



# 2022

## Dorchester's SUMMER OF SUNFLOWERS



## Aim

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- To create a friendly and bright welcome for visitors to Dorchester. Helping to ensure they have a good experience and want to return.
- To help ensure that visitors to the Dorset Sunflower Trail also visit the town of Dorchester.
- To raise money for the Kingfisher Ward at Dorset County Hospital and Cherkasy Hospital in Ukraine.

## Overview of outputs

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- Nine giant sunflowers (1 metre diameter) designed and created by local artist Claire Nuttall were put up along South Street.
- A4 summer of sunflower bunting was printed and put up at Brewery Square.
- Sunflower window competition was run for businesses.
- Sunflowers were planted in Borough Gardens.
- A park and stride was created from the town centre to Maiden Castle Farm to help encourage people to visit the town centre as well as the Sunflower trail. This was done via pavement stickers.

## Measures of success

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- Amount raised by Go Fund Me.
- Number of businesses taking part in window competition.
- Media coverage.
- Social media response.
- Website hits.
- Number of people doing park and stride.
- Feedback from businesses and Tourism partnership members.



# Results

## AMOUNT RAISED BY GO FUND ME

The total amount raised by Go Fund Me was £185. A target of £2000 was set. However, this is the first time something like this has been done in Dorchester so it has nothing to compare to.

## AMOUNT RAISED BY GO FUND ME

46 businesses took part in the window dressing competition from across Dorchester. Most were on South Street and High West Street but there were also a great number of businesses in the arcades, Brewery Square and in Poundbury. There was no prize other than some media coverage for their business for winning.

## MEDIA COVERAGE

Media coverage was impressive locally but no national media coverage was received. Locally, Summer of Sunflowers gained coverage in West Dorset Magazine, BBC South, Yahoo news, Planet Radio, Keep 106, Dorset Echo, Dorchester Nub News.

## SOCIAL MEDIA RESPONSE

The response from local people to the Sunflowers going up on South Street and the businesses taking part in the window competition was incredibly positive and were some of the most popular social media posts of the summer on the Discover Dorchester pages. The following table shows the impression of the three most popular sunflower posts on Facebook.

Popular posts	Likes	Shares	Post impressions	Post reach	Post engagement
Initial post sharing images of sunflowers on south street	111	32	12825	12425	1445
Above post when shared to Dorchester BID Facebook page	191	16			
Competition winner announcement post	46	12	12123	11463	2069

Table 1. Posts about Summer of Sunflowers on Facebook.

A flavour of some of the comments of social media received over the campaign are bulleted below. Not one single negative comment was received:

- "The town looked great with lots of Sunflowers around. Every time I walked into town, I found myself smiling 😊"
- "What a lovely range of window displays, well done everyone involved!"
- "How beautiful are these sunflowers!! A very talented artist in Claire Nuttall. I'm coming to Dorchester to see this amazing sunflower theme!!!"
- "Beautiful will cheer everybody up x"
- "That's so cool"
- "Saw these tonight, they look amazing"
- "Saw these today. Looked lovely against the bright blue sky"
- "What a lovely idea!"

## WEBSITE HITS

Blog about Summer of Sunflowers was 11th most popular page on website in August.

## NUMBER OF PEOPLE DOING PARK AND STRIDE

Maiden Castle Farm did feedback that they did have people arriving that had followed the trail to the trail but numbers were not recorded. This was not heavily promoted on Maiden Castle Farm website.

## FEEDBACK FROM BUSINESSES AND TOURISM PARTNERSHIP

- Dorchester BID received feedback that the nine sunflowers looked a bit sparse.
- Summer of Sunflowers was popular with listeners of Keep 106.
- Duchy of Cornwall pointed out that Dorchester is not the only place with a sunflower trail so the campaign needed to be very big to draw in tourists.
- Brewery Square commented that the bunting was very noisy and snapped in several places.
- Partnership pointed out that cash is preferred in Dorchester so if we do another fundraiser, need to be able have cash collection tins. Could do “round up” in businesses or have 5 p of every coffee going to fundraiser. Could have apple pay or google pay QR codes as young people prefer to pay by phone.
- The Tourism Development Officer and Maiden Castle Farm Sunflower Trail Organiser went round to personally thank all of the businesses that took part in the window competition. All were very pleased with the competition and enjoyed taking part. A hairdresser and taxi company both said they would have liked to have had cash buckets for collection rather than the online donations.

## Conclusion

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The Summer of Sunflowers project was popular and well received by local residents and businesses but there is no evidence that it generated additional tourism to the town. There is also no feedback from visitors recorded to say whether they liked the Summer of Sunflowers project.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the park and stride to the Sunflower Trail was used, this could have been recorded better.

The project did not successfully reach the funding target but, with feedback from businesses and the tourism partnership, this could be done more successfully in future.

Overall, the Tourism Partnership was pleased with the project and would like to run it again in 2023 but increase its scale.

## Recommendations

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- Make it bigger. More planted sunflowers, more sunflower sculptures, better bunting.
- Have more ways that people can donate.
- Window competition was successful, seek to run again.
- Have a feedback form or tally at Maiden Castle Farm to measure how many people have used the Park and Stride.
- Try to gain more national press coverage.
- Measure feedback from visitors to Dorchester via Website newsletter, BID Ambassadors, tourist attractions and accommodation providers.