

Honorary Alderman reply speech.

Thank you Madam Chairman and thank you colleagues, friends for recognising my 20 years of service on this Council, Uniquely, as I may have mentioned before, in 1974 I was working for the old Sturminster Rural District Council and so I was there at the start of North Dorset District Council and now, sadly, I am here, 45 years later, to witness it's demise. N. Dorset was a good Council with a great atmosphere of working together, from both Officers and elected Members, for the benefit of our residents.

Looking back at my two decades as a District Councillor it can be divided into two parts, in the first half Michael and I helped achieve much for Sturminster Newton despite the closure of both the Cattle Market and the Cheese Factory, a leisure Centre, The Trailway, The Exchange and not forgetting Sturquest the first Community Partnership in the UK that won many awards for this Council.

The fact that Sturquest no longer exists signals that our second decade has been a constant round of Central Government Grant reductions resulting in the formation of the new unitary Dorset Council in a few weeks time, a decision we were, in reality, forced to make to ensure we continued to deliver essential services to our residents.

I wish to pay tribute to my two friends Michael and Bill who along with myself were first elected in 1999 'the 99ers' and who did such a great job in their different roles, at the same time we must remember those who started out with us and are sadly no longer here to share this day with us.

In 2015 you did me the great honour of electing me as your Chairman a role I greatly enjoyed even though I was never to achieve the standards set by previous holders I tried my best to represent this Council well as I lunched my way across the County!

I must not forget the support I received from all Council Officers and in particular, Democratic Services who did so much to assist me in dealing with the confusing world of Local Government I shall miss them all.

Finally, I must thank my lovely wife Liz who has supported me through elections, delivering leaflets, even attending the election counts, assisting me when I was Chairman and not forgetting the phone calls from residents just as a meal is ready!

And so as the power and status is drained away from me I will end with thank you all it has been great fun!

Cllr Victor Fox.

NDDC 1999-2019.