

Dorchester Town Council

Management Committee

11 November 2024

Present: The Mayor (Councillor R. Potter) and Councillors L. Fry, W. Gibbons, J. Hewitt, F. Hogwood, S. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger (Vice Chairman), D. Leaper (Chairman), R. Major and M. Rennie.

Apologies: Councillor P. Farmer.

In attendance:

Councillors R. Biggs and K. Reid.

Officers: Tony Hurley (Assistant Town Clerk – Corporate), Carl Dallison (Assistant Town Clerk – Outdoor Services).

23. **Declaration of Interests**

Cllr Major declared a personal interest with regard to minutes 33 (a) below. Cllr W. Gibbons and Cllr D. Leaper both declared a personal interest with regard to minute 33 (c) below.

24. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 16 September 2024, adopted by Council on 30 September 2024, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

25. **Outdoor Services – Update Report**

The committee received the update report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Outdoor Services) and were informed that works to trees at Frome Terrace would take place later that week and that the resurfaced tennis courts at Borough Gardens were now available for use.

Resolved:

That the Outdoor Services update report be noted.

26. **New Picnic Table Area and Shrub Bed Works at The Great Field**

The committee received a report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Open Spaces) on a proposal to install a new, accessible picnic table/bench and shrub bed works at The Great Field. The committee were informed that the new picnic table would be made of recycled plastic.

Resolved:

That the committee approved the siting of the picnic table and shrub works as proposed in the report.

27. Draft Corporate Plan 2025-2029

The committee received a report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) on the council's draft Corporate Plan and were invited to comment on the draft documents.

With regard to page 6, Cllr Rennie asked that the fourth point be amended to make reference to other writers to emphasise the 'rich literary heritage' of Dorchester.

Cllr Rennie asked that on page 7 in Appendix A be amended to remove references to specific events such as Anonymous and Love Parks and, instead, refer in general to events for families and young people.

With regard to page 9 on Appendix A, Cllr Fry asked that the first bullet point be amended to remove specific reference to developers at Brewery Square and Poundbury and just refer in general terms to 'developers'. Also on page 9, Cllr Rennie also requested that the ninth bullet point be amended to read 'While there should be a mix in any new housing development...' and Cllr Hogwood asked for clarification on page 11 as to how the council will work with the Dorchester CLT. With regard to the same point, Cllr Fry proposed that it should be amended to '...with the Dorchester CLT and other partners...'.

Cllr Fry asked that the action points in Appendix B be numbered for ease of reference.

Cllr Biggs highlighted the forthcoming High Street Rental Auctions (HSRAs) which will give local councils new powers to tackle persistently vacant properties in town centres by putting the leases up for auction. Cllr Biggs suggested that this new power should be included in the Corporate Plan.

Resolved:

That the committee agreed the draft Corporate Plan 2025-29 subject to the proposed changes.

28. Request for litter bins on Pavilion Green

The committee received a report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) on a request from residents close to Pavilion Green in Poundbury for the provision of dog waste bins on this area of open space. The Chairman invited Ms Zoe Bell to address the committee and explain residents' concerns. Cllr Hogwood stated that the lack of litter bins was a problem affecting the whole of the north west quadrant of Poundbury but the litter pickers do good work. Cllr Gibbons explained that the Duchy of Cornwall had confirmed to him that it was their policy not to provide any litter bins.

Cllrs Rennie and Fry both stated that, although they sympathised with the residents, it was the town council's policy not to provide and service waste bins on land that it neither owned nor leased and that to do so for Pavilion Green would set a precedent that might lead to demands for similar provision in other areas of the town. The Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) reminded members that the committee had not yet agreed to the council taking

a lease on the Pavilion Green site and the Assistant Town Clerk (Outdoor Services) stated that the amount of remedial works required on the site meant that it would be some time before the site would be acceptable to the town council.

Cllrs Hogwood and Jones proposed that the town council should write to the Duchy of Cornwall requesting that it address residents' concerns through the provision of waste bins.

Resolved:

- a) That the request for the Town Council to provide and service dog waste bins on Pavilion Green be declined as the council does not have any responsibility for the land.
- b) That the Chairman and Mayor write jointly to the Duchy of Cornwall expressing their disappointment at the lack of bin provision on the Duchy's Pavilion Green site.

29. Request from Dorchester Bowling Club for assignment of lease

The committee received a report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) on a request from the Dorchester Bowling Club for the assignment of its lease from the Town Council to be transferred from the current trustees to the newly formed company limited by guarantee. The issuing of a licence to enable the assignment of the lease was fully supported by the committee.

Resolved:

That the council issues a licence to enable the assignment of the Dorchester Bowling Club's lease from the trustees to the company limited by guarantee.

30. Draft lease for Holmead Walk Greenspace & Play Area

The committee received a report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) on a draft lease to enable the Town Council to take responsibility for the Holmead Walk greenspace and play area. The Assistant Town Clerk (Outdoor Services) outlined his concerns about the condition of trees and woodland within the site and the absence of any active management or long-term plan. Cllr Kent-Ledger asked if the town council needed to undertake a survey and the Assistant Town Clerk explained that it should be the responsibility of the Duchy of Cornwall should commission the survey from a specialist.

The committee agreed that the Town Council should take on the lease for Holmead Walk subject to the Duchy of Cornwall commissioning a specialist arboricultural survey of all trees and woodland within the leased area and developing a long-term woodland management plan for the site.

Resolved:

That the council takes the lease on Holmead Walk greenspace and play area on the terms as set out in the report and subject to an independent arboricultural contractor being commissioned to carry out a current condition survey of trees

within the site and produce a schedule of remedial works and a 10-year management plan.

31. **Re-letting of lease for Borough Gardens Catering Kiosk**

The committee received a report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) on the need to find a new tenant for the catering kiosk in Borough Gardens as the current tenant was ceasing trading at the end of 2024. The terms of the current agreement for the kiosk were presented to the committee.

Resolved:

That the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to procure a new tenant for the Borough Gardens catering kiosk on the terms set out in the report in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee.

32. **Fordington Cemetery Wall.**

(a) Update on cemetery wall repairs.

The committee received a report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Outdoor Services) on the collapsed retaining wall along the Holloway Road side of Fordington Cemetery. The committee was informed that contractors will soon remove the spoil from the bottom of the wall and the exposed surface will be shuttered. The Assistant Town Clerk stated that an architect was producing a schedule of works for the repairs but, due to the specialist nature of the works, it may be some time before rebuilding commences. Cllr Jones asked that any original stonework should be reused where possible. Cllr Hogwood asked if there was any way for preventing rainwater from causing a similar collapse in future. The Assistant Town Clerk stated that the repaired wall would have a buffer zone behind the facing to enable de-watering.

Resolved:

That progress with the repairs to the retaining wall at Fordington Cemetery be noted.

(b) Future arrangements for Remembrance Service at the German memorial.

The committee received a report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) on the likely need to relocate the annual service of commemoration at the German prisoner of war memorial in Fordington cemetery for reasons of safety. Cllr Jones proposed that the service could take place uphill from the memorial with wreaths placed on its top. Cllr Kent-Ledger stated that the ceremony could take place in Holloway Road/Mill Street as it was not originally a religious service. The committee discussed whether the memorial should be relocated to a safer, more convenient position but it was generally considered that this would not be appropriate. However, it was agreed that the matter of the future location of the ceremony could be considered by the Twinning & Cultural Activities Panel.

Resolved:

That the Twinning & Cultural Activities Panel develop options for the future location of the annual commemorative service at the German Prisoner of War memorial given safety concerns regarding the current site.

33. **Grant Applications**

The Committee considered various requests for financial assistance and the following was decided:

- (a) That a grant of £225 be awarded to the Lions Club of Dorchester & District towards the cost of the Summerfest 2025 event.
- (b) That a grant of up to £320 be awarded to the Durnovaria Silver Band towards the cost of a printer and laminator subject to proof of expenditure.
- (c) That the request from the Poundbury Residents Association for a grant of £500 towards the cost of its 'Spirit of Poundbury' youth photography competition be declined.
- (d) That a grant of £300 be awarded to Dorset Museum & Art Gallery towards the cost of Dorchester Family Science Day in March 2025.
- (e) That a grant of £500 be awarded to the Dorchester Arts towards the cost of *The Script's The Thing* scriptwriting festival.

(Cllr R. Major declared an interest in (a) above and left the meeting during consideration of the matter).

(Cllrs D. Leaper and W. Gibbons declared an interest in (c) above and left the meeting during consideration of the matter).

34. **Notes of Member Site Visit on 10th September 2024**

The minutes of the member site visit were considered by members.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the member site visit be noted.

35. **Minutes of Dorchester Arts board meeting**

The minutes of the Dorchester Arts board meeting minutes of 23rd October 2024 were considered by members.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Dorchester Arts board meeting be noted.

36. **Draft Policy on the Provision & Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWE)**

The Assistant Town Clerk (Outdoor Services) outlined the responsibilities on the council as a result of the Provision & Use of Work Equipment Regulations and the need for the council to adopt a suitable policy. If the policy is adopted by the council then an report on work-related accidents will be presented to the committee on a biannual basis.

Resolved:

The committee agreed the draft policy on the Provision and Use of Working Equipment as set out in Appendix A of the report.

37. Use of council land for Beryl Bike scheme.

The Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) presented a request from Dorset Council for the use of a small area of town council land adjacent to the Sandringham playing field for use as a parking bay for the Beryl Bike electric bicycle hire scheme.

Resolved:

The committee agreed to the use of the identified area of land between Diggory Crescent and Sandringham playing fields as a parking bay for the Beryl Bike scheme and gave delegated authority to the Town Clerk to agree appropriate terms with Dorset Council.

38. Cemetery Matters

(a) Exclusive Right of Burial and Interments and Burial of Ashes

The report which detailed the Grants of Exclusive Right of Burial for grave spaces and the number of interments and burials of ashes, and the use of the South Chapel, at Dorchester Cemetery since the last meeting of the Committee had been circulated with the agenda.

Resolved:

That the report on the Grants of Exclusive Right of Burial and Interments and Burial of Ashes since the last meeting of the Committee be noted.

(b) Headstones and Inscriptions

The Committee received and noted applications for the design of headstones and inscriptions.

Resolved:

That the action of the Town Clerk in approving designs numbered 5438 to 5449 be confirmed and the Register of Memorials be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

39. Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

Resolved:

That in view of the fact that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the following matters the public and representatives of the press be excluded from this meeting during their discussion.

40. **Access to Fordington Farm**

The Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) presented a report setting out the draft head of terms for an agreement which would grant the Duchy of Cornwall permanent rights of access through the Sandringham playing field car park in to Fordington Farm. This new access arrangement would enable the Duchy to develop the redundant farmyard for housing.

The Assistant Town Clerk explained that the draft heads of terms would need to be amended to ensure that the Duchy (or its contractors/developers) will be responsible for putting the area the access area (shaded in red on the plan attached to the draft Heads of Terms) in good order at the end of the construction of the new development and discussions will need to take place with the Duchy over future maintenance.

Resolved:

The committee agreed the draft Heads of Terms (as set out in Appendix A) with the Duchy of Cornwall subject to amendments to ensure that the Duchy (or its contractors /developers) will be responsible for putting the area the access area (shaded in red on the plan attached to the draft Heads of Terms) in good order at the end of the construction of the new development and that discussions take place with the Duchy over future maintenance.

Chairman.....