

The District Council was Formed on 1 April 1974 from the municipal boroughs of, Blandford, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton Rural District Councils.

On March 31st North Dorset District Council and other councils like us in Dorset will cease to exist, and on April 1st 2019 the new Dorset Council will be up and running, so after 45 years it is time to say goodbye, auf wiedersehen, au revoir & adios to North Dorset District Council

But before we do..... I would like to say a few words about team north Dorset, because we are a team.

It has been my absolute privilege to serve as the Leader of this Council these past two years,

Steering this colossal tanker into the Port of Unitarization has been epic,

and there is no way I could have done this without the support & backing of you, the members, my cabinet and importantly our fantastic officers, every single one of them. I'm pleased that the new Dorset Council, with a budget of £294million, was able to start out by investing extra money in children's and adult services, some of that due to North Dorset councillors who have served on the shadow council and ensured that it happened.

From Past Chief executives to past junior officers, from bin men to directors every single one has made our Council the envy of others.

For the staff going forward and those seeking pastures new It goes without saying, that we members at North Dorset give our hearty and grateful thanks to all of you, that have worked so diligently with us over the past decades.

I would also like to record my thanks to.....

My dedicated, loyal & hard-working team of Cabinet members, who have supported me unwaveringly.

Deputy leader David Walsh, how he escaped going to the South West Councils meetings in Exeter is beyond me!I cut my teeth there,I know that pain!

Sherry Jespersen who's been fantastically supportive to me and without whom I'd have probably sworn a lot more, or gotten into trouble!

Andrew Kerby, Michael Roake, Piers Brown my three musketeers, knowing you guys had my back and I could count on you gave me great strength and confidence. Top blokes!

Chairman, Friends: I make no apologies for recognising the 297 years of outstanding service given by the following. That is almost three centuries of dedication.

Audrey Burch former cabinet member Licensing vice chair & being Vice Chairman of this Council

Bill Batty-Smith who has been a stalwart as Chairman of the Planning Committee since god was a boy

Pauline Batstone one-time Cabinet member & scrutineer dedicated to Sturminster & its surrounds.

Derek Beer for his years spent in the Licensing chair and for sharing the pain of following Yeovil Town

Deborah Croney an excellent former leader of this Council, and the architect of our success at Dorset Councils Partnership.

Charles Dowden Vice Chairman of planning thanks for leaving me you know who in Marnhull to deal with

Jo Francis, dedicated to the good folk of Shaftesbury, the District planning committee, and our shared love of dogs

Andrew Cattaway thank you for your comitment to the Council and your service in your cabinet role

Barry Cooper thank you for always asking the awkward questions,

Victor Fox, as a long-standing contributor to NDDC with a number of key roles including chairman

Mike Gould I was going to say something nice, then you joined the LibDems, but no, seriously Mike you're great!

Traci Handford for your commitment to the Blandford business community & work on the Town Team

Gary Jefferson for your contributions to Scrutiny & cabinet & making me fight to be leader.

Catherine Langham work on Planning & dedication to the parishes you represent.

Noc & Alex although your time with us here was brief I wish you luck in future endeavours moving towards the unitary council & keeping the average age of councillors under 70.

Emma Parker, thanks for your role and becoming Chairman of Licensing, loving vodka and wine and being feisty with it!

Simon Pritchard for your unique style & sometimes witt.....

Val Potheary Chairman of Council and former cabinet member, Gillingham all rounder

Belinda Ridout who's worked tirelessly for Gillingham Community & excelled at planning and scrutiny

Deirdre Skipwith whose contribution to licensing and the AoNB was always appreciated and interseting

Jane Somper a formidable Scrutiny Chair & great taste in handbags

Team Stayt, Jackie & John I salute you for your unwavering attendance and dedication to our council

John Tanner, committed to Blandford & passionate about affordable housing

Peter Williams I wish you good health, you're a valued Planning member & contributor to our group

Jane Westbrook who is an exemplary ward councillor Planning committee member valued member of this council, enjoy your freedom!

Members, all of us who have represented this wonderful little Council.....

We must make sure we don't fall into the ranks of the "**Ustabees**".

I have met so many over the years, "Oh"!, I used to be so and so or "Of Course" I used to be such an such.....because we are not consigning the friendliness or innovation of our Council to the history books. Pinch yourself if you ever refer to yourself as a "Ustabee"

Those going forward, if successful, must make it their priority to sprinkle the North Dorset fairy dust amongst the new council and councillors to ensure our ethics continue within the new Dorset council

Ladies & Gentlemen, I think, we can truly say

.....We are proud to have served the people of North Dorset, and we most certainly have had the very best District Council. And that's a Fact..