

DORCHESTER NEWS

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DORCHESTER'S NEW MAYOR



Photo by Finnbar Webster

Andy Canning has served continuously on the Town Council since 1999 and was Mayor once before in 2012. His chosen charities for his Mayoral year are Parkinson's Dance Group, Space Youth Project and the Dorchester Disabled Club. Andy will be supported by his wife Mel Lane as Mayoress and also Councillor Robin Potter as Deputy Mayor.

At the annual Mayor Making ceremony in May, Andy told the audience "I moved here in 1998 with my wife, Mel and our child, Alex, who was only 1 at the time. We loved Dorchester from the first moment we saw it and it has more than exceeded any of our hopes for a new life here. I was mayor before in 2012 and something my family and I really learned then was that there are many, many amazing people working really hard in Dorchester to make life better for others."

If you have an event that you would like Andy to attend, please download a mayoral engagement form from our website. You can also watch a recording of the Mayor Making ceremony – the link is on the front page of the Council's website.

THE CORN EXCHANGE UNVEILS STUNNING NEW FRONT OF HOUSE

After eight months of transformation, the Corn Exchange is proud to reveal its beautifully refurbished front of house. This major renovation has reimagined the space into a vibrant and welcoming hub for Dorchester and the wider community.

The refreshed space now features a modern bar and café, a dedicated art gallery, versatile community areas, and significantly improved accessibility — all designed to make every visit more enjoyable and inclusive.

Whether you're watching a performance, enjoying a coffee, exploring local art, or attending a community event, the new front of house is designed with you in mind. Come and see the transformation for yourself.



Highlights of the New Facilities Include:

- A brand-new reception and box office for ticketing and visitor information
- A stylish bar and café open to the public - perfect for relaxing before a show
- A redecorated Town Hall, ideal for hosting events and private functions
- Modern and accessible toilets, including improved facilities for disabled visitors
- A dedicated art gallery, showcasing a rotating programme of exhibitions
- A flexible community space for meetings, workshops, and venue hire

Opening Hours: Tuesday to Saturday: 10am – 4pm

Plus open during all afternoon and evening performances

RECENT EVENTS

This Spring has seen an exciting range of events take place in Dorchester, including the return of the Dorchester Artisan Market and the Street in the Park youth music festival.



Photos by Dorset Bays

The Town Council has played its part in providing the community and visitors with high quality activities. In April, working with the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee the council ran the Dorchester Roman Festival at Maumbury Rings with re-enactment gladiators and living history displays.

Over the course of the weekend, the Roman Festival attracted over 4,000 people and provided a boost for town centre business.



VE DAY 80TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT



Decadettes with the Mayor and Town Crier at the VE Day 80th Beacon Lighting event.

In May, the Town Council led local celebrations for the 80th anniversary of VE Day with the lighting of the beacon and free concert in Borough Gardens.

DORCHESTER WALKING FESTIVAL

The third Dorchester Walking Festival took place between 10th and 18th May. It was glorious weather throughout and hundreds of local residents and visitors enjoyed getting out and about on one or more of the 34 guided walks on offer. A huge thank you to Kingston Maurward College for sponsoring the walking festival this year and to all the wonderful walk leaders. Many of the walk leaders gave their time voluntarily for the festival and are donating the ticket sales to local charities.

GETTING AROUND DORCHESTER BY BUS

For a small town, Dorchester has a fairly comprehensive network of bus routes serving both its town and adjacent villages, and for most residents the nearest bus stop is only a short walk away. If you have internet access then you can plan your journey via Traveline South West. All you need to do is enter your postcode and when and where you want to travel, and the website will suggest your options, including trains.

There are several free apps that show real time bus information, for example UK Bus Checker, so you can find out whether your bus is on time even if you are at a bus stop that does not have a live departure screen.



Until the end of 2025, bus fares are capped at a maximum price of £3 for a single journey and if you hold a concessionary bus pass then it's free after 9.30am on weekdays and at any time at weekends.

Your local buses are financially supported by Dorset Council, both in terms of direct subsidy and via the national concessionary fares scheme. Sadly, many rural bus services have been lost over the years and if we want to safeguard the existing services then give the bus a try.

BOROUGH GARDENS IS BLOOMING!

The team at Borough Gardens have been hard at work creating a Spring and Summer spectacle for all to enjoy. The tulips and hyacinths were particularly beautiful this Spring which was very timely as a Green Flag judge visited the site in late April - the Green Flag award scheme recognises excellence in open spaces provision.

In all, 35 separate criteria are scored, ranging from safety and facilities to tree care and environmental management. Unannounced visits can be made at any time of year which is meant to ensure ongoing quality however this does not concern the team as they try their best to produce a fantastic garden all year round.



We will hear if we have retained the Green Flag award for 2025-26 in early July but we are confident of success and welcome everyone to pay a visit and enjoy the relaxing environment of the gardens which is so easily accessed in the town centre.

SUMMER MUSIC & EVENTS

JULY

Dorchester Borough Gardens

Sat 5, 12pm-4pm Gypsy, Roma & Traveller Event
Sun 6, 12pm-5pm Swingtime in the Gardens
Thurs 24, 11am-3pm Love Parks Family Fun Day

Great Field

Sun 13, 12pm-3pm Family Bike Ride
Sun 27, 10am-4pm Inflatable Theme Park
Mon 28, 10am-4pm Inflatable Theme Park

AUGUST

Dorchester Borough Gardens

Sat 9, 11am-3pm One World Festival
Sat 16, 2pm-10pm Dorchester Cider Festival
Mon 25, 11am-5pm Anonymous Youth Festival
Sat 30, 11am-4pm Palestinian Cultural Festival

Great Field

Sat 2, 10am-4pm Dorset Food & Art Festival
Thurs 14, 11am-4pm Holiday Hangout

Maumbury Rings

Sun 10, 10am-4pm Vegan Market

Sun 21 Sept, 11am-4pm
Heritage Open Day (Various Events & Venues)

...and free live music in Borough Gardens at weekends!
Subject to weather.

Check out the Discover Dorchester website for other upcoming events:
www.discoverdorchester.co.uk



BOROUGH GARDENS' REFRESHMENT KIOSK

Following a competitive process, the Town Council has given the company Temple of Refreshment the opportunity to run the Borough Gardens' refreshment kiosk for 2025. Temple of Refreshment also operate the kiosk at the National Trust's Stourhead site and offer a carefully selected range of hot and cold drinks, as well as snacks, cakes and ice creams. Visitors to the Gardens can now enjoy takeaway barista coffee made with freshly ground beans from Clifton Coffee, with local milk from Craig's Farm Dairy.



Dorchester Councillors' Residents Surgery

 

- Want to know what's happening in your community?
- Have a question for a local councillor?
- Want to know who does what?
- Or would you simply like to meet those representing you?

Where: Dorchester Library

When: First Saturday of every month 10.00am – 12.00pm

For more information call: 01305 224440



DorchesterArts AT MAUMBURY RINGS

Sun 6 June, 6.30pm
Robin Hood

Fri 1 August, 7pm
HMS Pinafore

Tues 19 August, 2.30pm
Alice Through The Looking Glass

Thurs 28 August, 7pm
The Rivals



BRINGING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER

In May, the council held its Informal Annual Town Meeting in the Corn Exchange. Town Councillors presented reports on the work of Council over the previous year and there was an opportunity to comment on the council's draft Corporate Plan and council's future priorities. The event also showcased 25 of the many prominent and active charities and voluntary groups in Dorchester, ranging from the Dorchester-Bayeux Society to the Friends of the Riverside Reserve, providing an excellent opportunity to celebrate the hard work of the town's many volunteers and showcase the services provided by the wide range of groups and clubs



GRANTS FOR LOCAL GROUPS



Members of Dorchester Youth Council receiving their certificate. Photo by Finnbar Webster.

Recipients of the last year's Dorchester Market Car Boot Fund were invited to a celebration tea recently where they received their certificates. All proceeds from the Dorchester Sunday Car Boot are donated to create a grant fund and around £12,000 was awarded to seventeen community organisations from the town and surrounding villages. Among those who benefitted were sports clubs, youth projects, projects for people with disabilities or long-term health related issues, and projects tackling social isolation and poverty. The certificates were awarded by Cllr Molly Rennie (Chair of the Joint Markets Panel), accompanied by the Mayor of Dorchester, Cllr Robin Potter, and the Chair of Dorset Council, Cllr Stella Jones.

The Dorchester Market Car Boot Fund is administered by Dorset Council and details can be found on their website – it opens for applications again this autumn.

LOOKING BACK: HOLBAEK CLOSE

As a result of a shared interest in community plays, a twinning arrangement was set up in 1992 between Dorchester and the town of Holbaek in Denmark which lasted for almost 20 years. So when it was planned to build 50 much needed affordable homes next to the Fordington Fields estate, it was decided to call this new development Holbaek Close as a tribute to the friendship between the two towns.

The land was owned by the Town Council and intended for a play area but, instead, it was sold to Magna and the proceeds put towards developing Sandringham Sports Centre.



WATERMARK TOWN

Wessex Water's Watermark Town initiative recognises communities that demonstrate a commitment to responsible and sustainable water use. The scheme encourages towns to value their water resources, understand their supply and waste systems and take action to protect the environment.

As part of its commitment to tackling climate change, the Town Council has just signed up to the scheme and is now working with partners and the community over the coming months to develop a long-term action plan.

Further details of the scheme can be found at: <https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/become-a-watermark-town>

COUNCILLOR CONTACTS

Phone and e-mail contact details for Ward councillors for the Town Council and Dorset Council are available on our website, www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk

