



Dorchester Community Forum

Key activities/achievements since September 2018

Health and Well-being

- Development of mental health support projects with MIND, particularly for young people including:
 - Funding and helping set up a drop in mental health group for sixth formers at Thomas Hardy School (started September 2018) (Called Mind, Food & Mood)
 - Funded and helped to set up a support group for young people not attending school which will be based at Shire Hall (starting October 2018) (Called Connected Minds – CM)
 - Funding development of a mental health support directory for young people.
 - Supporting and promoting setting up an evening support group for young people (starting September)
 - Linking Dorchester Family Partnership Zone and Dorset MIND to run projects together - particularly CM group.
- Set up working group to improve social prescribing and better working partnership between health professionals and voluntary sector - focussing on promoting the use of the environment to improve health and wellbeing. Several partners involved including: The Local Nature Partnership, Live Well Dorset, the Mid-Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group and Stepping into Nature. This culminated in a Health and Wellbeing picnic in Borough Gardens on Sat 8 September which involved the above organisations along with a range of community organisations such as the Dorchester Strollers and the Dorchester Disabled Club. A second event and other related activities are planned for 2019 to link into the self-management and social prescribing strategy that is being developed by the Dorset CCG.
- Ongoing support for the Dorchester Access Group including:
 - Commenting on Access issues around town and requests for dropped kerbs – successfully enabled provision of 3 pairs of dropped kerbs in Normandy Avenue area – greatly improving access across a housing development that previously had no dropped kerbs.
 - Working on developing an Access Guide for Dorchester – have over 30 local businesses signed up for this and are currently looking to do more partnership work with People First Dorset.

Environment

- Support to signage project - to improve signage for town.
- Helping to develop a plan for Dorchester to obtain 'Plastic Free' status - Town Council are supporting an initiative driven by local primary school to reduce use of plastic across the town

Arts and culture

- Member of Inside Out Dorset festival planning committee (provided advice/help with funding, input to their access guide and event support).
- Continued work on Try This website to ensure this project continues – aiming to run events in 2019
- Organised/supported additional events including the Dorchester Carnival

Housing

- Ongoing support for Dorchester Area Community Land Trust.

Young people

- Support to Dorchester Youth Council
 - This group ran a 'Votes for Women' event in Borough Gardens 01/07/18 which involved several speakers, performers and activities to celebrate 100 years since the introduction of suffrage for women.
- Democracy Day
 - Ran 2 Democracy Day events involving 2 local middle schools on 20/11/17 & 19/09/18.
 - second event was run in partnership with Shire Hall and a UK Parliamentary Outreach officer
- Coordination of Dorchester Youth Extra – youth forum for Dorchester
 - Group meet monthly and get involved in local consultations and projects
 - Ran 2 signature events in 2018:
 - Anonymous Festival – 10th anniversary of this popular family festival – approximately 2000 attendees.
 - Open Air Cinema event – approximately 4000 attendees.

Community cohesion, consultations, funding, advice & information

- Ran 3 Community Lunches – with average of 60 attendees per event
- Involved local community and set up focus groups for several local consultations including:
 - Jubilee Hall usage at Poundbury
 - Development of Great Field at Poundbury
 - Local Plan review
 - Town Centre Masterplan
- Work with Chamber of Business for Dorchester to find ways to support the community/voluntary sector – Chamber are holding a sponsorship breakfast in November to link local businesses to local groups
- Coordinated/Co-organised events to promote social inclusion including:
 - Holocaust Memorial Day
 - One World – multicultural celebration
 - Faith Communities Together event – bringing range of faith organisations together

Future work

- Ongoing support, advice, partnership working with several local organisations including the Dorchester Family Partnership Zone, the County Museum and Shire Hall
- Allotments project – scoping whether there is excess allotment produce that could be directed to people in food poverty – link to existing food projects including local Foodbank.
- Helping establish more pop-up shops in town
- Running a fundraising 'community soup' event
- Continued support/advocacy for involvement of the voluntary sector in Local Government Reorganisation – particularly in relation to community planning and delivery and funding/support for community/voluntary sector
- Continuing to ensure community voice is enabled regarding town centre planning and Local Plan proposals
- Scoped project to develop more Business Hub space
- Achieve 'Plastic Free' status for Dorchester
- Developing a financial advice pack for young people.
- Delivery of several large-scale events – including:
 - An event to celebrate Homecoming after World War One – November 2018
 - A 'scooter jam' at the Skate Park to celebrate its 10th anniversary – April 2019
 - An event to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the lunar landing – July 2019