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1.0 Dorchester Town Council



DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

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Adrian Stuart, Town Clerk

Tracey McGregor
Service Manager for Libraries
Dorset Council
South Walks House, South Walks Road
DORCHESTER
DT1 1UZ

26 November 2020

Dear Tracey,

DORCHESTER TIC

At our Council meeting on Monday night Members debated their position regarding the future of the Tourist Information Centre, within the context of wider tourism service provision.

Council is obviously disappointed that the TIC is at risk of closure, but also acknowledge the incongruity of Dorset Council delivering some TICs while others are provided by a mix of local council, voluntary and heritage body support. There was also a recognition that Dorset Council's financial position would always place the future of this discretionary service at risk.

The Council does, however, recognise that there is a need for some form of face to face information provision, echoing a key finding emerging from a tourism strategy being developed by the Dorchester Heritage Joint Committee, of which Dorset Council is a partner. We will therefore explore a number of options

- Basic Provision - A network of well-informed front desk providers based on heritage attractions, accommodation providers and key others (including hopefully your Library team), supported by a part time Tourism Development Officer (TDO) with a projects budget
- Enhanced Provision - As a possible addition to the above, either
 - One partner to provide a more in depth service, with ongoing financial support met by the Town Council and partners; or
 - The Town Council developing its own TIC, with ongoing financial support from partners

Council also recognised that, the current economic circumstances and timing being what they are, we will need to take the lead co-ordinating role, and that while we are establishing alternative provision it will be difficult to secure partnership funding from the business and community sectors.

The Council anticipates it will be 3 years before we can bring key partners into a funding partnership, as Dorchester BID will need to include any long term funding in its next rebalot prospectus and other key partners (Shire Hall, County Museum, commercial) will take time to recover from the impact of the pandemic.

We have costed the minimum provision outlined above (the Network supported by a TDO, with projects focused on training and improved information accessible from a central website) at £30,000 per annum, i.e. £90,000 for the first 3 years. We would ask that Dorset Council consider meeting half this cost with us, i.e. £45,000 over 3 years. We would be happy to include a project to share our experiences, learning and any systems developed with other towns as part if Dorset Council feels this of benefit.

Beyond three years there is no expectation of ongoing funding; nor are we asking for funding should we choose to supplement the Basic provision proposed with either of the Enhanced options outlined above.

I should also highlight that at present the Town Council has not committed to the basic alternative provision. It will consider the issue further at its Policy Committee on 18 January, making any recommendation to Full Council on 25 January.

Finally it would be helpful to know what level of commitment still exists to the Visit Dorset promotional service; all of our current thinking is based on a working assumption that Dorset Council still intends to focus on promoting Dorset as a tourism destination.

It would be helpful to have a clearer picture to share with Policy Committee in January, both confirming your decision regarding the future of the TIC and also regarding our suggestion that you support a managed transition towards a different form of provision.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you want to discuss any of the content of this letter.

Yours sincerely,



Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

2.0 Sherborne Town Council



Sherborne Town Council

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14th December 2020

Tracy McGregor
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South Walks House
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Dear Tracy,

Sherborne Tourist Information Centre Consultation

Thank you for providing the Town Council with an opportunity to consider the current consultation, and indeed to respond in letter form directly to you.

It is with much regret that this important service is potentially at risk of closure due to financial pressures within Dorset Council.

Our Town Council discussed the position regarding the future of the Tourist Information Centre within the context of the wider tourism provision locally, at our meeting held on Monday, 16th November 2020.

The Town Council recognise the service currently provided needs to adapt, especially considering the pandemic. Consideration was given to potential alternative venues and service providers. Members agreed that any future site for the TIC needs to be in the town centre and easily accessible to all. The possibility of a voluntary rather than employment led basis was also discussed. Further enquiries are to be made into the feasibility of some these potential alternative locations. Any transitional funding from Dorset Council would be very much welcomed, should the Town Council have any direct future involvement in overseeing any aspects of tourism moving forward in the town.

Whilst the Town Council are not able to offer employment to existing TIC staff in the event of the facility closing, the Town Council does recognise tourism as an important part of the local community. Consideration is currently being given to allocating funding for the creation of a microsite specifically for Sherborne as part of the wider Visit Dorset website.

In the meantime, the Town Council will continue to work with various organisations across the town to discuss the future of tourist information and future delivery here in Sherborne.

Yours sincerely

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

Steve Shield
Town Clerk

3.0 Wareham Town Council

The response from Council is as follows:

a) Tourist Information Centre Consultation (Minute 320 refers)

Strength of support was again demonstrated by the Town Council to retain the Tourist Information Centre in its current form, within the library. Members were keen to note that the TIC served the whole of Purbeck, not just Wareham.

The Town Clerk was asked to respond to Dorset Council expressing the strength of feeling of support for the TIC by the Town Council and the community at large.

Vanessa Ricketts FSLCC
Town Clerk

