

Dorchester Town Council

Management Committee

17 March 2025

Present: The Mayor (Councillor R. Potter) and Councillors P. Farmer, L. Fry, W. Gibbons, J. Hewitt, F. Hogwood, D. Leaper (Chair), R. Major and M. Rennie.

Apologies: Councillors F. Kent-Ledger and S.Jones.

In attendance:

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

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

54. **Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

55. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 13 January 2025, adopted by Council on 27 January 2025, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

56. **Louds Mill Allotments**

The committee received a report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) on the current status of the council's Louds Mill allotment site. Cllr Major was concerned that vacant plots were not being let out as any potential housing redevelopment could be many years away. Cllr Reid also considered that the vacant plots could be rented out even in the short-term and reviewed in a year. Cllr Hogwood was concerned that the vacant plots had not been advertised. Cllr Biggs stated that under emerging Dorset Council planning policy, there would be a greater drive to deliver new housing at pace and so the Louds Mill site might be of interest.

Julie Booker, the allotment representative for the Louds Mill site, was invited to speak and expressed the view that any housing development could be many years away and the vacant plots should be made available with some sub-divided to create more opportunities.

Members requested that Policy Committee provide direction as to the short and long-term management of the Louds Mill allotment plots following consideration of any redevelopment of the site.

Resolved:

That Policy Committee be requested to review the future use of the Louds Mill allotment site with regard to the provision of affordable housing.

57. Outdoor Services – Update Report – Late Winter

The committee received the update report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Outdoor Services). The picnic bench to be installed at The Great Field had been delivered and would be installed within the coming days. Members expressed their gratitude for all the hard work of the Outdoor Services team.

The Assistant Town Clerk also provided an update on the Fordington Cemetery Wall and stated that fifteen companies had submitted expressions of interest for the contract to reconstruct the wall and that, following shortlisting, six shortlisted companies would be invited to bid for the work. The decision on the appointment of the contractor would be taken by Policy Committee.

Resolved:

That the Outdoor Services update report be noted.

58. Location of VE & VJ Day 80th Commemorative Bench

The committee received a report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Outdoor Services) on potential locations for a bench with plaque to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE and VJ days. Members discussed locations and expressed a preference of Salisbury Field and for the plaque to commemorate both VE and VJ days. Members requested that the bench be installed in time to be unveiled at the 8th May 2025 for the 80th anniversary beacon lighting event.

Resolved:

That a bench to commemorate the 80th anniversary of both VE and VJ days be located on Salisbury Field.

59. Tennis Coaching Fee Proposals

The committee received a report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) on proposals for a fee structure for those wishing to coach tennis on the Borough Gardens' courts. Cllr Major queried whether the fees could be enforced if coaches decided to operate on the courts without council consent and Cllr Reid queried whether the fees applied to the coaching of groups over several courts. The Assistant Town Clerk undertook to provide a review of the effectiveness of the scheme and compliance after the first year of operation and report back to Committee. Cllr Rennie asked that the regular opening of the public toilets next to the courts be considered by a future meeting of the Committee.

Resolved:

That the council only allow tennis coaching on the Borough Gardens' courts on the basis of the following requirements:

- a) coaches will pay an annual membership fee of £35;
- b) coaches will pay the council a fee of £6.00 per hour for any coaching sessions;
- c) a maximum of ten 2-hour bookings for coaching in any 7-day period;
- d) anyone being coached by the coach must have annual membership.

60. Adoption of Public Art

The committee received a report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) on the proposal from Visible Women UK for the installation of a statue to the write Sylvia Townsend Warner on South Street. Cllr Fry did not support the proposal as the author did not have strong links with Dorchester.

Resolved:

- a) That the Committee agrees in principle to accepting both ownership and responsibility for maintenance of the proposed Sylvia Townsend Warner statue subject to the project securing all necessary consents and following a two-year initial period when the statue would remain the responsibility of Visible Women UK.
- b) That the transfer of ownership of the statue to the Town Council must be accompanied by a suitable financial contribution to assist with long-term maintenance costs.
- c) That the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to agree the terms of the transfer of the statue from Visible Women UK.

61. Appointment of operator for Borough Gardens' refreshment kiosk

The committee received a report from the Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) on the appointment of the company Temple of Refreshment to operate the Borough Gardens kiosk. The company were selected following an open process. Cllr Hewitt hoped that the prices charged by the new operator would be affordable.

Resolved:

That the appointment of the new operator for Borough Gardens refreshment kiosk is noted.

62. Grant Applications

The Committee considered various requests for financial assistance and it was

Resolved:

- (a) That a grant of £250 be awarded to Weymouth & Dorchester Parkinsons Group towards the cost of an outing.
- (b) That a grant of £500 be awarded to Visible Women UK towards the cost of the Sylvia Townsend Warner statue.

- (c) That a grant of £500 be awarded to Dorchester Cricket Club towards the cost of new cricket nets and surfacing.
- (d) That a grant of £500 be awarded to Kushti Bok towards the cost of the Gypsy Roma & Traveller History event in Borough Gardens.
- (e) That no grant be awarded to Bean on the Green Café for a new noticeboard.
- (f) That a grant of £410 be awarded to the South West Dorset Multi-Cultural Network towards the cost of security and first aid at the One World Festival in Borough Gardens.
- (g) That a grant of £300 be awarded to the Hardy Har! Comedy Festival towards the cost of a sound technician.
- (h) That a grant of £360 be awarded to the Vinyl Van Ltd towards the cost of printing and security for the Pride Picnic event in Borough Gardens.

With regard to the application from Visible Women UK, members indicated that they might consider a second application later in the year for other elements of the project – perhaps the cataloguing of the author’s archive at the Dorset History Centre.

63. Notes of Twinning & Cultural Activities Panel meeting on 13th January 2025.

The minutes of the Panel were considered by members.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Panel be noted.

64. Minutes of Dorchester Arts annual general meeting.

The minutes of the Panel were considered by members.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Panel be noted.

65. Minutes of the Dorchester Arts board meeting.

The minutes of the Panel were considered by members.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Panel be noted.

66. 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 5456 – 5461 be confirmed and the Register of Memorials be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

67. 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.

68. Draft Heads of Terms for leasing of The Duke of Edinburgh Gardens and associated greenspace.

The Assistant Town Clerk (Outdoor Services) outlined concerns about the quality and condition of planting and general infrastructure in the Gardens and the need for remedial work before the site would be in condition to be accepted by the Council.

Resolved:

The Committee:

- a) agrees the draft Heads of Terms subject to the exclusion of the bust of Prince Philip from the requirement to replace and insure;
- b) gives delegated authority to the Town Clerk to finalise the lease in accordance with the Heads of Terms and to ensure that the site is in an acceptable condition prior to completion of the lease.

Chair.....