

LOWER CENTRAL GARDENS TRUST BOARD

MONDAY, 22ND SEPTEMBER, 2025

Present: **Councillor Matthew Gillett in the Chair**

**Councillors Cllr J Martin (Vice-Chair), Cllr B Nanovo
and Cllr L Williams**

66 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence received.

67 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

68 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2025 were confirmed as accurate records and signed by the Chair.

69 Request for a multi-agency safety review or SARA

The Board received a verbal update following concerns raised by Councillor Armstrong regarding evening conditions in the Lower Gardens. These concerns related to low lighting at the Westover Road entrance, the evening closure of public conveniences and feelings of reduced safety after dark.

The Head of Public Protection and Dorset Police outlined the ongoing multi-agency work in the area. This included high-visibility patrols, youth engagement, hotspot policing and CCTV improvements. The Board noted that antisocial behaviour and serious violence had reduced. Officers confirmed that reports of defective lantern lighting would be passed to the Street Lighting Team and that an update would be provided to the Board by email. **ACTION**

It was Proposed, Seconded and RESOLVED that the Board receive an update on progress with the issues raised under this item including lighting and evening safety at the next suitable meeting on 18 May 2026.

70 Verbal Update on Bicycle Signage and Lighting in the Lower Central Gardens

The Board received an update that a works order had been raised to refresh surface cycle signage at the entrances and exits to the Gardens. A new lining contractor had started work and the refresh would be completed during the autumn and winter period. Lighting matters identified during the Board walkaround would be addressed through an Environmental Visual Audit.

Officers agreed to request an Environmental Visual Audit of the Lower Gardens and to report the outcome back to the Board. **ACTION**

71 Verbal Update on the Art and Makers Market

The Head of Leisure and Events provided a verbal update on the operation of the Art and Makers Market. The Board was advised that the 2024 tender exercise did not attract any

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submissions and that the market therefore continued in house until an external operator began a trial arrangement from June 2025. A mid-year review is scheduled for December 2025. The Board was advised that the operator was currently running the market every other weekend in an effort to rebuild footfall.

Two members of the public were invited to address the Board and provided their recent experience of the Art and Makers Market.

The Board considered the verbal update and raised the following points:

- In response to a query raised regarding access to storage within the hut, the Board was advised that officers would review current usage, confirm the allocation of space and report the findings to the Board by email. **ACTION**
- In response to a query raised regarding the impact on regular exhibitors and the practical challenges for older and disabled exhibitors, the Board was advised that these matters would be addressed through workable storage options with the operator and provide an update to the Board by email. **ACTION**
- In response to a query raised regarding vehicle access for loading and unloading, booking levels and artist participation, safety on quieter trading days, and differences between information reported by the operator and experience on site, the Board was advised that these issues would be reviewed with the operator and Public Protection as appropriate, and that reporting routes for antisocial behaviour would be reinforced.
- In response to a query raised regarding external funding opportunities, Members suggested that options such as the Arts Council may be available and officers agreed to explore these, subject to feasibility.

The Board noted that some exhibitors disputed the booking figures reported by the operator and asked that this be clarified as part of the update.

Outcomes of the mid-year review to be reported back to the Board. **ACTION**

72 Next Steps - Future Meeting Dates and Work

The Board discussed and suggested items that they wished to be included on future meeting agendas.

The Board discussed the frequency of updates on ongoing matters and asked that information be provided regularly between meetings. Officers agreed to provide the Board with monthly email updates on matters within the gardens, including lighting, safety in the Gardens and the Art and Makers Market. **ACTION**

The Board noted the following meeting dates :

- 26 January 2026
- 18 May 2026

Duration of the meeting: 1.00 - 2.58 pm

Chairman at the meeting on
Monday, 22 September 2025