

Corfe Castle Parish Council meeting

Monday 15th May 2023

Conservation works – The plan of action has been drawn up by the building surveyor and curator in line with the QQ report. We are looking to commence phase 1 works in July. The work will be carried out over 3 phases across 2-3 years. Phase 1 will mainly concern itself with vegetation removal and repointing between the South-west gatehouse and the Great hall up to the base of the Keep. Phase 2 will focus on the West bailey/Butavant tower and Phase 3 will focus on the Keep and Gloriette. The tender period for the work is beginning shortly.

Easter holidays – We had a great start to the Easter holidays with visitor numbers exceeding our expectations. We had some of the best feedback from our visitors that we've ever had about the trail that we put on for the children. Unfortunately the weather in the second week put a bit of a dampener (excuse the pun) on the holidays and so we did struggle the second week with visitor numbers and people taking up the trail. This left us with a number of chocolate eggs to find homes for. We donated eggs to the local schools, Poole hospital, the local food banks and many more worthy causes.

May Fair – We have met with the Village Festivities Committee and are working through the logistics and planning of the return of the 'For the Village, by the Village' event on Monday 29th May 2023. This event will be open for everyone and as always if you are a family or individual that lives within the Corfe Parish catchment free entry will be given upon showing proof of address. To emphasis this, it is only those living at that address who can gain free entry – it is not for other members of the family that are visiting from elsewhere. They would be required to pay to enter or if a member of the National Trust show their membership card. **No change other than - Plan still ongoing and final details being ironed out.**

Goat Path – we are closely monitoring the condition of the top section of the goat path, after recent heavy rain fall there is a small section that has come away. We have called in a Civil Engineer to look at the area and are waiting for a report to come back. Katie Black – Rights of Way Officer – has been asked to look at the condition of the pathway. No change on this one, Katie has been chased and so there might have been movement on since I submitted these notes.

King Charles's Coronation event – by the time you read these notes this will have happened and I'm hoping it has been a right royal success!

Burngate stonecarving display in the castle – 29th April – 1st May. Burngate Stone carving centre came to the castle and held talks and 'have a go' sessions. It was a great success and we have invited them back to take part in the Festival of Cultural Heritage that will be happening in September. Over the course of the 3 days, approximately 150 of our visitors took part in the 'Have a go' sessions and managed to create the lovely piece of stone carving pictured below. We have yet to decide where best to display it.



Wedding Fair - We are hosting a wedding fair in the castle on Sunday 14th May. There will be local suppliers to cover all aspects of wedding planning along with representatives from the Dorset Registry office. It is a ticketed event. Tickets can be found on the Corfe Castle events page of the website.

Community access passes for entry to the Castle – The National Trust are offering out community access passes to local community organisations. Community access passes give a group free access and parking to NT properties. We have two categories for our community access passes:

First, are charities/ community groups that bring individuals to our sites to provide a place for wellbeing & care. These are likely to be individuals who would not usually have the opportunity to access our sites (be that financial, transportation, situation etc.). An example is the Koru Project, where therapeutic mentors bring young people who have suffered trauma to our sites for their therapy sessions.

Second, are local families who would not normally have the opportunity to visit our sites. In this case, we are issuing the passes to certain local schools, SEND centres and referral centres, and the staff there will issue passes to families they think will benefit most. We have strong partnerships with all these schools/ centres and trust them to give the card out appropriately.

Bank of New York volunteering day – We have a commercial volunteering group of about 15 people coming to the castle on the 24th May to help re-lay a lot of the stone that has been lost from the paths in the Keep and Gloriette area of the castle.

E-push/mountain trike at the Castle – fundraising for new Zest Plus mobility Scooter We have taken delivery of a brand new Mountain trike at the ticket office which will help people with access needs to experience more of the castle. The Mountain trike is an electric powered chair that makes it easier to reach the top terraces and the south-west gatehouse. We are currently awaiting some training on it's use before we can offer it out to the general public.



We are aiming to purchase a Zest+ mobility scooter for the castle which is fully user controlled. We are going to be doing a little bit of fundraising around this, selling pin badges and asking for donations.

British sign-language interpretation – We have created a suite of BSL videos for our hearing-impaired visitors that can be accessed through smart phones by scanning a QR code in the accessible lodge by the trebuchet. These videos provide a sign-language tour of the castle that compliments the current written interpretation the we already have.

Second-hand bookshop at Castlevew – Shameless plug really. With the absence of a bookshop in Corfe we are looking to raise awareness of our secondhand bookshop in Castlevew visitors centre. We have a wide range of books which range from 50p to £3 in price. It is organised and run by our volunteers. It was brought up in a conversation by one of the local business owners that they get asked where people can buy books from in the village and they had no idea we had the secondhand bookshop, so I'm just spreading the word.

Keeper of the Castle story-telling – May Half-term – May half-term sees the return of our storyteller to the castle, he will be providing regular story tours of the castle for families and interested adults throughout the week starting on the 27th May. The theme of this year's story tours is life as a 17th Century Royalist Musketeer.