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## NORTH DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL FULL COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 8 MARCH 2019

**Present:** Cllrs P Batstone, B Batty-Smith MBE, P Brown, A Burch (Vice-Chairman), G Carr-Jones, A Cattaway, A Chase, B Cooper, D Croney, V Fox, J Francis, M Gould, S Jespersen, A Kerby, N Lacey-Clarke, C Langham, E Parker, V Potheary (Chairman), B Ridout, M Roake, D Skipwith, J Somper, Jackie Stayt, John Stayt, J Tanner, D Walsh, J Westbrook and P Williams MBE

**Apologies:** Cllrs D Beer, C Dowden, T Handford and G Jefferson

**Also present:**

**Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):**

Stuart Caundle (Head of Paid Service), Stephen Hill (Strategic Director), Elaine Tibble (Democratic Services Officer) and Jason Vaughan (Strategic Director)

#### 41. **Chairman's Notices**

The Chairman reminded members that there would be a flag raising ceremony at the Nordon flagpole at 09.45 the following Monday to commemorate Commonwealth Day.

#### 42. **Code of Conduct**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 43. **Minutes**

The minutes of the last Full Council meeting, dated 25 January 2019 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

#### 44. **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

#### 45. **Adoption of Dorset AONB Management Plan 2019-2024**

The Portfolio holder for Planning presented the report which had progressed through Cabinet and enabled the statutory reviews of the two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans (for the Dorset and Cranborne Chase AONBs) to be completed.

Proposed by Cllr Walsh, seconded by Cllr Burch.

**Decision: That the Dorset AONB Management Plan, included as Appendix 1 of the report, and the Cranborne Chase AONB Management Plan, included as Appendix 2, was adopted**

#### 46. **Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2031**

The Portfolio holder for Planning handed over to the Portfolio holder for Environment to present the report to make the Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2031, part of the development plan for use in planning decisions in the Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Area. The portfolio holder thanked members of the Planning Policy team for their commitment and perseverance to the Plan.

Proposed by Cllr Walsh, seconded by Cllr Roake.

**Decision:**

- a) **That the District Council made the Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan 2016 - 2031 (as set out in Appendix A) part of the statutory development plan for the Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Area**
- b) **That the District Council offered its congratulations to Sturminster Newton Town Council and members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group in producing a successful neighbourhood plan.**

The Chairman also congratulated Sturminster Newton on a well made plan.

**47. Hazelbury Bryan Neighbourhood Plan 2018 to 2031**

Cllr Batstone presented the report to make the Hazelbury Bryan Neighbourhood Plan 2018 to 2031 part of the development plan for use in planning decisions in the Hazelbury Bryan Neighbourhood Area. She thanked Officers and those who had worked on the Plan.

Proposed by Cllr Batstone, seconded by Cllr Walsh

**Decision:**

- a) **That the District Council made the Hazelbury Bryan Neighbourhood Plan 2018 to 2031 (as set out in Appendix A) part of the statutory development plan for the Hazelbury Bryan Neighbourhood Area.**
- b) **That the District Council offered its congratulations to Hazelbury Bryan Parish Council and members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group in producing a successful neighbourhood plan.**

The Chairman also congratulated Hazelbury Bryan on a well made plan.

**48. Cabinet Members Final Reports**

The Cabinet members presented their final reports to the Council and thanked officers for their support in their work.

49. **Leader's Portfolio speech**  
**Closing Speeches attached**

Councillor Walsh's tribute to Cllr Carr-Jones (Leader)  
Cllr Carr-Jones final speech  
Chairman (Cllr Potheary) final speech

**Duration of meeting:** 12.20 - 1.20 pm

**Chairman**

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Colleagues, this will be my final Housing Portfolio Holder update before NDDC is reborn.

Before I hang up my boots, I wanted to talk about some of the things I am most pleased to have achieved during the time I have had the honour of being the council's lead on Housing

Let me start by drawing your attention to a number of significant affordable housing developments successfully built over the years, such as those in Shaftesbury, Blandford, Gillingham, Sturminster Newton, and many other places

Everywhere you go around North Dorset you can see evidence of the hard work that has gone into building new affordable homes over many years, and this could not have been achieved without the support of you here today. This has been very much appreciated.

We have supported these schemes, and put money into them to ensure that local people have somewhere decent and inexpensive to live.

This does not just ensure that some settlements remain viable into the future, but can be instrumental in helping these communities to flourish.

For a variety of complex reasons, 2018/19 will not be a vintage year in terms of affordable housing completions, though we are expecting 2019/20 to be much, much better, as evidenced at committee through the redevelopment of our old offices at Nordon.....Looking forward I am expecting these homes to be extremely popular with local people.

One of the key things I have focused on over the last few years is ensuring that our relations with the predominant housing association, Spectrum, now part of Sovereign, are as good as they can be.

We regularly meet with them at a senior level, which helps us to better understand their business, but also helps them to appreciate what our priorities are for North Dorset communities

And we hold them to account.....in the last year, for example, we have challenged them over their disposals programme, over certain aspects of disrepair to their homes and so on. We also meet regularly with other key housing associations locally, including Magna, Stonewater, Aster and Yarlington.

One of my most important roles as a ward member and the Housing lead is to do what I can to help local people experiencing housing-related problems

I know that is something that we all do as elected members, and if you are anything like me, housing-related problems are amongst the most complex and

hard to resolve issues that we come across, not to mention the sheer volume of cases brought to our attention.

I'm sure you'll agree that it can be humbling to see the personal difficulties that some people are going through, and how gratifying it can be to have been of assistance.

We are moving into a brand new era, which for Housing will be exciting.

Whereas two/ three years ago, we brought three council Housing services together, in April we will be bringing a further two districts together into one.

I can see huge benefits from being in the same organisation of other related services, such as adult social care, social care commissioning, public health...rather than battling against each other and protecting the budgets in our own little silos, we'll all be part of the same organisation, we'll be collaborating instead of competing, which can only positive thing

I think that the future for Housing within Dorset Council looks promising, exciting, challenging, and rewarding.

I'd like to thank Clive Milone, Sarah Howe & of course all of the dedicated Housing team for their input over the years, and all those who have contributed to our successes and without whom none of it would have been possible.

That concludes my final Housing Portfolio Holder briefing. Thank you very much.

Well Graham, you can't threaten me with the Finance Portfolio anymore or South West Councils ..... great get togethers.

So what am I going to say??

**3<sup>rd</sup> August 2016 newspaper**

## **New leader elected for North Dorset District Council**

**The new leader of North Dorset District Council has been elected.**

Graham Carr-Jones has replaced Deborah Croney, who announced she was stepping down last month after becoming county council cabinet member for learning and skills.

Mr Carr Jones has been a councillor since 2003 and was previously the deputy leader on the Conservative-run authority.

He said he was "really looking forward to taking on this new role"

He was right, because this was a totally new role.

I have only known 3 Leaders of North Dorset District Council and they have all been very different each one had to take on a different role because each one faced a different Challenge. Graham was right in his quote that this was a new role because this was a Challenge North Dorset had never previously encountered in fact very few Councils had at that time come across Local Government Reorganisation. There was no template for Dorset for him to follow

Thankfully, Deborah was a great believer in Succession Planning and the day Graham took the helm he was already up to speed with everything that was going on and that was essential for North Dorset having a voice at the table of the many meetings that we attended.

Graham was reported in Somerset Live, to be one of 6 Council Leaders pledging their commitment to plans to change local government in the county,

He said: “The future Dorset Plan will bring £108million of savings in the first 6 years through economies of scale and reduced costs.”

“These savings could turn the tide and make money available to empty the bins, fix the roads, protect Parks and Open Spaces and run libraries- things that will be under very real threat if there is no change.”

He said, “The reduction in the number of Councillors – currently standing at 330 across the Authorities – would save more than £1million in costs.”

Graham has been very clear and open from the start as to the reasons why Local Government Reorganisation was necessary but there were long periods of frustration whilst we waited for news It was essential that Government did not forget us with all the other things they had on their plates To keep our aspiration in governments, mind alive on a number of occasions Graham and others would visit Parliament to ensure that the Secretary of State and others were keeping things on track to come into effect in April 2019 and these visits to Ministers obviously paid off.

Many, many meetings were held and we spent many hours with all the Leaders and Chief Execs, but at the time of the Somerset reporting 3 Councils were not on side and that made for meetings where certain Leaders were not given a Mandate to speak from their councils so at times it seemed that progress was slow and though frustrating Graham kept his cool, until on the drive home, when he would bend my ear but that is how it should be

In those meetings, the leaders sit around the centre tables and the deputies sit behind them around the edge of the room quietly, it is very formal. At the beginning of my involvement leaders started to talk about planning in Dorset at that point Graham asked the Chair if they would like the chairman of the Dorset Strategic Planning Forum Cllr Walsh to come to the table and address them? the response was in the affirmative. Thankfully I was still awake but totally unprepared and in David trying to wing it very enthusiastically definitely over enthusiastically. The Dorset Strategic Planning Forum was nearly dissolved for having aspirations to take over the world. I knew that I had mucked up and Graham just looked at me and said “well you really messed that up didn’t you?” Yes, Graham but a bit of warning next time would help. at least from that point those around the table knew that I had a voice and was not just there to carry my leader’s bag

Though he can be diplomatic. One of Graham's strengths is his forthrightness. To Graham a spade is a spade and he will speak straight to the point when others would perhaps pussy foot around until the next meeting, but he was disciplined in his approach and was always willing to listen to the views of others....before ignoring them! People trust him because he means what he says and he says what he means you always know where you stand with Graham being a man of loyalty and honour, he is great to have on your side and he will do whatever he can to support his members regardless of their party politics if you mucked up but were straight with him, he would be your best advocate

Working with Graham, I have seen his confidence grow and grow, now making quite a presence in even the highest of forums, where not only is he listened to, but his views are sought.

9 months ago, we received the go ahead from government and from then on we had to pick up the momentum to be safe and legal for Day 1.

All the way through this long process, Graham's concern was keeping everyone informed, involved and in the loop Members and Public alike so it was well suited when Graham was made Lead at the Shadow Council on Member Engagement and Communications realised as vital by everyone and in this role, he made great strides forward.

Graham hated that less was going on for member involvement which is why he pushed for members to be engaged and attend as many briefings as could be given Members then being conduits would disperse that information down to their Towns and Parish Councils So that everyone would know what was going on

Graham is dedicated and very hard working, I know for a fact that his work day starts at 5 am

No one could have worked harder than he has, leading us all, with eyes wide open into an unknown new era of Local Government for Dorset. I have learnt a great deal from Graham and listened sometimes in awe after he has spoken, I am left thinking, where did he pull that gem from?

Graham Carr-Jones it has been a pleasure working with you: At times

and for what you have done what you have achieved for all the people of North Dorset I thank you and applaud you

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 1<sup>st</sup> 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..

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## **LAST COUNCIL**

It is not very often in one's lifetime that we knowingly participate in a moment of genuine History.

Today; fellow councillors, officers, ladies and gentlemen is one such day.

We may not generate the impact of a Tsunami or major Earthquake. Indeed your grandchildren may never ask "where were you at the end of the NDDC" - but nevertheless today marks a major and fundamental change in the structure of local government, here, and indeed across our county.

What we commemorate today affects the lives of everyone, the councillors, officers, residents, services users and suppliers of NDDC. It affects all of our constituents, the names and boundaries of our wards and, in due course, it will impact on the duties and responsibilities of town and parish councils throughout Dorset.

### **We must make some time today to look back and recognise our Past Achievements**

Having lived under the NDDC umbrella for over 50 years and been a councillor for 12 years I can say that during my time alone there are have certainly been people and accomplishments that we can all be proud of. I am delighted that some of those people are here today and later we will all have the opportunity to thank them for their dedication and their service.

I have typed up my personal memories and pride in our accomplishments and have placed them on the display table – otherwise we would have been here all day!

But I would just like to share a quote from Hilary Ritchie, who cannot be with us, speaking about the Community Partnership model "The combination of building strength in the community right across the district and being able to support them with staff and office resources and project funding was a real and lasting success and legacy. It was the envy of many, but took the bravery of our little authority to achieve.

And a message from Hilary:-

"I am sorry not to be there with you today. NDDC deserves to be celebrating all that it has achieved. It was always the best Dorset council by far (and I believe better than most others as well) and was never afraid to try something new.

We had so many notable successes over the years. For a small authority with a small budget to always be positive and find ways of making things happen, so that our community had what it needed and wanted, was no mean feat. But we did it. Not just once, but time and again. We always worked with and for our community and wherever possible, gave them the choices and empowerment."

I echo that view and have been extremely proud to be a member of this council – and even prouder to be its chairman.

## **So let us take a moment to consider the Future**

Changing the name, the boundaries and even the remit of the new Unitary Authority will not and cannot, alter the challenges we face.

North Dorset will not disappear with the council boundary.

Our constituents will continue to struggle with the consequences of poor communications, both physical and electronic.

We must work together to tackle the problems of personal and rural isolation, find the means to deal with the strains on our social and health care services, and develop the education and training resources needed to improve our local economy. Everyone here has been working hard on activities, projects and programmes - all intended to improve our quality of life. Everybody here knows the work isn't done yet!

## **So we come to the end of NDDC**

There are some things that we must give up .....our chain of office, our seal, our jobs and 'job titles' - even our leader!

But there are other things which I believe we must never lose. Things that I have been particularly proud of about the way this council behaves and conducts itself

- We have kept and continue to keep a sense of duty and responsibility to our residents
- We behave with civility to each other - whatever our persuasions (I use the term loosely)
- We act with respect and appreciation for our officers
- We have worked hard to acquire the confidence and knowledge to challenge officers and their departments, when required
- We have been frugal – we have dug deep and taken tough and unpalatable decisions – working in cooperation to make the best and most effective use of ever dwindling resources
- But above all, I believe we have worked with the principles of honesty and fairness and a willingness to hear, (if not always to embrace) another's point of view.

I believe, my fellow councillors, that these are the lasting attributes and qualities of North Dorset District Council. That is what makes us special.

It is my sincerest hope, that those who are elected in May, will take our values and principles with them. Lead by example and encourage (no insist) that the new Dorset Council adopts them.

Thank you for coming today. Thank you for everything you have done in the past. I salute you all.