

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

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Adrian Stuart, Town Clerk

15 July 2020

You are invited to a virtual meeting of the **DORCHESTER HERITAGE JOINT COMMITTEE** will be held in via the **ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING PLATFORM** on **TUESDAY 21 JULY 2020** commencing at **7.00pm**.

You will be able to join the meeting by using the link -
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81772417242>

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Stuart'.

Town Clerk and Secretary to the Committee

Declaration of Interests

Members are reminded that it is their responsibility to disclose pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests where appropriate. A Member who declares a pecuniary interest must leave the room unless a suitable dispensation has been granted. A Member who declares a non-pecuniary interest may take part in the meeting and vote.

Membership

Dorset Council: R. Biggs, A. Canning, L. Fry, S. Jones and D. Taylor

Dorchester Town Council: S. Biles, F. Hogwood, G. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger and R. Major

The following Members may attend and speak but not vote:

A Chisholm (Ancient and Honourable Guild of Town Criers), Mr B Murphy (Duchy of Cornwall), T. James (Dorchester Civic Society), M. Woodgate (Dorchester Chamber for Business), L. Gardner (The Keep Military Museum), L. Poulsen (Dorchester Local Nature Reserve), J Murden (Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society), T Loasby (Blue Badge Tourist Guides) M Rice (Dorchester Association), Martin Stephen or Hannah Jefferson (National Trust (for Max Gate and Hardy's Cottage)), A King (Shire Hall)

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

To elect a Chairman for the remainder of the 2020-21 Council year.

3. **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

To elect a Vice Chairman for the remainder of the 2020-21 Council year.

4. **MINUTES**

To read, confirm and sign the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Committee held on 26 May 2020 (copy enclosed).

5. **NEW MEMBER**

To welcome Linda Poulsen who has been appointed as the Dorchester Local Nature Reserve Member to the Committee.

6. **DORSET HISTORY CENTRE**

To consider amending the terms of reference of the Committee so as to allow a representative from the Dorset History Centre to be part of the membership of the Committee.

7. **DECLARATIONS OF PREDETERMINATION**

Members to declare if they consider that they have predetermined or may predetermine in the relation to the following items and to indicate the action they will be taking when the item is considered.

NOTE: It is the responsibility of individual Members to decide whether they have predetermined in relation to an item. Members who make a declaration should leave the room during the discussion and voting. Members who may wish to take part in the decision making process as a member of another committee, at which the item is to be considered, should decide whether they wish to participate at this stage.

8. **SALISBURY FIELDS - MOULE INFORMATION BOARD**

Members will recall that the Committee has previously agreed to a proposal from resident Mark Chutter for an information board in memory of his grandmother and regarding Reverend Henry Moule at Salisbury Fields. Mr Chutter has produced some text (enclosed) and provided some images (previously shown to the Committee) that could be used to form the basis of the information board. The total cost of producing the board in the existing information board style will be around £2,200 and the Committee will be asked if it wishes to contribute the £1,400 which remains in the information board / blue plaque reserve to the project. Mr Chutter will contribute the remainder of the costs.

9. **HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY**

To consider the following reports:-

- (a) Progress Report (enclosed).
- (b) Heritage Audit Progress and Update (enclosed).
- (c) Draft Heritage Tourism Strategy (enclosed).

10. **LET'S EXPLORE DORCHESTER PUBLICATION**

To consider the report from the Heritage Tourism Project Manager (enclosed).

11. **QUESTIONS**

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

12. **URGENT ITEMS**

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

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE HELD VIA THE ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING PLATFORM

26 MAY 2020

At a virtual Meeting of the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee held on 26 May 2020:

PRESENT:

Dorchester Town Council

Councillors: S. Biles
F. Hogwood
G. Jones (Chairman)
F. Kent-Ledger
R. Major

Officers: S. Newman and T. Hedger

Dorset Council

Councillors: R. Biggs
A. Canning
L. Fry
S. Jones

Ancient & Honourable Guild of Town Criers
Blue Badge Tourist Guides
Dorchester Association
National Trust (for Max Gate and Hardy's Cottage)

A. Chisholm
T. Loasby
M. Rice
M. Stephen

32. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D. Taylor (Dorset Council), A. King (Shire Hall Museum), L. Gardner (The Keep Military Museum) and M. Woodgate (Dorset Chamber for Business).

33. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2020, a copy of which had been circulated, were confirmed and signed.

34. **DECLARATIONS OF PRE-DETERMINATION**

There were no declarations of pre-determination.

35. **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 press representatives be excluded from this meeting during their discussion.

36. **APPOINTMENT OF CONSULTANTS**

(i) References – Members noted the satisfactory references that had been received which had previously been circulated to the Committee.

(ii) Presentation – The Committee welcomed Sarah Douglas and Bernard Lane from Red Kite Environment who gave a presentation to Members regarding their proposal and the methodology to be used to undertake the work to both review the heritage tourism offer and suggest opportunities for improving the contribution of heritage assets to the overall visitor experience through a Heritage Tourism Audit.

Red Kite Environment responded to Members detailed questions about themselves and the work to be undertaken.

During the discussion the following matters were highlighted:-

- That the ‘Final Audit’ mentioned in the presentation should read ‘Draft Final Audit’.
- There were some excellent resources already available regarding the town such as the seven community play books, the Lets Explore Dorchester publication etc.
- The amount of accommodation available for visitors.
- The need to link the Red Kite Environment work to the overall emerging Heritage Tourism Strategy.
- The need to identify what Heritage means to the whole community – make it fun, possible competition.
- Key milestones for the work required.
- The need to think outside of the town boundary.
- With the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic the benefits of an ‘open air’ heritage plan.

The Committee thanked the Red Kite Environment representatives who then left the meeting.

(iii) Appointment – Having heard the presentation and questioned / tested Red Kite Environment it was

RESOLVED

That Red Kite Environment be appointed to undertake the Heritage Tourism Audit in accordance with the quotation submitted.

Chairman.....

SALISBURY FIELDS - MOULE INFORMATION BOARD

SOME SUGGESTED TEXT PREPARED BY MARK CHUTTER

Memories of a Vicarage by Mark Damon Chutter

'I remember, I remember,
The house where I was born,
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn' Hood

Fordington has such a rich tapestry of history. St Osmund, related to William the Conqueror, became Royal Chaplain to the Chancellor in 1072 and shared in the compilation of the **Doomsday Book**. He became Bishop of Salisbury, and was given Salisbury Field by his royal uncle. Situated in Salisbury Field and surrounded by copper beeches and sycamore trees (opposite this information board) stood Fordington Vicarage (now Fordington Hill House). The building dated back to at least 1222 when the Church of Fordington Saint George received its first vicar called Robert de Dorcestre. There is also evidence that a priest lived here during the pre-Reformation era, as a crucifix and holy water stoup were discovered underneath the floor of one room.

The L-shaped building had its main entrance at the top of High Street, Fordington. From 1829 to 1880 the famous Moule family lived here. Henry Moule (vicar of Fordington for over 50 years) helped the poor during the outbreak of cholera in Mill Street in 1854 and 1855. Henry Moule also invented the earth closet to help improve sanitation. 'The Moule Memorial Coffee Tavern' was built shortly after the death of Moule which existed in Pound Lane but was sadly demolished in the 1980's. Please also see the blue plaque on the former entrance to the Vicarage on the High Street. Henry and Mary Moule had eight sons who were brilliant scholars and attended Cambridge University. One of the sons H.J. Moule became Curator of the Dorset County Museum and was an accomplished painter .

The poet and novelist Thomas Hardy was a frequent visitor to the vicarage and he became friends with the gifted Horace Moule who sadly committed suicide in 1873. William Barnes visited the house and gave a reading of his poems, while a friend of Charles Lamb's, Charles Valentine Le Grice, was another famous visitor . Much has been written on the building . In 1913 Handley Moule penned **Memories of a Vicarage** which was a story of his childhood growing up in the Vicarage. Moule states that pupils were educated at the Vicarage called the Fordington Times Society. He writes of the building 'You enter, and find a dwelling seemly, roomy, of entire simplicity. The dining-room is spacious, as long as the depth of the house'. The Vicarage was a home of Christian education and scholarship. Horace would draw a plan of Ancient Rome with lines of pebbles on the lawn. In his **Dorchester Antiquities** (1901) H.J. Moule (son of Henry) states "to return to houses yet surviving, Fordington Old Vicarage is almost certainly the most ancient. Parts of the walls are 3ft thick". In 1830 a piece of the vicarage wall was pulled down and a 15th century two-arched tracery window was discovered. It is now in the garden of Fordington Hill House. Reverend Moule died in 1880 and it would appear that in 1895 the Church Commissioners sold the glebe land known as Salisbury Field and the Vicarage.

Furthermore, the building had strong literary associations with Thomas Hardy and in 1912 the O'Rourke family (originally from Ireland) moved to the Old Vicarage. May O'Rourke was also a poet

and writer and later became secretary to Thomas Hardy at Max Gate. In her book **Thomas Hardy: His Secretary Remembers** May writes '**in 1912 came one of the most outstanding events in my life: our removal to the Old Vcarage, Fordington. When the green doorway in that stone boundary wall first opened before me, I knew I had come home**'. O'Rourke was a devout Catholic and she typed the dramatised version of **Tess of the d'Urbervilles**. She recounts how Hardy used to talk to her at Max Gate about her home and he was pleased that she took posies of flowers from the Old Vicarage garden to the Moule graves in Fordington Churchyard (please visit the church where there is the Roman Tympanum and a stained glass window by Sir Edward Burne-Jones surmounted by angels designed by William Morris worthy of note. As you follow the path around the church you will arrive at the churchyard and the Moule graves are on the right as you enter).

During the O'Rourke period it appears that a Mr Robert Hunt owned the property. In 1942 Mr A.H.Edwards of Mill Street Mission bought the Old Vicarage. From 1942-1971 my grandmother Faith Irene Damon (nee Bugler) and her family lived there. My mother Christine describes her childhood there as 'idyllic'. In 1971 the Old Vicarage was sadly demolished to make way for new social housing. My grandmother fought the development and was the last resident to leave the ancient building. Even the O'Rourke sisters May and Bride returned to the vicarage to try to help my grandmother save the building, which was often painted by H.J.Moule. After demolition archaeologists found, in the area of a known Roman burial ground, 21 inhumations and three cremations from 2nd to 4th centuries.

My grandmother, Faith Irene Damon (Dolly) sadly passed away in August 2017 at the age of 93 but her legacy lives on (please see the bench adjacent to this information board dedicated to my grandmother). Dolly was born in Fordington in 1924 in Pound Lane and died at 15 South Walks Road (the once home of Mill Street Missionary Kate Godbehear). When my mother and I were sifting through her belongings we found a document secreted away in her Holy Bible with the following words:

'The year was 1942. As I walked into the tree-laden path to a large grey house, it looked so lonely walled in from the road. I was quite alone, this was to be my first real home. The old oak doors creaked and groaned at my touch, but it seemed as if they had waited just for me. I felt a holy presence within me. This is when life and love started for me -it lasted 30 years. I will ever be grateful and never forget The Old Vicarage'

References, Bibliography and Acknowledgements for further reading:

BARTELOT,R.G. **The History of Fordington**, Henry Ling, 1915

MOULE, H.C.G. **Memories of a Vicarage**, The Religious Tract Society, 1913

MOULE,H.J. **Dorchester Antiquities**, Henry Ling, 1901

O'ROURKE,M. **Thomas Hardy: His Secretary Remembers**, Toucan Press, 1965

STARTIN, D. **Excavations at the Old Vicarage, Fordington, Dorset, 1971**, Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, Volume 103, 1981

YARKER, G.**A Victorian's View of Dorset - The life and watercolours of Henry Joseph Moule 1825-1904**, Henry Ling, 1997

Photographs and watercolour paintings reproduced courtesy of Dorset County Museum. My thanks to Helen Gibson of the Hardy Archives DCM and to Dorset History Centre

DORCHESTER HERITAGE JOINT COMMITTEE
21 JULY 2020
PROGRESS REPORT

Background

1. In 2015 Dorchester Town Council resolved to include in its corporate plan, intent to:
 - Develop & Implement a Tourism strategy, with a strong Heritage focus
 - Carry out an informal heritage sites audit for the town

This information report updates members on progress made and the current work programme.

Progress

2. Context - Further pieces of contextual research have concluded and have been summarised as reference documents to form a suite of 8 documents to support the Heritage Tourism Strategy:
 - A - Heritage Role in Tourism - Why does it matter, why is it important?
 - B - The impact of tourism in Dorchester - Research and studies summarised
 - C - Delivery of tourism - Who is responsible for what in tourism, nationally to locally, what do they do?
 - D - Local Context - Observations from the local tourism businesses
 - E - Governance and Delivery Structures - How is tourism delivered in other towns or cities, is there any emerging best practice?
 - F - Current extent of marketing - Who is doing what to promote Dorchester as a visitor destination?
 - G - Dorchester Tourism Product - What is the current product in the town?
 - H - SWOT analysis
3. Business meetings – further meetings with relevant local businesses and organisations have not been possible because of the COVID19 lockdown and furloughing of staff.
4. Strategy and Action Plan - A draft strategy and action plan has now been produced and is the subject of a separate report on this agenda.
5. Visitor survey - The short questionnaire developed jointly with Dorchester TIC, went live for the two weeks prior to lockdown. It is anticipated that the survey will continue once the TIC reopens and life returns towards the “new normal”.
6. Heritage Audit – Following the special meeting of this committee on 26th May, Red Kite Environment has now been appointed to complete the Heritage Audit. An initial progress report from Red Kite is the subject of a separate report on this agenda.
7. Members are invited to note the progress made.

Trevor Hedger
Heritage Tourism Project Manager

DORCHESTER HERITAGE JOINT COMMITTEE
21 JULY 2020
HERITAGE AUDIT PROGRESS AND UPDATE

Background and Progress

1. At a special meeting of this committee in May, it was resolved to appoint Red Kite Environment to conduct a Heritage Audit for Dorchester to:
 - Act as a reference that will benchmark the scope of Dorchester’s History and Heritage pertinent to the visitor economy;
 - Determine the appropriate Heritage “assets” to support the development of Heritage Tourism in Dorchester;
 - Identify “assets” from which future visitor experiences can be developed;
 - Be used by local businesses and organisations associated directly and indirectly with Heritage Tourism specifically and Tourism generally in Dorchester to develop visitor experiences.

2. Following a project inception meeting with the Chairman of this Committee, Deputy Town Clerk and Heritage Tourism Project Manager in early June, work has now commenced on the audit. A progress report from Red Kite is attached as appendix 1 and a socially distanced meeting with the representatives from three heritage attractions is planned for the 20th July.

Consultation

3. The original brief specified holding workshops or other public meetings as part of the consultation on and development of the new “visitor product” offer and opportunities in the town.

4. The continued impact of COVID19, social distancing and inability to hold local public meetings has rendered this impossible in the foreseeable future. Red Kite Environment has therefore proposed as follows.:

Survey Monkey survey:

When we bid for the Heritage Audit it was at the very beginning of lockdown. We had proposed consultation with an agreed list of consultees and focus groups. We have agreed to consult by email and phone 60-70 consultees but the Covid-related restrictions on public meetings mean that our plans to hold focus groups have had to change as it is unlikely that many people would choose to attend a focus group.

As an alternative approach we propose to carry out a survey via Facebook. We will be using the survey to find out from people who have been to Dorchester, and those who haven’t, which of the stories and themes we and you have researched they find most interesting and what kind of media they would like to use to find out more about Dorchester.

In many ways this has advantages over the focus groups. We can survey a larger group of people, from a larger geographical area (say within 1.5 hours travel time of Dorchester) and also gather information from potential visitors, people who have **not** previously visited Dorchester, about what would attract them to make a leisure trip to the town.

The digital survey will cost £1275. This is to develop the survey, pay for hosting the survey for 2-3 weeks and provide preliminary analysis of the results. I think it would be useful to produce a short report for the Town Council on the survey results and their implications for both the Heritage Audit and for the Tourism Strategy.

This work is beyond the original requirements of our brief and the working groups has agreed that it is an additional cost.

This would be in addition to the proposed local survey work amongst business and community organisations, members of this committee, surrounding parishes and communities and interested individuals.

5. This proposal from Red Kite, has the added benefit of capturing feedback from potential day visitors from within and just beyond the target geography proposed in the strategy, capturing data and feedback from potential visitors across an area that includes Bristol, Swindon, Southampton and Exeter, and so provide a much richer set of visitor data from which to develop future visitor experiences in the town.
6. There is budget available to fund this additional work from within the Heritage Tourism project budget.

Recommendation

7. The Committee is asked to:
 - a. Note the progress report and progress made
 - b. Agree the additional £1275 to fund enhanced Facebook visitor research.

T Hedger
Heritage Tourism Project Manager

Red Kite

Dorchester Town Council Heritage Audit

Progress report

10 July 2020

Sarah Douglas and Bernard Lane of Red Kite Environment have been commissioned to undertake a heritage audit for Dorchester. The heritage audit will support the Draft Tourism Strategy, identifying themes to enable and encourage visitors and residents to enjoy and understand the town's rich cultural and natural heritage

Work undertaken:

1. Continued research to develop and expand the DTC spread sheet, developing broad themes.
2. Agreed the boundary of the project: Dorchester and the parish councils immediately adjacent to the town.
3. Mapping all the key heritage sites in and immediately around Dorchester to identify potential clusters for new / improved walking routes
4. Spoken to Ian Gosling, who is photographing all the listed buildings in Dorchester for the Civic Society and these photos will be included in audit spreadsheet.
5. Linking the audit to the draft Tourism Strategy.
6. Developing some initial ideas for promoting Dorchester using its heritage – themed trails with site installations – panels, leaflets, touchscreen etc, supported and expanded by web-based interpretation, accessible from individual's mobile phones.
7. Arranged to see Jon Murden and Roger Maughan, County Museum; Abbie King, Shire Hall Museum; Laura Jane Gardener, Keep Military Museum on 20 July 2020.

Initial ideas:

The overall aims are

1. to help secure the economic diversification of the town
2. to celebrate and 'valorise' the conservation of Dorchester's heritage
3. to give Dorchester an innovative competitive edge in the increasingly competitive small town short break tourism market.

Key work undertaken so far includes:

- Identifying Dorchester's USPs related to heritage tourism for a SWOT analysis to undertake with TDC at next meeting.
- Developing a small number of themes (<8), to market Dorchester's heritage, to encourage visitors and residents to explore and discover Dorchester's heritage, some of which is relatively unknown and 'hidden'.
- These themes could include:
 - Literary figures
 - History
 - Industry
 - Archaeology

- Architecture
- Art and sculpture
- The Natural World
- Political movers and shakers
- Suggesting effective delivery mechanisms to market this heritage, which could likely involve physical installations, print materials, as well as information on the internet.
- Development of layered heritage interpretation aimed at various age groups.
- Potential for locally staffed guided walks, to develop stronger community links and relevance.
- A potential *Dorchester Ambassadors* scheme.
- Potential for links to museum exhibitions and travelling exhibitions.
- Potential for links to Corn Exchange based performances of Dorchester heritage-linked plays, music theatre and opera, and partnerships with Dorchester Arts
- Links to Festivals featuring the above
- Considering the implications for heritage tourism of Covid19 and including these considerations in the proposals.
- An exploration of a possible start point or hub from which to start to explore Dorchester's heritage.
- Consideration of linking heritage tourism in Dorchester to the growing concept of "Slow Tourism", and car-free tourism.
- Devising a modular time table for the implementation of a heritage tourism programme spread over several years, to encourage repeat visits.

Sarah Douglas
10 July 2020

DORCHESTER HERITAGE JOINT COMMITTEE
21 JULY 2020
DRAFT HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY

Background

- 1 In 2015 Dorchester Town Council resolved to include in its corporate plan intent to:
 - Develop & Implement a Tourism strategy, with a strong Heritage focus
 - Carry out an informal heritage sites audit for the town

This report notes the development steps taken to produce the draft strategy and makes proposals for consultation.

Development of the Strategy

- 2 Members will recall a number of background papers presented to this Committee in January. Four further background papers have been added to form a suite of 8 to inform both the direction and activity of the strategy and act as an initial reference point as follows:

A - Heritage Role in Tourism

- Why does it matter, why is it important? Informed by research publications from Heritage England, Heritage Lottery Fund, and Dr Kanagasapapathy PhD thesis for Bournemouth University

B - The impact of tourism in Dorchester

- Research and studies summarised. Informed by the statistical tourism analyses performed at national level and estimated at local level, a visitor study (2018) and Dorset Tourism Study (2019) from Dorset Tourism Association (DTA), a tourism specific study for Dorchester, commissioned as part of a wider package of studies by WPBC with funds from Dorset LEP, evaluation reports from events including Dippy on Tour and Thomas Hardy Victorian Fair, and national independent reports on the state of and recovery of high streets and town centres (Grimsey 1 and 2)

C - Delivery of tourism

- Who is responsible for what in tourism, nationally to locally, what do they do? The work of Visit Britain (VB) and Visit England (VE), Dorset LEP and DTA, Dorset Council and Visit Dorset, Dorchester Town Council and Dorchester BID

D - Local Context

- Observations from the local tourism businesses

E - Governance and Delivery Structures

- How is tourism delivered in other towns or cities, is there any emerging best practice? Informed by discussions and

correspondence with over 40 towns and cities working to support their local tourism economy

F - Current extent of marketing

- Who is doing what to promote Dorchester as a visitor destination? A review of website and social media activity (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) from national (VB and VE) level to local businesses and organisations where Dorchester content could appear

G - Dorchester Tourism Product

- What is the current product in the town? A summary of the range and quantity of accommodation provision in the town, and the paid and free to access attractions in the town

H - SWOT analysis

- A traditional strengths weaknesses opportunities threats analysis informed by comments from members of this committee and the Heritage Tourism Steering Group.

The background papers are published on the town council website at:-
<https://www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk/Services/Heritage+Tourism+Project>

- 3 The draft strategy is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. It is written around 10 topic areas, the majority informed variably by the background papers:
 - a. An Introduction and purpose of the strategy
 - b. The Towns offer – informed by background papers B, D and G
 - c. Why now
 - d. The Heritage Tourism Market – informed by background paper A
 - e. Dorchester’s Tourism Market – informed by background papers B and D
 - f. The delivery of tourism locally – informed by background papers C D E and F
 - g. Sustainability
 - h. Governance and Delivery – informed by background paper E
 - i. The Vision – a short term vision to focus the strategy
 - j. Strategic Objectives and action plan
 - k. Performance measurement
- 4 The prioritised Action plan is broken down into six action areas and proposes actions as follows:

A Governance

The delivery of the strategy will need a suitable lead body to oversee and coordinate activity if the strategy is to achieve growth in the town’s visitor economy. The proposal is for a formal partnership of the town council,

tourism sector and other town centre businesses and relevant organisations supported by a town council officer.

B Communication

The strategy has identified that the town is not well known as a visitor destination. The communication aim should be to increase visitor numbers for both day visitors and for staying visitors by maximising the existing asset utilisation (bed spaces, travel and attractions visitor capacity etc), away from the peak season. The strategy proposes developing a brand identity with shared images and straplines for all to use in promoting Dorchester, determining the best approach to a web presence through a dedicated website or better content in others websites, coordinated social media activities, exploring group travel options, and developing culture and attractions joint working and promotion

C Community

The community of Dorchester is an important element in delivering an exceptional visitor experience, whether providing volunteers to work in attractions and at events, or as workers in the many business with whom visitors interact, or as guardians and exponents of the town's heritage. The strategy proposes developing support for volunteers, introducing a Dorchester Ambassador programme for locals to champion the towns offer, and developing a long-term vision for tourism with the community

D Environment

Tourism can be a benefit, or negatively impact the environment (both natural and built). This strategy is celebrating the Heritage of Dorchester which includes the natural and built environment. The actions arising from this strategy should seek to make, where possible, a positive contribution towards environmental issues.

The strategy encourages: an environmental message in all marketing; development of "e" vehicle charging solutions; championing the towns built and natural environment; better Wi-Fi access to reduce need for print; green travel planning for visitors to the town ; development of more and retention of existing visitor bedspaces.

E Visitor Offer

The strategy has and will identify a wealth of heritage on which to build the visitor experience, it also identifies the importance of "experience" in attracting and retaining town centre users and visitors. It is important that the existing and any new visitor offer positively contribute to the visitor experience and grows the reputation of the town as a must visit destination. The strategy proposes: Development of new visitor experiences; review and update where necessary existing visitor trails guides and supporting products; a potential mystery shopper exercise to measure and improve visitor

experience; development of new food culture and heritage events in the town.

F Industry

The visitor experience of the town is dependent on the quality of the offer from its tourism industry. For the Heritage Tourism in the town to grow, businesses and event’s organisers need to have the skills and capacity to continue to deliver on and exceed visitor expectations. The strategy proposes:

Supporting the development of skills in the tourism industry locally; establishing a support and development programme for volunteers supporting attractions and events; creating an image and video resource library for local businesses to use in their own marketing activity; encouraging collaborative working amongst tourism business; developing support resources for events organisers

- 5 Each of the actions has been assigned a priority (1-3), likely resource implications (High Medium Low), role of this Committee and or Town Council (Lead, Influence, Encourage) and position on a timeline. Some of the actions may be through a policy approach (for example with regards to new tourism related development or environmental considerations). The timeline for high and medium impact actions is presented in appendix 2 to this report.

Geography

- 6 The strategy, as a Dorchester strategy, focusses on the tourism product and offer (attractions events accommodation etc) within the town or immediately adjacent the town boundary (e.g. Hardys Cottage, Kingston Maurward Animal Park and Gardens, Maiden Castle). It should not however be considered exclusive.

The strategy proposes a communications focus on day visitors within a 30-60 minute travel time and so should reach out to accommodation providers and marketing opportunities within that geography. It would also be appropriate to establish working links with those heritage attractions which would appeal to Heritage Visitors to Dorchester who may be within the same geography.

Steering Group

- 7 The Committee will recall agreeing terms of refence and membership profile for a industry steering group to inform the work of this committee and the Heritage Tourism Project Manager. The Chairman of this Committee and the Project Manager presented a draft of the strategy and action plan to the steering group in mid-June. The Steering group broadly welcomed the strategy and its approach and made comments on the action plan as follows:

Action Area	Comment	Action taken
Governance	Make link to external organisations	New action added

	Any new post should not over emphasise “heritage”	Address in job design
Communication	Explore partnering opportunities Focus on Dorchester as gateway to Jurassic Coast & countryside Develop joined up offers to appear in VE marketing activity	New action added Address in detailed Dorchester marketing proposals and branding exercise
Community	Encourage activity that makes the town more resilient to economic shock	May require a wider town centre plan/strategy
Environment	Tourisms is just one town centre industry – lobby for an holistic town centre strategy	
Visitor Offer	Include modern heritage offer in strategy and actions Focus on Dorchester as gateway to Jurassic Coast & countryside	Emphasised in Action plan Address in detailed Dorchester marketing proposals and branding exercise
Industry	Develop a focus on local businesses, local products, local sourcing	
Generally	High number of priority one actions early on in timeline	Timeline revised; resource impacts added

Consultation

- 8 It is proposed that the draft strategy is the subject of consultation until end of September amongst the community, businesses and business organisations and interest groups locally. It is proposed that the following are invited to comment:
- lead representatives from business and community organisations are invited to circulate for comment amongst their members
 - parish councils and communities from the parishes from across the Dorchester Local Area Partnership area by sending details to the parish clerks
 - All members of the Heritage Tourism steering group, and businesses individuals who have already made or had contact with the project
 - Dorset LEP, Dorset Tourism Association and Visit Dorset

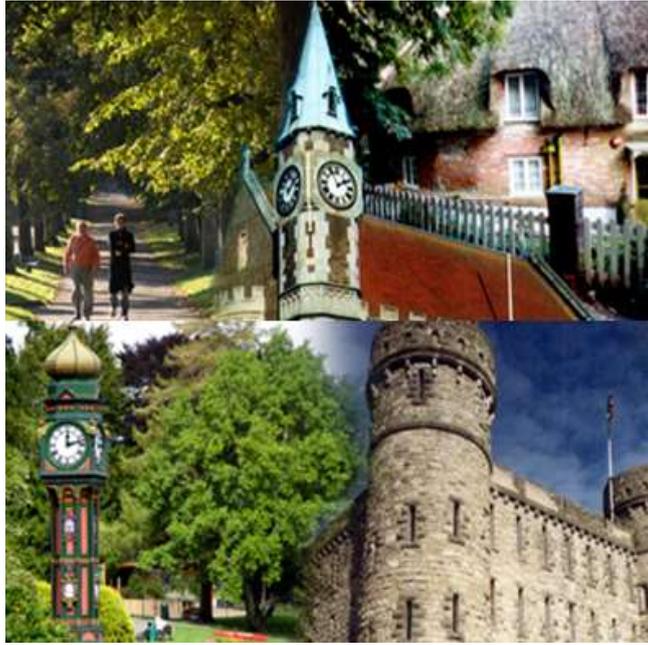
It is also proposed that through the council’s social media presence, and via press release to local media that comments are invited from the community. It is possible

that some larger membership originations (such as Chamber, BID, Civic Society) may also require some form of formal presentation. Consultees will be invited to either comment directly on the strategy and or complete an online questionnaire.

Recommendations

- 9 It is recommended that:
 - a. The Committee agree the draft strategy, subject to any amendments, for consultation
 - b. Note the outstanding steering group comments for consideration at the appropriate stage
 - c. That the Committee agree the consultation proposals

T Hedger
Heritage Tourism Project Manager



DORCHESTER HERITAGE JOINT COMMITTEE
DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

DORCHESTER HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dorchester benefits from over 6000 years of history and has both in the recent past and is currently seeing significant investment in heritage assets in the north of the town. Yet the town's visitor offer remains hidden, and its heritage assets have not been acting as an attractor of visitors for the economic benefit of the visitor economy and the town.

There is therefore a real opportunity to promote the Dorchester visitor offer across Dorset and particularly to staying visitors in the BH postcodes. The town has the opportunity to grow its short break visitor, and particularly its day visitor appeal, using its cultural and heritage offer as an attractor. Dorchester has much to offer the "heritage" visitor, but the offer is not well defined or well known amongst its target market and target geography.

This strategy has been produced because of Dorchester Town Councils corporate plan intent to "Develop & Implement a Tourism strategy, with a strong Heritage focus".

It sets priority actions to create the right environment and structures for the Council, the local tourism industry (both accommodation providers and attractions), town centre businesses and relevant public and private sector partners and the community to benefit from the opportunities that exist for the growth in the value of tourism through the heritage and culture in our town, and to be able to take those forward.

Successful delivery of the strategy will require the establishment of a governing body, proposed as a formal partnership, with an established term of reference and resource to lead and coordinate the development of the tourism sector in the town including:

- Building a long-term vision for the growth of tourism in the town, engaging with and acceptable to both the residential community and the business community, particularly those engaged in the heritage and visitor sectors.

- Development of a marketing approach that considers websites, includes social media and traditional marketing methods, and establishes some brand principles and USPs.

- Supports the volunteers so important to some of the town's key attractions and events.

- Delivers the strategic actions paying due regard to climate change and sustainability.

- Identifies ways to enrich the visitor experience through both the product and stories the town can offer, and the experience provided across the town by all with whom visitors engage.

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A Introduction - What is the document for

From 2015, Dorchester Town Council has had intent, in its Corporate Plan, to “Develop & Implement a Tourism strategy, with a strong Heritage focus”.

This strategy establishes why heritage is relevant, what we know about tourism and visitors to Dorchester, the role of others in developing and delivering tourism, and why we are doing this now. It considers the appropriate geography where actions should apply

The strategy looks to set priority actions that will create the right environment and structures for the Council, the local tourism industry both accommodation providers and attractions, town centre businesses and relevant public and private sector partners and the community to benefit from the opportunities that exist for the growth in the value of tourism through the heritage and culture in our town, and to be able to take those forward.

B The Town’s offer

(background papers B, D & G)

Dorchester has existed at the heart of an agricultural area as an administrative and trading centre for centuries. This is a function it continues today with Dorset County Hospital, principal offices for Dorset Council, Schools serving the outlying villages, and with weekly general markets, periodic farmers markets and a town centre mix of independent and multiple retailers. Unlike most towns, it has a jobs to resident ratio close to 1, indicating a significant immigration of workers principally to the public administration, health and education services.

The town is not however well-known as visitor destination, and this is perhaps reflected in the low number of bed spaces available in the town, although recent additions such as the Premier Inn and the Duchess of Cornwall (and shortly the Kings Arms) with reputed high levels of occupancy suggest here is an opportunity to grow the number of bed spaces.

The towns visitor attraction offer is relatively small compared with other major Dorset destinations. Those most likely considered “Heritage” are very dependent on volunteers to fulfil a wide range of functions from stewarding to meet and greet and back office support.

The recent developments at Shire Hall and the County Museum, together with the growing interest in and attendance at local events (background paper B) suggest an opportunity for Dorchester to continue to maximise its staying visitor occupancy and become known and recognised as an excellent day visit and repeat visit destination, developing new experiences based on its heritage to improve visitor experiences and reasons to come back .

The town can tell stories from over 6000 years of history with an extensive catalogue of current and past people, places, and events including Maiden Castle, the Roman Town House, the “hanging” Judge Jefferies, Tolpuddle Martyrs, Thomas Hardy, and barracks for the military, together with significant archaeological remains under the town. It is also a town for today, with its developing new heritage at both Brewery Square and at Poundbury, both of which are already attracting visitor interest.

Much of this is in untold stories of the people and buildings including at random:

Birthplace and story of Frederic Treves
Emigration to Massachusetts

Fire from Heaven
Fighting Cholera with earth closets

First prorogation of Parliament

Castle and royalty

Multiple listed buildings displaying features from their past such as small glazed windows (former gunsmiths) and butchers hooks

Other elements of its history and heritage, particularly its archaeological heritage, are hidden beneath car parks, under buildings or modern facades.

It has a growing confidence in celebrating its heritage through the Thomas Hardy Victorian Fayre, and Heritage Open Dorchester event, together with the many other well attended events held in Maumbury Rings and the Borough Gardens.

It benefits from an extensive cultural programme of events from Dorchester Arts, embracing all tastes and with a full and comprehensive programme involving local to national and international artists. Dorchester Arts is heavily supported by volunteers as stewards and in the back office.

Opportunities exist to develop and enhance the visitor experience with new and additional ways of presenting and joining together the interesting people, buildings, places and events that are the background to modern Dorchester. This may involve new technological interpretation facilities and experiences.

C Why Now

The 2020 Coronavirus outbreak, period of lockdown, and temporary closure of non-essential business (still in place at time of writing) has put significant strain on the local economies across the country, and placed an additional burden on many already fragile high streets. With the recent closure of the Marks and Spencer store in Dorchester (Feb 2020), and several long-term vacant properties, including the former TIC remises in Antelope Walk, Dorchester cannot consider itself to be a robust town centre.

With major investments in heritage assets recently concluded or completing in the near future, and growing experience of successful local events attracting '000s of visitors from near and far, Dorchester has a rare opportunity to maximise the benefits of tourism for the town from the new experiences currently offered or about to become available in the northern area of the town.

With the failure of some smaller airlines, and the major airlines forecasting much reduced foreign travel¹ in the near future, the interest in staycationing and UK holidays is likely to grow, as it did in the recession of 2008.

The Town has an embarrassment of heritage riches, that are not necessarily well known locally, regionally or nationally. It has a limited availability of bed spaces in the town. It does not have a dedicated tourism promotional website, or tourism forum or other tourism

¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-52462660>
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p08bz9nx>

focussed industry group. However, it has the opportunity to attract “day” visitors (locals and staying visitors) from across Dorset and neighbouring counties, and from the growing cruise ship visits to Portland Port and Port of Poole once the cruise industry has recovered post COVID19.

This strategy, and its action plan, can contribute to the town centre recovery through the development of the town’s visitor experience offer, and the potential for a greater interest in UK holidays. It can do this by building on the currently untold stories it has in depth, and to both provide and receive benefit from the heritage attractions, buildings and assets which have and are seeing significant investment.

D Heritage Tourism Market

(see Background Paper A)

While the value and volume of tourism across other tourism areas has fluctuated in recent years, the value of heritage tourism is reported to have seen annual growth. It is also an area which has wide appeal with over 75% of the population visiting a heritage site at least once in a year, and over 66% reporting that the opportunity to make a heritage visit was a key influencer in deciding on a short break or holiday in the UK.

It is also clear that visitors, together more generally with town centre users, are seeking an active experience of a place as opposed to a passive experience.

Dorchester, with over 6000 years of history, fantastic heritage old and new, factual and fictional characters of international renown, and unique and exceptional examples of former lives, is well placed to grow its tourism visitor to the town offer through its heritage and related stories.

With several recently or soon to be completed major investments in heritage assets in the town there is a particular opportunity to raise the local national and international reputation and awareness of the town’s visitor offer and heritage experience.

E Dorchester’s Tourism Market

(see Background Papers B & D)

While there is no data captured in Dorchester to enable a true picture of the volume, value and seasonality of tourism in the town, there are statistically robust analyses from national surveys that give an indication of the volume, value and seasonality of tourism in the town, and allow comparison with other destinations.

The sector locally follows the typical UK pattern, with peak occupancy close to capacity in the mid-summer months, and with year on year fluctuations resulting from many factors including political uncertainty, seasonal and unseasonal weather, global unrest, recession and staycation, Brexit and the exceptional weather in recent years. These fluctuations are likely to continue as the nation works out how to travel safely and manage life as a result of Coronavirus.

Dorchester’s staying visitors are typically coming from a 2.5-3 hr. journey time predominantly from the Midlands, London and SE England. Foreign visitors are mostly from the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium and France, and particularly during the Thomas Hardy Festival from Japan and USA.

Anecdotally, local businesses confirm the seasonality of tourism locally, and the home locations of staying visitors. They also note that staying visitors are not aware of the Dorchester visitor offer.

Most visitor attractions are either resident or staying visitors from across the county, but visitors will travel much further for a “unique” experience or event.

There is a real opportunity to promote the Dorchester visitor offer across Dorset and particularly to staying visitors in the BH postcodes. The town has the opportunity to grow its short break visitor, and particularly its day visitor appeal, a using its cultural and heritage offer as an attractor. Dorchester has much to offer the “heritage” visitor, but the offer is not well defined or well known amongst its target market and target geography.

F The Delivery of tourism locally

(Background papers C, D E & F)

From the national tourism bodies promoting the UK nationally and internationally, through the Dorset LEP and Dorset Tourism Association strategies and sector representation, to Dorset Councils maintenance of the public realm, highways, car park operations and planning function to wide promotion of Dorset through its visit-Dorset channels and, and individual businesses promotion of their own enterprises, the promotion and development of tourism, and the maintenance of the supporting infrastructure is a complex picture.

Each has a role to play:

- international and national promotion,
- national and local product development,
- setting national and regional strategic direction
- sector representation and lobbying,
- grant fund prioritisation, application assessment and administration
- industry data gathering and analysis,
- Grant support to local organisations such as cultural organisations which are a key part of the local offer to visitors
- Supporting a positive visitor experience through maintenance of the public realm and protection of the natural environment

However, for these myriad organisations, “local” does not go below County level or prioritise any one local destination. Sustained relationships with the more local organisations will provide opportunity to represent the towns tourism needs and offer to those organisations and for those needs and offer to be reflected in their own activity.

At local destination or town level, and apart from local business own promotional activity, the only visitor promotion, public realm maintenance or visitor support currently provided exclusively for the town is through:

- Dorchester BID’s current programme of activity encouraging and supporting visitors to and within the town, and is just part of a wider remit within the BID business plan 2018-2023
- Dorchester TIC ‘s information and event booking services
- Dorchester Town Councils management of the Borough Gardens, Maumbury Rings, River Walks and open spaces, and the recent LEADER funded town centre signage

There is however neither one plan for coordinating or delivering the promotion and development of Dorchester as a visitor destination nor any formal or informal collaborative working.

Background paper D, concluded that staying visitors in the town had little awareness of the Dorchester offer prior to their visit, and that some staying visitors had spent a night for other reasons than to be a tourist in the town, and wished they'd stayed longer.

National websites have no Dorchester content currently, and while there is content on regional sites, their focus is more toward individual businesses (accommodation and attractions) which in turn are dependent on the business having a membership package on the site. It is often not easy to navigate to pages with detail about the towns visitor offer in a single place on regional websites, and their content is not often proactively and routinely maintained.

Town based websites exist for other purposes than promotion of the visitor economy and for a multitude of audiences with different needs. Where there is content about the visitor offer, it is not always easily to identify or locate.

Local businesses frequently do not have comprehensive content about the town's visitor offer.

There is a need clearly to improve the accessibility to and ease of search for visitor content for the town across websites at all levels. This may or may not be through a new dedicated website. However, with small numbers of tourism businesses in the town, most of whom are already paying a BID levy, it is unlikely that a commercial or exclusive membership approach to such a website will derive sufficient income to justify costs of debt collection and administration, or make a significant contribution to operating costs.

Social media activity is mostly carried out by larger organisations promoting Dorset generally, town centre offers or features of specific attractions. There is little social media activity amongst accommodation businesses.

There is an opportunity to increase social media activity and develop some common stories for all to share.

There is both opportunity and need to develop a marketing approach with a cost benefit analysis for the town's heritage tourism offer that:

- identifies and builds on the towns heritage USPs through a branding exercise;
- works to improve the quantity and quality of content on national, regional and local (town focused) websites;
- evaluates the options for a dedicated promotional website for the town;
- builds a coordinated approach to social media and traditional marketing based on the brand values

Opportunity should also be taken to establish new and sustain existing relationships with local and regional tourism representative bodies to ensure that the Dorchester's tourism needs and offer are included in their respective activities.

G Sustainability

It would be inappropriate for this strategy not to address sustainability and green issues. The Town Council and Dorset Council have both signed up to a climate emergency and are making efforts to reduce carbon footprints in the delivery of their services.

Opportunities for considering sustainability in tourism include for example:

- Encouraging public transport for travel to the destination
- Encouraging park and ride options for travel into the destination
- Walking or cycling on arrival, leaving the car at the accommodation
- Encouraging the greater provision of electric vehicle charging points
- A local green tourism charter for businesses that could include:
 - encouraging elimination of single use plastics,
 - sourcing locally,
 - reducing print waste and only printing on recycled materials

The signing of a climate emergency by Dorchester Town Council, the potential impact of climate change on our town, and the need to ensure preservation of our heritage, require this strategy to ensure that its actions address sustainability and environmental issues.

H Governance and Delivery

(background paper E)

The organisational structure to take the strategy forward should be appropriate to the scale of the local tourism sector and the capacity to fund and deliver. It is clear that no one size fits all, and that activity, structure and funding are dependent on the local situation, ambition and political aspiration to get involved. It is also clear that where there is intent to deliver support for tourism (marketing, product development, events coordination etc.) the council has dedicated staff resource to enable delivery.

Larger destinations have established CICs or Companies Limited by Guarantee. These are often supported by some large regional private sector organisations such as hotel groups, or regional transport bodies, and are often established to deliver several services (such as Inward Investment or sports facilities) or to act in a commercial trading environment. They all charge significant membership fees and have a large sector base from which to draw memberships and income. None researched have identified an advantage in their private sector status in securing grant funding as a result of their status.

Several smaller destinations work alone without any engagement with the private sector, while others work to a greater or lesser extent in partnerships.

Given the small size of the tourism sector in the town, and the existence of a Business Improvement District already charging a compulsory levy on most town centre businesses, the establishment of a private sector membership body to lead and deliver the strategy is not proposed in this strategy.

In a town the size of Dorchester, and in common with many of the smaller proactive destinations across the country, it may be appropriate to take a less formal structured approach to the governance and delivery of the strategy through the establishment of a town tourism partnership.

The town council has been the lead organisation in the development of this strategy through the towns Joint Heritage Committee. In the absence of any other group with a heritage and tourism locally focussed remit, it would be appropriate that the Committee continues to take a lead role in delivering this strategy and establishing a formal partnership with appropriate partners including Dorchester Chamber, Dorchester BID, Visit Dorset/Dorset Council and the tourism sector in the town and that it maintains a connection to the Dorset Tourism

Association. It is likely that this would require a dedicated member of staff part time to support the partnership and take a lead on appropriate actions from the action plan.

I The Vision

Dorchester needs to establish a vision for its visitor offer, that encompasses the towns values and aspirations for the future growth of both the visitor economy and the towns economy generally. This should be developed collaboratively engaging with the visitor heritage economy sectors specifically, and with general town centre businesses and the community, and can be commenced by the tourism partnership once established. This could be a long term 5-15-year vision for the town and tourism in order to establish some higher value goals and ambition.

In the interim, the Dorchester short term (3-5 year) vision could be:

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

The strategic vision will underpin the actions of the strategy and provide a benchmark against which to measure progress and success. The vision should be established with full engagement of both the residential and the business community.

J Strategic Objectives and Action Plan

Research and analysis, presented in the background papers A-G together with a SWOT analysis (background paper H), along with the feedback from the businesses within the tourism sector locally has identified several strategic objectives presented below. Delivery timescales are presented in the action plan assuming that delivery commences once the strategy has been formally adopted by the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee and Dorchester Town Council. Subject to consultation, adoption of the strategy could take place in Autumn 2020 so that delivery could commence from October 2020.

Dorchester Heritage Joint Committee – Heritage Tourism Strategy Action Plan

Strategic Theme – Governance								
The delivery of the strategy will need a suitable lead body to oversee and coordinate activity if the strategy is to achieve growth in the town’s visitor economy								
	Action area	Priority	DTC/DJHC Role Lead/Influence/ Encourage	Partners	Resource Implication (if known) and impact	Note/Comment	Indicative Timescale	Performance measure
G1	Establish a formal local delivery tourism partnership, and build communication amongst the tourism sector in Dorchester	1	Lead	Tourism businesses Dorset Council & Visit Dorset Dorchester Chamber Dorchester BID	Staff support High	Consider terms of reference, membership, degrees of autonomy, relationship with DJHC	Oct-Dec’20	Partnership, ToR, degrees of autonomy, relationship with DTC and DJHC agreed
G2	Consider appointment of dedicated Heritage Tourism post within DTC	1	Lead		Ongoing salary High	To support the partnership and deliver the strategy. Role and programme in addition to G1 determined by outcome of action plan activity	Jan-Jun’21	Post and budget agreed by DTC,
G3	Establish some key performance indicators against which change in the visitor economy can be measured, and comparisons made with other destinations	1	Lead	Dorset Council DJHC Dorchester Chamber Dorchester BID Tourism Sector	Staff Medium	See section K	Jan-Sep’21	Data sources and data sharing principles agreed
G4	Maintain and sustain existing, and build new relationships with local and regional tourism sector bodies such as the Dorset	2	Lead	Dorset LEP DTA Visit Dorset Visit England	Staff Low		Apr-Jun’21	Awareness raising, lobbying, influencing

	Tourism Association, Visit Dorset and Visit England			Historic Towns Forum (HTVF) Historic England				
G5	Carry out a long term 5-15 years visioning exercise to establish an aspirational vision for tourism for the town that is relevant to the attractions, accommodation providers and town centre businesses	3	Lead	Tourism Sector, Heritage Sector, Local businesses Community	Consultancy fee (£1200 committed DJHC January 2021) and staff support Medium	The Long-term vision, influenced by the branding exercise will guide and influence the actions of the strategy for the longer Ensure community engagement in the process	Jan-Jun'22	Long term vision established through business and community engagement

Strategic Theme – Communication

The strategy has identified that the town is not well known as a visitor destination. The communication aim should be to increase visitor numbers for both day visitors and for staying visitors by maximising the existing asset utilisation (bed spaces, travel and attractions visitor capacity etc), away from the peak season.

	Action area	Priority	DTC/DJHC Role Lead/Influence/ Encourage	Partners	Resource Implication (if known) and impact	Note/Comment	Indicative Timescale	Performance measure
C1	Conduct Brand development exercise to define what the Dorchester visitor offer is	1	Lead	Tourism Sector, Heritage Sector, Local businesses Community	£3000 (already committed by DJHC 21.1.20) Medium	To establish a brand identity for the town's heritage offer and some USPs, straplines. Images and iconography that can be used by all in town promotion and delivering a consistent image of Dorchester's visitor offer.	Jan-Sep'21	Specification agreed, consultancy appointed, brand agreed
C2	Investigate and evaluate cost effective means of improving visitor awareness of the Dorchester offer and develop and implement a costed marketing plan informed as below (2a-2d) and from the branding exercise				Outcome dependent Medium	Principal focus should be on increasing day visits to the town and maximising the existing asset utilisation (away from peak season) for staying visitors. Consider commissioning a marketing review	Apr-Sep'21	Marketing options investigated, marketing plan agreed, resources identified

C2a	Evaluate cost and benefit of a dedicated Dorchester Heritage Tourism Website and social media activity, or strong partnership working with other notable local websites (such as Dorchester BID, Visit Dorset) and social media activists	1	Lead	Visit Dorset Dorchester BID	Staff resource Medium	Options include a paid for satellite site from Visit Dorset, or dedicated town website Content informed by branding exercise.	Apr-Sep'21	
C2b	Evaluate cost and benefit of focussed Dorchester content and feature in printed area tourism guides such as Resort Dorset, and Visit Dorset's Explore Dorset, and Days out in Dorset publications	1	Lead	Visit Dorset, Publishing houses Local businesses	Staff resource Medium	Options include content for editorial, and paid for advertising	Apr-Sep'21	
C2c	Evaluate cost and benefit through partnering or other, of town promotion along key access routes such as rail and motorway and road services	1	Lead	SW Trains First Great Western National Express	Staff resource Medium	Options include posters at "stops" or on-board advertising	Apr-Sep'21	
C2d	Evaluate opportunities and cost benefits of town promotion via blogs, podcasts, newsletters	1	Lead		Staff resource Medium	Informed by the brand exercise Use of appropriate channels, attraction of followers	Apr-Sep'21	

C3	Support improved Dorchester content in social media promotion by Visit Dorset, Dorchester BID and local businesses, including encouraging periodic “Dorchester focus” weeks	2	Lead	Visit Dorset Dorchester BID Local businesses	Staff resource Medium	Informed by the brand exercise Led by tourism partnership Yr 1	From Jan’21 on and informed by C1	Agreement to share content reached, content agreed, timetable of soc media joined up working agreed and implemented
C4	Evaluate options for increased cruise ship passenger day trips from Portland and Poole.	3	Lead	Port of Poole Portland Port Dorchester BID Dorchester Chamber	Staff resource Low	Options appraisal and resource identification Use of content from C3	Apr-Jun ‘22	Dependant on cruise ship industry recovery post COVID 19 and planned programme of calls to both ports
C5	Work with Visit Dorset to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support press familiarisation trips that include a visit to Dorchester • improve Dorchester content on Visit Britain and Visit England websites 	3	Influence	Visit Dorset	Staff resource Medium	Informed by branding exercise As opportunity arises	Apr’21 on	Improving Dorchester content submitted in response to calls for press fam trips to Dorset
C6	Evaluate requirements and benefits of advertising in group travel publications such as Coach Drivers Club (CDC) Tourism yearbook and similar	3	Lead	Local tourism businesses Dorset Council	Staff resource Low	Cost benefit analysis, informed by benefits seen in other destinations and towns ability to meet CDC visit expectations	Apr-Jun’22	Group travel options investigated, and benefits of engagement resolved

C7	Lobby for better signposting from the town bypass and from main routes (M5, A31) to the town and into the town	3	Influence and Encourage	Highways Agency Dorset Council DJHC Dorchester Chamber Dorchester BID	Staff resource Low	Town approaches could have info boards on the approaches celebrating visually the towns heritage offer	Apr-Jun'22	Key contact in relevant agencies identified, lobbying approaches submitted
C8	Explore how the towns cultural offer could combine with the attractions to offer complimentary experiences - promoted jointly by social media	3	Influence and Encourage	Dorchester Arts Arts Development Company Local attractions	Staff resource Medium	Connecting the theme of an arts performance with a display/artefacts/event If you enjoy X, why not also look at Y	Apr-Jun'21	Key player actively developing and delivering options under banner of town tourism partnership

Strategic Theme – Community

The community of Dorchester is an important element in delivering an exceptional visitor experience, whether providing volunteers to work on attractions and at events, or as workers in the many business with whom visitors interact, or as guardians and exponents of the town’s heritage.

	Action area	Priority	DTC/DJHC Role Lead/Influence/ Encourage	Partners	Resource Implication (if known) and impact	Note/Comment	Timescale	Performance measure
Co1	Establish a volunteer support and development programme to support volunteers to deliver exceptional service as part of the visitor economy	2	Influence	Volunteering Dorset Attractions engaging with volunteers	Staff resource Low	A resource to support volunteer recruitment and service industry skills development	Apr-Jun'21	Volunteering Dorset working with key attractions to implement a volunteer support programme
Co2	Welcome Dorchester - Develop a voluntary town “ambassador” programme to grow local people’s knowledge of the heritage offer in order that they may, through their own interaction with visitors, contribute to the visitor experience	3	Lead and Influence	Tourism businesses Dorchester Chamber Dorchester BID Visit Dorset and Dorchester TUIC	Staff resource, Grant funding or sponsorship Medium	Self-instruction resources about Dorchester’s Heritage offer to visitors, where locals can develop their local heritage knowledge and share with visitors “if you liked... you’ll also enjoy...”	Oct'21- Mar'22	Business supportive, resources identified, programme requirements defined,
Co3	Long term vision - see Governance G5	3	Lead		Staff Resource Medium	Ensure the community is engaged in the process	Apr'22 - Sep'23	

Strategic Theme – Environment

Tourism can be a benefit for good, or negatively impact the environment (both natural and built). This strategy is celebrating the Heritage of Dorchester which includes the natural and built environment. The actions arising from this strategy should seek to make where possible a positive contribution towards environmental issues.

	Action area	Priority	DTC/DJHC Role Lead/ Influence/ Encourage	Partners	Resource Implication (if known) and impact	Note/Comment	Timescale	Performance measure
E1	Ensure a common environmental message runs through marketing and promotional activity – minimising environmental impact	1	Lead	DJHC	Low	Consider material used, environmental impact of actions proposed, longevity, residual waste. Avoid disposable product or materials as much as possible	Apr'21 on	Inclusion in marketing messages
E2	Encourage more electric car charging points, making the town more attractive to the growing number of electric car owners	1	Influence	DTC Planning Committee Dorset Council	Low	Lobbying role through the planning process	From Oct'20	Consideration given in town council responses to planning matters (policy and development)
E3	Champion the state of the town's natural and built environment	1	Influence	DTC Planning Committee Dorset Council Property owners	Low	Litter free, plentiful hanging baskets, well maintained buildings, paving, signage etc	From Oct'20	Consideration given in town council responses to planning matters (policy and development)
E4	Support and encourage Dorchester BID in its promotion and growth in	1	Influence	DTC DJHC Local businesses	Medium	Increased awareness of and access to an improved mobile network access across a	From Jan'21	Dialogue commenced with Dorchester BID

	the free to access town centre Wi-Fi network			Dorchester Chamber		wider area will enable more technical solutions to improve the visitor offer and experience in Dorchester		
E5	Encourage the promotion of green travel planning for visitors to the town in promotional activity	1	Lead and Influence	DTC DJHC Visit Dorset Dorchester BID Local businesses	Low	Include references to Rail, Coach, Bus, National Cycle networks in promotional work	From Apr'21	Inclusion in marketing messages
E6	Support and encourage both the retention of existing and development of new serviced accommodation bed spaces to both maintain and increase the overnight visitor bed capacity	1	Influence and Encourage	DTC Planning DJHC Local businesses Dorchester Chamber	Low	Growth in visitor bed capacity identified in Blue Sail study	From Oct'20	Audit trail of comments on both spatial planning and development management processes Growth in bed spaces
E7	Explore the appetite within the tourism sector locally for the development of a local "Green Tourism Charter"	2	Influence and Encourage	DJHC Local businesses Dorchester Chamber DTA	Medium	Including local purchasing, local food, waste minimisation, no single use plastics	From Oct '21	

Strategic Theme – Visitor Offer

The strategy has and will identify a wealth of heritage on which to build the visitor experience, it also identifies the importance of “experience” in attracting and retaining town centre users and visitors. It is important that the existing and any new visitor offer positively contribute to the visitor experience and grows the reputation of the town as a must visit destination.

	Action area	Priority	DTC/DJHC Role Lead/ Influence/ Encourage	Partners	Resource Implication (if known) and impact	Note/Comment	Timescale	Performance measure
V1	Conclude the Heritage Audit to Determine the appropriate Heritage “assets” to support the development of Heritage Tourism in Dorchester, including the new heritage of Brewery Square and Poundbury	1	Lead	DJHC Dorset Council & TIC Local Businesses including those on Heritage Sector Community Civic Society and others Brewery Square Developments Duchy of Cornwall	£4900 Medium	Audit will identify the most appropriate assets on which to build new visitor experiences	Oct-Dec’20	Audit concluded; recommendations received
V2	Develop specifications and options for solutions to the new visitor experience products identified in the Heritage Audit	1	Lead	DJHC Dorset Council & TIC Local Businesses including those on Heritage Sector Community Civic Society and others Brewery Square Developments	Staff resource High	This should include but not be limited by tech solutions and traditional print options	Jan-Sep’21	Specifications agreed, resources identified, Solutions commissioned

				Duchy of Cornwall				
V3	Review, update and coordinate the existing town trails and supporting products including Poppy Trail, Discover Dorchester Guide and trails, Dorchester Visitor Guide (Dorset Council), Real Town Trail (DBID), Doradormouse website	2	Lead	DJHC Dorset Council & TIC DBID	Staff resource High	Review existing content for accuracy, determine and cost replacement, updated or new resources required (paper, tech, infrastructure)	Jan-Sep'21	Need to review assessed, requirements agreed, resources identified, solutions commissioned
V4	Determine appetite amongst attractions and visitor appropriate town centre businesses (e.g. cafes, taxis, gift shops) to participate in, and specify and cost an ongoing mystery shopper exercise to measure and improve the quality of our visitor experience	2	Lead and Influence	DTC Dorchester Chamber Dorchester BID Tourism businesses	Staff Resource Medium	To measure progress in the improvement of the visitor experience	Jan-Jun'22	Discussions held, appetite determined, programme specified, resources identified, mystery shopper exercise programme commissioned
V5	Informed by the Heritage Audit, raise awareness of the opportunity of new food, culture and heritage focussed events in the town to attract town centre visitors, to potential events organisers/providers.	3	Influence and Encourage	Town Centre Attractions Hardy Society Civic Society Dorchester Chamber Dorchester BID Dorchester Arts Arts Development Company	Staff resource Medium	Recent new events have proved increasingly popular after the success of Dippy on Tour in 2018. Consideration should be given to grow visitor numbers for both staying and day visitors	Oct'20-Mar'21	Food, Culture and Heritage sectors locally working together on new events

						away from the peak season		

Strategic Theme – Industry

The visitor experience of the town is dependent on the quality of the offer from its tourism industry. For the Heritage Tourism in the town to grow, businesses and events organisers need to have the skills and capacity to continue to deliver on and exceed visitor expectations.

	Action area	Priority	DTC/DJHC Role Lead/ Influence/ Encourage	Partners	Resource Implication (if known) and impact	Note/Comment	Timescale	Performance measure
In 1	Determine industry skills requirements and lobby for improved access/local delivery and raising profile of local career opportunities	1	Influence/ Encourage	Dorchester Chamber Dorchester BID Weymouth College Dorset Growth Hub Dorset Gateway	Staff Resource Medium	Initially support skills development in new communication technologies	From Apr'21	Dialogue with local businesses and learning establishments held, solutions identified
In 2	Work with event's organisers, attractions dependent on volunteers, and Volunteering Dorset to develop a support and development programme for new and existing volunteers supporting the Heritage Tourism sector	1	Influence/ Encourage	Volunteering Dorset Weymouth College Dorset Growth Hub Dorset Gateway	Staff Resource Medium	Improved capacity for events organisers to host more bigger and better events to attract visitors to the town	Apr-Jun'21	Volunteering Dorset, and volunteer dependent attractions in dialogue, training needs and resources identified
In 3	Develop a resource library of images and videos for	2	Lead	DJHC Visit Dorset	Staff Resource	Copyright free resources to help with	Apr-Jun'21	Library developed, copyright issues

	use by local tourism businesses in their own marketing			Dorset History Centre Civic Society	Low	a consistent message about Dorchester		resolved, images in use across platforms and users
In 4	Encourage collaborative working across the museum sector to achieve greater visits and visitor numbers across the sector from their complimentary exhibits and artefacts	2	Encourage	Heritage Attractions	Staff Resource Low	To improve awareness of the local offer and increase day visitor dwell time and repeat visits	Apr-Jun'21	Museums in dialogue, maybe as subgroup of the tourism partnership
In 5	Look at how other destinations provide resources support for event's organisers including facilities/ equipment/ storage/ processes	3	Lead		Staff Resource Low		Oct-Dec'20	

Actions identified as:

Lead – Those actions where the Town Council and or its employees will be directly involved in delivering

- Influence – Those actions where the Town Council councillors, staff, or members of any established Tourism town partnership may bring influence in other fora where they are invited to comment or have representation
- Encourage - Those where the Town Council councillors, staff, or members of any established Tourism town partnership can lend support or suggest new approaches to others working in or supporting the tourism industry locally

Impact

- High – likely to require significant time and effort
- Medium – Less time and effort
- Low – Little time and effort, or not a role for the employed post, may be a position statement or policy approach of the council

K Performance Measurement

The individual actions in the action plan each have a note regarding performance or key stages against which to measure progress with the chosen action. They do not however capture change in the visitor economy of the town.

Background paper B identifies the current range of statistics produced and published about tourism across the country, and notes the significant time lag between the data capture and publication of the analyses. It also notes that regional, county, and (when published) town data and reports are deductions from national studies using statistical methodologies, as opposed to on the ground data capture.

Key Performance Indicators should be established which measure effectiveness of activity, growth in visitor numbers, and if possible local sector health through comparison with other destinations capturing comparable data once some baseline data has been captured.

Options include:

Effectiveness

Marketing - Numbers of and change over time in

- Unique visitors to established Dorchester visitor web pages on one or more websites
- Followers to Dorchester based visitor focussed social media pages

Sector health

Visitor Experience

- Mystery shopper data
- TripAdvisor reviews and change over time

Sector health and growth

Visitor numbers

Numbers of and change over time in

- Car park usage data
- Visitor numbers at selected attractions (suitably anonymised)
- Footfall (dependent on footfall counter technology)

The ability to capture much of this data will be dependent on reaching agreements to share data with key businesses and organisations in the town in order that baselines can be established, and future meaningful comparisons made.

Appendix 2

Action plan timeline in priority and role for High and Medium resource impacts only

Activity Ref	Activity Description	Priority	DTC Role	DTC Resource Impact H M L	Oct-Dec'20	Jan-Mar'21	Apr-Jun'20	Jul-Sep'20	Oct-Dec'20	Jan-Mar'21	Apr-Jun'21	Jul-Sep'21	Oct21 on	Ongoing
G1	Establish tourism partnership	1	Lead	H	#									#
V1	Conclude Heritage Audit	1	Lead	M	#									
G2	Appointment of dedicated Heritage Tourism post within DTC	1	Lead	H		#	#							#
V2	Develop new visitor experience products	1	Lead	H		#	#	#						
G3	Establish KPIs	1	Lead	M		#	#	#						#
C1	Brand development exercise	1	Lead	M		#	#	#						
E4	WIFI Development	1	Influence	M		#								#
C2a/b/c/d	Develop and implement a costed marketing plan	1	Lead	M			#	#						#
In1	Industry skills	1	Influence	M			#							#
In2	Volunteer Development Programme	1	Influence	M			#							
C3	Improved social media promotion	2	Lead	M		#								#
V3	Review existing visitor experience offer	2	Lead	H		#	#	#						

E7	Local "Green Tourism Charter"	2	Influence	M					#					
V4	Mystery shopper exercise	2	Lead	M						#	#			
C5	Press fam trips and VB and VE web content	3	Influence	M			#						#	
C8	Culture and attraction joint working	3	Influence	M			#							
Co2	Welcome Dorchester a voluntary town "ambassador" programme	3	Lead	M				#	#				#	
V5	New events.	3	Influence	M				#	#					
G5 & Co3	Develop long term 5-15 years vision	3	Lead	M					#	#			#	

**DORCHESTER HERITAGE JOINT COMMITTEE
21 JULY 2020
PUBLICATION - LETS EXPLORE DORCHESTER**

Background

1. In April 2013, the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee resolved to commission and publish a booklet “Let’s Explore Dorchester”, targeted at 5-11 years old children. The Committee further resolved to sell the publication at £2.50 with all proceeds returning to the Committee.
2. In June 2014, the Committee resolved that the finished booklet could be sold at outlets in the town and that the Committee could, should it so wish, change the price in the future. The minutes record a proposed launch at the County Museum on 23rd May 2014. The minutes do not record the initial print run, or the cost of production.

Current Position

3. It is understood that copies may have been made available via the County Museum, the Dorchester TIC and other outlets including the Town Council offices. It is believed that copies are currently only available at the town council offices, where very few copies are sold annually at £2.50. Records indicate 8 copies sold in the past 24 months.
4. There are over 7100 copies held in store at the Town Council depot in St Georges Road.
5. Income received from sale of copies has been absorbed into the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee budget, and not separately identified for reprints, redesign, or updates of Let’s Explore Dorchester.

Proposal

6. While they remain in storage, the Let’s Explore Dorchester booklet is not fulfilling its intention of introducing and enthusing young people, both residents and visitors to the town, in the heritage and history of Dorchester.
7. There are several options for their future use and distribution:

Option	Observation	Recommendation
1. Distribute a copy to all 5-11 years olds in Dorchester Schools in September	Likely to use about 1000 copies. Could link to the curriculum, and could encourage young families to explore the town and shop locally	Recommended

2.	Offer for sale to TIC and other interested outlets including attractions, accommodation providers, shops, and cafes for a cost price of £1.65 and a retail price of £2.50. Copies supplied could be “invoiced on net sale” minimising the risk to the outlet, reducing the administration at the town council	This offers a 51% mark up to outlets and could over time generate up to £9900 for the Heritage Committee to invest in reprints or future projects. The Committee may wish to consider a modest investment in point of sale dispensers if this approach is agreed (about £12-£30 each dependant on supplier for clear plastic A4 three tier dispensers)	Recommended
3.	Make available for free through TIC and other locations including accommodation providers and town centre attractions	Potential to achieve a rapid high level of distribution. However, funds to invest in a reprint or future publications would be dependent on the availability of town council or other budgets and grants. Free distribution reduces perception of quality and may result in copies being collected and subsequently wasted unused	Not recommended

8. The Committee is invited to consider and recommend a future distribution approach for remaining copies of the Let’s Explore Dorchester publication it commissioned in 2013.

Option 1 (free distribution to Dorchester Schools children aged 5-11) and Option 2 (sale at “cost” price £1.65 for retail sale at £2.50 to TIC and interested outlets) are recommended

It is further recommended that up to £150 is invested in A4 clear plastic dispensers to be made available to some outlets.

Trevor Hedger
Heritage Tourism Project Manager