

HARBORNE ADVISORY · SAMPLE AREA GUIDE

Sherborne

An almanac of the town, for those about to live in it



An abbey town of ochre ham stone on the edge of the Blackmore Vale. Two castles, sixty-odd u3a groups, a Thursday and Saturday pannier market, and a direct train to Waterloo from a station you can walk to with a suitcase.

Demonstration document · researched and sourced · shown in Harborne Advisory's own palette, set in yours in production · Dorset, 2026

Concerning

This Sample

*A working demonstration, not a live client project –
and a different document, on purpose, from our city
sample.*

Sherborne was chosen because it is the kind of town where the area sells the home as much as the home does. What follows is the guide we would put in a sales office there: the schools with their current inspection positions, the trains with their times, the clubs with the days they meet, and the walks with their gradients. Every factual claim carries a numbered source, listed in full at the back, and everything was checked in August 2026.

In a live project the palette, the typefaces and the photography become yours. The format stays; everything else becomes the developer's own. Image areas marked in stone throughout are reserved for commissioned photography — the pages viewers photograph deserve photographs taken for them.

What a finished guide contains

At a glance · getting around · schools · everyday essentials · eating and drinking · sport and recreation · clubs and societies · something for everyone · outdoors and days out · two illustrated days out · the town's year · a first weekend · walks from the door · the two castles · and a full appendix of sources.

No two guides share a contents page. This one has sixty u3a groups and an unhurried afternoon in it; our Leeds sample has a rail matrix and a Tuesday. Same discipline, different town, different buyer, different book.

HOW TO READ IT

Numbers in brackets — [12] — are sources, listed at the back. Every factual claim carries one.

TIMES & SPEND

Times are a shape for the day, never a timetable. Spend bands are typical per head: free, under £10, £10–25.

THE DATE THAT MATTERS

Checked August 2026, and says so. A guide that doesn't date its claims can't be trusted twice.

IN PRODUCTION

Your brand guidelines, your photography, four weeks from brief to print-ready. Copyright assigned on final payment.

Chapter the First

The Town at a Glance

A market town of roughly 10,000 on the River Yeo at the edge of the Blackmore Vale, built almost entirely from ochre ham stone.

The town	An abbey town, two castles, a Georgian and Victorian high street and a market twice a week. Called the prettiest small town in Dorset by Simon Jenkins. [5]
Council	Dorset Council — Sherborne Town Council beneath it for gardens, open spaces and the Terrace Playing Fields. [14] [15]
Station	Sherborne, on the Waterloo to Exeter main line. Direct both ways, no changes, walkable with luggage. [2] [3]
Schools	The Gryphon School, rated Good, with a sixth form — plus five independent schools in and around the town. [10] [11] [12]
Hospital	Yeovil District Hospital, about 9km — roughly 16 minutes by bus. [16]
Clubs	Sherborne u3a runs over 60 interest groups. [13]
Sport	Rugby, football, cricket and eight tennis courts, all at the Terrace. [13]

2_h15

London, direct

10,000

townsfolk, roughly

60+

u3a groups

2

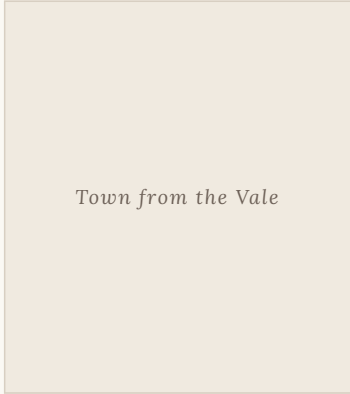
castles

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

South Bank districts sell the future; Sherborne sells the settled present. The pitch writes itself — everything on this page already exists.

THE ONE NUMBER

The station is close enough to walk to with a suitcase — rarer than it sounds in a town this size. [2]



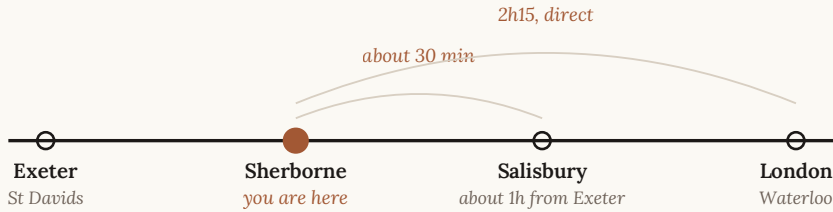
Town from the Vale

Plate reserved — commissioned
photography

Chapter the Second

Getting About

Sherborne has its own station on the Waterloo to Exeter main line, with direct trains in both directions and no changes.



The Waterloo & Exeter line, drawn as a line — not a map. South Western Railway, roughly hourly for most of the week. [2] [3] [4]

The station opened in 1860; it is staffed, and has WiFi, a café and toilets. Sherborne sits on the main line proper — direct both ways, no changes, and close enough to walk to with a suitcase. [2] [3] [4]

Nearby, by road

6 miles	Yeovil	retail, hospital and the wider job market
19 miles	Dorchester	the county town — museums and markets
30 miles	Jurassic Coast	World Heritage coastline, south
40 miles	Bath	north, for the day

The A30 runs through the town east to west. Distances approximate, for orientation.

On foot

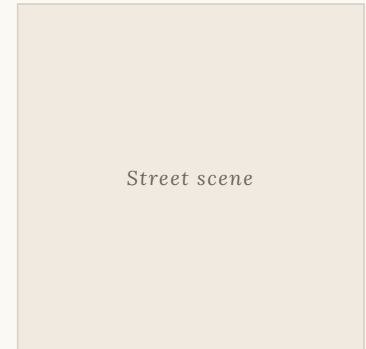
Station to Cheap Street is a few minutes' walk; the Abbey, the market, the shops and Pageant Gardens all sit in the same few streets; the castle grounds and lakeside are on the edge of the town.

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

The station is close enough to walk to with a suitcase, which is rarer than it sounds in a town this size.

BEFORE TRAVELLING

Rail times are typical journey durations from the operator and vary by service. Check southwesternrailway.com or nationalrail.co.uk. [2] [3]



Chapter the Third

Schools

Remarkably well provided for a town of 10,000 – a
Good state secondary with its own sixth form, and five
independent schools in and around the town.

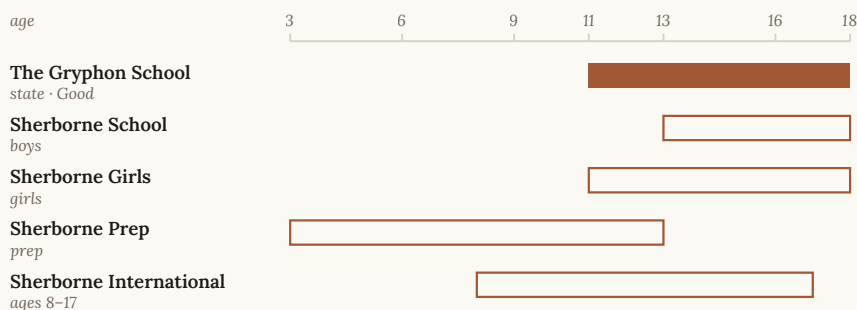
The Gryphon School

A Church of England academy for ages 11 to 18, rated **Good** by Ofsted, with a sixth form on site. Extracurricular reach includes a TEFL course, peer mentoring, the Ivy House leadership programme, Sherborne Radio and an Eco-club. [10] [11] [12]

The independent schools

Five in and around the town: Sherborne School and Sherborne Girls, both day and boarding; Sherborne Prep; Sherborne International; and Leweston, just outside. [5] [21] [22]

WHO COVERS WHICH AGES



Published age ranges. Leweston School also sits just outside the town. [5] [10] [21] [22]

How admissions work

Dorset Council is the admissions authority for state schools and allocates places against published oversubscription criteria; academies and independent schools set their own arrangements. Check the current position with Dorset Council and with each school before deciding. [14]

The independent schools shape the town's calendar. Concerts, lectures, exhibitions and sport are open to residents who have no child at any of them – and the u3a pickleball group plays at Sherborne School's sports facilities on Thursday mornings. [13]

"WILL WE GET A PLACE?"

The honest answer is to check the current position with the admissions authority – and this guide says exactly that rather than promising. [14]

"STATE OR INDEPENDENT?"

The town holds both answers. Few towns this size offer the choice. [10] [11] [12]

SMALL PRINT

School ratings change, and Ofsted has been altering how it reports them. Read the full report at reports.ofsted.gov.uk before deciding. Living near a school does not guarantee a place. [10] [14]

Chapter the Fourth

Everyday Essentials

Cheap Street is the spine of the town – Georgian and Victorian frontages masking much older medieval buildings, and almost entirely independent.



— The Cross Keys on Cheap Street – brick, stone and hanging baskets

ON CHEAP STREET

Independent fashion boutiques, antique shops and art galleries, and coffee shops and delis stocking local produce. [23] [24]

GREEN SPACE

Pageant Gardens – formal planting and a bandstand. Paddock Garden at the other end of town. The castle grounds – 42 acres and a lake. [15] [19]

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Pageant Gardens was paid for by the money raised at the 1905 Pageant. The Town Band still play the bandstand every summer. [15]

Markets

Pannier Market	Cheap Street, every Thursday and Saturday [23]
Vintage Market	last Saturday of every month [23]
Sherborne Market	monthly on a Sunday, 10am to 5pm, around the town [18]

Health & council

Yeovil District Hospital sits about 9km away – roughly 16 minutes by bus. Dorset Council handles council tax, waste and planning; the Town Council keeps the gardens, open spaces and the Terrace Playing Fields. [14] [15] [16]

Chapter the Fifth

Eating & Drinking

Cafés, bistros, pubs and restaurants across the town centre — and a lot of the produce on the menus comes from the shops a few doors down.

Names locals give first

The Plume of Feathers	opposite the Abbey
Tamburino Gold	Italian, locally recommended
The Abbey Friar	a reputation for the fish and chips
Abbey Tea Rooms	where the u3a crossword group meets [13]



— The Plume of Feathers, opposite the Abbey

Sherborne carries an unusual spread for its size — cafés, bistros, gastropubs and restaurants covering most tastes and budgets, with many independent shops stocking the local produce that turns up on the menus. Yeovil, six miles away, adds the chains and the multiplex if you want them. [24] [25]

FOOD EVENTS

Pannier Market Thursdays and Saturdays · monthly Sunday market around the town · food hall and live music at the July Classic and Supercars Show · Festive Shopping Day in early December. [18] [23] [26]

IN A LIVE PROJECT

This page names every pub, café and restaurant, and says which does the good Sunday roast.

Chapter the Sixth

Sport & Recreation

Nearly all of it in one place. The Terrace Playing Fields, run by the Town Council, are home to the rugby, football, cricket and tennis clubs.

At the Terrace

Sherborne RFC — rugby union, established 1980 — alongside Sherborne Town FC, Sherborne Cricket Club, and Sherborne Tennis Club with its eight courts; additional local football clubs complete the picture. [19] [20]

Tennis, all ages

Sherborne Tennis Club welcomes all ages and abilities, with programmes and both social and competitive events running from mini-reds at five to eight years old right through to veterans over seventy. [20]

Through the u3a

Pétanque, Wednesdays 2–4pm · table tennis, weekly afternoons · pickleball, Thursdays 10.30am · tap dancing, Fridays 10.45am · Movement to Music, two weekly sessions · Dance "Pot Pourri", second and fourth Tuesdays. [13]

Walking and hiking

The u3a runs a hiking group, out on the first Thursday of the month, a separate walking programme, and an "Out and About" group on the third Tuesday. Beyond those, the Blackmore Vale footpath network and the Castle lakeside walk start from the town itself. [13] [15]

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Everything is at the Terrace. Four codes and eight courts on one site means a family with three children has one drop-off, not three.

Playing fields

SMALL PRINT

Run by the Town Council. Clubs and sessions as published by each club. [13] [19] [20]

4

codes, one site

8

tennis courts

5

tennis from age

1

drop-off, everything

Chapter the Seventh

Clubs & Societies

. . .

Sherborne u3a alone runs over 60 interest groups, most weekly or fortnightly, across ten venues in the town and the villages around it. Registered charity 1085915. [13]

· GAMES & CARDS ·

- **Bridge** — Social, Improvers, Duplicate and Beyond Basic; four afternoons a week
- **Mah-Jong** · 1st and 3rd Thursdays
- **Scrabble & Rummikub** · alternate Wednesdays
- **Crosswords** · twice monthly, Abbey Tea Rooms
- **Pétanque** · Wednesdays 2–4pm

· MUSIC & WORDS ·

- **Choir** · weekly, Wednesday afternoons
- **Madrigals** · weekly, Monday afternoons
- **Music Appreciation** · fortnightly Fridays
- **Musical Boutique** · monthly
- Four separate **reading groups**
- **Industrial History** · 3rd Monday

· ARTS & CRAFTS ·

- **Botanical Art** and Botanical Illustration
- **Drawing** · fortnightly Tuesday mornings
- **Lace Making** · fortnightly
- **Sewcial Crafts** and Leisure Arts & Crafts
- **Art Needlework** · 1st and 3rd Wednesdays
- **Photography** · 4th Monday
- **Art Talks** and Trips

· LANGUAGES & LEARNING ·

- **French** — three groups: Conversation, Language & Culture, Think French
- **German, Italian** and two Spanish groups
- **Geology** · monthly, with winter talks
- **Science in Society** · 2nd Monday
- **Christianity Explored** · 2nd and 4th Fridays

THE SOCIAL ONES

Beer Exploration · monthly, Tuesday evenings
Coffee and Quiz · 1st Friday, 10am
Lunch Club · 1st Wednesday
Out and About · 3rd Tuesday

If you are new to a town, these four are where to start. [13]

WHERE THEY MEET

Tinneys Lane Community Centre, Digby Memorial Church Hall, Raleigh Hall, the Small Digby Hall, Cheap Street Church Hall, Chrysanthemum Hall, the Abbey Tea Rooms, Sherborne School, and village halls at Alweston and Milborne Port. [13]

BEYOND THE U3A

The Town Band at the bandstand each summer; Abbey and church congregations; the festival committees — Abbey, Literary, Country Fair — all run on volunteers.

Chapter the Eighth

Something for Everyone

The same town, described four ways — because a downsizer and a family are not buying the same thing.

For downsizers and retirees

Over 60 u3a groups, most weekly; four bridge sections across four afternoons; pétanque, table tennis and pickleball; Choir and Madrigals, both weekly; level walking in Pageant Gardens; Town Band concerts all summer; the Lunch Club and Coffee and Quiz; and a direct train to London with no changes.

For families

The Gryphon School, Good, with a sixth form; five independent schools nearby; rugby, football, cricket and tennis all at the Terrace, tennis from age five; the castle grounds, lake and Old Castle ruins; the Rare Breed Show at the May Country Fair; the Jurassic Coast around 30 miles south.

For commuters

A direct Waterloo service roughly hourly from a staffed station with WiFi and a café, walkable from the town centre; Salisbury and Exeter both direct; Yeovil six miles away for the wider job market — and a Saturday pannier market to come home to.

For younger buyers

Independent boutiques and galleries on Cheap Street; the vintage market on the last Saturday of the month; the Abbey Festival's jazz and swing as well as its choral programme; the Classic and Supercars Show each July; November fireworks at the Castle; Bath and Bristol within reach.

WHY THIS PAGE EARNS ITS PLACE

Ask a viewer where they're moving from, then open the guide at the right chapter. It turns one document into four.

Lifestyle

Chapter the Ninth

Outdoors & Days Out

Two castles, forty-two acres of Capability Brown parkland and a fifty-acre lake – all on the edge of the town, not an hour away from it.



— Sherborne Castle across the Capability Brown lake

ON FOOT FROM THE CENTRE

The Castle grounds and lakeside walk · Pageant Gardens and Paddock Garden · the Blackmore Vale footpath network · the conservation-area streets – the walk is the attraction. [15]

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Go in late October for the Autumn Colours weekend. The Capability Brown planting was designed for exactly that fortnight. [26]

Sherborne Castle & Gardens

Built by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1594 and home to the Digby family since 1617. Forty-two acres of Capability Brown landscape around a fifty-acre serpentine lake. [7] [8]

Sherborne Old Castle

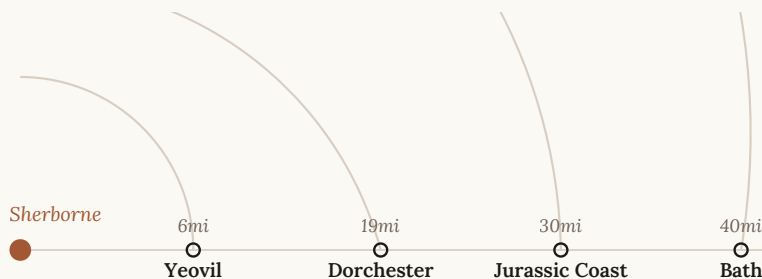
The ruins of the earlier castle stand across the lake from the newer house, and have hosted the town's Pageant. Please check current opening arrangements. [9] [15]

Sherborne Abbey

A Saxon cathedral from 705 to 1075, a Benedictine abbey from 998 to 1539, and the parish church ever since. The fan vaulting is what people travel to see. [5] [6]

Within the hour

Yeovil for retail, hospital and the wider job market · Dorchester, the county town · the World Heritage coastline · Bath for the day.



Drawn to distance, not direction – for orientation only. The A30 runs through the town east to west.

The First Itinerary

A Day Out with the Kids

A Saturday that works from about nine until five, all of it inside the town or on its edge, and only one short drive in the middle.

9.00

Pannier Market, Cheap Street

Thursdays and Saturdays. Stalls the length of the street, and the last Saturday of the month adds the vintage market. Start here while everyone is still fresh. Town car parks; free to browse. [23]

10.30

Sherborne Abbey — a three-minute walk

A Saxon cathedral from 705, a Benedictine abbey from 998, the parish church ever since. Get them to look up — the fan vaulting is the bit they remember. Free; donations. [5] [6]

11.30

Lunch on Cheap Street — five minutes on

Cafés, delis and bistros the length of it, much of the produce from the shops a few doors down. The Abbey Friar if the answer is fish and chips. Already parked; £-££ per head. [24] [25]

1.15

Sherborne Old Castle — one short drive

A ruined twelfth-century bishop's castle in the care of English Heritage, standing across the lake from the newer house. Children can get right in among it. Visitor parking; admission charged. [9]

2.15

Sherborne Castle & Gardens

Raleigh's house of 1594, the Digby family home since 1617. Forty-two acres of Capability Brown around a fifty-acre lake — room to let them run. Family entry charged. [7] [8]

SPEND PER HEAD

Free to browse the market and the Abbey; lunch under £10-25; admission at both castles.

THE WHOLE DAY, IN SHORT

Roughly 9am to 5.30pm. Under 20 minutes walking in total, and two 8-minute drives.

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Park once in town and leave it there until after lunch. The market end of Cheap Street fills up first on a Saturday.

CONTINUES

The afternoon concludes overleaf, at Pageant Gardens.

The First Itinerary, concluded

The Afternoon

One short drive out to the Castle, and the rest of the day is in forty-two acres of parkland and a ruined keep.

4.30

Pageant Gardens — back into town

Back into town for the last hour. Formal planting, a bandstand and the Town Band on it through the summer. Somewhere to sit while they burn off the rest. Town car parks; free. [15]

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

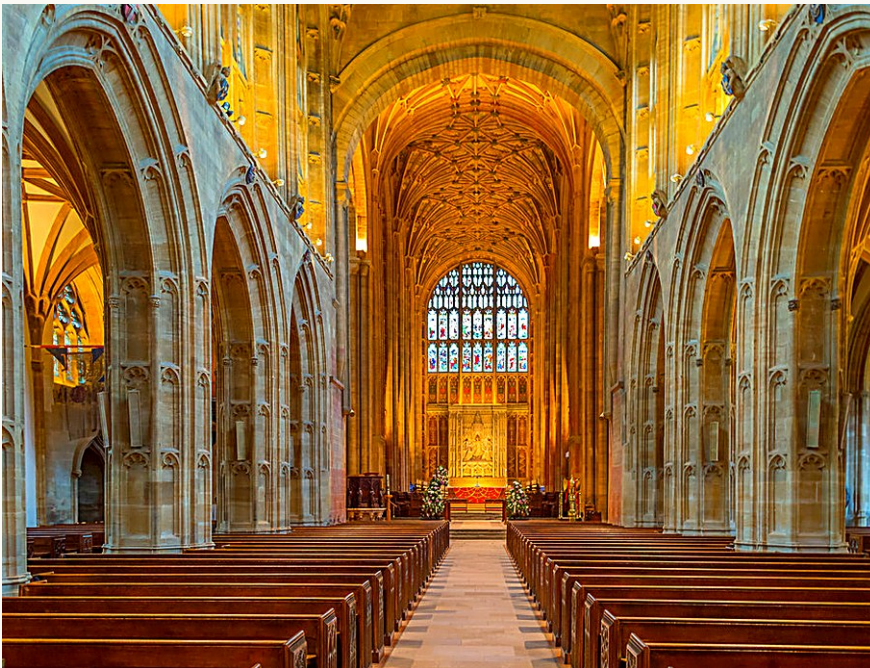
Do the Old Castle before the house. It is the one they will actually remember, and it works better on fresh legs.

SMALL PRINT

A live guide carries checked admission prices, opening seasons and parking detail for every stop, dated at publication. [7] [8] [9] [15] [23] [24]

If you would rather sit down all day

The u3a Lunch Club meets on the first Wednesday, Coffee and Quiz on the first Friday, and there are four bridge sections running four afternoons a week — the almanac's answer to a wet Saturday. [13]



— The Abbey's fan vaulting — the bit they remember

The Second Itinerary

An Unhurried Day Out

The same town at a gentler pace. Four stops, nothing more than a few minutes apart, and level ground for all of it.

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 10.30 | Coffee on Cheap Street
Independent coffee shops the length of it; under £10. The conservation-area streets are the morning's entertainment. [23] [24] |
| 11.30 | Sherborne Abbey — two minutes, level
Twelve hundred years of it, and one of the finest fan vaults in England. Seating throughout, and often something being rehearsed. Free; donations. [5] [6] |
| 1.00 | Lunch, Plume of Feathers — across the green
Directly opposite the Abbey, and a name locals give first. Sensibly priced set lunches. ££ per head. [24] |
| 2.30 | Pageant Gardens
Formal planting, benches and the bandstand. On a summer Sunday the Town Band play, and the whole afternoon takes care of itself. Free. [15] |

LEVEL GROUND

Every stop on this itinerary is step-free or benched. The distances are in minutes, not miles.

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

The u3a Lunch Club meets on the first Wednesday, with bridge sections running four afternoons a week — company without commitment. [13]

Pageant Gardens

The day, in short

Everything on this page is within a few hundred metres. You can do the whole day without moving the car once.

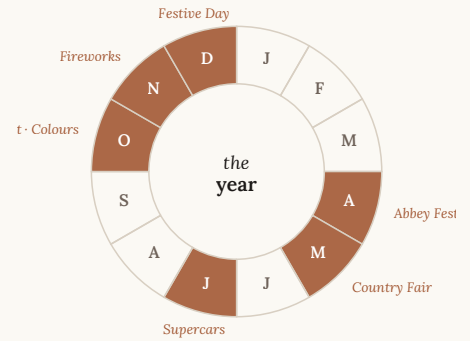
Chapter the Tenth

The Sherborne Year

· · ·

Small towns have a calendar, and joining it is how a place stops being where you live
and starts being home.

January	the quiet month — markets and the u3a carry it [13] [23]
February	—
March	—
April	Sherborne Abbey Festival begins — 30 April to 7 May in 2026. Opera, choral, classical, jazz and swing across the town [27]
May	Sherborne Castle Country Fair — one of the largest Rare Breed Shows in the country [28]
June	Town Band season at the Pageant Gardens bandstand [15]
July	Classic & Supercars Show — two thousand cars, 150 trade and autojumble stands, live music and a food hall [26]
August	bandstand Sundays continue [15]
September	—
October	Literary Festival · Autumn Colours weekend in the Capability Brown gardens, late in the month [26]
November	Fireworks Extravaganza at the Castle [26]
December	Festive Shopping Day , early in the month [26]



Ochre months carry a fixture. [26] [27] [28]

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Abbey Festival week is the one to diary.
The Abbey's acoustic is the reason
performers come, and it is the week the
town is at its best.

SMALL PRINT

Dates and programmes are set by the organisers
each year and change. [26] [27] [28]

And underneath it all, every week: the pannier market on Thursdays and
Saturdays, the vintage market on the last Saturday, and sixty-odd u3a groups
meeting through the month. [13] [23]

· THE ORDINARY WEEK ·

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Madrigals	Out & About	Choir · pétanque	Market	Coffee & Quiz	Market	Abbey

Ochre days are the ones to aim at as a newcomer: something is reliably happening, and
nobody needs to have joined anything first. [13] [18] [23]

Chapter the Eleventh

Your First Weekend

. . .

*If you moved in on a Friday, here is what we would do
with the two days that follow.*

*Sat
morning*

The Pannier Market on Cheap Street, then coffee somewhere on the same street. Walk the length of it and look up — the Georgian frontages are hiding medieval buildings. [23] [24]

*Sat
afternoon*

The Abbey, then out to the Castle grounds and round the lake. Forty-two acres of Capability Brown is a lot of afternoon. [6] [7] [8]

*Sat
evening*

Dinner at the Plume of Feathers opposite the Abbey, or Tamburino Gold. If you would rather not cook and not dress up, the Abbey Friar. [24] [25]

*Sun
morning*

A service at the Abbey, or the Blackmore Vale footpaths straight out of town. [5] [6]

*Sun
afternoon*

Pageant Gardens if the Town Band are on, or the Old Castle ruins across the lake. [9] [15]

Monday

Look up the u3a group list and pick one. Coffee and Quiz meets on the first Friday and takes newcomers. [13]

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Do the market on your first Saturday. It is the fastest way to stop being new — the same traders are there every week and they remember faces.

Weekend

Chapter the Twelfth

Walks from the Door

. . .

*Nobody in Sherborne drives to go for a walk. The four
below all start in the town, and two of them never
leave it.*

Pageant & Paddock Gardens — *in town, level*

Formal planting and the bandstand at one end of town, the quieter Paddock Garden at the other, and Cheap Street's conservation-area streets between them. The Town Band still play the bandstand each summer. [15] [19]

Castle grounds & lakeside — *edge of town, mostly level*

Forty-two acres of Capability Brown parkland around the fifty-acre serpentine lake, on the edge of the town rather than an outing from it. Check current opening arrangements before setting out. [7] [8]

The Old Castle circuit — *one slope*

Out past the twelfth-century ruins and back — the two castles face each other across the lake, and this is the walk that shows you both at once. English Heritage site; children can get right in among the ruins. [9] [15]

The Blackmore Vale — *out of town*

The footpath network into Hardy's Vale of the Little Dairies starts from the edge of town — the walk that grows with you, from an hour to a day. Waymarked routes; conditions vary seasonally. [15]

DO I NEED BOOTS?

Not in town — pavement and path throughout. The Vale is a different story after rain. [15] [19]

DO I NEED A MAP?

No, which is the point of these four. Everything except the Vale is inside the town. [15]

THE ONE TO DO FIRST

Castle grounds and lakeside — it ends facing the Old Castle across the water, the view that sells the town. [7] [9]

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

The castle grounds in the last fortnight of October are the best free thing in the town's year. [26]

Chapter the Last

The Two Castles

*Two castles, ten minutes apart, facing each other
across a lake — the thing Sherborne is famous for gets
its own chapter.*

The ruin — twelfth century

Sherborne Old Castle: a ruined bishop's palace in the care of English Heritage, standing alone on the lake side away from town. It is a ruin you can climb through rather than look at from a rope — children can get right in among it. Admission charged; visitor parking. [9]

The house — 1594

Sherborne Castle & Gardens: built by Sir Walter Raleigh and home to the Digby family since 1617, with forty-two acres of Capability Brown landscape around a fifty-acre serpentine lake. Seasonal opening. [7] [8]

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

They are different owners and different tickets — English Heritage for the ruin, the estate for the house. Nobody discovers this until the second gate, so say it at the first one. [7] [9]

Castle across the lake



Nine centuries on one line. Old Castle history and Pageant per English Heritage and the Town Council. [9] [15]

· WHICH IS WHICH ·

	<i>The ruin</i>	<i>The house</i>
Built	twelfth century	1594
Cared for by	English Heritage	the Digby estate
Ticket	its own	a separate one
Best for	children, and climbing	the parkland and lake

On a viewing day

Old Castle first, on fresh legs — it is the one children remember [9] · the lakeside walk between the two is the connective tissue [7] · late October for the autumn colours, planted for that fortnight [26].

Admission prices, opening seasons and parking are confirmed with each operator and dated at publication in a live guide. [7] [8] [9] [26]

Appendix

Sources

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Every factual claim carries a reference number. All sources accessed and checked in August 2026.

HARBORNE ADVISORY

Local area guides *for new homes developments*

• • •

*Researched on the ground, sourced on the page, designed to your brand.
This almanac is one voice of the format; our city sample speaks in another
entirely.*

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