

DORCHESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

YOUR DORCHESTER IN 2050

On Tuesday 12th November, at a packed public meeting, residents were invited to identify the major challenges facing the town and what their ideal town should look like in 2050. This Vision will be of increasing concern to younger families and their children. Pollution levels in the High Street are already excessive and the provision of homes and jobs for our growing community is vital.

Dorchester Civic Society had invited Dr. Tim Dixon of Reading University to talk about a smart and sustainable Reading 2050, including being carbon-free by 2030. What lessons can our town learn? He outlined a route map to achieving this whilst enjoyment of life flourished in a better environment.

The audience became participants, working in groups to set out their demands and how to prepare Dorchester for its challenges. The lists were topped by the same needs:

Genuinely affordable homes, built to high standards of insulation and low energy demand, increased and subsidised public transportation into and within the town, communal electric vehicles saving families using their own – or even not needing to own a car. Allied to this was a traffic-free High Street and town centre. A healthier and fitter public would result. As a result our Heritage offer would be enhanced and thus tourism, with its income, boosted.

The huge surplus of employment in Dorchester, together with the major daily influx of staff from Weymouth where housing is generally cheaper, requires better use of public transport between the two towns to provide a linked and mutually supportive community.

In this vein a greener town centre is wanted, with the now surplus Charles Street proposals giving way to a tree-lined town square for public benefit and assisting air quality to recover. Consideration for new housing sites should include the many villages which look to Dorchester for services, subject to improving public transport and providing attractive walking/cycling routes. For all this Dorchester will need an empowered Town Council with the proper funding from central government.

The next DCS Talk is by Dr. Susan Parham, Associate Professor and Head of Urban Planning, University of Hertfordshire who will explore the history, success and benefits of Garden Villages. Dorchester may be “blessed” with one as a neighbour in the next Local Plan Review for the years 2109 – 2036. How would it function and how relate to the old town?

This Vision Talk is on Tuesday 3rd December, 7.30 pm. At The Dorford Centre, Top o' Town, Dorchester. Car parking at A 35 car park opposite. All welcome.