

Greening opportunities in a post-covid Dorchester

Richard Bradford

A talk for Dorchester Civic Society

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Greening opportunities in a post-covid Dorchester

Introduction

- Greening - focus on urban greenspace, from public parks & private gardens, to verges & odd corners
- Opportunities - focus on nature & people
- A post-covid Dorchester - what are we learning in these times?

Looking at:

- Why is this topic important today?
- What 'green' does Dorchester already have..?
- Look at the opportunities for people, for places & for nature

Welcome your views on:

- Opportunities - places, getting involved, ways to contribute
- Who might lead...?
- What next...?



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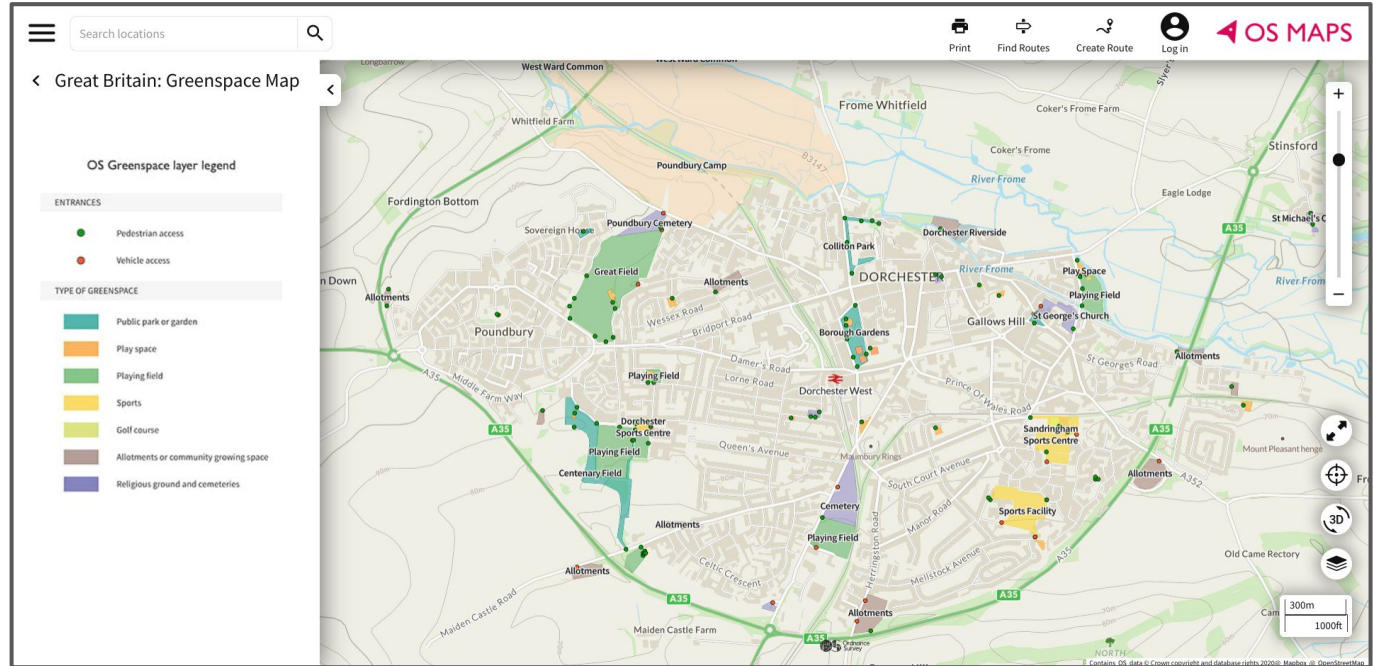
Why is urban 'greenspace' important today..?

- Physical and mental health benefits
 - Opportunities for exercise
 - Connections with nature and with people
 - Nearby, accessible, +/- 'natural'
 - Stimulating - change of scene, sounds, seasons, pace
- Economic benefits
 - Air quality and local climate regulation
 - Tree canopy cover in Dorchester = 12%, recommended = 20%
 - Water quality and flooding - the Frome & its floodplains
 - Business prosperity & property prices - ups & downs
 - Collective sense of place, pride of place
- Ecological Emergency
 - Emergencies declared by many, recent UN 'Code Red' Report
 - State of Nature reports - UK placed 189/218 for nature deprivation
 - Facing sixth mass extinction...



Greening opportunities in a post-covid Dorchester

- **Starting point:**
Greenspace Map
- **Add:**
 - School grounds
 - Employment land
 - Informal open spaces
 - Road (& rail) verges
 - Odd corners and patches - loved & unloved
- Private gardens
- Who is involved?



Greening opportunities in a post-covid Dorchester

Greening opportunities - places:

- **Public greenspaces**
 - Change mowing regimes - frequency, timing, cut & collect
 - Verges - safety, tidiness & nature
 - Cemeteries - respect, access & nature
 - Active enhancements - planting native trees & hedges, meadow creation, wetlands
- **Private gardens & allotments**
 - Individual choice - but collective action adds up
 - Every contribution counts - hedgehog holes, bird feeders
 - Planting for pollinators - 'Trees for Bees'
- **Odd corners and patches**
 - 'Filling stations' & 'stepping stones'
 - Guerilla or Postcode gardening - giving nature a helping hand
- **Bigger, better and more joined up...**
 - Corridors and connections
 - Collective action - it all adds up



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Greening opportunities - for people:

- Change the way we do things:
 - Public greenspaces - mainly by Councils
 - Private gardens & allotments - individuals
 - National campaigns - eg. 'No Mow May'
 - Reduce use of pesticides
- Take practical action together:
 - Planting, weeding, mowing, cutting, raking
 - Harvesting, propagating, sharing - tree nurseries
- Engage widely:
 - Events - walks, talks, festivals
 - Citizen science - 'Every Flower Counts'
 - Schools grounds and projects
 - Collective action - making connections
- Express your views - lobby..!



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Current greening activities - public sector:

- Dorchester Town Council - cemeteries & open spaces
- Dorset Council - verges & some open spaces
- Schools - wildlife gardens & grounds

Current greening activities - volunteers:

- Transition Town Dorchester - Community Farm, Heritage Orchard, hedge planting, tree nursery
- People need Nature & EuCAN - work with Duchy of Cornwall
- Friends of the Riverside Nature Reserve
- Dorset Museum - All Saints' Wildlife Garden, Roman Town Villa, schools & Urban Nature Project
- Community Rail Partnership - Dorchester South
- Community groups - Youth Centre, Rotary, Beavers et al

Current greening activities - development driven

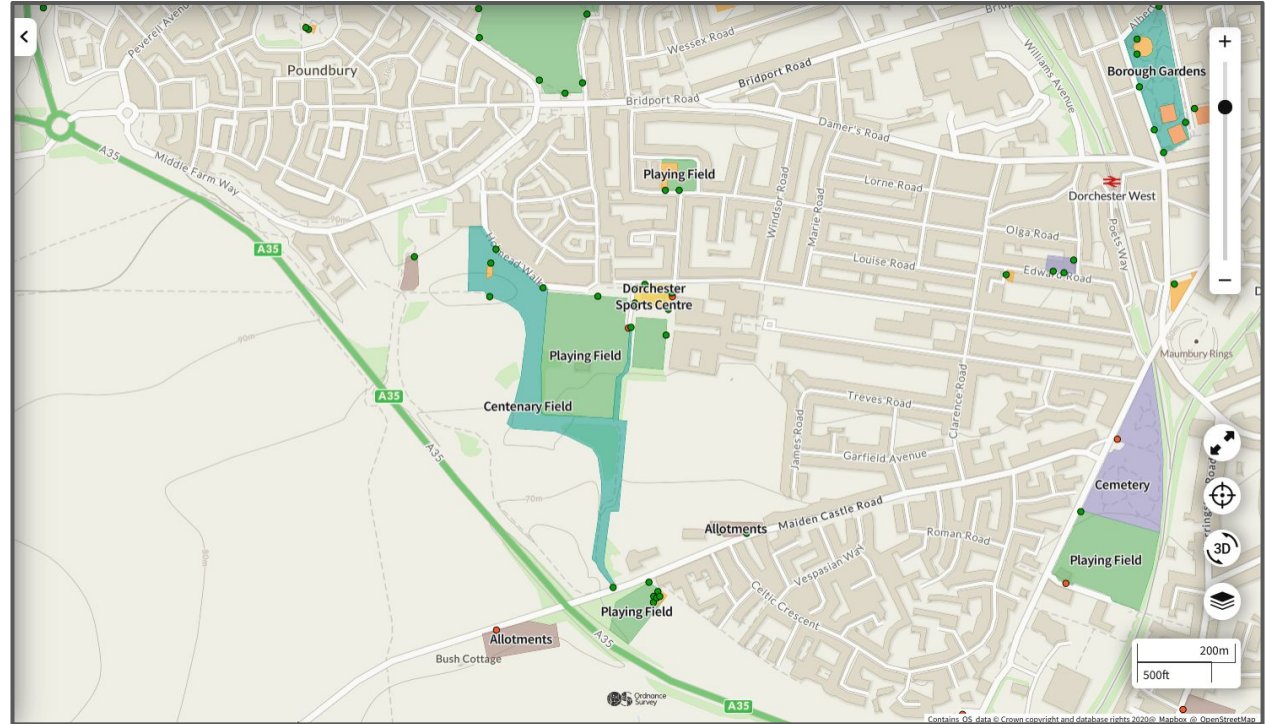
- Duchy of Cornwall - Poundbury, St George's



Greening opportunities in a post-covid Dorchester

Example: Castlefield+

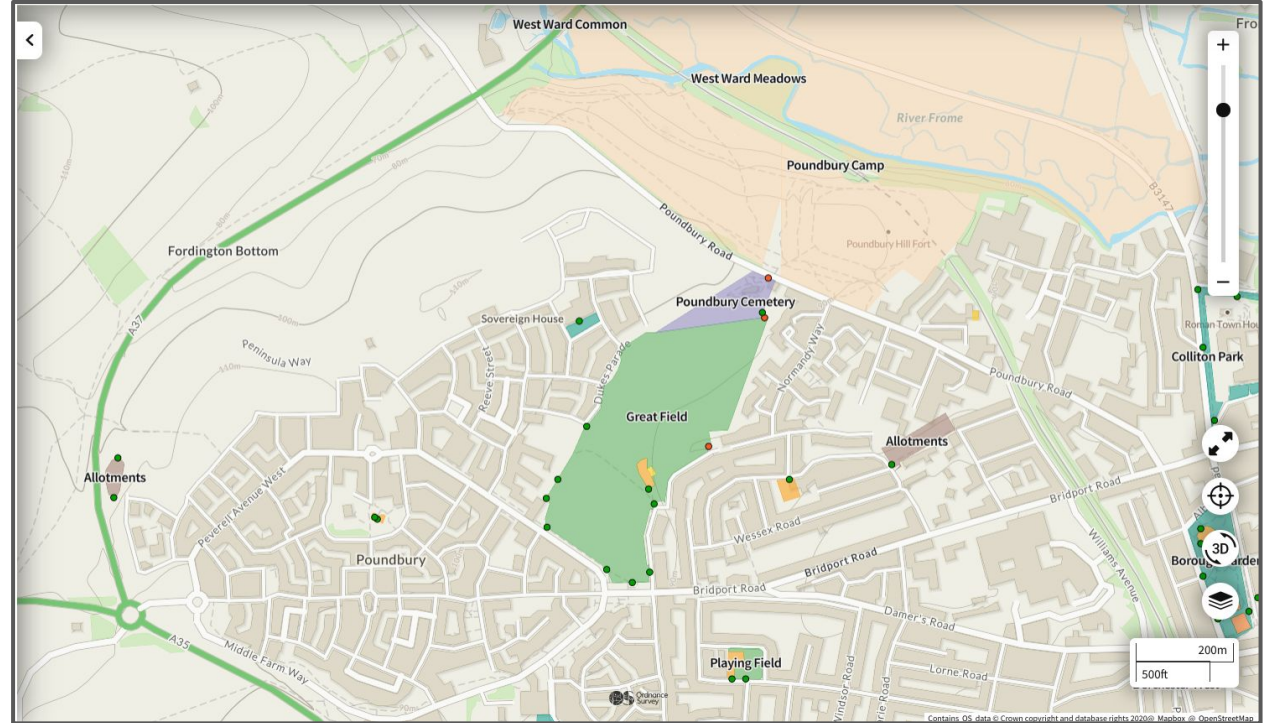
- Substantial area on urban fringe
- Mix of formal & informal open space
- Tree & hedge planting
- Bee Orchids & more
- Duchy of Cornwall
- Connections - social & nature
- Opportunities..?



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Example: Poundbury+

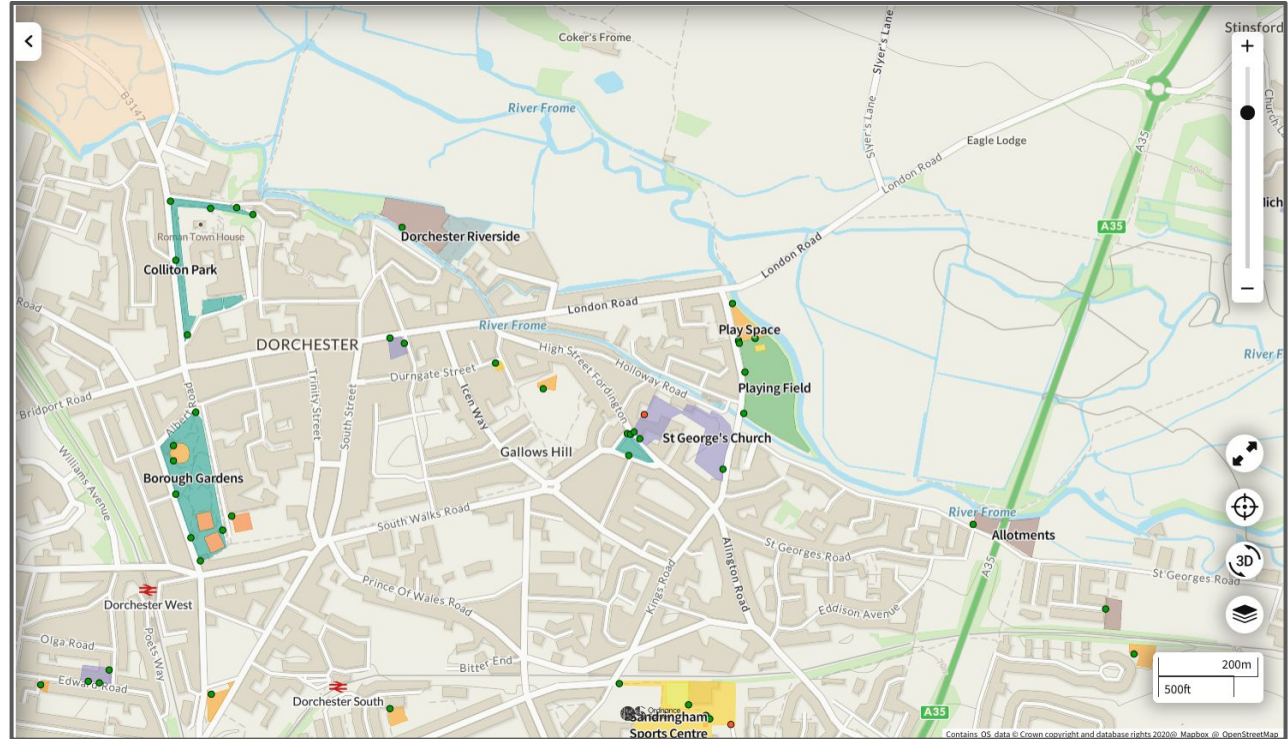
- Substantial & mixed area:
 - Great Field - mixed use
 - Poundbury Cemetery
 - Fire Station Green
 - Fordington Bottom..?
 - Poundbury Camp
 - West Ward Common
 - River Frome
- Duchy of Cornwall
- Connections - social, access & nature
- Opportunities..?



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Example: Riverside+

- Blue & Green elements:
 - River Frome & Millstream
 - West Ward Common
 - John's Pond
 - Baroness' Kitchen Garden
 - Allotments
 - Frome Terrace Green
 - Riverside Nature Reserve
 - Old Swan Green
 - Kings Road playing field
 - Lubbecke Way open space
 - Long Bridge
 - St George's 'Nature Park'
- Dorchester Town Council
- Connections - social, access & nature
- Opportunities..?



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What next, what would you like to see...?

- Individual action..?
- Join national campaigns..?
 - No Mow May
 - Pesticide Free Towns
- More events, talks, practical tasks, work days..?
- Collective action by patch..?
 - Friends of Castlefield, Friends of the Frome..?
- Town-wide campaign - 'Wild about Dorchester'..?
- 'Green Infrastructure Plan'..?
- Who should lead..?



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Further information:

- Transition Town Dorchester - <http://transitiontowndorchester.org/>
- EuCAN - <http://www.eucan.org.uk/uk/dorset/dorset-mid-week-group/>
- People Need Nature - <https://peopleneednature.org.uk/>
- Dorset Museum - <https://www.dorsetmuseum.org/>
- Friends of the Riverside Reserve - <https://www.facebook.com/FRRDorchester/>
- Purbeck Community Rail Partnership - <https://purbeckcrp.org.uk/>
- National campaigns:
 - No Mow May - <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/discover-wild-plants-nature/no-mow-may>
 - Every Flower Counts - <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/everyflowercounts/>
 - Big Butterfly Count - <https://bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org/>
 - Garden Birdwatch - <https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/gbw>
 - Road verges - <https://plantlife.love-wildflowers.org.uk/roadvergecampaign>
 - Pesticide Free Towns - <https://www.pan-uk.org/pesticide-free/>
- Guerilla gardening eg. in Reading - <https://www.facebook.com/guerrillagardeningreading/>
- Postcode gardening - <https://experiments.friendsoftheearth.uk/projects/postcode-gardeners-how-hiring-postcode-gardener-can-bring-nature-back-your-street>
- Town-wide campaigns:
 - Frome- <https://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/your-community/parks-and-green-spaces/wild-about-frome/>
 - Worcester - <https://www.theweg.org.uk/>

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Points discussed afterwards:

- Car Club for Dorchester might reduce the amount of traffic?
- Planting (allotments) – cherry plums, crab apples
- Greening of High E and High W Street – changing the scenery, ? trees in pots
- Greening of car parks - trees would help shade cars, intercept rain and filter some air pollution
- Dorchester South Station – Friends of Dorchester South being formed
- Do we need a group/organisation to lead on green infrastructure involving partner organisations? This could, for example, be a sub-group of the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee
- Link with transport groups for joined up thinking re improving and greening pedestrian and cycle routes across the town and into the surrounding countryside