

Dorchester Town Council

Council Offices, 19 North Square, Dorchester, Dorset. DT1 1JF
Telephone: (01305) 266861

For information about this agenda contact Steve Newman
s.newman@dorchester-tc.gov.uk

13 July 2022

Agenda for the meeting of the **Policy Committee**, which will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER** at **THE MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, HIGH EAST STREET, DORCHESTER** on **MONDAY 18 JULY 2022** at **7.00pm**.

Steve Newman
Town Clerk

Public Attendance and Speaking at the Meeting

The Chairman has discretion to allow members of the public to speak at the meeting. If you wish to speak please **contact the Clerk by 9.00am on the morning of the meeting**. We ask speakers to confine their comments to the matter in hand and to be as brief as possible.

Member Code of Conduct: Declaration of Interests

Members are reminded that it is their responsibility to disclose interests where appropriate. A Member who declares any interest must leave the room. A Member who declares a registerable interest as a Council nominee to a partner organisation may first address the meeting as a member of the public.

Membership of the Committee

Councillors B. Armstrong-Marshall, R. Biggs, S. Biles, A. Chisholm, T. Harries, F. Hogwood, S. Hosford (Chair), G. Jones and The Mayor ex-officio.

Agenda

1. Apologies

2. Declaration of Interests

3. Minutes

To read, confirm and sign the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 May 2022 (adopted by Council on 24 May 2022). A copy of the Minutes can be found at <https://www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk/Committees/Management+Committee/Minutes>

4. Financial Update

To consider a report by the Financial Controller (enclosed).

5. Climate Emergency Works – Weymouth Ave Cricket Pavilion

To consider a report by the Financial Controller (enclosed).

6. Communications Policy

To consider the second draft Communications Policy (enclosed).

7. Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

To resolve “That in view of the fact that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the following matters the public and representatives of the press be excluded from this meeting during their discussion”.

8. ICT Support

To consider a report by the Town Clerk (enclosed).

9. Investments

To consider a report by the Financial Controller (enclosed).

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE – 18 JULY 2022

FINANCIAL UPDATE AT 30 JUNE 2022

1. Financial Position

- Month 3 spend (Appendix 1) £9k under:
 - £6k under on Outdoor Staff
 - £5k under on Office Staff (due to later appointment of new TC)
 - £10k over on agreed payment
 - £3k up on Cemetery income
 - £2k over on parks electric (BGH & Fountain)
 - £5k over on Parks R&M
 - £1k Loss on hire from BG House being closed
 - All other under and overspends net £5k under

- Cash Position **£000**

Lloyds Bank	307	Nil interest
Payden Global	900	c. 0.126% return
National Savings and Investments	7	0.5% interest
CCLA Deposit Account	600	1.0384% (0.327% 31/12)
Total Cash	1,814	(31 Dec £2,322k)

Notes:

- £33,848 CIL money received 25/04/22, CIL report updated on website.
- April precept received £790,835
- £340k expenditure on MB Development to date 22/23.
- £94K VAT to be reclaimed July 2022

- Debt over 30 days = £0, 0 debtors (31 Jan £0, 0 debtors)

- Payments list 1 May to 30 June on website. Supporting vouchers available from Financial Controller
 - **RECOMMENDED** that the Payments list, totalling £621,370.58 is approved.

2. Municipal Buildings

In September 2021 this committee resolved to take out a loan for some of the Municipal Buildings works. Before applying for a loan, permission must be sought from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). It is likely that the loan will end up being significantly less than this amount and a more detailed report will be submitted to Policy Committee regarding long term debt in September 2022 (as per March's update to Policy Committee), once the majority of payments have been made on the project. It is proposed the Corporate Projects Reserve will be used to fund the project in the short-term until September Policy Committee.

Recommendation

It is recommended that an application to the DLUHC to take out a loan for up to the maximum value of £700,000 to fund the Municipal Buildings works is approved and in the meantime the Corporate Projects Reserve is used.

3. Management Committee Recommendations

To consider any recommendations arising from Management Committee on the 11 July 2022.

Nigel Hayes
Financial Controller

MANAGEMENT REPORT AT 30 JUNE 2022

By Spend Type	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	Under/Over £000
Staff	820	212	206	-5
Capital Financing	28	17	17	0
Other Payments	539	238	237	-1
To Specific Reserves	316	316	316	0
Income	-121	-26	-29	-3
Net Budget	1,582	756	747	-9

By Service	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	Under/Over £000
Allotments	-10	0	0	0
Parks & Open Spaces	119	56	62	6
Cemeteries	-12	9	5	-4
Corp. & Dem. Manage.	38	10	8	-1
Cultural & Twinning	56	21	21	-0
Municipal Buildings	356	302	300	-2
Other Services	127	98	97	-1
Office Team	452	132	134	2
Outdoor Services	457	129	120	-9
Net Budget	1,582	756	747	-9

Earmarked Reserves with budgeted Expenditure In Year	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	Under/Over £000
Cemeteries	30	0	0	0
Municipal Buildings	428	340	340	0
Parks Premises	0	0	0	0
Play Equipment	23	20	20	0
Public Realm	278	0	0	0
Vehicles & Equipment	20	0	0	0
Arts & Cultural	5	2	2	0
Christmas Lights	0	0	0	0
Corporate Projects	0	0	0	0
Planning Advice	10	0	0	0
Climate Emergency	20	0	0	0
Treasury	15	0	0	0
Net Budget	829	362	362	0

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE – 18 JULY 2022

WEYMOUTH AVENUE CRICKET PAVILION

1. In 2018 the Council installed a ground source heat pump, bore hole, loft insulation and LED lighting at the Cricket Pavilion. At the time the Duchy of Cornwall was reluctant to allow solar panels on the building.
2. Discussions have however continued and following a positive meeting with representatives of the Duchy of Cornwall on the 12 April approval in principle to the installation of solar panels has been received subject to final approval of the detailed plans.
3. The Council is also looking to make further environmental improvements including waterless urinals and the installation of two electric vehicle charging points.
4. These additional measures would make the building virtually carbon neutral (the first of the Town Councils buildings to be so). It would also be of benefit to the Cricket Club who would be able to invest the energy cost savings back into the Club.
5. Quotes have been sought for the installation of solar, waterless urinals and the EV charging points. It is anticipated that the overall cost will be in the region of £25,000.
6. It is proposed that these additional climate mitigation measures are funded using some of the Climate Emergency Fund (current balance £88,426 of the £125,000 originally assigned), reduced by any successful grant applications (possibly Low Carbon Dorset, English Cricket Board and others).
7. The financial overview of installing solar panels is set out below, the cost of installation is to be recovered in just over four years.

Solar Panels - Financial Overview	
Net Payments	£19,462
Lifetime Bill Savings	£124,942
System Profit	£105,480
Internal Return Rate	27.87%
Payback Period	4.2 years
Simulaton Results	15.00 kWp
Max Achieved AC Power	12.50 kW
Annual Energy Production	16.75 MWh
CO2 Emission Saved	3.9 t
Equivalent Trees Planted	179

8. It is recommended that these works be funded from the Climate Emergency Reserve, less any grant aid achieved. Works to commence subject to an appropriate procurement exercise, permission from the Duchy of Cornwall and planning permission.

Nigel Hayes
Financial Controller



Dorchester Town Council
Communications Policy
29 June 2022 (second draft)

1. INTRODUCTION

This draft communications policy is intended for use by Dorchester Town Council Officers and Councillors to facilitate communication, particularly with the Media and Press. There are many platforms which the Town Council can use to communicate, publicly or privately, which can involve multiple and varied stakeholders, and which can be internal, external or both.

This draft policy sets out a code of practice for Council Officers and Councillors for their communications to keep information safe, ensure its veracity, avoidance of damage to the Council's reputation and be lawful. It is important to know which individuals are responsible for communication and to approach them for support when required, particularly to the Media. Inappropriate individual opinions being given as representative of the Officers or Councillors of the Town Council must be avoided.

Officers and Councillors should be briefed on an agreed policy as well as receive training when appropriate before engaging in any communication.

2. SCOPE

The policy applies to all the following personnel:

- Town Council employees, including those working from home or from other locations
- Town Councillors
- Other workers (including casual and agency workers, seconded staff and contractors) who are authorised to use the Council's equipment and networks.

3. PLATFORMS

- Zoom/ Teams/ Google virtual meetings
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok, etc.)
- email
- Letters to individuals or groups
- Town Council Newsletters/ press releases (printed publications)
- Town Council Website
- Interviews: Radio, TV, local or national newspapers

4. GENERAL POINTS

Before engaging in any communication all Town Council Officers and Councillors should consider registering and sharing any request for information with an appropriate Officer and ensuring data protection procedures. It is optimal to have designated Officers or Councillors when communicating with the Press or other Media, with a hierarchy of who should say what and to whom, but all the points below should be considered when communicating through any platform:

1) Appropriate communication should include:

- a) Accurate proof reading for spelling, grammar and syntax
- b) Appropriate language, avoiding profanities or colloquial language. Communications to larger audiences should be kept formal.

- 2) **Malicious Communications Act 1988.** Communication should not be indecent, offensive or a threat, or include information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- 3) **Remain calm** in situations that you may disagree with and consider your reply carefully. Consider exploring a request for information, or any response given, with an appropriate colleague or designated Officer before responding.
- 4) **Do not share** private or inappropriate information, text or images
 - a) Inappropriate information is defined as:
 - Pornography
 - Gambling
 - Promotion of discrimination of any kind
 - Promotion of racial or religious hatred
 - Involving threats or promoting violence
 - Promotion of illegal acts
 - Offensive language which relates to any protected characteristics under the Equalities act 2010, including race, sexuality, disability, gender, age, religion or belief
- 5) The **Defamation Act 2013** c.26.

This defines defamation as an action which causes ‘serious harm’ to the reputation of an individual or corporation which is likely to cause serious personal or financial loss. Libel is the written form of defamation and slander is the spoken equivalent. However, any such allegations are a serious issue. Town Council Officers and Councillors must make sure that any communications, spoken or written, could not be deemed as slander and are substantiated.
- 6) **Images**
 - a) Do not share images that are copyrighted unless you have sought permission, or they are open content or have creative common licences. Images on Google and other platforms for open content but this must be ensured.
 - b) If content has close ups of people, it must be ensured that individuals in the image have signed an appropriately worded consent form. If the image is of a child, it is important that a parent, or appropriate surrogate person has signed a consent form. Consent forms should be scanned onto a PC and saved in your files with data protection rules being observed. At larger events where it may not be possible to obtain consent there should be signage which make the public aware that photographs will be taken at the event and what they will be used for. For ticketed events, the ticket could state under the terms and conditions of an event that photographs will be taken at the event and what platforms they will be used on.
- 7) **Accessibility.** Consider these points when creating content:
 - a) Avoid or explain jargon, particularly acronyms or technical information
 - b) Keep paragraphs short and to the point
 - c) Make sure you use contrasting colours so text is readable
 - d) Font, sans serif fonts are more accessible these include Arial, Calibri, Century Gothic, Helvetica, Tahoma and Verdana. Calibri is the preferred font of DTC. Avoid complicated,

overuse of varying fonts or underlining, mixtures of case and colours, particularly in the production of posters

- e) Text aligned to the left is more readable than centred
- f) Make sure that font is readable and clear
- g) Make sure lines aren't too close together; 1.5 to 2 spacing is optimal
- h) Content should not induce seizures, this means that it should not contain flashing images and if this can't be avoided make sure to warn users of flashing content and make sure it doesn't play automatically
- i) Use <https://colororacle.org/> or <https://bit.ly/3pYmo0> to find out how someone who is colour blind will see your communications. Use muted background colours for those with light sensitivity or who are prone to migraine
- j) Underline links; this makes them more recognisable to those who might have a visual impairment
- k) Images with text should be avoided as they may not be readable with screen readers. Make sure to provide information in a text format elsewhere in the document
- l) Official information should be proof read by an appropriate separate individual.

5. VIRTUAL MEETINGS.

Virtual meetings are a common experience following the Covid pandemic and it is important to make sure they are still treated as important forms of communication and are held with the same standards as face-to-face meetings.

- 1) **Show up on time.** If you are running late due to another meeting or you are having technical difficulties try to email or call the organiser/chair to let them know. Always give apologies if you are late.
- 2) **Technical difficulty.** If you face technical difficulty during the meeting, make sure to apologise, particularly in a smaller meeting. However, these incidents are often out of our control.
- 3) **Moderators.** It is good practice to delegate a moderator in virtual meetings, particularly if they are large. Moderators can help to field questions in the chat or spot those with virtual hands raised.
- 4) **Stay put.** Try not to move around or leave your screen during meetings. If you feel you must, you may turn off your camera so you do not cause distraction. However, speakers prefer to see their audience during a presentation and be aware they they wish to ask a question or need clarification on a point being made.
- 5) **Sharing your screen.** Make sure that you share the correct screen and documents when you are the presenter and avoid accidental showing of private or sensitive information
- 6) **Appropriate Communication.** See Section 4.1.
- 7) **Background.** If necessary blur or add your own background when on Zoom or similar platform, particularly if you don't know what others may be doing around you, or if you do

not wish to share the background of your office or environment.

- 8) **Mute** yourself when you are not talking, to avoid microphone feedback and distracting noises. If you know that you are going to be doing a lot of talking in your meeting consider relocating to a quieter area of the office/ home. If this is not possible make colleagues, or those in your household, know that you will be in an online meeting.
- 9) **Accessibility.** Section 4.7. On zoom there is an option whereby you can add closed captions by clicking 'Live Transcript' and then click 'Enable Auto Transcript'. The participant can then click to 'Show Subtitles' or 'View Full Transcript'. This option is not only good for accessibility but also for taking notes during a meeting.

6. SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a popular platform to share and the Council uses a number of social media outlets.

- 1) Dorchester Town Council run pages:
 - Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/dorchestertowncouncil>
 - Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/DorchesterBoroughGardens>
 - Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/DiscoverDorchesterDorset>
 - Twitter - <https://twitter.com/DiscoverDorch>
 - Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/discoverdorchester/>
 - Tik Tok - <https://www.tiktok.com/@discoverdorchester>
- 2) Town Council Officers and Councillors must remember at all times that their online presence is seen to reflect the Town Council. This policy applies if, in their comments or posts, they are recognisable as Officers or Councillors. They should not:
 - Present personal opinions as Town Council policy
 - Post any confidential / embargoed information
 - Present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment to the Council or bring it into disrepute
 - Post anything malicious, libellous or which could be deemed as harassment or bullying
 - Post anything that can be deemed as offensive or relates to any protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010, including race, sexuality, disability, gender, age, religion or belief
 - Conduct any online activity which violates laws, regulations or constitutes a criminal offence.
- 3) Town Council Officers and Councillors should follow guidance, listed in section 6.2. above, when using their own private social media, particularly when interacting with Town Council run pages.
- 4) Staff members who use the social media pages listed in section 6.1. while working on Town Council business should consider:

- a. Only sharing from reputable pages. Bear in mind that content can be edited even after shared by a page. Make sure that the page you shared a post from does not post anything that could be viewed as offensive, political or of a commercial nature.
- b. Moderation. Officers may remove comments which could be deemed as being offensive, abusive or defamatory. However, if comments do not meet these criteria, then they should left on the page. The Council may also block users who act offensively on the Council's pages.
- c. Not sharing private or inappropriate information, text or images (Section 4.4.).
- d. Defamation (Section 4.5.).
- e. By sharing images from reputable pages there is some reassurance that they have followed general image sharing guidance but policy guidelines should be followed (Section 4.6.).
- f. Social media is one of the few places where it is acceptable to be more informal when talking to a wider audience. However, as Town Council Officers and Councillors communication platforms used should be appropriate and follow policy guidelines.
- g. Improvement of accessibility can be achieved by including alternative text, or a description with images, and can explain what an image is for those with visual impairments (Section 4.7). Videos can be used with closed captions. Consider how screen readers will read your text, for examples: Emojis can be read out but should not be overused or words can be capitalised on a hash tag (such as #AccessibleWeb rather than #accessibleweb; this is called CamelCase and means that screen readers can pick up individual words)

5) Email is an important form of communication that can quickly provide information to many recipients.

- a. Emails should always introduce the writer of the email to the recipients, especially if they have not been emailed before. The reason for contact should be established and a subject should be highlighted as the reason for contact.
- b. It is critical to check who the email is for with the correct address. Pressing 'reply all' must be considered and only be used if the reply is intended to go to everyone.
- c. Appropriate communication by email (Section 4.1.).
- d. Private or inappropriate information, text or images should not be shared (Section 4.4.)
- e. To ensure accessibility long paragraphs are tricky to read and should be avoided, especially for those with dyslexia. Paragraphs, with short lines of sentences, are the easiest to read

and bullet points may be helpful for this (Section 4.7)

7. LETTERS

The Town Council uses letter writing as a form of communication between Officers, Councillors, organisations and businesses. They should follow the corporate letter format (an example is attached at the end of this document) and formal language should be used.

8. PRINT PUBLISHING

Print publications can come in many forms: newspapers, press release and print media. They are an important part of the Town Council's communication. An example of a press release format is included later in this document (page 10).

- 1) Private or inappropriate information, text or images should not be shared (Section 4.4)
- 2) Defamation (Section 4.5.)
- 3) Images (Section 4.6.)
- 4) Accessibility (Section 4.7)
- 5) All information provided to in print media must have facts checked by a responsible, designated Officer or Councillor.
- 6) Press releases must be approved by the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk

9. WEBSITE

This is the main online face of the Town Council; it can also be used as a hub for information.

- 1) Communication must be appropriate (Section 4.1.)
- 2) Private or inappropriate information, text or images must not be shared (Section 4.4.)
- 3) Defamation (Section 4.5.)
- 4) Images (Section 4.6.)
- 5) Accessibility and functionality should be available from a keyboard, and include pages which have clear titles and appropriate subheadings

10. PRESS INTERVIEWS

Interviews are an important method of providing a more personal side to a news story. Different media platforms may approach Officers or Councillors. The Town Council may approach these platforms to publicise their aims and objects and progress. If Officers or Councillors are being interviewed on behalf of the Town Council they should be briefed before the interview by the most appropriate members of staff in relation to the subject of the interview.

This guidance should be followed when being interviewed:

- 1) Ensure the correct and most up to date information is available. Take notes before the interview, particularly of the facts or figures that might be asked
- 2) The subject should be well researched so that answer questions can be answered more confidently
- 3) If the answer is unknown speculation should be avoided
- 4) Private or inappropriate information, text or images should not be shared (Section 4.4.)
- 5) Defamation (Section 4.5.)
- 6) Permissions. Only the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk are authorised to communicate with the press. Other Officers or Councillors may speak to the press if authorised to do so by the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk.

Date Approved:

Reviewed Date:

Policy Version:



Dorchester Town Council

News Release

Issue Date:

Embargo Date + Time: (if appropriate)

Headline – (sets out point of release)

Detailed Text –

Introduction:

- Follow the 5W rule (who, what, where, why, when?) This may be the deciding factor in if a journalist continues to read the news release
- Who is the release written for, make sure to market it to those who are likely to be interested

Main text:

- Ensure dates, times and locations are clear, using bold fonts is appropriate
- Include, whenever possible, a quote from the appropriate Town Council Committee Chairman or Vice Chairman and the Mayor

Notes:

- Use subheadings
- Make sure to order information correctly with the key points at the beginning and the extra information towards the end
- Bullet points can be used to get points across quickly, particularly if it is a list of information
- Share facts and figures if appropriate

Images: attach any images with photo credits – use good quality photos. Provide description of image

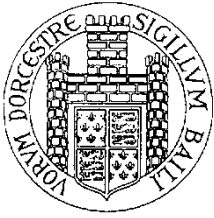
For further information: contact details, including telephone, email and website where appropriate.

Logos: attach any logos

Notes to Editors: Add any background or anything else the press are likely to want to know.

ENDS

KEEP THE PRESS RELEASE TO UNDER TWO PAGES



DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Council Offices, 19 North Square, Dorchester, Dorset. DT1 1JF

Telephone: (01305) 266861

Steve Newman, Town Clerk

e-mail: s.newman@dorchester-tc.gov.uk

DATE

ADDRESS

ADDRESS

ADDRESS

ADDRESS

Dear

SUBJECT OF LETTER – use capitals and bold

Letter content – use Calibri 12 point - left hand margin no paragraph indent, do not justify.

Line space between paragraphs.

Yours sincerely or faithfully

Name

Job Title