

PLATINUM JUBILEE CIVIC HONOURS COMPETITION
Application Form

Name of place applying: DORCHESTER
City status / Lord Mayor or Provost status: NONE
Local authority: DORSET COUNCIL for Dorchester Town Council
Contact details of applicant: MATT PROSSER CHIEF EXECUTIVE DORSET COUNCIL COUNTY HALL COLLITON PARK DORCHESTER DORSET DT1 1XJ 01305 221000 matt.prosser@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

A. Summary

Dorchester is an ancient and historic settlement that has been serving a rural hinterland for over 2,000 years. Until the 4th Century, the Romans established the town as one of only 13 Civitas in Britain and developed the town as a trading centre with a local forum. The Roman Street pattern and walls layout are still evident today. Daily and weekly markets continue, and the well-maintained historic central shopping area is complemented by retail offers in Poundbury and local centres.

Dorchester has played its part in national history, being the location for the “bloody assizes” following the Monmouth Rebellion, the trial of the Tolpuddle Martyrs and evolution of Trade Unions and is now playing its role in leading models of residential, employment and leisure development through the work of HRH Prince Charles and development on Duchy of Cornwall land at Poundbury.

The population has grown from 15,000 in the late 1980’s, to 20,000 today and will exceed 23,000 by 2025. Much of this growth is located at Poundbury. Employment is predominantly in public sector administration and public health, and Dorchester provides significant employment for a wide rural hinterland, exceptionally delivering a job: resident ratio of 1:1. The 2011 Census found that 64% of the working population commuted into Dorchester, a far higher proportion than other places in Dorset. In-commuters outnumbered out-commuters by more than three to one, reflecting Dorchester’s role as a regional employment hub. Dorchester also has a higher proportion than average of small (10-49 employee) enterprises.

Dorchester is situated almost equi-distant from the historic and regional centres and cities of Salisbury, Bath, Bristol, and Exeter, and, as it has for centuries, it fulfils an important public administrative and public health and commercial role for a wide rural hinterland.

There are strong links to national and internationally renowned creatives and innovators such as Treves, Hardy and Frink. Leisure, entertainment, arts, and sports are well represented with many active teams and groups satisfying diverse interests of residents of all ages. The cultural offer includes many outdoor as well as indoor performances for all ages at numerous sites, including Maumbury Rings, possibly Britain’s oldest continually used entertainment venue.

The natural environment is important for residents’ wellbeing. There are green and open spaces throughout, including its Victorian pleasure gardens (the Borough Gardens) managed by the Town Council, the Neolithic and Roman amphitheatre Maumbury Rings, the river walk and nature reserve forming a natural northern boundary and

many large and small playing fields used for recreational sport.

Dorchester has had strong links with the Royal Family, welcoming Her Majesty the Queen in her coronation year, and on several occasions since. It maintains close links with the Royal Family through the internationally renowned development of Poundbury on Duchy of Cornwall land.

This unique blend of history of national importance, continuing commercial and administrative functions and a wide rural hinterland for over 2000 years, a diverse and active cultural and leisure offer make Dorchester the ideal candidate to be the oldest “new” and growing city in the 21st century.

B. Introduction

Identity

Dorchester is one of Britain's oldest settlements, with Neolithic sites going back over 6000 years. The Iron age settlements of the "Durotriges" tribe were overrun during the Roman invasion, with both making use of renowned sites at Maumbury Rings, Poundbury Hill Fort and Maiden Castle.

Rome recognised Durnovaria as one of the 13 civitas of its province and today's retail centre is still focused on the forum and echoes the original Roman street pattern. There are visible Roman remains at the 4th Century Villa in Colliton Park, the only one to be seen in its entirety in Britain, while tree lined Georgian "walks" follow the line of the former defensive walls.

Dornwercestre was an important administrative centre in Saxon Wessex, with both a mint and market, while Edward I formally recognised Dorchester as the County Town of Dorset in 1305, at which time a prison was constructed on the castle site to serve the County. A Franciscan Friary was built nearby on today's Friary Hill, existing for over 300 years until its dissolution in 1538.

The town has existed at the heart of an agricultural area, acting as a key market and justice centre. In 1685 Judge Jefferys held the first of the "bloody assizes" following the Monmouth Rebellion, and in 1834 the Shire Hall hosted the trial of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, a core moment in the history of the Trades Unionism movement.

The town continues as an important local administrative and trading centre today with both the Dorset County Hospital and Dorset Council based in the town. Schools serve the town and outlying villages, there are daily and weekly markets and a vibrant town centre mix of independent and multiple retailers.

Dorchester has grown to encompass much of the Duchy of Cornwall estate of Fordington. Following the publication of "A Vision of Britain" by HRH Prince of Wales, in 1993, construction started on a modern urban extension to the town of Dorchester to the west of the town centre. Poundbury, due for completion in 2025, already attracts significant national and international interest as a new model of urban development.

Dorchester is well connected, with two main railway lines connecting it to both London and Bristol and to the coast at Weymouth. The main east-west trunk road (A35) runs along the south coast (east via A31 to M27 and M3, and west to M5); the A37 connects north to Bristol and M5; and the A354 southwest to Weymouth and north east to Salisbury.

Today Dorchester retains a unique and relaxed feel, a compact urban area at the heart of stunning countryside much of which is protected by landscape designations.

Civic Pride

Dorchester has elected a Mayor since 1629, through a charter granted by Charles I. Today the first citizen is elected annually and acts as host to visiting dignitaries and performs civic and ceremonial duties, leading acts of remembrance at war memorials that include one created by German prisoners in the Great War. In 2021, because of COVID19 restrictions, for the first time our Mayor Making was held outdoors in the Borough Gardens and broadcast live on Facebook, receiving interest from as far afield as India.

The Town Council is based in the Municipal Buildings, currently undergoing a major refurbishment as part of plans for a new home for Dorchester Arts, as well as to act as an exemplar of how a historic listed building can be converted to reduce its carbon footprint in response to the climate emergency. The Council Chamber displays civic regalia dating back to the early 18th century, alongside the names of nearly 400 past Mayors.

Started in September 2005 to commemorate the granting of the town's charter in 1305, local volunteers and children from Dorchester's middle schools started work to embroider the "700" tapestry. Unveiled in 2006, it is on permanent display in the foyer of the Municipal Buildings.

Proud of its history, a joint committee of councillors from both town and unitary councils, and members from heritage interest groups (including the Civic Society, Dorset History Centre, Blue Badge Guides, National Trust, Local Nature Partnership) champion and tell the stories of Dorchester past and care of the town's historic fabric. Most recently the Committee has adopted a heritage-inspired Tourism Strategy. A small example of its work is the commissioning of interpretive panels, the most recent celebrating the life of Reverend Henry Moule -designer of the Moule Earth Closet which did much to reduce the spread of cholera.

Cultural Infrastructure

Dorchester has evolved over many centuries following the Roman footprint for the town. Following several "great fires" in late 16th and early 17th centuries, it has many Georgian buildings in the town centre, many of which are listed.

There are notable iron age and Neolithic sites in and near the town, including the iconic Maiden Castle Iron Age hill fort and the centrally located Maumbury Rings, which has Neolithic origins and has in turn been a Roman amphitheatre, civil war barracks and place of public execution. It is now regularly used for outdoor theatre and musical performances festivals and fairs and is one of the oldest continually used public performance spaces in the country. The town also boast the most extensive in situ Roman mosaics in the Roman Villa in Colliton Park, which has recently enjoyed conservation and protection works, along with new interpretation panels and a small "amphitheatre" style performance area.

The town hosts three museums:

- Occupying the former gatehouse to the barracks for the Dorset Regiment, the Keep Military Museum tells the stories of the Devonshire and Dorset Regiments from the 17C, through campaigns in India to the second world war.
- The Shire Hall Historic Court House Museum is a Grade 1 listed Georgian court building which operated from 1797 to 1955. The building opened as a museum in May 2019, telling the stories of over 200 years of justice and injustice to life, including that of the Tolpuddle Martyrs who were unfairly transported to Australia in 1834 for creating an Agricultural Workers union, before being given a royal pardon. The Museum hosts regular exhibitions, events and talks for all ages on the justice theme
- The Dorset Museum, formerly Dorset County Museum, reopened in May 2021 following an extensive £15m+ refurbishment and enhancement. It holds exhibits from across Dorset from dinosaurs to art and literature, including artefacts from Thomas Hardy and Dame Elizabeth Frink. It was the first venue in the UK to host the Natural History Museum's mobile exhibition "*Dippy on Tour*" in 2018.

All three museums are actively supported by volunteers from the community who fulfil a wide variety of roles from meet and greet, retail, stewards and guides and other front of house activity to behind the scenes care for artefacts and research.

The Town has an active arts organisation - Dorchester Arts that promotes nationally and internationally renowned performers from the world of music, theatre, and comedy, as well as engaging more local touring productions particularly for outdoor performance in the summer months.

The Town Council and Dorchester Arts are currently renovating the Corn Exchange, within the Municipal Buildings, as a high quality 150 seat arts venue, as well as refurbishing the main hall of Thomas Hardy School as a 400- seat venue for larger audiences. These venues will be complimented by outdoor performances in Maumbury Rings, and indoors at St Marys Church and elsewhere. The Municipal Buildings work will also allow Dorchester Arts to develop its community arts engagement programme. In 2019 the two partners brought Luke Jerram's Museum of the Moon to Dorchester on the weekend of the 60th anniversary of the moon landing; this will be followed up with one of the first showings nationally of the exhibit My Mars in 2022.

Since 1985, Dorchester Community Plays Association has produced 6 community plays (more than any other town or city in the UK), based on the town's long history. The community is fully involved throughout including stage design and making costumes, behind the scenes at performances as well as performing. The most recent play, "Drummer Hodge", considered the impact of events between the Boer War and the Great War on a Dorchester family, while the national record-breaking seventh play, "Spinning the Moon" to be performed in 2022, will focus on the turbulent period after the Wars of the Roses.

Dorchester was the home for one of Britain's greatest writers, Thomas Hardy. For literary purposes he renamed the town as "Casterbridge" for several of his novels, notably "The Mayor of Casterbridge". Hardy was born in a neighbouring parish in 1840, trained with a Dorchester based Architect's practice and returned to build Max Gate (National Trust) in the town, where he lived and wrote until his death in 1928. There are active literary societies celebrating the life and works of Thomas Hardy, and William Barnes – a Victorian polymath, linguist, priest and poet in the local dialect some of whose works were set to music by Ralph Vaughan Williams. The Hardy Society hold a biennial international Hardy Festival in early summer, as well as regular lectures, seminars, walks and concerts on a Hardy theme

There are several very active amateur theatre groups, including the New Hardy Players (formed with Hardy's blessing in 1908). Amateur and semi-professional music flourishes, both choral (Dorchester Choral Society, Viva Women's Choir, Heart and Soul Community Choir, Casterbridge Male Voice Choir and others) and instrumental (Dorchester Community Orchestra, Dorset Chamber Orchestra). Young people have ample opportunity to engage in the arts through youth music groups such as Pop Club and Dorchester Youth Theatre, or at the town's three very successful dance schools, which also offer classes for adults. An established Literary Festival is held annually in the autumn and The Arts Society and Film Society meet regularly at the Corn Exchange.

Recent years have seen a growth in events to celebrate Dorchester's heritage. The Thomas Hardy Victorian Fair, held in early June, has become an annual event celebrating the work of Hardy and life in the late 19th early 20th centuries. It includes the ceremonial laying of a wreath at Hardy's statue by the Mayor, who proceeds with Council in their full regalia. Heritage Open Dorchester, held in September is a broader celebration of Dorchester's past. Both events feature stalls, street food, demonstrations and displays of heritage crafts, music, talks, tours and people in costume – although in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID restrictions the events were held virtually.

The Town Council runs a programme of free weekly summer community events in the Borough Gardens and at Maumbury Rings, either directly by providing cinema and staged music, or through local community partners who cover everything from historic buses to gypsy and traveller heritage. There are also successful beer and cider festivals.

The new town centre development on the former brewery site, Brewery Square (a mixed residential retail and commercial development) includes a large outdoor "piazza" with large cinema screen. The owners host free events for all ages in the piazza throughout the year. The town benefits from two multi-screen

cinemas, one a chain cinema in the new development of Brewery Square, the other an art deco 1930's cinema in the town centre. Both are well supported.

The Dorset History Centre, run by Dorset Council, acts as the archive for the historic county of Dorset, providing a regular series of exhibitions as well as access for researchers. The Town Council has also supported the local Civic Society in its project to photograph and map all of the listed and historic buildings in the town.

Vibrant Welcoming Community

Dorchester has an extensive network of community, social and support groups, meeting the needs of the wider Dorchester area. Volunteer Centre Dorset, based in the town acts as a networking contact and access centre to recruit and match volunteers with a variety of community and social needs.

Support networks are well developed in Dorchester, led by local groups linked to national movements including Citizens Advice, Age UK, mental and physical health charities. The faith network is equally strong and is instrumental in the distribution of food, a sad but necessary part of any community infrastructure. The Services groups, Rotary, Lions, Round Table, were all prominent in the recent Covid response.

The Dorchester Youth and Community Centre are an active not for profit organisation who run a full programme for young people in the town and surrounding area, including running special events and programmes for distinct age groups. Dorchester has many vibrant youth groups including Scouts and Guides at all ages, a wide range of sports and dance groups, Army cadets attached to the local barracks and St John's Ambulance. The Schools pyramid, based around Thomas Hardy School, has a well-established music development programme.

The town has an active U3A community, claiming to be one of the largest in the country with over 55 special and general interest groups meeting regularly in the town. There are active branches of the Women's Institute (the county association is based in Dorchester) and a local Towns Women's Guild.

Essential for a newly forming community, Poundbury has an active residents' association and residents' newsletter, and there is a regular Poundbury Magazine. There are many community groups in Poundbury which are widely publicised and open to all and cover all interests including wine tasting, being active, crafts and travel.

The Town council has supported a Youth Council and Forum and is a member of the Dorset Council led Dorset Youth Council and also the Youth Parliament. It also holds democracy days for young people in association with local schools.

In addition to all of the above, there are many active local interest groups in the town including photography, art, walking, Dorset Agricultural Society, town twinning groups, chess, badminton, bridge, athletics, amateur dramatics and golf but to name a few.

Innovation.

Several former sons of Dorchester have played their part in innovation

- Sir Frederick Treves, born at Cornhill in Dorchester in 1853, was an eminent surgeon specialising in abdominal surgery, at the London Hospital in the late 19th/early 20th century. On 29 June 1888, he performed the first appendectomy in England. He was Surgeon Extraordinary to Queen Victoria, and later one of several Honorary Serjeants Surgeon to King Edward VII. Supported by Lord Lister, he performed the then-radical operation of draining the infected appendiceal abscess in the King, causing the delay of the coronation.

- Revd Henry Moule was vicar of St Georges. Fordington in Dorchester from 1829 until his death in 1880. Following cholera epidemics in 1849 & 1853, and after his investigations into sanitary science, he developed and patented the dry earth closet. His system was adopted in private houses, in rural districts, in military camps, in many hospitals, and extensively in India and was a contributor towards better public hygiene.
- John Pouncy (1818-1894) was originally a painter and decorator but became, a pioneer in the development of photography. He worked to resolve the fading of photographic prints through the development of photo-lithography and was the first in England to publish a book with photo lithographic illustrations “Dorsetshire Photographically Illustrated” (1857).

More recently local technology firm Key Digital have become pioneers in the use of technology through their development of the Holidaymaker platform. This app works on and offline to inform and support visitors initially in holiday parks and now developed for tourist destinations. They have recently won the inaugural innovation award of the Dorchester and Poundbury Business awards for their development of the Holidaymaker platform. Key Digital is also a website solution provider to the Duchy of Cornwall for the Poundbury development.

The development of Poundbury on Duchy of Cornwall land as a modern urban extension to Dorchester has been recognised as an exemplar in new development. It puts into practice HRH Prince of Wales thoughts on urban development as expressed in his book “A Vision for Britain” (1989).

The Town Council has also played its part in innovation, recognising the reducing availability of Government funding to support discretionary local services

- It has established an active Dorchester Tourism Partnership of Council, business, visitor and heritage groups with a modest budget and support officer, in order to develop the hitherto lightly tapped tourism market and underpin national and regional investment into Dorset Museum and Shire Hall. Research has suggested this approach has not yet been tried elsewhere.
- It has developed an innovative relationship with Dorchester Arts. The Council will pass management of the Municipal Buildings to Dorchester Arts, allowing Dorchester Arts to operate the building as a fully functioning arts centre, while the Town Council will occupy a small office space at the rear of the building. As part of the conversion programme the Council is installing a biomass boiler into a listed Victorian building.
- The Town Council developed the concept of *Picnic in the Park* to bring health and wellbeing activities and support in an accessible and fun way to the community. This is supported by pop up stalls offering advice and guidance for all. This approach has since been rolled out elsewhere in Dorset by the Dorset AONB team who now run events in various country parks.

Governance

Dorchester was granted a charter in 1305 by Edward I to become the county town and was required, as a result, to have a prison for the county. The town subsequently provided a prison in various locations, the last one closing in 2014. Dorchester was governed by varying numbers of burgesses from 1324, and gained the right to elect an alderman and mayor under charters from James 1 in 1610 and Charles 1 in 1629.

The current Town Council, responsible for the parish of Dorchester, came into being in 1974 following the Local Government Act 1972, alongside West Dorset District Council. Together with Dorset County Council, created in 1881, this saw three layers of local governance in the town. Most recently, West Dorset District Council and Dorset County Council, along with 4 other district/boroughs merged to form the unitary Dorset Council (2019).

Dorset Council has statutory responsibility for a range of services, including Adult and Children Social Care, the administration of benefits and collection of local taxes, Roads, Highways and Public Transport, Housing, Planning, Waste Management and Libraries.

Dorchester Town Council is responsible for a number of discretionary but important services, including the management and maintenance of extensive green and recreational spaces, play areas and a skatepark, 5 allotment sites and 3 cemeteries. It also provides direct funding support for local community groups and organisations, public and community events and has twinning links with Lübbecke (Germany) and Bayeux (France). Most recently it has developed a Tourism Strategy for Dorchester with the local tourism, heritage and business community and is also developing a local response to the climate emergency.

The two councils collaborate to manage markets in Dorchester.

Dorchester is also home to the Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group which oversees NHS healthcare provision across the historic county area; to Dorset County Hospital, the main provider of medical services within the rural county; to C Company, 6th Battalion of The Rifles; to an extensive school pyramid which provides services across a significant area, as well as a range of Government and Local Government agency and related offices.

Associations with Royalty

The earliest known Royal connection for Dorchester dates back to 789AD when the King's Reeve of Dorchester was killed by Vikings in Weymouth when, assuming they were traders who should pay tolls on their goods, he remonstrated with them with fatal results. A Royal Mint was created in 937 during the reign of King Athelstan.

Dorchester was the subject of royal charters confirming matters relating to the administration of the town from Edward I through to Charles I. These are kept at the Dorset History Centre and include the 1629 charter which granted the right to elect a Mayor.

Of particular relevance today is the town's long association with the Duchy of Cornwall which dates back to 1342 when the Manor of Fordington, which surrounds the historic Roman town, was acquired by Prince Edward (the Black Prince) as part of the Iselworth Exchange. The Manor of Fordington has remained Duchy of Cornwall land ever since. A number of land transactions with Dukes of Cornwall are included in the town's records and at the History Centre.

The internationally renowned Poundbury development is being carried out on Duchy of Cornwall land within Dorchester's boundary. The concept and design for Poundbury followed publication of HRH Prince of Wales "A Vision of Britain" and has resulted in a modern residential, employment and leisure development built to the highest standard. Importantly, approaching 30%, around 600, of the homes created have been made available as affordable housing, a critical part of the delivery of affordable housing for the wider area over the past 20 years. HRH Prince of Wales visits the site regularly, and often informally, taking an active interest in the progress of the development.

The town was pleased to host Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, in 1952 when she was welcomed by the then Mayor Mr. Edward Hedger and amongst other things, she inspected the troops at the barracks of the Dorset Regiment and attended events in Maumbury Rings. The Queen has visited Dorchester on several occasions since, the most recent being in October 2016 to unveil a statue of HRH Her Majesty the Queen Mother in Queen Mother Square at Poundbury. This is believed to be to be the only statue of HRH Her Majesty the Queen Mother outside London.

The town is also regularly visited by other members of the Royal Family, with over 32 formal visits since 1999 including visits by the late Duke of Edinburgh, Duke of Cambridge, Earl of Wessex, Duke of Gloucester, and the Princess Royal.

Other Relevant Information

While best known as the birthplace and home of author and poet Thomas Hardy, there are two other noteworthy local men who share the name.

Thomas Hardye was a local benefactor, who in 1579 provided funds for the teaching staff of the Dorchester Free School (established 1567). The school has moved through several locations, was the local boys Grammar School until 1979, and is now a comprehensive secondary school of over 2,000 pupils from the area. The school continues to be known as the Thomas Hardye School.

Vice Admiral Sir Thomas Masterman Hardy (“Kiss me Hardy” of Trafalgar fame) was a notable sea farer born locally and commemorated by a distinctive 22m high memorial tower and landmark for shipping on Black Down Hill, visible from many parts of Dorchester and for over 100km to sea.

Dorchester has strong international connections through twinning links with Europe. These links remain strong, with regular visits, across a number of shared interests, both to and from the continent.

Twinning happened first with Bayeux, France, (home of the famous tapestry) in 1959, the connection resulting from the liberation of the town in 1944 by soldiers of the Dorset Regiment.

Twinning with Lübbecke, Germany, dates from 1973 and came about as a result of a meeting of the Durnovaria Silver Band with the Lübbecke Schützenmusik Corps in Bayeux in 1968. At the time Bayeux was twinning with Lübbecke.

Dorchester played a significant role in the colonisation of the United States. The Rev John White, a Dorchester clergyman, was active in the establishment of the Massachusetts Bay Company and in supporting a colony of Dorset men to establish a community with “liberty of conscience”. The first 140 settlers landed in 1630 and founded the settlement of Dorchester, Massachusetts (now a suburb of Boston). A further 10 ships and 560 colonists, former Dorset men, subsequently joined the early settlers.

Dorchester has important links to the English Civil War, supporting the parliamentarians, perhaps influenced by its MP Denzil Holles, 1st Baron Holles. In 1642 Holles was at the centre of one of the key moments in English Parliamentary history, being one of the five “Birds have flown” MPs the subject of a failed arrest attempt by Charles I – an action which was a catalyst for the English Civil War. An impressive memorial to Holles is displayed in St Peters Church.

The town has other literary and artistic connections.

Noted Australian artist Tom Roberts was born in Durngate Street, emigrating in his teens. His art can be seen in galleries across Australia. His birthplace is commemorated with a plaque.

The Cowper Powys family produced a number of authors in the late 19th Century, the most noted being John Cowper Powys. He is best known for his Wessex novels which include “Weymouth Sands”, and “Maiden Castle” which is set in the town.

In 1986, the town was gifted a public sculpture by Dame Elisabeth Frink commemorating those who had been executed for their religious beliefs at Gallows Hill in Dorchester during the Reformation. These are installed on the site of the former gallows with an inscription which reads “*For Christ and Conscience Sake*”.

One of Dorchester’s key features is the Victorian Eldridge Pope brewery, which dominated an area outside the Roman walls to the south of the town. The brewery closed in the mid 2000’s and has since been redeveloped as a mixed residential and commercial site, providing a highly successful example of town

centre regeneration. In 1985, the brewery's founder, Sarah Eldridge was the subject of *Entertaining Strangers: A play for Dorchester* by the playwright David Edgar and produced as a community play by the people of Dorchester, In 1987 the play was transferred to The National Theatre, with Judi Dench in the role of Sarah Eldridge.

Dorchester's status as a Roman civitas should not be overlooked. According to Cicero the civitas was the social body of the cives or citizens, united by law. It is the law that binds them together, giving them responsibilities on the one hand and rights of citizenship on the other. Rome recognised Durnovaria as having the status of a civitas or city due to its location and role within the tribal system of that time. 2,000 years later Dorset is one of only a few historic counties not to have a city.

Dorchester is located approximately half way between the long established cities of Southampton and Exeter on the east-west A35 trunk road. It is similarly distanced from the cities of Salisbury to the north east and Bath and Bristol to the north west. It therefore forms a strategic location for key services across a largely rural hinterland.

C. Profile

Dorchester is the historic County Town of Dorchester. It was the Durnovaria of the Romans who founded it in 70AD and the fictional Casterbridge of Thomas Hardy’s novels. It lies at the junction of the A35 South Coast Trunk Road and the A37 to Yeovil and the north. It also has direct rail links to London and Bristol.

The town has a busy shopping centre and a flourishing market. It is the administrative centre of the County and is the County Town

Population

According to the 2019 Mid-Year Estimates, the population of Dorchester is 21,440 of whom 10,330 are male and 11,110 are female. The population of the town has increased by 30% over the past twenty years through relatively high levels of high quality house building, notably on the Duchy of Cornwall’s Poundbury Development and the redevelopment of the former Dorchester Brewery site on the southern edge of the town centre. Both of which have transformed the town adding a significant range of leisure, retail business and other employment services.

Population projections based on existing planning suggest that Dorchester’s population will continue to grow over the next ten years rising to 23,000 by 2031.

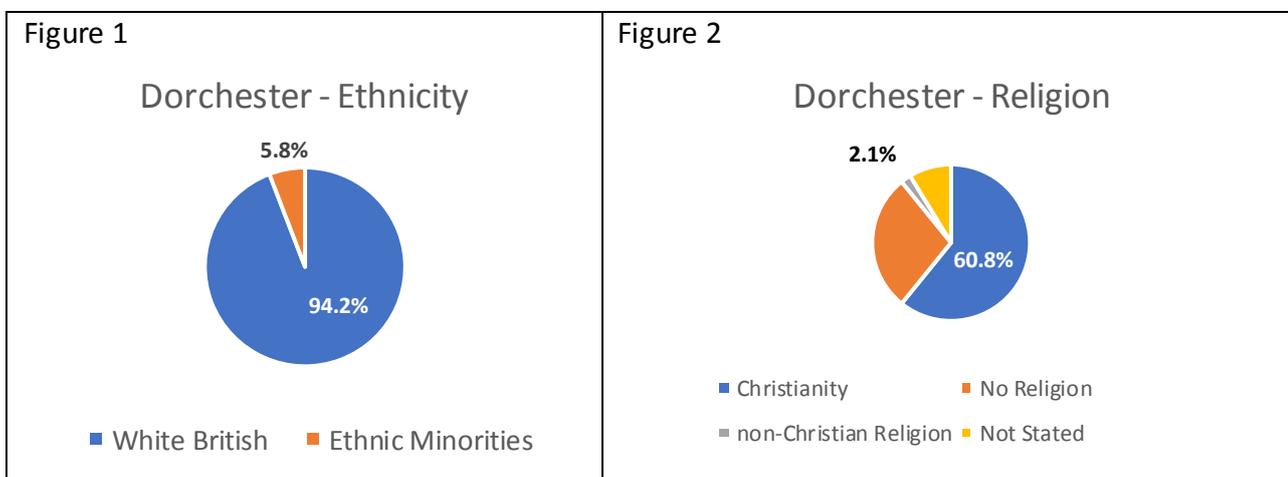
Table 1 below gives the age structure of the population in percentage terms based on 2019 Mid-Year Estimates:

Table 1

Age 0-15	Age 16-17	Age 18-44	Age 45-59	Age 60-84	Age 85+
16.2%	2.1%	27.1%	21.4%	28.2%	5.0%

Ethnicity and Religion

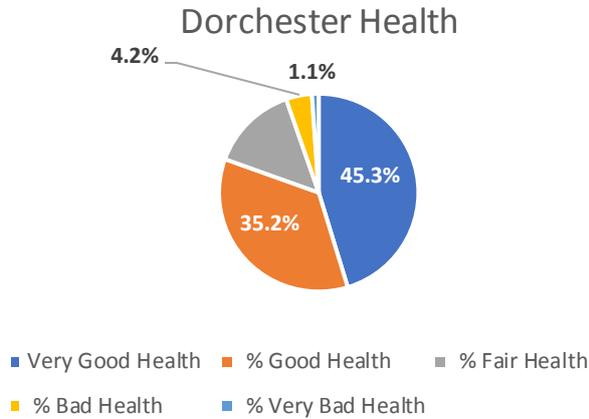
In the 2011 census, 94.2% of Dorchester’s population were classified as ‘White British’ and 5.8% were classified as ethnic minorities. Also in the 2011 Census 60.8% of Dorchester’s population are Christian, 28.4% do not have a religion, 2.1% have a non-Christian religion and 8.7% do not state their religion. Dorchester has many well supported Churches as well as a new Islamic Centre.



Health and Care

In general, and given its demographic make-up, Dorchester is a healthy town based on data from the Census in 2011 80% of Dorchester’s residents have either Good or Very Good Health.

Figure 3



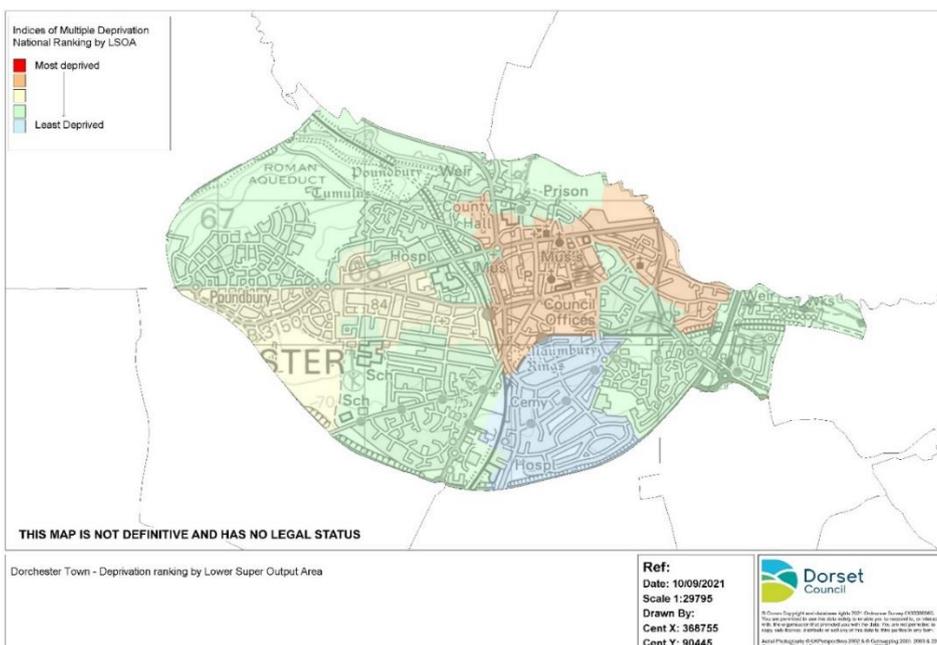
Deprivation

The gold standard for measuring deprivation at a small geography is the ‘Indices of Deprivation’ this data set is updated by the Government every four to five years. The data looks at a range of different indicators of deprivation as well as merging them to provide an overall Index of Multiple Deprivation.

The index uses a small level geography of on average 1,500 residents to compare areas across the country and rank them from 1 the most deprived to 32,842 the least deprived.

There are thirteen of these areas across Dorchester (map 1) - none of these areas could be considered significantly deprived, however, like most urban areas there are disparities across the town with some relatively deprived areas in and around the centre and areas that are more comfortably off radiating out from there.

Map 1



Employment

This information is taken from the Business Register and Employment Survey 2019 from the Office for National Statistics.

In 2019 Dorchester had around 21,000 employees (excluding the self-employed). This is the largest employed population of the Dorset market towns. Dorchester has seen growth in the number of employees of around 10 per cent over the previous five years compared to 5 per cent nationally.

The 2011 Census found that 64% of the working population commuted into Dorchester, a far higher proportion than other towns in Dorset. In-commuters outnumbered out-commuters by more than three to one, reflecting Dorchester's role as a natural employment hub.

The most significant employment sectors in Dorchester are:

- Human health & social work (29%)
- Professional, scientific and technical activities (19%)
- Public administration and defence (14%)

Public sector employment is very important to the town, making up 43 per cent of all employment in the town. Fewer people than the national average are employed in education, but if these are added to the numbers employed in health & social work and Public administration and defence the total is 47%, more than half the town's employment and nearly twice the national average of 25%.

Between 2015 and 2019 the number of people employed in Public administration and defence increased by around 500. Administrative and support service activities increased by 300, Construction by 250 and Accommodation and food service activities by 200.

The table below gives details of all employees in employment in 2019:

	Dorchester	Dorchester % of all	England % of all
Agriculture, mining & utilities	155	1	2
Manufacturing	500	2	8
Construction	600	3	5
Wholesale and retail	2,500	12	15
Transportation and storage	200	1	5
Accommodation and food service activities	900	4	8
Information and communication	300	1	4
Financial and insurance activities	200	1	4
Real estate activities	500	2	2
Professional, scientific and technical activities	4,000	19	9
Administrative and support service activities	1,000	5	9
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	3,000	14	4
Education	800	4	9
Human health and social work activities	6,000	29	13
Arts, entertainment and recreation	350	2	2
Other service activities	250	1	2
Total	21,000	100	100

Businesses

Data for 2020 (from UK Business Counts, ONS) show that Dorchester had 1,240 local units (excluding agriculture). The most populous business sector was Wholesale & retail which accounted for nearly a quarter of all businesses. Professional, scientific & technical activities and Human health & social work each accounted for just over ten per cent of firms in the town, with Construction a little less.

Dorchester has above representation of businesses in:

- Public administration & defence (over two per cent of businesses compared with one per cent nationally)
- Human health & social work (about eleven per cent of businesses compared with five per cent nationally)
- Wholesale & retail (about 22 per cent of businesses compared with 16 per cent nationally)
- Other service activities (about five per cent of businesses compared with four per cent nationally)
- Accommodation & food service activities (about eight per cent of businesses compared with six per cent nationally)

Business under-representation relative to England is more evident in: Transportation & storage; Information & communication; Administrative and support service activities; Construction; Manufacturing; Professional, scientific & technical activities.

	Dorchester	Dorchester % of all	England % of all
Agriculture, mining & utilities	25	2	4
Manufacturing	45	4	5
Construction	105	8	11
Wholesale and retail	275	22	16
Transportation and storage	25	2	4
Accommodation and food service activities	95	8	6
Information and communication	50	4	8
Financial and insurance activities	35	3	2
Real estate activities	55	4	4
Professional, scientific and technical activities	165	13	16
Administrative and support service activities	75	6	9
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	30	2	1
Education	25	2	2
Human health and social work activities	140	11	5
Arts, entertainment and recreation	35	3	3
Other service activities	60	5	4
Total	1,240	100	100

Dorchester has a 'larger' business profile than the national average with higher percentages of businesses with 10 or more employees and even, whilst the actual number is very small, a larger percentage with 250 or more employees.

Employment Sizeband	Dorchester	England % of all	Dorchester % of all
Micro (0 to 9)	950	85	77
Small (10 to 49)	235	12	19
Medium-sized (50 to 249)	45	3	4
Large (250+)	5	<1	<1
Total	1,240	100	100

According to the Business Register and Employment Survey 2019, 43 per cent of the working population are in part time employment compared to only 32 per cent nationally.

Dorchester has seen an increase in the retail offer in the last 10 years with the expansion of the Poundbury development as well as the redevelopment of the former Eldridge Pope brewery site in the town centre. The latter adding a second cinema to the town as well as numerous shops and restaurants.

Education

Dorchester lies at the centre of the Dorchester Area Schools Partnership which covers Dorchester's natural catchment area as well as the town itself and includes a total of 13 first schools, 3 middle schools, 1 upper school, an independent preparatory school and a learning centre. Of these 4 first schools, 2 middle schools, the upper school and the independent preparatory school are located within Dorchester, with the learning centre situated immediately outside the town to the south.

The four 'first schools' in Dorchester all accept pupils from 5 to 9 years of age these are Damers School (444 pupils), Manor Park CofE School (457 pupils) and Prince of Wales School (158 pupils). The fourth, St Mary's RC School with 180 pupils

The 2 middle schools deal with pupils between 9 and 13. They are Dorchester Middle School (592 pupils) and St Osmund's CE School (719 pupils)

The Thomas Hardy School has 2,140 pupils aged between 13 and 18.

Sunninghill Preparatory School has pupils aged between 2 years 9 months and 13 years.

The Vision and Ethos of all the schools is to create a climate where all children are encouraged and are enabled to achieve their potential.

All of the schools are committed to working together to provide a coherent education for all children, share expertise and resources, use common systems of recording pupils' progress and ensure a smooth transition between schools.

Kingston Maurward College, which started life as an agricultural training establishment but has now massively widened its sphere of activity, including degree level courses, is just outside the town to the east.

Currently over three quarters of these educational establishments are rated either Good or Excellent by Ofsted.

Public open Spaces

The jewel of Dorchester's open space is its Victorian pleasure garden, the Borough Gardens opened in 1896. The fully accessible gardens are a mix of walk ways, planted flower beds, a bandstand regularly in use for all types of music, lawns, tennis courts, clock tower, fountains, children's play area, café and public conveniences, an analemmatic sundial and outdoor gym. Three flower beds – the shield beds - are planted each year to commemorate anniversaries of local or national organisations and charities. The gardens are regularly used by locals and visitors alike for socialising, picnics, relaxation and play.

Maumbury rings, of Neolithic origin and a former Roman amphitheatre, forms a unique green edge of town centre space for play, relaxation and picnics and is often used for performances, festivals and events.

The "walks", following the line of the former Roman walls, are tree lined walks around three sides of the old town, the fourth being the lovely river walk overlooking the water meadows to the north of the town. Part way along the river walk there is a loop into a local nature reserve and short board walk. Residents and visitors can regularly be seen strolling along side the gently flowing river Frome.

Dispersed throughout the town are large maintained green spaces, often tree lined and with children's play equipment at Salisbury Fields towards Fordington (complete with town Beacon), The Great Field at Poundbury, at Kings Road (complete with locally built former steam road roller decommissioned and painted up for a children's play and climbing), Centenary Field at Poundbury (with Belvedere donated by HRH Prince Charles and overlooking the Maiden Castle iron age hill fort)

Smaller green spaces and play areas are in Maiden Castle Road, Elizabeth Place Gabriel Green and Fortress Green.

Sporting and Leisure Facilities

Dorchester is home to the Dorset Council libraries HQ, the Dorchester Library and Learning Centre which provides a range of lending services for fiction and non-fiction, music CD's, and DVDs and audio books. There is an extensive reference section, and access to online sources from free to use computer stations in the library. The library has recently extended its range of books, audiobooks and magazines available through on-line platforms such as Libby and Borrowbox. The Library has a number of classrooms and also hosts events throughout the year for children and adults including reading groups and author talks.

The town is well catered for with a football ground, cricket oval and rugby facilities. All of which are used throughout the appropriate seasons by active local clubs with junior level as well as adult teams. The cricket ground, leased by the local cricket club from the Town Council, also provides two football pitches for use by amateur clubs outside of the cricket season, and host a boxing gym within the Pavilion.

There are three sports centres across the Town. The Dorchester Sports Centre has a swimming pool, a fitness suite with a variety of exercise machines, gym/sports hall areas and several outdoor multi-use all weather sports pitches. It hosts a variety of exercise classes for all ages and abilities.

St Osmond's Community Sports centre has an indoor sports hall, studio exercise space and several outdoor multi use games areas. It is able to offer space for tennis, football, netball, badminton, basketball, indoor cricket nets and hockey.

Sandringham Sports Centre and Playing Fields provides three outdoor football pitches and an outdoor play area, a bowls club and petanque area and basketball hoop plus a comprehensive selection of outdoor gym equipment.

The Dorchester Skate Park is a popular free to use facility providing an all concrete transitions bowl park with a plaza style street section at the bottom.

The Town Council is supporting the development of a local Parkour free running site in the town

Shopping Centres

Dorchester benefits from a traditional shopping centre, reflecting the Roman layout of the town, now comprising a main pedestrianised shopping street with a good mix of independent and high street names. This is joined by three arcades and two side streets, each with its own selection of interesting shops and eateries including a traditional bakery and traditional butchers, independent shoe shops and local department store across two sites and hosting a food hall celebrating local foods.

There is a parallel but not traffic free shopping street including the popular local privately owned Art Deco design cinema

An east west throughfare abuts both streets and has a number of interesting and historic buildings, eateries, specialist independent shops, two churches, the Dorset Museum, the Shire Hall Historic Court House Museum and several hotels and BnB's.

There is a daily market in Cornhill, now comprising a selection of clothing, book and craft stalls, while there is a traditional weekly market at Fairfield on the site of the former animal market and sheep fayre.

Opposite the market, on the site of the former Eldridge Pope Brewery is the new mixed residential and commercial Brewery Square development. This has a chain cinema, several popular chain restaurants and a number of independent shops around a large open performance space, complete with outdoor cinema screen and fountains embedded within the surface of the square.

To the west of the town is Poundbury, the modern urban extension developed by the Duchy of Cornwall and influenced by HRH Prince Charles "A Vision of Britain". Amongst Poundbury's discrete squares and along the main streets are a variety of shops of all types, mostly independently owned and operated and including clothing, food (two small supermarkets and a butchers/greengrocers) gifts, toys, a gallery and several high quality cafes and restaurants.

There is a small Out of town retail development of the south of the town (about one mile from the town centre) with a supermarket, pet store, car accessories store and electrical goods outlet.

There are local shopping parades in Victoria Park (west of the town centre) and Manor Park (East of the town centre) providing local services.

There is a weekly Country Market (former WI Market) held in the town centre, regular Vegan markets and periodic local food fairs held at venues around the town. Prior to COVID there was a monthly farmers market held in Poundbury.

Dorchester town council's support for voluntary sector

Dorchester Town Council employs its own Community Development Officer, a catalyst and supporter of a number of local community initiatives including:

- Support for community groups supporting those in need through COVID enforced lockdown
- Establishment of a Community Fridge
- Working with the local Muslim Community and others to plan and run multi faith events
- Providing support to the many local community groups across the town, including a small grants fund.

Supporting inter group working and networking
Consulting on and developing a community plan for the town
Hosting an access group to provide advice and guidance on access issues
Producing and issuing a community newsletter
Hosting Holocaust Memorial Day events, and Black History month
Supporting the Southwest Dorset Multi Cultural Faith Network
Working locally with Dorset MIND - Including local funding and advice. This is also the current Mayor's charity and will benefit from funds raised during his term of office.

D. Photographs

Identity

1. Dorchester Seal



Dorchester town seal from early 17C, displayed in the Town Council's Council Chamber.

2. Roman Town House



Dorchester's 4thC Roman Town House, the only one to be seen in its entirety in Britain.

3. Roman Wall



Segment of the rubble core from the town's Roman Walls.

4. Georgian High West Street



Georgian properties along High West Street. Originally the main shopping street in the town, it is now a mix of residential accommodation, retail, offices and restaurants.

5. Poundbury



A typical Poundbury street scene and mix of business and residential development.

6. Oak Room/ Judge Jeffreys Lodgings



The reputed dwelling of Judge Jeffreys during his “bloody assize”.

7. Dorset Museum



Interior of the newly refurbished and extended Dorset Museum © DorsetMuseum.

8. Shire Hall



Historic Court Room at Dorchester's Shire Hall © Folio Creative.

9. The Keep



The Keep Military Museum, Former gatehouse to the Barracks for the Dorset Regiment.

10. Hardy statue



Commemorative statue to Thomas Hardy, erected 1931.

11. Dorset County Hospital



Main entrances to the North and South Wings of the Dorset County Hospital, which serves the needs of residents across rural Dorset.

12. County Hall



The entrance to the Dorset Council offices, formerly the offices of Dorset County Council, construction began before WW2, but was not completed until after the war had ended.

Civic pride

13. Mayoral Plaques.



Plaques displayed in the Dorchester Town Council council chamber commemorating past Mayors, and Civic and National events

14. Cenotaph



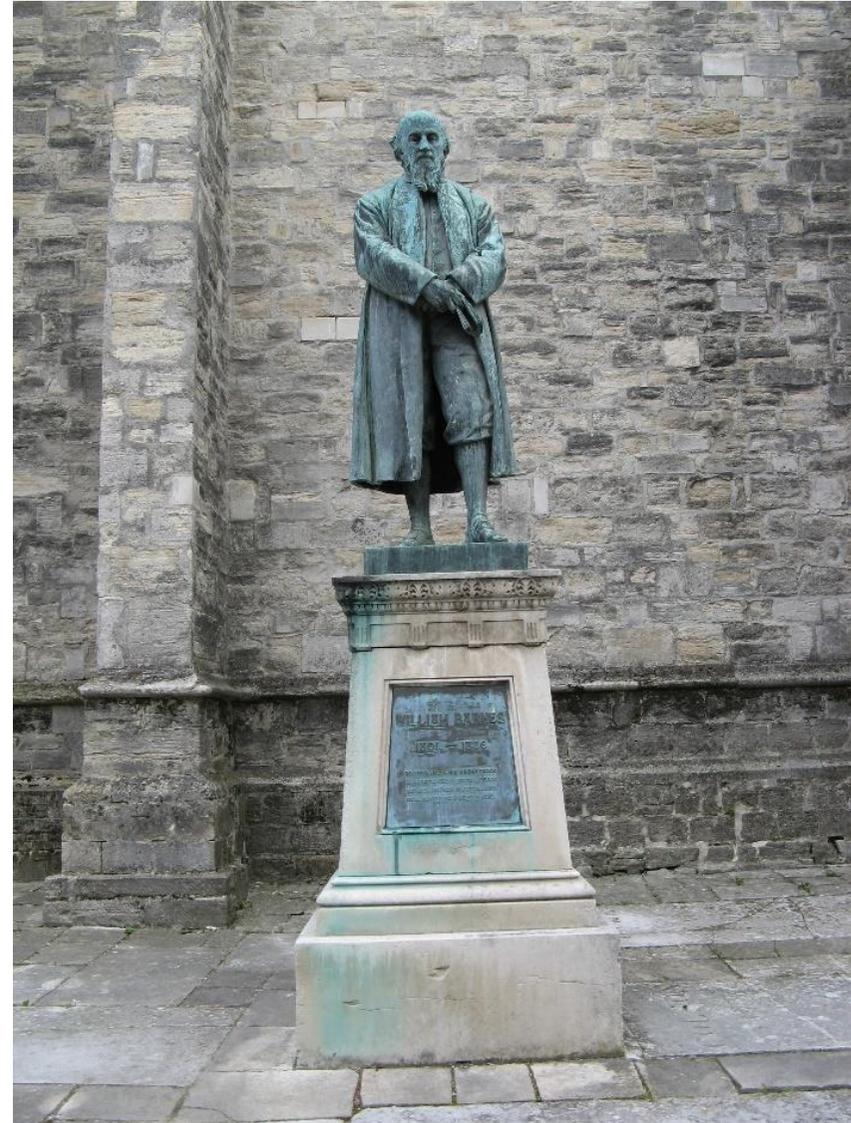
Lutyns Inspired Cenotaph memorial to the fallen from two world wars and successive conflicts. This is the focus of the town's commemorations on the Sunday before Armistice Day.

15. Tirah memorial



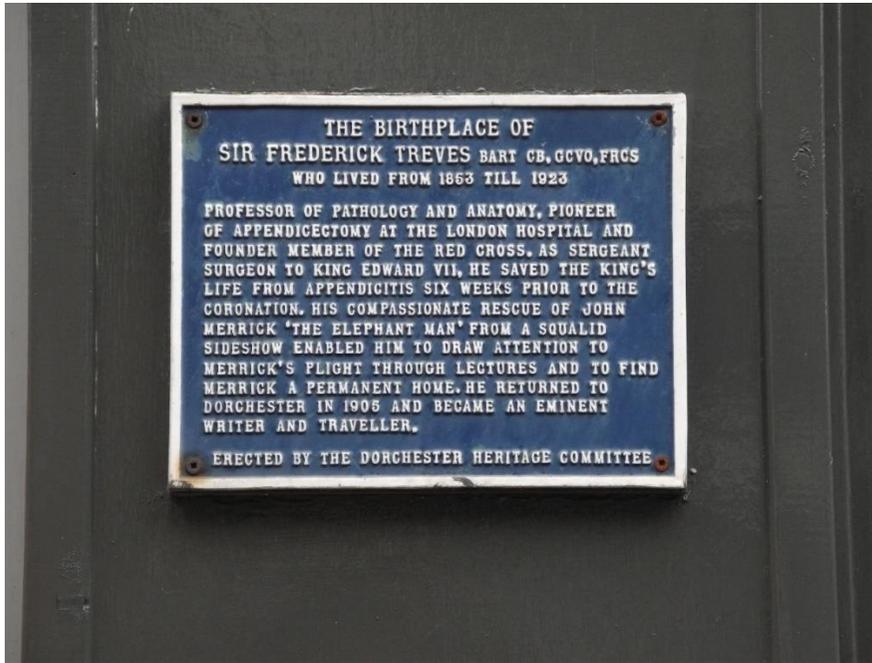
The Tirah memorial in the Borough Gardens, commemorating the fallen of the Dorset Regiment in the Tirah Campaign, on the NW Frontier 1897-98

16. William Barnes Statue



Statue of Wm Barnes, Polymath and dialect poet, friend of Thomas Hardy, erected outside St Peters Church in the town centre

17. Treves Plaque



Memorial Plaque to commemorate Sir Frederick Treves, eminent surgeon, born at 8 Cornhill Dorchester, the property on which this plaque is placed

Cultural Infrastructure

18. Shepherd



The statuesque 'The Dorset Shepherd' sculpture was inspired by William Barnes' poem, 'The Shepherd o' the Farm' and is located in Durngate Street

19. The Martyrs



The Martyrs Statues close by Gallows Hill, by Dame Elisabeth Frink, commemorating those who in the C16 and C17 had been executed for their religious beliefs at Gallows Hill in Dorchester.

20. Hands



Sculpture "All you need is Love", aka The Hug. Commissioned by the Town Council to commemorate the centenary of the First World War. A similar sculpture stands in the twin town of Lubbecke

21. Dorchester Arts/Municipal Buildings



The former Corn Exchange and Municipal Buildings, future town centre home of Dorchester Arts

Vibrant Welcoming Community

22. Poundbury Residents Magazine



Front cover of the Poundbury Residents Magazine, distributed widely across Poundbury and the rest of Dorchester

23. Borough Gardens bandstand



The Bandstand in the Borough Gardens, venue for many free performances, concerts through the year, and recent location for a COVID safe Mayor Making ceremony

24. Brewery Square piazza



The piazza in Brewery Square, a new residential, shopping and leisure development in the edge of the town centre, complete with outdoor performance space, cinema screen and dancing fountains.

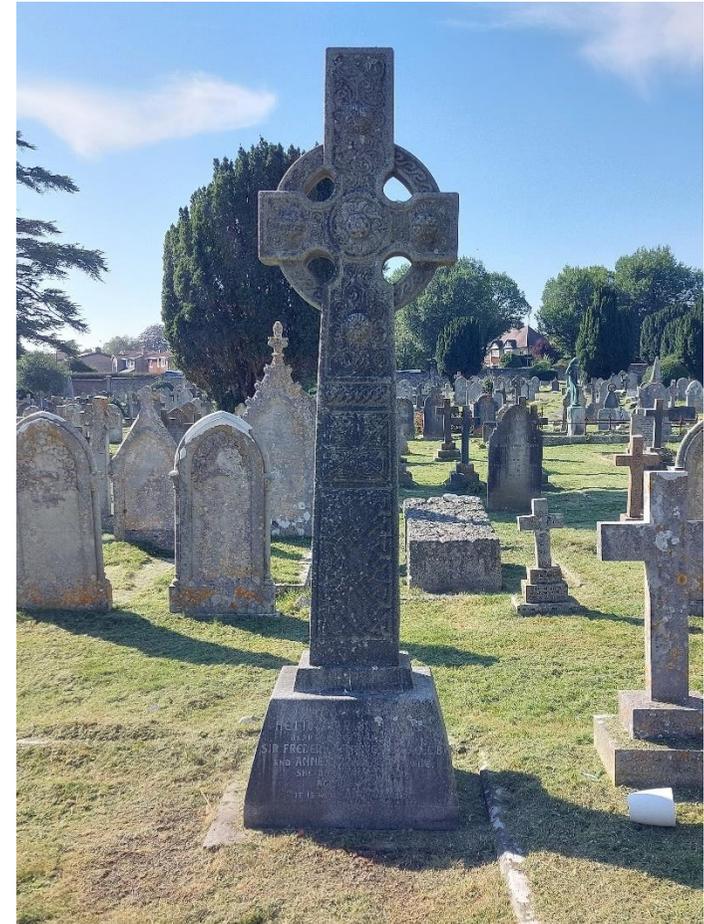
Innovation

25. Earth closet



The Moule Earth Closet ©Dorset Museum. The Earth closet was developed by local vicar Henry Moule to improve domestic sanitation and reduce the spread of cholera

26. Treves grave



Memorial Cross to Sir Frederick Treves, surgeon, befriender of Joseph Meyrick, Surgeon Extraordinary to Queen Victoria.

Governance

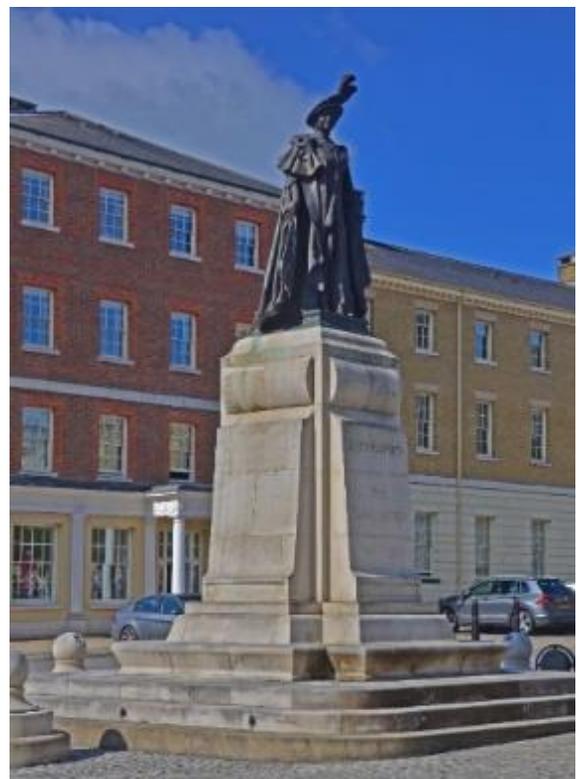
27. Mayoral Chain

The Mayoral Chain of Office, used by successive Mayors since 1874



Royalty

28. Queen Mother Statue



Statue of HRH Her Majesty the Queen Mother, erected in Queen Mother Square at Poundbury, and unveiled by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth 11 in 2016.

Open spaces

29. Borough Gardens



Dorchester's Borough Gardens, location for relaxing, exercise and entertainment

30. Great Field



The Great Field at Poundbury, a large open green space at the heart of Poundbury for exercise, games, and relaxation, with outdoor gym and children's play area .

31. Centenary Field

Centenary Field at Poundbury, with Commemorative Silhouette and information board commemorating the centenary of the end of the First World War. Close by and from Centenary Field There is a play area, community farm and extensive views of the Maiden Castle iron age hillfort



32. Kings Road play Area



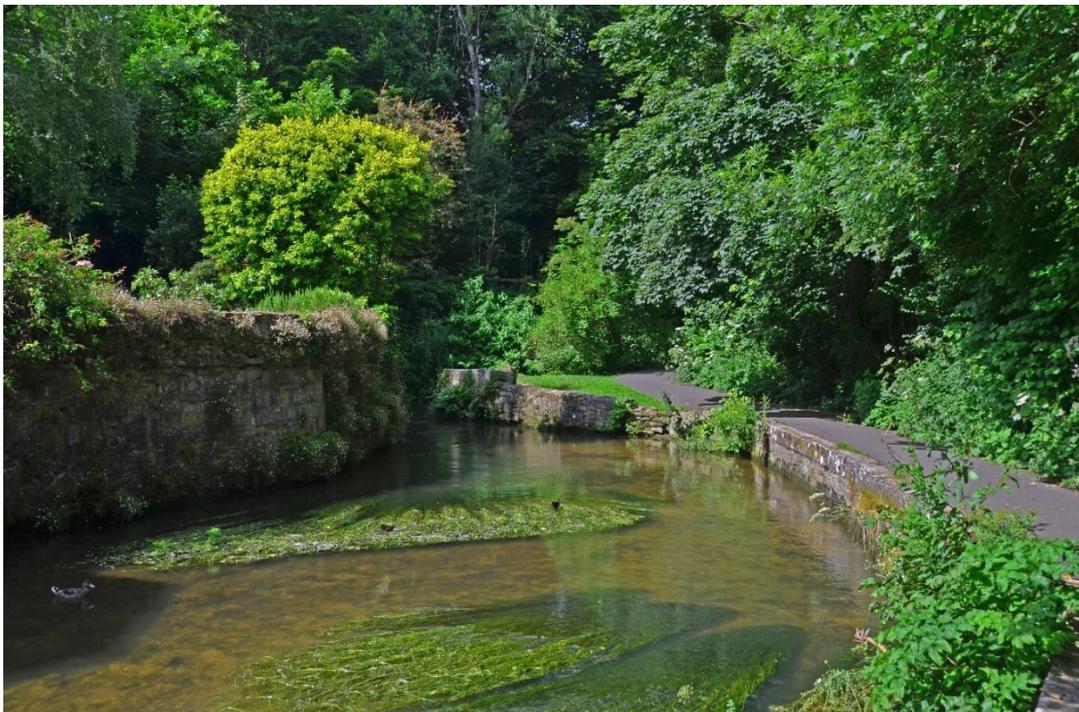
Kings Road play area, at the edge of Dorchester, complete with locally built decommissioned Steam Road Roller for children to climb on. There are also football pitches and other play equipment.

33. Salisbury Field



Salisbury Field, play area, open space and town Beacon

34. RiverWalk



The river Frome marks the northern boundary of the town, and is place of a pleasant walk, Nearby are allotments, and a local nature reserve.

Sport and Leisure

35. DorchesterFC



The Avenue Stadium, home of the Dorchester Town Football club, is used by many other local football teams of all ages and genders.

36. Dorchester Recreation Ground and Cricket club



Dorchester Recreation Ground, home to the Cricket Club who also provide space for the Boxing Club, and have two winter football pitches for community use.

37. Rugby Club



Dorchester Rugby Club offers opportunities for all from age 5, both male and female to engage in the sport of Rugby

38. Skate park



The Dorchester Skate Park, free to use facility opened in 2009. It is an all concrete transitions bowl park with a plaza style street section at the bottom and holds something for all abilities.

39. Dorchester Sports Centre



The Dorchester Sports Centre, adjacent the Thomas Hardy School and on the edge of :Poundbury has outdoor multi use games areas, a large pool and an infants pool, and fitness suites offering lessons and classes for all.

40. Sandringham



Sandringham sports centre with pitches, the bowls club and play equipment

Shopping Centres

41. Antelope walk

One of several shopping arcades in the town centre, Antelope Walk has been developed on the site of a former coaching inn and has a good mix of shops and services and makes an interesting and historic diversion from the main shopping street.



42. South St

Dorchester' pedestrianised South Steet, the town's principle shopping street



43. Maud Road Shopping Parade

44.



Maud Road parade of shops. They include a bakery, Post Office, Mini Supermarket, Pharmacy and take away

45. Buttermarket



Buttermarket in Poundbury, a parade of shops with residential units above that includes home furnishings, children's toys, delicatessen, coffee and bread shop, and a post office. There are electric vehicle charging points in the parking area in the centre of the square.

46. Cornhill market



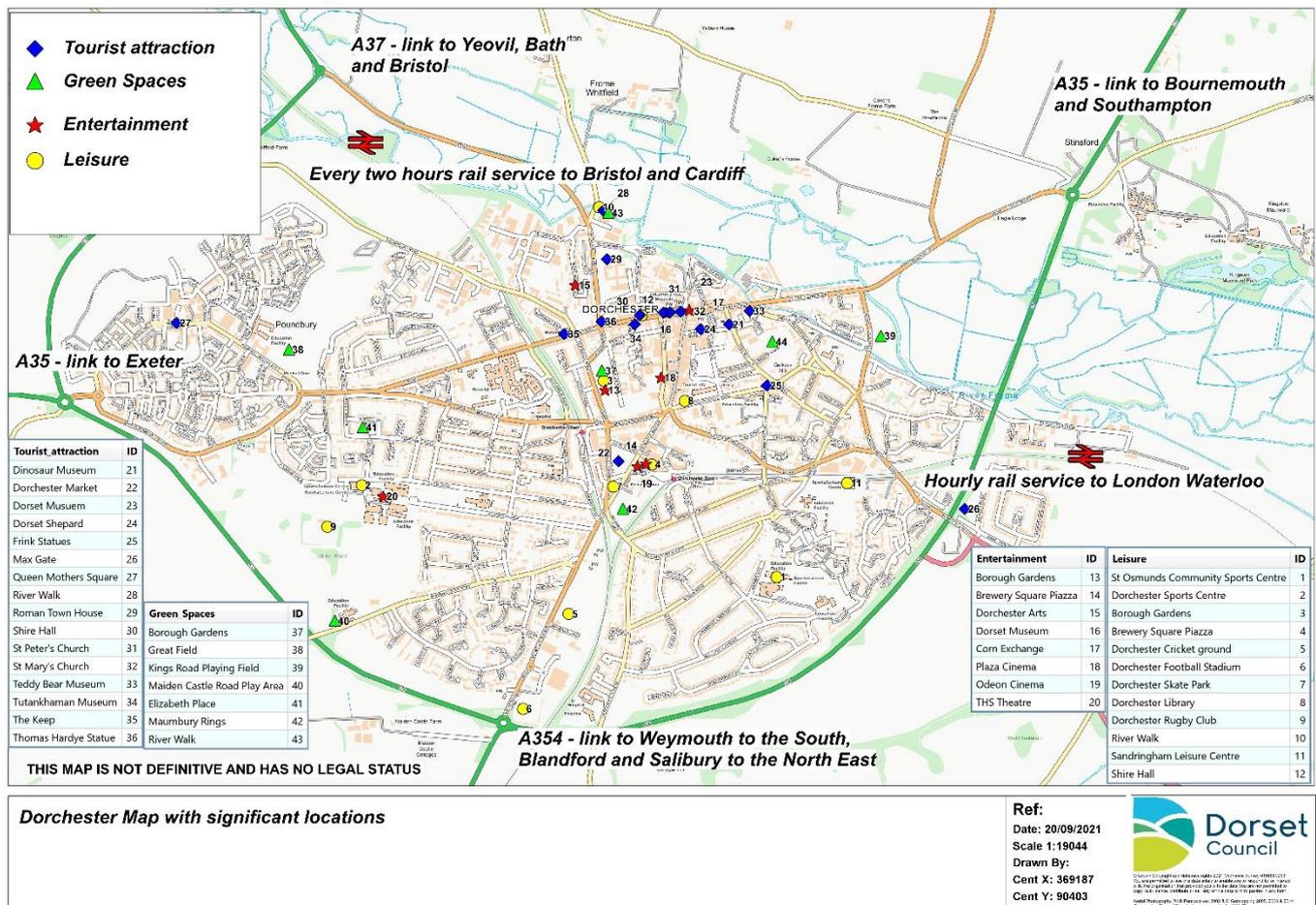
Cornhill street market in the centre of the town. It has a daily changing mix of craft, clothes, fruit and veg, flowers fish, books and collectables stalls.

47. Fairfield Mkt



The covered market area of the weekly Fairfield market. This traditional market site had originally been the local cattle and sheep market, and is now a weekly general market. The area is also used for a weekly car not sale, raising money for local charities.

E. MAP



Bus Routes Serving Dorchester

Bus Route	Frequency
Yeovil to Dorchester	Four times a day
Sherborne to Dorchester	Six times a day
Blandford to Dorchester	Six times a day
Weymouth to Dorchester	Every 20 mins
Bridport to Dorchester	Eight times a day

Bus Routes within Dorchester

Bus Route	Frequency
Within Dorchester Damory Service 1	Every 30 mins
Within Dorchester Damory Service 2	Every hour
Within Dorchester Damory Service 6	Every 30 mins

Rail Services serving Dorchester

Rail service	Frequency
From Cardiff Bristol and the West (GWR)	Every two hours
To Bath, Bristol and Cardiff (GWR)	Every two hours
From London Waterloo, Southampton, Bournemouth (South Western Railway)	Every hour
From Weymouth (South Western Railway)	Every Hour