

## **DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**

### **DORCHESTER JOINT HERITAGE COMMITTEE**

**18 APRIL 2023**

At a Meeting of the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee held on 18 April 2023:

#### **PRESENT:**

Dorchester Town Council	Councillors:	S. Biles A. Chisholm F. Hogwood G. Jones (Chairman) D. Taylor
	Officers:	S. Newman M. Manley
Dorset Council	Councillors:	A. Canning S. Jones
Dorchester Association		M. Rice
Dorchester Civic Society		I. Gosling
Dorchester Heritage Magazine		M. Woodgate
Local Nature Reserve		L. Poulsen
Dorset Museum		E. Selby
Blue Badge Tourist Guide		J. Wallis
Shire Hall Historic Courthouse Museum		N. Corey
Thomas Hardy Society		M. Chutter

The Chairman welcomed Nina Corey, the new Director of the Shire Hall Historic Courthouse Museum, to her first meeting of the Committee.

#### 33. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R. Biggs and L. Fry (Dorset Council), R. White (National Trust) and M. Gayton (Dorset History Centre).

#### 34. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2023, a copy of which had been circulated, were confirmed and signed.

#### 35. **ROMAN BATHS**

Dorset Council's Senior Archaeologist Steve Wallis gave a presentation to the Committee in respect of whether it was possible to uncover the Roman Baths located at the Wollaston Road car park area.

Members felt that opening up the Roman Baths would be a good thing for the town and a real plus for tourism but noted the difficulties and costs associated with such a project. Other options to mark the Baths in some way were discussed. At the very least an information board should be provided in the area. It was noted that a board had been designed but at the time agreement had not been forthcoming from the District Council in respect of installation.

The Committee thanked Steve for an interesting and thought provoking presentation.

**RESOLVED**

That further consideration be given to installing the information board that was produced about the Roman Baths at the site.

36. **HARNHAM WATER MEADOWS**

The Chairman of the Civic Society reported on a recent trip to Harnham Water Meadows at Salisbury. The site was managed by the Harnham Water Meadows Trust which was established in 1990 with the following aims:-

- preserve and reinstate the original irrigation system where possible, -replant hedgerows in what is believed to be their original lines,
- protect and encourage the growth of wild flora, fauna and birds,
- carry out controlled "drownings" of approximately 10 acres (4ha) through the channel system, at present three times a year in winter, and
- organise educational visits, guided walks and demonstrations throughout the year in part by using its headquarters in Rose Cottage, which it has owned since 2006

The representative also reported on what might be able to happen with Dorchester water meadows.

The Committee thanked the representative for his presentation and work in respect of Dorchester's water meadows.

37. **INFORMATION BOARD AT POUNDBURY**

The Committee had before it a copy of the proposed 'Poundbury's Roman Era Farm' information board which had been amended to take into account the comments made by the Committee at its last meeting. It was noted that discussion was ongoing with the Duchy of Cornwall regarding a suitable location for the board.

**RESOLVED**

That the revised information board be agreed.

38. **HERITAGE TOURISM STRATEGY**

- (a) Tourism Partnership - Update

The Committee received a progress report from the Tourism Development Officer on the work of the Tourism Partnership with a specific update on the new Tourist Information Point at Shire Hall, Hillforts and Henges Festival 2023 and the Joint Museums Easter event.

**RESOLVED**

That the update be noted.

(b) Dorchester Tourism Partnership – Notes of Meeting

The Committee received the notes of the Tourism Partnership meeting held on 5 April 2023.

**RESOLVED**

That the notes of the Tourism Partnership meeting held on 5 April 2023 be received.

39. MILL STREAM PATH – SECTION FROM LONDON ROAD TO MILL STREET

The Committee considered four draft information boards which had been drafted by Mark Chutter and Miranda Woodgate and which would be installed along the Mill Stream path from London Road to Mill Street.

Members agreed to let Mark or Miranda have any comments on the boards within two weeks.

**RESOLVED**

That, subject to any further comments, the boards be agreed.

40. ROMAN MOSAIC PROJECT – THE WALKS

The Committee heard an update from the Tourism Development Officer. Members were informed of a mosaic still in situ in the Trinity Street / Alexandra Terrace area.

**RESOLVED**

That the update be noted.

41. THOMAS HARDY VICTORIAN FAIR

The Committee was updated on progress with the arrangements for the 2023 Thomas Hardy Victorian Fair. It was noted that a road closure for the event had been submitted and would be approved. Members were pleased with the progress reported.

**RESOLVED**

That the update be noted.

42. HERITAGE OPEN DAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2023

Members gave consideration to the format of an event for 2023. The Committee felt that as 2023 was a Thomas Hardy Victorian Fair year the Heritage Open Day event should involve less activity in the street itself. It was noted that a road closure application had been submitted. Members put forward a number of comments and suggestions which included:-

- Include Fordington again
- Hidden heritage
- Open doors – to places that are not usually accessible
- Themed trails and walks
- Wollaston House / Judge Jefferies
- Heritage building trails

**RESOLVED**

That support be given for a scaled down Heritage Open Day on 10 September 2023.

43. **QUESTIONS**

A question had been received from the Dorchester Association as follows:-

“Should not the Joint Heritage Committee take a lead in dealing with the increasing problem of Graffiti around the town?”

The current wave of graffiti started around two years ago, when an individual started leaving his mark on street furniture around the town. As this was not removed, it led to others leaving their marks and other daubings. It is still increasing with new participants in evidence. A co-ordinated clear up should be funded in order to improve the heritage environment of the town. The work of the committee to improve our heritage for the benefit of residents and tourists is being undermined by the signs of a creeping inner city malaise as indicated by graffiti.

In response the Chairman confirmed that it was not possible for the Committee to undertake graffiti removal but that any incidents of graffiti should be reported to the appropriate authority or to the Town Council who would either remove or report to the correct body.”

44. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

Chairman.....