

Dorchester Town Council

Management Committee

13 January 2025

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

Apologies: None

In attendance:

Councillors S. Biles, R. Biggs, J. Germodo and K. Reid.

Officers: Tony Hurley (Assistant Town Clerk – Corporate), Carl Dallison (Assistant Town Clerk – Outdoor Services) and Nigel Hayes (Responsible Financial Officer).

41. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

42. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 11 November 2024, adopted by Council on 25 November 2024, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

43. Revenue Budget 2025-26

The committee received the report from the Responsible Financial Officer on the proposed revenue budget for 2025-26 relating to services overseen by Management Committee. Cllr Fry raised a query with regard to staffing for the Municipal Buildings and the council's grant to Dorchester Arts and the Responsible Financial Officer explained that any decreases in town council staffing in the Municipal Buildings would result in an increase in the grant to Dorchester Arts. Cllr Kent-Ledger asked whether the potential devolution of services from Dorset Council might affect the budget but officers stated that this might be the case for the 2026-27 budget.

Cllr Gibbons queried the increase in staffing costs for Outdoor Services and was informed that this was to enable the appointment of new markets officer if the transfer of responsibility for Dorchester markets to the Town Council went ahead. In response to a query from Cllr Biles, the Assistant Town Clerk (Outdoor Services) informed the committee that the increase in spending on training related to the need for the renewal of qualifications every four years.

Resolved:

- a) That the Policy Committee be informed that the draft Estimates for 2025-26 be approved so far as this Committee is concerned.

- b) That with effect from 1 April 2025, the Cemetery fees and hire charges for the Borough Gardens House, the Tennis Courts and other council land be as set out in Appendix 1.

44. Outdoor Services – Update Report

The committee received the update report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Outdoor Services). Cllr Hogwood asked about problems with recruitment and officers informed her that these problems were due to various factors including the difficulty to arrange apprenticeships and higher salaries in the private sector.

Resolved:

That the Outdoor Services update report be noted.

45. Borough Gardens Carpet Bed Design Options 2025

The committee received the report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Outdoor Services) on the results of an open invitation for suggestions for the design of the carpet bed. The commemoration of the 80th anniversary of VE was mentioned as a potential subject but Cllr Rennie stated that the council's Twinning & Cultural Activities Panel was keen instead to see a public bench dedicated to this anniversary. It was agreed that the 80th anniversary of the Dorchester Civic Society should provide inspiration for the design.

Resolved:

That the Borough Gardens' carpet bed design for 2025 should celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Dorchester Civic Society.

46. Fordington Cemetery: Holloway Road wall update

The committee received the update report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Outdoor Services) and were informed that the slope and surrounding walls were now stable. Officers stated that a structural engineer was now producing a design for the replacement wall which would handle any build-up of water. The Assistant Town Clerk stated that not all of the costs for the rebuilding of the wall would be covered by the council's insurance.

Resolved:

That the update report on the Fordington Cemetery Holloway Road wall be noted.

47. Draft policy on hire of council land for events

The committee received the report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) that set out a draft policy to guide future decisions on the hire of council land for events. Cllr Jones requested that the policy should include a requirement that event organisers be responsible for the provision of additional temporary toilets where needed.

Resolved:

That the draft policy on the hire of council land for events, as set out in the report, be agreed.

48. Review of 2024 events programme and proposals for events in 2025

The committee received the update report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) and were informed of events likely to take place on council land in 2025. Cllr Rennie asked that future reports should highlight the expenditure that the council incurs in supporting events organised by others, either through grants or facilities. Cllr Fry also suggested that reports could include an estimate of the amount of funding raised for good causes by events on council land.

Members discussed the management of traffic and parking for events on The Great Field with particular regard to St John's Way.

The application of the council's hire charges was discussed and it was agreed that larger community events such as the Dorchester Cider Festival should pay the Concessionary rate given the demand that they placed on council facilities and staff.

Resolved:

- a) That the council should ensure it charges the Concessionary rate for the hire of council land for large-scale community events such as the Dorchester Cider Festival.
- b) That the Committee notes the review of the 2024 events programme and agrees the proposals for event and festivals in 2025.

49. Grant Application

The Committee considered various requests for financial assistance and it was

Resolved:

That the decision to award a grant of £256 to the Dorchester Opportunity Group be delegated to the Assistant Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee subject to the receipt of satisfactory information on the project details and the Group's accounts.

Members noted the previous grant awarded to People Need Nature to help with the cost of swale management at The Great Field and asked for an update on the activity.

50. Notes of Twinning & Cultural Activities Panel meeting on 11th November 2024.

The minutes of the Panel were considered by members. Cllr Rennie highlighted the Honorary Citizen Ceremony that will be held on 9th February 2025 and urged all members to attend.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Panel be noted.

51. 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 5450 – 5455 be confirmed and the Register of Memorials be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

52. 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.

53. Boxing club at Weymouth Avenue Pavilion

The committee received a report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) setting out the recommendations of the member working group set up to select a new tenant for the boxing club space in Weymouth Avenue Pavilion. After an open application process, the working group was recommending that Launchpad Dorset, a local community interest company, be offered a five-year lease on the boxing club room.

Resolved:

The Committee agreed that Launchpad Dorset CIC (company no. **15137782**) be offered an initial five-year agreement to occupy the boxing club room in Weymouth Avenue Pavilion for a rent of £6,000 per annum.

Chairman.....

APPENDIX 1 – FEES & CHARGES

CEMETERIES FEES:

Interments	1 Apr 24	1 Apr 25
a) An infant under 2 years or stillborn	Nil	Nil
b) A person aged 2 years or older	£745	£750
c) A casket of ashes	£205	£210

Scattering of ashes

a) In a previously used plot or in the Poundbury Pavilion chamber	£66	£68
b) In the Garden of Remembrance	£34	£35

Exclusive rights of burial in earthen graves

For an exclusive right for 50 years, including Memorial Rights in an earthen grave:

a) Full Sized Plot	£1000	£1025
End of term Renewal for 25 years	£850	£855
b) Ashes plots and infant under 2 years	£670	£675
End of term Renewal for 25 years	£525	£530

Additional Interment, Scattering and Exclusive Rights fees will be charged for:

- Non-residents – fee doubled. Residence is defined as living in Dorchester or Winterborne Herrington, within previous 10 years or previously resident for at least 25 years.
- Non-standard grave sizes – additional fee to be agreed with the Funeral Director

Monuments, gravestones, tablets and monumental inscriptions

Right to erect or place a headstone, footstone, tablet, flat stone, plaque, or monument in any other form at any site not subject to Exclusive Right of Burial

£235 **£240**

Additional inscription on a gravestone or other memorial (for each deceased)

£115 **£120**

BOROUGH GARDENS COMMUNITY ROOM HIRE FEES:

Prices include VAT. Performing Rights Fee may also be payable.	Per Session £	Hourly Rate £	Hourly from 5.00pm £
Voluntary and Community Organisations	61	29	41
Other Non-Commercial or Private Events	71	31	46
Commercial	97	41	66

Session times for the Borough Gardens House are 8.00am – 1.00pm, 1.00pm – 5.00pm and 5.00pm – 11.00pm (on request only).

TENNIS FEES:

Annual Membership	£50
Dorchester Resident Discount	- £15

FEES FOR HIRE OF COUNCIL LAND:

Fee Category	Fee 2025-26
Commercial rate: for hire of land by commercial organisations for a commercial purpose.	£500 per day plus VAT
Concessionary rate: for hire of land by a charity/commercial organisational for an event aimed at family / children or other community benefit (as judged by the Town Clerk).	£250 per day plus VAT
Community rate: for hire of council land by social enterprise, charity, or community group for a free-to-enter community event.	No fee

* Town Clerk to be authorised to offer discounts on the above rates for repeat/regular bookings and to attract new events.