan.

6.5.1 Anticipated Projection

UKCP18 is a very complex and in-depth piece of work and it produces many outcomes based on many different scenarios and projections. In summary, if a position is taken that future emissions remain as they are predicted to, then the following very basic assumptions can be made that will directly impact upon the gardens.

- Summers will be hotter and dryer, rainfall events will be more intense
- Winters will be warmer with more frequent heavy rainfall events and higher wind speeds associated with them. Cold events will still occur.
- The trend will continue to be warming and there is a risk of an increase in degree of warming if emissions are not reduced and exceed projected levels.

6.5.2 Historic Context

Given the main character of the gardens is an historic one and their listing as examples of such gardens, it is important that the character is maintained as much as is possible.

It is however important to try to combine this driver with the anticipated impacts of climate change, to fail to do so will ultimately see the gardens fail and risks the gardens not being fit for purpose in the future.

It is important to retain as many historic features in the landscape as possible. It is the responsibility of the Town Council to do this and as much as possible mitigate the effects of climate change.

6.5.3 Mitigation Measures Implemented

The new projections show an acceleration in the degree of change in later years but in the early future there is significant overlap with the previous model (UKCP09). To meet some of the challenges that have been common knowledge for a decade some mitigation work has taken place in the gardens:

- Placement of seating and picnic tables in areas of natural shade
- Use of climbers and structures overhead to provide seating and shade in the play area.
- Introduction of waterplay feature in play area.
- Drainage system in main picnic lawn.
- Planting of Mediterranean bed.
- Introduction of storm/ high wind closure policy.

6.5.4 Future Mitigation measures

The Town council will continue to try to meet the challenge of climate change and balance that with the historic need of the site. Existing mitigation 6.5.3 has placed the gardens in a good position, further work will include: -

- Consideration of impact of climate change on any developmental works carried out to structures or buildings. **See Action Plan 10:1:1**
- Selection of species that are tolerant of dryer summer soils conditions and higher temperatures
- Specific consideration of sudden branch drop during dry summer events.
- Replacement tree planting to avoid species that are currently thought to be vulnerable e.g. *Fagus spp*
- Acceptance that the fountain pool will be used for cooling off and adaptation of management practice to allow for this.
- Maintain significant shade areas e.g. above gym equipment and incorporate more in landscape design.
- Adapt tree inspection regimes to incorporate increase target zone when utilising shade under canopies.
- Continuation of change to entirely mulched shrub beds.
- Continue to locate wildlife refuges and homes in shaded areas e.g. Fernery

In addition to sections 6.4.3 and 6.4.4 the council has several actions contained within its [Climate emergency preliminary response](#) “that are relevant to Borough Gardens, these are contained within the action plan.

Some events in the gardens are based around environmental and sustainable message the most recent being the event below.



The poster features a dark blue background with stylized green and yellow leaf patterns at the top. In the top right corner is a circular logo for 'Weapons of Sound' with the text 'THE ORIGINAL JUNK MUSIC BAND SINCE 2002'. The event details are centered: 'JULY 27, 2019: 11AM - 3PM' and 'BOROUGH GARDENS, DORCHESTER'. The main title 'PLASTIC FREE PICNIC' is in large, bold, light green letters. Below the title, a paragraph explains the event's purpose: 'The Plastic Free Picnic is about inspiring, sharing ideas and supporting others to make changes by reducing use of single use plastics. Bring along your single use plastic free picnic.' A list of activities follows: 'MUSIC FROM POP CLUB AND WEAPONS OF SOUND', 'CRAFT ACTIVITIES (ECO BRICKS & BOOMERANG BAGS)', 'THE GREEN WEIGH MOBILE ZERO WASTE SHOP', 'BBQ FROM BRACE BROTHERS', and 'AND MANY MORE ACTIVITIES FOR ALL THE FAMILY'. At the bottom, there are five logos: 'Damers FIRST SCHOOL', 'LITTER FREE DORSET', the Dorchester Borough Council crest, 'theWI INSPIRING WOMEN', and 'PLASTIC FREE DORCHESTER SURFERS AGAINST SEWAGE'.

JULY 27, 2019: 11AM - 3PM
BOROUGH GARDENS, DORCHESTER

PLASTIC FREE PICNIC

The Plastic Free Picnic is about inspiring, sharing ideas and supporting others to make changes by reducing use of single use plastics.
Bring along your single use plastic free picnic.

MUSIC FROM POP CLUB AND WEAPONS OF SOUND
CRAFT ACTIVITIES (ECO BRICKS & BOOMERANG BAGS)
THE GREEN WEIGH MOBILE ZERO WASTE SHOP
BBQ FROM BRACE BROTHERS
AND MANY MORE ACTIVITIES FOR ALL THE FAMILY

Damers FIRST SCHOOL
LITTER FREE DORSET
DORCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL
theWI INSPIRING WOMEN
PLASTIC FREE DORCHESTER SURFERS AGAINST SEWAGE

7 Biodiversity, Landscape and Garden Heritage

The Borough Gardens are listed by Historic England as a Grade 2 Heritage Park and Gardens. (see listing [BOROUGH GARDENS, DORCHESTER](#)), within the gardens there are also two listed structures the Clock Tower and the Bandstand. The gardens also play an important part for wildlife as a link in the wider greenspace of central Dorchester providing both permanent living and transient use opportunities for some species. Maintaining the potentially conflicting requirements of the above is difficult, historic artificial landscapes and associated traditional maintenance practices restrict the gardens desirability to a wide range of species but works can still be carried out to ensure the gardens offer wildlife value.

7.1 Biodiversity

Urban greenspace, such as the Borough Gardens, play an important part in conserving biodiversity in urban areas. Much of the existing permanent planting contributes to increased biodiversity within the gardens e.g. flowering plants, native trees and mature shrubs. The original HLF grant was given to restore the heritage value of the gardens and since then additions have been made to increase biodiversity without compromising the heritage of the gardens. This will continue to be a driver moving forward through the life of this plan.

Aim

To sustain and, where possible within heritage restraints, augment the wildlife diversity, as well as horticultural interest in the gardens through selective planting and other measures to encourage a diversity of flora and fauna. Also, to continue to explore and adopt new maintenance techniques using more environmentally sustainable methods.

Objectives

To have regard to wildlife especially in potentially ecologically useful areas of the gardens.

To comply with biodiversity statement and action plan to protect species of interest found in the gardens.

To comply with relevant environmental legislation, waste minimisation and composting policies.

To monitor and encourage the wildlife diversity found in the park with the help of local volunteers and where appropriate the Dorset Wildlife Trust.

To introduce late season and early spring flowering plants to provide a suitable source of nectar for insects.

7.1.1 Current habitats

The gardens feature a range of trees at various stages of maturity, shrub beds, some offering more dense cover, grass areas, annual beds and heritage structures. These offer a range of habitats for living organisms at all levels.

7.1.1.1 Trees

The tree stock on site is of varying ages and maturity which offers opportunities for nesting birds, insects, invertebrates and bats. Woodland is not present.

Trees are managed to encourage wildlife and both Bird and Bat boxes are located in trees around the gardens.

7.1.1.2 Shrub beds

A balance is maintained within the gardens in how shrub beds are maintained between the needs of wildlife in terms of habitat and nesting/living opportunities and ensuring there is a feeling of security and safety for users.

This is achieved by allowing the shrub areas on the western (Cornwall road) boundary to remain quite large and undisturbed, these are on the gardens boundary so don't visually affect sightlines or "feel" excessively and also screen the gardens and provide some noise reduction from the nearby road. Maintenance is reduced here and limited to removal of pernicious weed, application of mulch in higher light areas and trimming of boundary shrubs where they encroach onto the footway and road.

Where possible beneficial species such as ivy are allowed to grow providing habitat and feeding opportunity for winter moths etc.

Pruning operations to all shrub and hedge beds is restricted to outside of the bird nesting season unless it is a safety matter that requires resolution.

Shrub beds also are used as locations for hedgehog boxes along with log piles and insect/ bee hotels.

7.1.1.3 Annual Beds

Although traditionally regarded as not particularly valuable in biodiversity terms the annual beds in the gardens are subject to a soil improvement programme. This involves the re-instatement of older horticultural practices to increase the Biological load within the soil coupled with newer concepts around the value of Mycorrhizal fungi.

The beds and plants do not have any chemicals applied nor slug pellets (nematode control and plant choice limits this problem) organic fertilisers only are added only when absolutely necessary. Purpose made compost is added to improve and maintain structure and texture so providing good conditions for MF, worms, invertebrates and insects which in turn provide a valuable food source for predators.

7.1.1.4 Grass areas

The gardens have to maintain lawn areas to keep their heritage value and provide opportunities for users to sit, relax play attend events etc however maintenance practice have been adjusted to try to make them more wildlife friendly. No lumbricides are applied nor any chemicals to tackle pests and diseases, grass length is left longer than

previously and no collection occurs. Lawns are not watered unless to promote seed germination and establishment.

Some areas are planted with native bulbs which provide a valuable food source for insects and in the future zones around the bases of several trees will be sowed or planted with shade tolerant wildflower species. (see action plan)

7.1.1.5 Grass free lawn

Located on a slope on the eastern boundary of the gardens is an area known as the grass free lawn. It was funded and installed as part of a former mayors, mayoral project for their year and took place as a wider community effort with significant help and assistance from the Friends of the Borough Gardens who continue to co-ordinate replacement species and planting.

The lawn includes many species of low growing plants (to replace the use of grass) which provide rich sources of nectar etc for bees, other insects and butterflies. An information board is located adjacent to the bed so garden visitors can read about the project.

7.1.1.6 Structures

No structures on site are identified as roosts for birds or bats. Borough Gardens House has nest boxes located on it; other listed structures are cast iron construction so do not offer ready opportunity.

Any future structures to be created will consider increasing biodiversity value at project planning stage.

The kiosk roof whilst in design a possible opportunity for either solar panels or green roof is located under a heavy mature tree canopy so both possibilities are currently not a viable option.

See section 12.3 Mess room extension for creation of bat roost in roof space. 2024 Revision.

7.1.2 Notable and other Species

The gardens are located adjacent to a pedestrian walks network that is tree lined so offering valuable habitats and corridors for wildlife within the very centre of Dorchester. This makes the gardens valuable in terms of being both a temporary wildlife habitat and also a permanent one.

Because of their highly urban location, species of note that are present permanently within the gardens is restricted to hedgehogs. These are encouraged by management of shrub beds and provision of boxes. Dorchester is signed up as a hedgehog friendly Town. The council manages several sites and has boxes located in them to encourage and support hedgehog populations which are maintaining number well compared to rural environments

Grey squirrel are also resident, whilst they are not controlled, they are not encouraged by provision of boxes etc and the public are requested not to feed them. Numbers currently remain low.

Transient visitors include badgers and foxes, numerous birds and insects taking feeding opportunities. Bats utilise the gardens for feeding and occasional use of boxes provided though their species and patterns of residence are not yet known.

The Council has a wider [Biodiversity action plan](#) which details how the council will encourage biodiversity across the Town of Dorchester it details how other adjacent sites are managed differently to encourage different species. The plan sits alongside wider Dorset biodiversity work centred on “The Dorset Biodiversity strategy 2003” produced by the Dorset Biodiversity Partnership.

Items relevant to the gardens in the Town Councils’ action plan are detailed below:

Gardens and Open Spaces	7. Continue to provide opportunities for placement of Hedgehog, Bat and Bird boxes.	OSM	Life of plan
	8. Investigate and if appropriate provide Owl boxes	OSM	Jan 2019
Trees	11. To increase replacement ratio of trees that have been felled or died for like for like to 2 for every one lost.	OSM	Nov 2018
	12. Implement a biosecurity procedure ensuring tree stock is UK grown and wherever possible uses seed or propagation material from UK.	OSM	Nov 2018
	13. When replanting, utilise UK native trees where appropriate given existing site characters.	OSM	Nov 2018
		OSM	Nov 2018
Fauna	12. Continue policy of Hedgehog Friendly Dorchester.	OSM	Life of plan
	15. Undertake Bat survey in Borough Gardens	OSM EAV	June 2020 Now 2022

EAV = External Agency and or Volunteers

OSM = ACOS

Veteran Trees

Whilst none are present in the gardens currently, careful management of existing mature stock will allow for it to age to veteran where possible.

7.2 Conservation of Landscape Features

Research undertaken for the previous lottery funded renovation project identified the historical significance of the Borough Gardens as an example of late 19th Century public Gardens designed by William Goldring. Assessment of historical plans and photographs were used to identify key elements of the original design and subsequent changes. Goldring's treatment of the shape and landform of the site relied on the interaction between planting, ground-modelling and views and still reads strongly in the Garden's character. The Gardens have been listed as Grade II in the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England and are also designated as a Conservation Area. (See also 2.2 history of the site).

Aim

To manage the restored and renewed late Victorian Gardens, so as to maintain, and where possible enhance, their horticultural and Landscape assets.

Objectives

To exploit the Gardens' full potential as a site of significant historic interest.

To maintain all historic features of both hard and soft landscapes in accordance with historic character and to monitor their condition.

To ensure that the integrity of the original layout with its curvilinear paths, contouring features and views are maintained and enhanced where possible.

To follow, as far as possible, the planting palette developed for the whole Gardens to ensure that future planting is consistent in terms of restoration, character and management objectives.

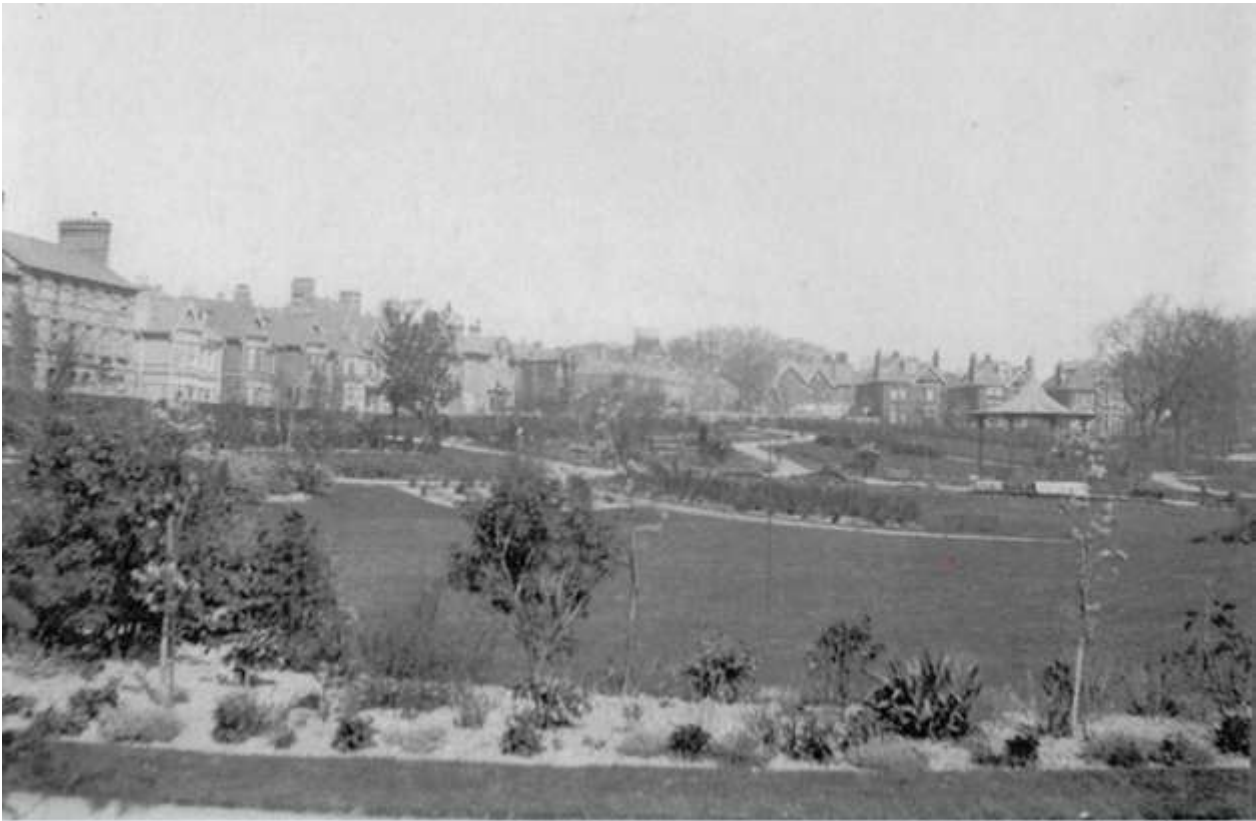
7.2.1 Historic Development

When the above is considered (and read along with section 2.2) and then a comparison made with the modern-day site, it can be seen that the gardens have naturally changed over a significant period of time. Many of the original soft horticultural features have been lost or made way for more relevant features that were "of the time" thankfully a strong core remains based around ground levels, path layout and core tree planting (See next section for structures etc). The photograph overleaf shows the gardens in 1925. It can be seen that significant changes had already been made from the near original layout shown in the picture below it. The northern section, (lower left of photograph) had been levelled to provide a site for tennis courts, similarly the central section south of the bandstand. Whilst a regrettable loss, this period marked the end of significant change. Fortunately, more recent developments have centred on these two already modified zones e.g. the play area, because of this, other features have remained intact. The heritage lottery project then sought to repair, re-instate and safeguard them into the future.



Historic England Archive: EPW013526

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7.2.2 Landform Features

The site contains two major landform features;

- The embankment on the eastern boundary this is a scheduled ancient monument being the old earthwork defence for the pre roman town. The designation prevents excavation into the embankment without permission from both the Dorset County Archaeologist and Historic England which safeguards its future.
- The Bowl lawn which was previously a defensive mire located outside the walls, it is not listed but being in context with the above embankment could be included in the designation should anything be discovered or development be proposed. (See also section 5.2 Horticultural maintenance)

The complex of town defences also included three rows ditch and bank, whilst these are no longer visible, they are known to run underground, parallel to the embankment for the length of the gardens. English heritage extended their Ancient Monument designation to include the old bowling green area when the new southern tennis courts were proposed and a series of investigation trenches were excavated to enable an archaeological record to be made of the ditch and bank layout. These were then carefully refilled and a low impact installation of the tennis court proceeded.



The photograph above shows the archaeological trenches cut in the old bowling green exposing the buried ditch and bank defences. The old ditches can be seen as dark areas the banks showing as chalk patches.

7.2.3 Future Management

It was a key part of the granting of the lottery funding that the management and maintenance practices within the gardens maintained their heritage value. The work schedules contained later in this report are still based on those proposed as part of the improvement project and will continue over the life of this plan.

Further improvement works and changes to cultural practices will seek to enhance features which already exist and have heritage value this has happened recently with the works around the fountain to bring back the vista when entering from the main gate.

The action plan will be amended at annual review points to include any intended landscape changes.

Having carried out large scale reductions of overgrown shrubs in the gardens the first two to four years of this plan will then see those beds re-planted where appropriate and regenerating shrubs managed with the focus on a sense of site safety and re-instating surprise vistas and views both across and into the gardens encouraging visitors to explore and enjoy.

Also see section 5.4 for arboricultural management.

7.3 Conservation of Buildings and Structures

There are several buildings and structures within the gardens, these are detailed in section 4.1. along with their brief history and current use where applicable. These assets provide features of interest in the gardens and as such have a high profile and value within the garden setting. The Town Council takes the need to care for and safeguard these structures into the future seriously and has invested heavily to secure them.

Aim

To manage and maintain the older restored and new structures within the Victorian Gardens, so as to safeguard, and where possible enhance, their value within the garden landscape.

Objectives

To externally maintain all built historic features in accordance with their historic or business character and to monitor their condition.

To ensure that the integrity of the structures is maintained and enhanced where possible.

To use modern maintenance products or practices to achieve a high-quality built environment within the gardens.

Ensure any future structures are designed in an appropriate manner so as to compliment the character of the area of garden in which they are located and the overall heritage designation of the gardens.

7.3.1 Management arrangements

Day to day inspection and maintenance regimes are detailed in section 4.2 and this helps to safeguard both the public and the structures. The council however fully understands that as part of the normal lifecycle for outdoor buildings etc that weathering and gradual deterioration will occur. To ensure this challenge is met the following apply.

7.3.1.1 Borough Gardens House

As part of the lottery improvements for Borough gardens house which was entirely gutted back to outer shell. operational plans, structural information and contractor handover documents provide the basis for ongoing maintenance regimes these are held centrally by the Town Council. The house has been externally decorated in 2020 and will be internally decorated in 2023/4.

7.3.1.1.2 Kiosk, Tennis Toilets and Gardeners Accommodation

These are a contemporary style structures and a more traditional brick built design respectively both constructed as part of the lottery project. Arrangements are as for BGH above. All these structures received complete inside and out redecoration and renovation in 2019/20. This will be repeated every 5 years.

7.3.1.1.3 Fountain

An original traditional water feature with modern pumping and filtration system, maintenance and repair systems are as for BGH above.

7.3.1.1.4 Clock Tower

An original cast iron feature, the clock is vulnerable to external deterioration over time, the paint will weather, corrosion occur and the clock hands /mechanism will degrade. Repainted as part of the lottery project it was in need of redecoration again by 2017. In keeping with aims and objectives regarding structures it was decided that rather than simply overpaint, the structure should be taken back to bare metal by shot blasting, treatment applied to the metal then repainting followed by anti-fade/weathering clear coat treatment to give a lifetime of at least 15 years. In this way the structure was restored to its visual best. In addition, new clock faces were installed and mechanism replacement carried out to completely renew the clock dial appearance and secure its working for many years to come.



Borough Gardens Clock Tower

The image to the left gives a rarely seen close up view of a Sphixbust on a pedestal of which there are 4 on the upper section of the clock. This was taken after shot blasting when a protective coat and base paint coat had been applied.

To complete the project the granite base upon which the clock sits was treated and washed to removal algae and rust staining as much as was possible. Bi-annual low pressure washing of the base will keep it in good visual condition.

7.3.1.1.5 Bandstand

The bandstand is very similar to the clock tower in terms of its heritage and construction. It was similarly repainted as part of the lottery redevelopment and was simply repainted again in 2016. The life of that repainting will be approx. 7-8 years at which point the structure will be completely stripped back and treated as was the clock tower to reduce ongoing maintenance and preserve it as fully as possible.

7.3.1.1.6 Tirah Memorial

Located in the north west corner of the gardens by a former entrance point, the Tirah memorial was erected in 1899 to mark the part the local infantry regiment played in the Indian Northwest Frontier (Tirah) Campaign of 1897-98. It is dedicated to the memory of the non-commissioned officers and men of the 1st Battalion Dorset Regiment who died in the conflict. A nearby interpretation panel offers further information.

The pillar is marble with inscription panels on 4 sides. Maintenance is via low pressure wash on an annual basis.

The monument sits within a roughly oval grass area bordered by paths, contained within this was a low-quality floral display both had poor levels and soil structure. The area was completely renovated in 2019 to include new grass, annual beds and monument cleaning. The annual beds are now in the form of the outline of a Victoria Cross medal (which also has the shape of the Maltese Cross where the regiment were also stationed in later years.) which is the regiments highest awarded honour.



A project was carried out in 2020 involving volunteers and the local military museum to add the names of two young officers attached to the regiment and lost in time. The community of Dorchester has a close affiliation with the infantry company who still have barracks in the town, this monument and the annual October remembrance service have a high local profile.

8 Community Involvement

The Town Council is keen to maintain the close links that it has developed with the wider community in connection with the management, maintenance and development of the Borough Gardens. For example, the provision of facilities such as community meeting rooms and halls is important for the social needs of the local community. The restored and converted Borough Garden House has improved the provision of community resources within Dorchester.

Aim

To involve as much as is possible the local community (groups and individuals) to gain local support for the management and maintenance of the Gardens and engender a sense of enjoyment and ownership.

Objectives

To promote social inclusion so that more people in the local community/groups make a positive contribution to the Gardens e.g. local birders; photographers; artists; adults with

learning difficulties/disabilities, walking office and outdoor office meetings, mum and toddler walking and exercise groups.

To engage with local voluntary groups/individuals and encourage volunteering and joint ventures within the Gardens – litter collection, planting, watering etc. (this is taking place with 1 volunteer in place at the moment)

To survey the local community to gauge levels of support, issues, perception of safety, enjoyment and frequency of use etc.

To have regular contact and meetings with the Friends of the Borough Gardens (and also with other key users e.g. Kiosk operators) to assess how their input can be maintained and /or increased, such as by fundraising and other volunteering activities.

The gardens are somewhat restricted in their potential to engage with large sections of the community in a meaningful way due to the limitations placed upon them due to their character and listing status restricting what can be delivered. However, by developing certain areas of the gardens where possible to meet a variety of needs (see next section) the relevance of the gardens to as many people as possible can be achieved. The key to securing buy in and interest is relevance and the gardens are managed in such a way as to be as relevant as possible.

8.1 The Friends of Borough Gardens

The major community involvement route is via the Friends of Borough gardens who hold regular meetings in Borough Gardens House usually with a guest speaker to add interest and a secondary presentation from the head gardener who will deliver progress and news items



As can be seen from the Annual AGM flyer (left) the group proceed in a formal way this both ensures clarity of role and the ability to secure funding from external sources. The group have been very good at securing money for improvement projects in the gardens and also carry out direct work themselves the latest being the planting of bulbs previously used in bedding displays into borders and the gapping up of the grass free lawn in which they were instrumental in creating.

The friend's views would be sought if any major changes were going to be made to facilities or infrastructure for example and they provide a valuable resource to the council in term of providing feedback about the gardens their use and history.

The friends also organise one of the gardens most popular winter events the Christmas carol Concert which attracts hundreds, despite some inclement weather on occasions. The Bandstand is lit, carols are sung and father Christmas makes an appearance to wish all well for the coming festive season.

8.2 Volunteering

At the time of writing the Borough Gardens have one part time volunteer placement organised by the local Volunteer Centre. The individual has been attending for many years and helps the on-site team with various tasks.

The size of the gardens and small on-site team limit opportunities to a certain extent but there is capacity for further volunteering work. At the time of writing the town council is in discussion with the local health trust to deliver therapeutic work opportunities in the gardens.

In addition to the above, three-week work experience placements are accepted in the gardens and an apprentice place also exists which was filled in June 2022.

2025 revision apprenticeship completed and now a part time member of staff, sadly no learning providers exist currently in Dorset to allow for a new apprentice.

8.3 Events

A key way to gain both an increase in the profile of the gardens and engender community engagement is by the delivery of events throughout the year in the gardens structured to appeal to as wide an audience as possible.

The council encourages the use of the gardens for public entertainment of all types and also arranges its own programme of entertainment. This policy was first introduced in the mid-1990s and it has proved extremely popular and successful and will continue to be maintained; numbers attending ranging from hundreds to around three thousand.

There are resource and maintenance implications from the increased use of the gardens for events. Additional work is required prior to events in terms of physical preparation, health and safety considerations, etc. and after events to remove litter, repair any damaged planting and carry out additional aeration to counter the ground compaction which inevitably arises from increased footfall. The extension of the electricity supply into areas of the gardens via pop up electrical points in the Bowl Lawn has increased their suitability and flexibility for an increased range of entertainment events.

Aim

To hold events in the Gardens with sensitivity to the historic and horticultural framework of the Gardens.

Objectives

To maintain a varied programme of events each year of local importance aimed at the varied community using the gardens, which will be well organised and once over, events people and staff will leave the gardens in a clean and sound state.

To ensure that through careful planning and co-ordination between groups and the Gardens staff, the potential for damaging the infrastructure and the landscape of the Gardens is restricted.

The donkeys are always a great hit at Love Parks Day



The council employs a community development worker who works with numerous groups within the town some of which are classed as “hard to reach”. As can be seen from the events calendar some of these groups will then go on to organise events such as the Street to Park youth Event. First held in 2019 it is making a welcome return in 2020, it features work by theatre and outreach groups based around youth culture and features such things as local DJ’s performing their sets and Parkour demonstrations the target age group is 14 -21.

Diverse Dorset Day celebrates and raises awareness of diversity in the community, another example of an awareness is the Gypsy and Traveller event held annually to celebrate the culture of these groups and to demonstrate some of their crafts and lifestyles.

The image shows a Facebook post from 'The Borough Gardens, Dorchester, Dorset' dated 26 February at 16:27. The post features a collage of six photographs: a woman with glasses speaking into a microphone, a person in a wheelchair, a table with items, a dragon dance, a person in a wheelchair on a blue mat, and a 'stroke' awareness tent. The event is titled 'Diverse Dorset Day' and is categorized under 'Causes' with 446 people. The post shows 1,147 people reached and 47 engagements. Interaction buttons for 'Like', 'Comment', and 'Share' are visible, along with a comment input field.

The Borough Gardens, Dorchester, Dorset
26 February at 16:27 · 🌐

SAT, 18 APR AT 11:00
Diverse Dorset Day
The Borough Gardens, Dorchester, Dorset · Dorchester
🔍 Causes · 446 people

1,147
People reached

47
Engagements

[Boost Event](#)

👍 3

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

Comment as The Borough Gardens, Dorchester, ...

The community development worker is tasked with checking that provision by the town council fits with the needs of the townspeople and they are heavily involved with youth engagement, youth council and the towns access group who have made several visits to the gardens to ensure they are as much as possible accessible to all. Additional work focussed on health has also been carried out with on-site staff receiving dementia awareness training in 2019 and the Head Gardener receiving Safeguarding training in 2020 which was then fed down to onsite staff by the HG.



Many mainstream events also take place throughout the year featuring a wide range of themes again designed to be attractive to as many groups and interest bodies as possible given Dorchester's population size and demographic.

These events prove a good opportunity to receive public feedback and do light engagement with visitors to get feedback and views on the gardens. As part of ongoing management, all events are logged and then reviewed by officers for value and any comments coming back to the council. This work helps to inform the programme going forward into subsequent years and also any management changes that need to be made to venues such as Borough Gardens. The tabulated information is then presented to the Council's Management Committee for discussion/review. Events are always free to enable anyone regardless of financial situation to come and enjoy some special time in the gardens.

General feedback from the summer events was that there was a good selection of different events going on around the town and it was wonderful to see the Gardens and other venues being used by so many people throughout the summer.

A committee report extract is shown overleaf detailing events for 2024

**DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 13 JANUARY 2025
REVIEW OF 2024 EVENTS PROGRAMME AND PROPOSAL FOR EVENTS IN 2025**

1. Background

1.1 Each year the Town Council provides a programme of events and entertainment on its open spaces for the benefit of both residents and visitors. The main types of activities are as follows:

- a) Weekend music in Borough Gardens, organized and paid for by the town council.
- b) Council-organised community/civic events – e.g. beacon lighting at Salisbury Field or the Love Parks event in Borough Gardens.
- c) Bookings at other Council sites by third parties for food markets, fundraising events (e.g. Cider Festival) or entertainment (e.g. outdoor theatre).

1.2 A list of all the events that took place on council-owned open spaces is provided in **Appendix A**. This highlights the wide range of entertainment which the council hosts, with events taking place nearly every weekend from Easter until early September.

1.3 Although Borough Gardens hosts most of the Council's own events, the Council's other outside sites are growing in popularity:

- Maumbury Rings is very popular for markets and, in particular, outdoor theatre organised by Dorchester Arts.
- The Great Field is mainly a venue for markets and community picnics.
- Woodlands Crescent greenspace – this mainly hosts the Poundbury independent market.
- Fordington Green – occasionally used for fetes.
- Salisbury Field – rarely used apart from council-organised beacon lighting events.

1.4 The income generated by hosting these events is quite modest (£1,133 in total) with, in many cases, no fee being charged for charity and community events.

1.5 Expenditure by the Council on events was as follows:

- £1,625 paid to performers for music in Borough Gardens every weekend from April to September.
- £4,287 - Anonymous youth festival, with an additional funding from external grants.
- £1,257* - Love Parks, a popular summer family event in Borough Gardens.

- £1,905* - Town Council's 50th anniversary family event in Borough Gardens.

* These figures are net of any income from concessions (e.g. food stalls).

2. Review of 2024 events

- 2.1 The weekend free music performances in Borough Gardens from Easter to September would appear to have been successful and the cost to the Council is relatively modest with the bandstand providing a good venue. In 2024, the Council sought to attract new performers via an open advert on Facebook and this brought in many new acts to the summer programme – including younger bands.
- 2.2 The Council-organised festivals for 2024 comprised the council's 50th anniversary event in June, the Love Parks (family fun day) in July and the Anonymous Festival at the end of August. Both events continue to be successful and offer local families and young people free entertainment.
- 2.3 In 2024 the new monthly Dorchester Artisan Market made use of Borough Gardens for live music and food stalls. However, linking the Gardens with the main market in South Street and Brewery Square proved problematic and so the Artisan Market will not make use of the Gardens in 2025. However, the craft/artisan market sector remains buoyant and various markets take place throughout the year on The Great Field, Woodlands and Maumbury Rings. The Council also helps to promote these markets for the benefit of the local economy via the Discover Dorchester tourism website and social media accounts.
- 2.4 The Council's sites have also hosted several significant community organised events/festivals which have proved popular with the local community including the Dorchester Cider Festival, which attracts very large crowds, and the One World Festival. A new event for 2024 was the Palestinian Cultural Festival which offered a range of foods, crafts, music and dance in Borough Gardens. A request has been made by the organisers to hold this event again in the Gardens in August 2025.
- 2.5 Maumbury Rings continues to be a popular venue for outdoor theatre, with Dorchester Arts programming a series of performances across the summer.
- 2.6 The Great Field is growing in popularity for events with Summerfest, Summertime Fayre, Inflatable Theme Park and Dorset Food & Craft Festival taking place on the site during 2024 and most likely to return in 2025. These events do, however, generate additional traffic in the area and so the council will take steps to require event organisers to discourage visitors from attempting to park on St John's Way.
- 2.7 In addition to the large-scale events described above, the Council's open spaces host a range of regular bookings for exercise classes (e.g. Tai Chi and Yoga) and the popular ParkRun.

3. Events in 2025

3.1 It is proposed that the Council-organised events for 2025 include:

- Roman Festival in Maumbury Rings, 12th & 13th April – organised with funding by the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee.
- Weekend summer music on the bandstand in Borough Gardens.
- VE Day 80th celebration beacon lighting event on 8th May on Salisbury Field and music/picnic in Borough Gardens on Sunday 11th May.
- Love Parks – free family fun day on 24th July in Borough Gardens.
- Anonymous youth festival on 25th August 2025.

3.2 The details of the VE Day 80th celebratory events will be agreed with the Committee's Twinning & Cultural Activities Panel.

3.3 In terms of events organised by third parties on Council land, the following are likely to take place during 2025:

- Summerfest organised by the Lions on The Great Field.
- Inflatable Theme Park run by South West Inflatable Theme Park on The Great Field.
- Vegan Markets at Maumbury Rings.
- Dorchester Cider Festival in Borough Gardens.
- *Street in the Park* youth music event organised by Activate Performing Arts in Borough Gardens.
- Outdoor Theatre organised by Dorchester Arts on Maumbury Rings.
- One World Festival organised by the South West Multi-Cultural Network in Borough Gardens.
- Gypsy, Roma & Traveller History event in Borough Gardens.
- Palestinian Cultural Celebration organised by the Dorset Palestinian Solidarity Campaign in Borough Gardens.
- Dorchester Food & Art Festival on The Great Field.
- St George's Fair on Fordington Green.
- Carols in the Gardens organised by the Friends of Borough Gardens.

3.4 The above events and festivals will offer a broad range of entertainment to all members of the community and also help to attract visitors to the town for the benefit of the local economy.

3.5 The scale of fees to be charged by the Council for the hire of its land are included in the budget proposal for 2025-26.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the review of the 2024 events programme and agrees the proposals for event and festivals in 2025.

Appendix A – Events and festivals on Council sites in 2024

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

ITEM 9 - Appendix A: Events and festivals on Council sites in 2024

Date	Borough Gardens	Other council sites
BH Mon 1st April		Egg Rolling – The Great Field
Sat 27th April		St George's Day Fair – Fordington Green.
Sun 28th April	Artisan Market – music and food stalls.	Dorchester Triathlon - crossing The Great Field.
Sat 11th May	Street in the Park - Activate Performing Arts	
Sun 12th May		Poundbury Independent Market – Woodlands. New Hardy Player – filming on Salisbury Field.
Sat 18th May		Vegan Market – Maumbury Rings. Step Challenge – The Great Field.
Sun 19th May		Vegan Market – Maumbury Rings Summerfest – The Great Field
Sun 26th May	Artisan Market – music / food.	
Sun 2nd Jun	Ruffdog Elliott – live music	
Thurs 6th June		Vintage Jaguar Car Rally – The Great Field. D-Day 80 th Beacon Lighting event – Salisbury Field.
Fri 7th June		Outdoor Theatre - Sherlock & Watson, A Murder in the Garden (Dorchester Arts). Maumbury Rings.
Sat 8th June	D-Day events. Live music and outdoor theatre.	
Sun 9th June	Fluke – live music	Music at the PiP / The Great Field
Sat 15th Jun	Gypsy & Traveller History Event – Kushti Bok.	
Sun 16th Jun	Bethel Gospel Fellowship – choir. Dr Jazz – live music.	
Mon 17th June	Dorchester Choral Society evening rehearsal.	
Tuesday 18th June	Rhyme Time in the Park (Dorchester Library)	

Date	Borough Gardens	Other council sites
Friday 21st June	Rhyme Time in the Park (Dorchester Library)	
Sat 22nd Jun	Dorchester Choral Society - evening concert.	
Sun 23rd Jun	Artisan Market – live music and food stalls.	
Wed 26th June		Outdoor Theatre - The Comedy of Errors (Dorchester Arts) – Maumbury Rings
Sat 29th Jun	DTC 50th Birthday Celebrations in the Gardens.	
Sun 30th Jun	Bethel Gospel Fellowship – choir. Durnovia Silver Band & Encore Singers - Proms Event.	Age UK Summertime Fayre – The Great Field.
Friday 5th July	Health & wellbeing picnic for hospital staff.	
Sat 6th Jul	Bethel Gospel Fellowship (choir). What the Phunk – live music.	
Sun 7th Jul	Swingtime in the Gardens.	
Sat 13th Jul	No Fixed Abode – live music.	
Sunday 14th July	Bethel Gospel Fellowship (choir). The Hooked – live music.	
Fri 19th July		Dorchester Community Church youth club. The Great Field.
Sun 21st July	Bethel Gospel Fellowship (choir) Durnovia Silver Band – live music	
Thurs 25th July		Outdoor Theatre - The Importance of Being Earnest (Dorchester Arts) Maumbury Rings.
Sat 27th Jul	Bethel Gospel Fellowship (choir) Family Fun Day. Dorchester Salvation Army.	
Sun 28th Jul	Artisan Market – live music and food stalls.	
Mon 29th Jul		Inflatable Theme Park – The Great Field. 'Mary Channing' - performance by Thomas Hardy Society. Maumbury Rings.

Date	Borough Gardens	Other council sites
Tues 30th July		Inflatable Theme Park – The Great Field. Outdoor Theatre - rehearsal. (Dorchester Arts) Maumbury Rings.
Weds 31st July	Family Wellbeing Session.	Outdoor Theatre - rehearsal. (Dorchester Arts) Maumbury Rings.
Thurs 1st Aug	Love Parks event	Outdoor Theatre - Sisata Theatre -. (Dorchester Arts) Maumbury Rings.
Sat 3rd Aug	Nick Capaldi – live music.	Dorset Food & Arts Festival – The Great Field.
Sun 4th Aug	Bethel Gospel Fellowship (choir). Damaris Fowler & Rick – live music.	Vegan Market – Maumbury Rings
Weds 7th Aug		Holiday Hangout at the PiP (DTC) – The Great Field.
Fri 9th Aug	United Reform Church - holiday club picnic.	Outdoor Theatre - Dr Doolittle with Illyria Theatre (Dorchester Arts). Maumbury Rings.
Sat 10th Aug	One World Festival - South West Dorset Multi-Cultural Network	
Sun 11th Aug	Tony Lowe – live music	
Thurs 15th Aug		SENsational Story and Play (Dorchester Library) – The Great Field.
Sat 17th Aug	Dorchester Cider Festival.	
Sun 18th Aug	Weymouth Concert Brass at 2.00pm	Music at the PiP – The Great Field.
Sat 24th Aug	Ukrainian Independence Day event (cancelled due to weather).	
Sun 25th Aug	Artisan Market – music / food stalls.	
BH Mon 26th Aug	Anonymous Festival	
Wed 28th Aug	Family Wellbeing Session.	
Sat 31st Aug	Palestinian Cultural event. Dorset Palestinian Solidarity Campaign.	
Sun 1st Sept	Tony Lowe – live music.	
Fri 6th Sept		Music at the PiP. The Great Field. Outdoor Theatre. The Merry Wives of Windsor (Dorchester Arts). Maumbury Rings.
Sat 7th Sept	Guided walk around the Gardens. Friend of the Borough Gardens	

Date	Borough Gardens	Other Council sites
Sun 22nd Sept	Artisan Market – live music and food stalls.	
Thurs 26th Sept		'Digging for Britain' filming in Maumbury Rings
9th-15th October	Baby Loss Awareness Week.	
Sun 20th Oct	Chi in the Park 9.00am-9.45am	Dorchester Triathlon crossing the Great Field.
Sun 27th Oct	Artisan Market – music / food stalls.	
Thurs 19th Dec	Carols in the Garden – Friends of Borough Gardens	

A list of events to be held in 2025 is shown below, it is an early in the year 2025 version and shows the early draft core offer. Many more events are added as the year progresses.

Draft programme of events and music in Borough Gardens 2025
As at 15/1/25

Date	Borough Gardens
Sat 10th May	Street in the Park. Activate.
Sun 11th May	Decadettes 2-4 (VE concert)
Sun 9th March	Covid Day of Reflection - midday ceremony
Sat 7th June	Volunteer Fair with Volunteer Bureau - TBC
Sun 15th Jun	Fluke (music) 2-4
Sun 29th Jun	Damaris Fowler (music) 2-4
Sun 6th Jul	Swingtime in the Gardens (confirmed by Loric Collins).
Thurs 24th July	Love Parks
Sun 3rd Aug	Tony Lowe (live music) 2-4.
Sat 9th Aug	HOLD - One World Festival
Sat 16th Aug	Cider Festival - CONFIRMED

BH Mon 25th Aug	Anonymous
Sat 30th Aug	Palestinian Cultural Festival - 11.00am-4.00pm. Rob Ferguson (confirmed)
Sun 7th Sept	Tony Lowe (live music) 2-4.
Sun 14 th Sept	Tony Lowe (live music) 2-4.
18th December	Carols in the Gardens

8.4 Appropriate Provision for the Community

Section 8.3 previous demonstrates the councils' desire to engage as many diverse groups of people into the gardens as possible. This both shows the gardens relevance and value to the wider community who may not normally visit "a gardens".

The gardens are limited in terms of physical development given their listed status however as previously mentioned in this plan, some areas have had original features removed and this has allowed for some areas to be updated over the years with features of relevance at the time.

Currently these changes manifest themselves in the form of:

- The large play area, created as part of the lottery improvements, this area features a wide range of equipment for the toddler and junior groups.
- The outdoor gym area, located in recent years this offers a range of equipment for those using the gardens to take advantage of
- The new tennis courts, located on the old bowling green these offer high quality facilities for anyone in the gardens to enjoy.
- Borough Gardens House Community Room. This offers modern, light and accessible facilities for anyone in the community or delivering services to the community to use. Hirers range from private birthday parties to art exhibitions; Photography classes are held as are group meetings for various interests including Politics!
Health and well-being groups hire the room to do outreach and drop in work and many local organisations take advantage of its location centrally in the town for awayday sessions where a change of scenery adds to the learning or management discussions taking place.

To avoid a clash of users and to comply with the character of the gardens and heritage status, play and recreation for older children and young people is provided for at nearby sites, e.g. a skate park and large open grass area for ball games are provided approx. 500 metres away.

This is not to say young people are not welcome in the gardens and many take advantage of the grass areas and sunny aspect for social gatherings, this is particularly the case at end of terms and the summer holidays.

Staff take a relaxed attitude towards anyone's enjoyment of the gardens it is not a "rules" orientated site but they will politely request people respect others in the gardens when necessary.

9 Marketing and Communication

The council aspires to continue to raise the profile of the Borough Gardens. One way of doing this is by enhancing and publicising the cultural activities and events (See section 8.3) taking place in the Gardens; there are other methods and these are highlighted below. The Town Councils strategy is to focus on existing interactions with users via social media and the website. Resources are limited given the size of the Town Council to increase outreach much further by engaging in the production of leaflets/mailings etc however the quarterly newsletter will continue to be produced.

Aim

To produce a plan to raise the profile of the Borough Gardens, in the first instance locally, and thereafter regionally.

Objectives

To work with the local media (produce press releases), especially radio and local press, to develop newsworthy, local interest stories about the gardens at different times of the year.

To actively promote the gardens through the Town Council website, and update the events listings.

To work in partnership with the Friends of the Borough Gardens to promote the site through the local media.

To market and promote the tennis courts and the Gardens through local community websites and publications.

9.1 Social media and internet

9.1.1 Town Council website

This contains what's new and what's happening sections where the garden events are promoted. The Borough gardens also have a dedicated section where further information can be found around Facilities, Community Room hire and Educational / Information boards on site.

9.1.2 Facebook and Trip Advisor

The gardens have a face book page which is actively used to promote them and any events being held. In addition to this, seasonal items are posted drawing users' attention to points of interest in the gardens or advising them of works being carried

out. The Borough Gardens page can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/DorchesterBoroughGardens/>

Pages are actively monitored, especially comments, reviews and messages sent and responses/ comments are provided by management for Dorchester Town Council. Trip advisor is important as it is user driven and the content posted is the genuine view of users. Comments are regularly reviewed and where appropriate responded to and feedback used as part of management of the gardens where constructive points about the gardens are made.

The profile of the gardens and reviews are of high importance to the council.

9.1.3 Discover Dorchester (2023 revision)

A web site developed in conjunction with the Dorchester Tourism Partnership (funded by DTC) was created in mid-2022 the intention being for it to become the main tourism website for Dorchester. [Discover Dorchester - Official destination website for Dorchester Dorset](#) . Details of all Dorchester's play areas and gardens can be found here.

There is also an associated face book page [\(4\) Discover Dorchester | Dorchester | Facebook](#). which is a more active post site detailing events of interest and special feature including happenings in the gardens such as Carols, events and gardens news.

9.2 Events

See section 8.3

9.3 Press

Where appropriate the Town council will create press releases sent to local media outlets, press, TV and radio to announce forthcoming events, initiatives or important meetings which have a bearing on the Borough gardens or are directly relevant to something happening in them. These will be accompanied by a statement from the current mayor and usually contain a photograph.

9.4 Quarterly Newsletter

The Town Council produces a quarterly newsletter that is send to all addresses in Dorchester. News and events about the gardens are regularly included to raise awareness of the gardens.

9.5 On site Notice Boards

There are three large notice boards located adjacent to the main entrances to the gardens. These are of an enclosed cabinet type and can display several A4 sized posters/notices. The boards are checked and managed by the Head Gardener to ensure they remain current. Only posters that notify of events in the gardens, in town council facilities or organised by the Town Council are usually allowed to be put up so ensuring that there is not too much information in the boards where messages risk becoming diluted.

10 On site Action Plan

The council has an action plan of works to be carried out over the coming two years of this plan. Given that the last two years has seen significant work in the gardens after the HLF improvements the emphasis of current management is around maintaining steady state and improving quality going forwards. This colours how the council action plans for the gardens and as such action plans will only usually be two years long, on a rolling basis, being review annually. The current action plan is shown below.

10.1.1 Action Plan 2020-2024

Action Plan 2020-2024

Note OSM is now ATCOS as of Jan 23

Ref n.o.	Detail	By whom	Intended date Completed Y/N
1	Complete redecoration of Kiosk and toilets	OSM	2020 Y
2	Complete redecoration of Tennis Court toilets	OSM	2020 Y
3	Carryout washing of entire perimeter fence	OSM	2020 Y
4	Undertake patching repairs to tarmac paths (Contractor)	OSM	2020 Y
5	Erect new fence line on tennis court corner path	OSM	2020 Y
6	Bulb plant crocus/Camassia bank	H/G	2020 Y
7	Install new propagating bench in Glasshouses	H/G	2020 Y
8	Modify scaffolding in cold glass house for seed use	H/G	2020 Y
9	Carryout repairs to Borough gardens House Bay Window (contractor)	OSM	2021 Y
10	Fill in regularly flooded area in Play Area (Topsoil and seed)	OSM	2020 Y
11	Gardeners office redecorate /renovate	H/G	2021 Y
12	Produce options for South West corner of Gardens for cttee considerations	OSM	2021 Y
13	External decoration of wood work to Borough Gardens House	OSM	2021 Y
14	Internal decoration to Borough gardens House	OSM	2024 Y
15	Creation of Rose Garden and seating area	OSM	2021 Y
16	Flooring replacement in Kiosk	OSM	2021 Y

17	Implementation of 2020 tree survey findings	OSM	2020 Y
18	Creation of Bowling alley pleached lime replacement plan	OSM	2023 Y
19	Implementation of above replacement plan	OSM	2024 Rev 2025
20	Replacement of Electrical supply to Fountain area	OSM	2022 Y
21	Improvements of Grass and annual beds around west walks Yew	OSM	2022 Y
22	Repositioning of flag pole and associated landscaping	OSM	2022 Y
23	Replacement of outdoor gym and surfacing	DTC/OSM	2022 Y
24	Extension to existing gardeners' office	ATCOS	2024 Y
25	Development of Ash Dieback Plan	ATCOS	2023 Y
26	Improvements to Fountain surrounds	ATCOS	2023 Y
27	Investigate Air source and solar for Brough Gardens House	ATCOS	2023 Y
28	Install air source and solar	ATCOS	2024 Y
29	Create shade tolerant wildflower area	ATCOS	2024 Y
30	Installation of further bird boxes and specific swift boxes	ATCOS	2024 Y
31	Renewal of Mediterranean Border, create "hot border"	H/G	2025
32	Cleaning of Boundary railings	H/G	2026
33	Planting of Metasequoia group adjacent to kiosk	H/G	2025
34	Planting of Cornus group adjacent to Gym equipment	H/G	2025
35	Repainting of play equipment	ATCOS	2025

11 Monitoring

- The performance of staff and the levels of service and quality delivered will be routinely monitored by both the Head gardener and the Assistant Clerk Outdoor Services
- The management Plan and action plan will be reviewed and amended annually by the Assistant Clerk Outdoor Services
- General enquires and/or requests made by the Town councils Enquiries system which are relevant to the Borough Gardens will be monitored by the Assistant Clerk Outdoor Services.

Indicators of success of the plan will be based around monitoring feedback from independent sources.

Targets to benchmark against: -

1. Green Flag Award
Retention of the green Flag for the life of the plan with actual score bands being maintained or improved.
2. Tripadvisor
Ongoing response to reviews and maintenance of review rating average at 4.5 or higher.
3. Facebook
Ongoing response to reviews and maintenance of review rating average at 4.5 or higher

12 Additions to Management plan as a result of implementation of Action Plan/ Annual revisions

12.1 Rose garden and seating area

As part of improvements to the southern section of the gardens a project was initiated to create a rose garden in the grass area to the west of the existing new tennis courts.

An outline of the project is detailed below. It was agreed by the management committee of Dorchester town council in summer 2020 and works commenced in Autumn 2020 with completion in Feb 2021.

12.1.1 Background

A suggestion to plant some roses named after Hardy characters somewhere within Borough Gardens was made by Councilor Rory Major. His idea was to use varieties named after Thomas Hardy characters and bred by David Austin roses who are specialist rose breeders. This would link the heritage of both the gardens and more widely Dorchester, with the author.

There are three Hardy named varieties available, which are acceptable for use in an existing shrub border etc. as initially conceived but it was felt the idea had good merit and could be further expanded to deliver a special feature within the gardens.

12.1.2 Rose selection

Having only three varieties is a little restricting, confining use to a small rose border/garden type setting, limiting both the potential of the design and increasing the risk of disease, poor vigor etc. if planted in larger numbers.

As a result, a scheme has been drawn up to further develop and expand this initial idea to create a new "Writers Rose Garden" based around the use of David Austin rose varieties named after famous authors and the characters from the Hardy novels. David Austin roses are known for their quality and in some cases, purpose bred varieties with very highly scented characteristics.

12.1.3 Location

The area provisionally selected is in the area to the west of the tennis courts currently laid out to grass that was formerly part of the old bowling green, unused when the tennis courts were created. It is currently under utilised and the project has great potential to transform the appearance of the entrance to that part of the gardens from the current somewhat utilitarian setting comprising the new tennis courts and nursery areas.

12.1.4 Design

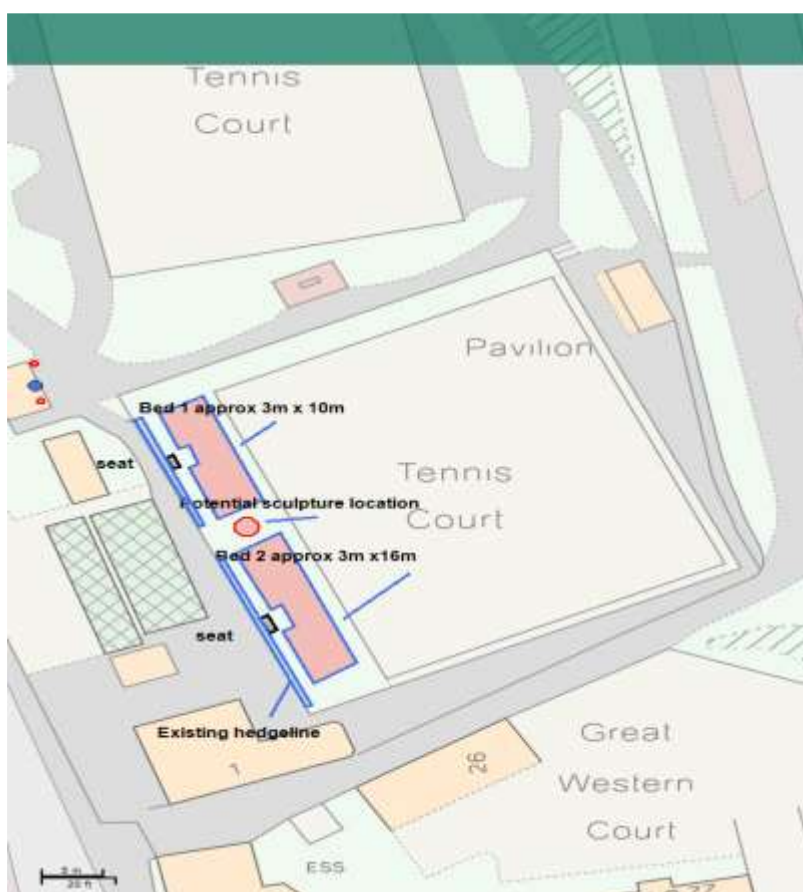
The design comprises two rectangular borders surrounded by grass and complimented by two donated benches to allow for peaceful reflection, enjoyment of the roses and watching tennis being played.

To increase the height and interest in the borders, in each bed there will be two pyramidal obelisks which will provide support for climbing roses.

The design also provides the potential site for the relocation of the sculpture and plinth currently located on the underused path below the limes on the path adjacent to Bowling Alley Walks.

existing hedges between the path and the rose garden have recently been reduced to give a cleaner and inviting air to the pathway. As part of the design, it will be necessary to reduce these hedges in both height and width and then step the southernmost hedge line to accommodate the gradual vertical rise in the pathway. The initial impact on the hedges will be harsh but they will recover quickly and can then be formally clipped to retain shape. These works will have two main advantages

- Help to create and compliment the formal setting for the rose garden to sit within.
- Improve the potential casual supervision of the area giving a clear view across the site which in turn will lead to an increased sense of security for users.



The seats will be sited on formal riven sandstone bases which will reduce wear and tear on the grass in front of them. The same paving will also be used to create a second access/egress point from the garden at its northern end proving a simple route back out onto the main path.

A part of the design concept is to allow for the future creation of a set of steps to allow access down from the new gate adjacent to Borough Gardens House (the existing path between the hedge and nursery will be retained to provide easier

access avoiding the steps). The route at the other end could then be opened up again with steps allowing for the creation of a completely new route into the main gardens taking advantage of the newly created rose garden setting. Funding for the project was secured by generous donations from the Friends of Borough Gardens and two private donators, also with the support of David Austin roses in providing roses and specialist advice.

12.2 Ash dieback Plan

Borough Gardens contain three specimens of *Fraxinus excelsior* it was noted in 2021 that all three were showing signs of Ash Dieback disease in its very early stages.

One tree (T1) is a large mature specimen located adjacent to the Cornwall Road gate (see pic below) the crown overhung the main entrance gate, pathway, interpretation board and a seat. The second (T2) a smaller specimen is located adjacent to the first but nearer to the boundary fence and it overhangs both the entrance gate and path plus the adjacent footway and carriageway of Cornwall Road.



Tree T1 with T2 behind it showing sparse crown density in summer 2022

T3 is located adjacent to the main gate entrance from Princes Street and is a medium sized semi mature specimen.

12.2.1 Current Situation

Both Trees T1 and T2 showed a progression into stage 3 of the disease by late summer 2022. It is thought that the presence of *Armillaria* fungus in the soil and the significant drought experienced in the summer of 2022 had caused a rapid progress to stage 3 infection through 2022. In late summer 2022 a felling permission request was approved by Dorset Council planning service. Felling was preferred rather than a managed reduction of the crown due to the sensitive location of both crowns above high target areas and the risks associated with Ash dieback causing fracture of limbs.

Tree T3 has not seen the disease progress as quickly (up to late summer 2022) and as a result will continue to be monitored for signs of disease progression.

2024 Revision T1 and T2 felled with new shrub planting in place. T3 slight deterioration under ongoing monitoring.

12.2.2 Replanting

Within the Crown spread area of T1 and T2 are a semi mature *Ginkgo biloba* and a small specimen of *Prunus serrula*. Both of these will be able to grow more actively as a result of the trees being removed so it is proposed to replace with a single tree only *Prunus subhirtella "autumnalis"* along with an understory planting of shrubs which will give a bright welcome into the gardens from the main entrance gate.

12.3 Mess facility extension

Work is to be carried out to extend the Gardeners office/ mess facility building.

12.3.1 Background

The building is located near the South western corner of the gardens. It was a new facility built as part of the HLF lottery works. Due to project constraints at the time the building was made as small as possible. Over time it has it for purpose and the need exists to increase the size of the building.

Councillors agreed to the allocation of funding to allow for the extension of the building, the style to match the existing, by some 4m to the north. This involves the loss of a specimen of *Garrya elliptica* and a specimen of *Cotoneaster*. Both specimens are not considered to be significant and will be replaced after work is completed adjacent to the newly extended elevation.

The extension will use materials that match the existing building as much as possible and will be fully insulated.

A special access point will be placed in the north facing gable end wall giving access to the roof space for bats to use as a roost.

12.3.2 Timetable

Surveying of the existing building commenced in Jan 2023. It is anticipated preliminary designs were agreed in August 2023 for a commencement post planning of November 2023. Completion is anticipated by March 2024.

Once the work is completed staff will vacate the community room currently used as a mess facility and this will then be redecorated and refurbished. The room is expected to be available for hire from July 2024.

Works were completed and staff moved back in 2024.

12.4 Solar and Air source heating to Borough Gardens House and Greenhouses. 2024 revision

As part of Dorchester Town Councils climate emergency work and initiative to reduce CO2 emissions significant investment is being put into alternative forms of heating and hot water for both Borough Gardens House and the Greenhouses.

12.4.1 Solar PV

A 7.2 Kw solar array will be placed on the roof of Borough Gardens House. This will provide electricity to the air source heat pumps and electrical equipment in the community room and kitchen areas. This system will see an estimated ROI of 13% after 10 years. The works will be completed by March 2024

Works completed 2024

12.4.2 Air Source Heating and Hot Water

Two air source heat pumps will be placed outside both the main house and potting shed. These will provide heating and hot water to Greenhouses, Community room, toilets, kitchen etc and via a sub metered supply to the upstairs flat. Cooling will also be achieved in the community room.

This will enable sufficient heating to enable plants required for the gardens to be grown as previously using the gas supply. AS there is a residence involved and the risk of total crop loss if the heating fails the existing gas boiler will be retained as a standby fail safe.

Works were completed and the house opened for community use again in 2024

12.5 Shade tolerant wildflower area. 2024 Revision

A shade tolerant wildflower area was created in late 2023 on the western side of the gardens. The area is in the main shrubbery adjacent to the access gate from Cornwall Road. The site is beneath a large *Fagus* specimen and suffers from shading. This has prevented adequate shrub growth leading to a bare area which has been mainly left to see what can survive. Plantings of spring bulbs have grown well along with some native wildflowers that naturally emerged and spare grass growth. The area was weeded and very lightly cultivate, and woodland wildflower seed introduced in Autumn 2023. The area will be monitored for any pernicious weed and irrigated as required in spring summer 2024 in the hope of establishing an area that is of use to wildlife in the gardens.

Works completed 2024

12.6 Tennis court re-surfacing

After funding from the Lawn Tennis Association was successfully secured in 2024, the northern tennis courts were re-surfaced in summer 2024. Associated works included new nets and posts, improvements to fencing and installation of controlled gate access to allow members to book a court online and gain access to play.

The surface installed was permeable tarmac, painted with two full size courts.

This work sees the completion of the renovations and improvements to the south western end of the gardens.

Works completed 2024.