

STURMINSTER NEWTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Held on **Thursday 7th March 2019** in the Council Chamber at 7.15 pm

Present :

Councillor A Donaldson

Councillor V Fox

Councillor C Fraser

Councillor M Jones (Deputy Mayor)

Councillor H Reed

Councillor G Rose

Councillor R Taylor

Absent: Cllr H Lacey (Mayor), Cllr Batstone, Cllr Chater

In attendance: Mrs Emma Lindsay (Town Clerk) and Miss Kate Squire (Finance Officer)
 Four members of the public were present.

Minute No.	COMMENTS	RESOLUTION <small>for each item the proposer is named first followed by the seconder</small>
TC/37/19	<p>PUBLIC SESSION</p> <p>Mike Woods from the Community Benefit Society attended with a member of staff from Colten Care to discuss a proposal for Sturminster Newton becoming a Dementia Friendly Town. This matter was discussed later in agenda item 8. A member of the public requested that more litter bins should be located at the Mill.</p> <p>A member of the public presented concerns regarding a planning application that was discussed later in the meeting as part of agenda item 7.</p> <p>Mike Woods from the Community Benefit Society also addressed the Council regarding the Town Website agenda item.</p>	
TC/38/19	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies were received from Cllr Batstone and Cllr Lacey. These apologies were accepted by the Members present.</p>	
TC/39/19	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS</p> <p>Cllr Fox declared an interest as a member of North Dorset Planning Committee and would not be commenting on the plans outlined in Agenda Item No 7.</p>	
TC/40/19	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COMMITTEE MEETING</p> <p>The minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 7th February 2019, having been circulated and publicised prior to the meeting, were taken as read and approved for signature by the Chairman as a true and correct record.</p>	<p>Cllr Reed Cllr Donaldson</p>
TC/41/19	<p>TO APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEE MEETINGS:</p> <p>i Planning and Environment – The minutes of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 21st February 2019 had been circulated and publicised in draft form.</p> <p>There were no recommendations to approve.</p>	
TC/42/19	<p>FINANCIAL MATTERS</p> <p><u>i. Approval of Payments</u></p> <p>The list of payments detailed below and checked by Cllrs Donaldson and Reed were APPROVED.</p>	<p>Cllr Donaldson Cllr Reed</p>

Chair's initials

ii. Budget Comparison as at 31st January 2019

The Budget Comparison as at 31st January 2019 was **APPROVED**.

Cllr Rose
Cllr Donaldson

iii. Proposed Budget Virements

The Town Clerk proposed the following virements:

The Clerk explained that the office server required urgent replacement and requested approval that a virement from Code 1000 Office Salaries to Code 1020 Office Facilities of £3000 be approved.

The Clerk explained that the Costs of the DCC Rangers service had increased this year and requested a virement from Code 2000 Grounds Salaries to Code 2140 Open Spaces of £1500 to cover the increase in costs be approved.

The Council RESOLVED TO APPROVE the proposed virements and delegated authority to the Clerk to replace the office server.

Cllr Rose
Cllr Reed

TC/43/19 CONSIDERATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

1.

2/2019/0179/FUL – Consultee Comment from Sturminster Newton Town Council

Plot 5, North Dorset Bus Park, Rolls Mill Way, Sturminster Newton, Dorset

Erect building for Light Industrial (Class B1@), General Industrial (Class B2) and Storage and Distribution (Class B8) uses.

The Town Council does not object as this is a business park site, however the Council recommends that the following conditions to be implemented:

Cllr Fraser
Cllr Reed

1. A landscape scheme that mitigates the impact on the neighbouring properties and minimises noise.

2. That the colour of the building should be carefully considered to merge with the skyline.

3. That the activities on site be limited to the working day only.

2.

2/2019/0117/HOUSE – Consultee Comment from Sturminster Newton Town Council

Lindens Cottage, The Row, Sturminster Newton, Dorset, DT10 1AU

Erect single storey front extension.

No objections as the plans are in keeping with the policies of the neighbourhood plan.

Cllr Taylor
Cllr Reed

TC/44/19 DEMENTIA FRIENDLY TOWN

After considering the written report circulated with the meeting papers.

The Council RESOLVED to endorse the work of the Community Benefit Society in proposing to make Sturminster Newton a Dementia friendly town. Cllr Reed will support the Dementia Action Group as a representative of the Town Council.

Cllr Donaldson
Cllr Rose

TC/45/19 TOWN WEBSITE

After considering the written report circulated with the meeting papers.

The Council RESOLVED to transfer the ownership of the Town Website to the Community Benefit Society with a contribution of £500 towards running costs.

Cllr Rose
Cllr Reed

- TC/46/19 ENHANCEMENT OF THE SCOUT HUT
After considering the letter circulated with the meeting papers.
The Council RESOLVED to APPROVE the request that the Williams Williams Trust investigate the feasibility of a project to enhance the Scout Hut.
- TC/47/19 FINANCIAL RISK ASSESMENT
After considering the report circulated with the meeting papers.
The Council RESOLVED to ADOPT the Financial Risk Assessment for 2018/19.
- TC/48/19 STANDING ORDERS
The Council discussed the draft Standing Orders that were circulated with the meeting papers. Following minor amendments the Council adopted the Standing Orders attached to these minutes (Appendix 1)
The Council RESOLVED to ADOPT the revised Standing Orders.
- TC/49/19 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS
The Council discussed the draft Financial Regulations that were circulated with the meeting papers. Following minor amendments the Council adopted the Financial Regulations attached to these minutes. (Appendix 2)
The Council RESOLVED to ADOPT the revised Financial Regulations.
- TC/50/19 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS
The Clerk introduced the schedule of meetings and suggested amending the August Planning and Environment meeting date.
The Council RESOLVED to APPROVE the schedule of meetings for the next municipal year as amended.
- TC/51/19 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS
District Councillor Fox's report, having been previously circulated is included at the end of these minutes.
- TC/52/19 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT
County Councillor Batstone's report, having been previously circulated is included at the end of these minutes.
- TC/53/19 TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT
The Town Mayor had sent apologies. No report was received.
- TC/54/19 DAPTC AND NALC
The Town Clerk advised that she had received a questionnaire from NALC regarding the issue of on street antisocial parking in Towns.
- TC/55/19 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT
The Town Clerk advised the Council that work had begun on the End of Year preparations. She advised that the Annual Town Meeting would be held on 14th March 19 at 7.30pm. The Clerk also advised that there will be an event for prospective Councillors on Wednesday the 20th March at 6.30pm – 8.00pm
- TC/56/19 CORRESPONDENCE
One item of correspondence had been received. This was a response regarding the application to the Future High Street Fund. Unfortunately the application was not successful.
- TC/57/19 INFORMATION FROM MEMBERS
Cllr Donaldson – Reported that he had been to the new Community Café run by which was well worth a visit and seemed well supported.

Cllr Donaldson
Cllr Fraser

Cllr Rose
Cllr Reed

Cllr Reed
Cllr Taylor

Cllr Reed
Cllr Rose

Cllr Reed
Cllr Donaldson

Meeting closed at 8.48pm

Sturminster Newton Town Council

BACS Payments for Town Council 7/3/19

Start of year 01/04/18

Tn no	Cheque	Gross	Vat	Net Invoice	date	Details	Cheque Total
2066	BACS1903 12A	£20.00	£3.33	£16.67	28/02/19	The Exchange - Civic Day Set Up/Clear Charge	
2067	BACS1903 12A	£110.00	£4.17	£105.83	28/02/19	The Exchange - Civic Day Room Hire	
1		£85.00	£0.00	£85.00		OA Room Hire	
2		£25.00	£4.17	£20.83		OA Cutlery and Crockery Hire	
2068	BACS1903 12A	£133.00	£15.75	£117.25	28/02/19	The Exchange - February Recharges	
1		£58.69	£9.78	£48.91		OA February Electricity Recharge	
2		£5.81	£0.97	£4.84		OA February Alarms Recharge	
3		£20.79	£0.00	£20.79		OA February Water Recharge	
4		£27.41	£4.57	£22.84		OA February Gas Recharge	
5		£2.60	£0.43	£2.17		OA February Refuse Recharge	
6		£17.70	£0.00	£17.70		OA February Insurance Recharge	
2069	BACS1903 12A	£132.56	£15.75	£116.81	31/10/18	The Exchange - October Recharges	
1		£58.69	£9.78	£48.91		OA October Electricity Recharge	
2		£5.81	£0.97	£4.84		OA October Alarm Recharge	
3		£20.79	£0.00	£20.79		OA October Water Recharge	
4		£27.41	£4.57	£22.84		OA October Gas Recharge	
5		£2.60	£0.43	£2.17		OA October Refuse Recharge	
6		£17.26	£0.00	£17.26		OA October Insurance Recharge	
2080	BACS1903 12A	£280.42	£46.74	£233.68	28/02/19	The Exchange - New Boiler Contribution 7% of £3338.33 net	£675.98
2070	BACS1903 12B	£72.00	£12.00	£60.00	07/02/19	Society Of Local Council Clerks - Managing Local Council Elections Webinar - E Lindsay	£72.00
2087	BACS1903 12BCR	-£36.00	-£6.00	-£30.00	01/03/19	Society Of Local Council Clerks - Credit Costing Error Election Webinar	-£36.00
2071	BACS1903 12C	£140.00	£0.00	£140.00	28/02/19	Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils - The Planning System Training E Lindsay, A Donaldson, R Taylor	£140.00
2072	BACS1903 12D	£99.00	£0.00	£99.00	25/02/19	Unity (Sturminster Newton) CIC - Quarter Page Advert Annual Town Meeting	£99.00
2073	BACS1903 12E	£3,029.70	£504.95	£2,524.75	10/01/19	Philip Hughes Associates - Sturminster Mill Balancing Fee	£3,029.70

Chair's initials

2074	BACS1903 12F	£663.00	£0.00	£663.00	28/02/19	Hope2Bake - Buffet for Civic Day	£663.00
2075	BACS1903 12G	£600.00	£100.00	£500.00	12/02/19	Dorset County Council - Tree Inspection	£600.00
2076	BACS1903 12H	£288.00	£48.00	£240.00	07/02/19	J.A.T Electrical - PAT for workshop and office	
2077	BACS1903 12H	£73.20	£12.20	£61.00	14/02/19	J.A.T Electrical - Emergency Lighting Maintenance	£361.20
2078	BACS1903 12J	£117.60	£19.60	£98.00	25/02/19	Partnership Security Ltd - Annual Service of CCTV Public Toilets	£117.60
2079	BACS1903 12K	£15.00	£2.50	£12.50	28/02/19	Hart & Sons (Dorset) Ltd - Smoke Alarm Office Kitchen	£15.00
2081	BACS1903 12L	£177.74	£29.62	£148.12	20/02/19	Cox C.J Ltd - Grease Cartridge/Seat Covers	
2082	BACS1903 12L	£14.60	£2.43	£12.17	19/02/19	Cox C.J Ltd - Mower Bearings	£192.34
2083	BACS1903 12M	£85.51	£14.25	£71.26	25/02/19	Northover G & Sons Ltd - Fuel	
2084	BACS1903 12M	£35.10	£1.67	£33.43	25/02/19	Northover G & Sons Ltd - Fuel	£120.61
2085	BACS1903 12N	£76.28	£3.63	£72.65	04/03/19	Southern Electric - Footway Lighting	
2086	BACS1903 12N	£16.42	£0.78	£15.64	07/03/19	Southern Electric - Footway Lighting	£92.70
2088	BACS1903 12P	£360.00	£60.00	£300.00	31/01/19	Farnfields Solicitors - Legal Advice Honeymead Fields	£360.00
2089	BACS1903 12Q	£28.28	£4.71	£23.57	07/02/19	Sturminster Newton Building Supplies - Hand Cleaner, Masks and Brushes	
2090	BACS1903 12Q	£13.20	£2.20	£11.00	11/02/19	Sturminster Newton Building Supplies - Cement Mixer Hire 1 Day	
2091	BACS1903 12Q	£37.87	£6.31	£31.56	13/02/19	Sturminster Newton Building Supplies - Turtle Wax, Flap Disc, Hammerite, Brush, Bolt	
2092	BACS1903 12Q	£66.54	£11.09	£55.45	13/02/19	Sturminster Newton Building Supplies - Ballast and Cement	£145.89
2093	BACS1903 12R	£25.66	£3.89	£21.77	01/02/19	Wynnstay (Agricultural Supplies) Ltd - Yard Scraper, Handle	
	1	£23.33	£3.89	£19.44		AS Goods	
	2	£2.33	£0.00	£2.33		AS Credit Charge	
2094	BACS1903 12R	£6.60	£1.00	£5.60	01/02/19	Wynnstay (Agricultural Supplies) Ltd - Hook on Plate	
	1	£6.00	£1.00	£5.00		AS Goods	
	2	£0.60	£0.00	£0.60		AS Credit Charge	
2095	BACS1903 12R	£195.24	£29.58	£165.66	01/02/19	Wynnstay (Agricultural Supplies) Ltd - Gate Posts	£227.50

Chair's initials

						and Fixings	
1		£177.49	£29.58	£147.91		AS Goods	
2		£17.75	£0.00	£17.75		AS Credit Charge	
2096	BACS1903 12S	£45.90	£0.00	£45.90	06/03/19	Dodson Adam - Travel Expenses IOSH Training 102 miles total	£45.90
2097	BACS1903 12T	£10.27	£0.00	£10.27	07/03/19	Water2business - Railway Gardens	£10.27
2098	BACS1903 12U	£5,935.88	£989.31	£4,946.57	06/03/19	Dorset County Council - Sturminster Newton Site and RoW SLA	£5,935.88
1		£1,288.00	£214.67	£1,073.33		AS RoW SLA	
2		£4,647.88	£774.64	£3,873.24		AS Open Spaces SLA	
2099	BACS1903 12V	£2,828.64	£0.00	£2,828.64	07/03/19	H M Revenue & Customs - February Tax and NI	£2,828.64
Total		£15,697.21	£1,939.46	£13,757.75			

Sturminster Newton Town Council

February 2019 Direct Debits

Start of year 01/04/18

Tn no	Cheque	Gross	Vat	Net	Invoice date	Details	Cheque Total
2045	DD190220 G	£74.00	£3.52	£70.48	20/01/19	Total Gas & Power Ltd - Electricity 01/01/19-31/01/19 Public Toilets	£74.00
2040	DD190201 A	£148.74	£24.79	£123.95	01/02/19	Condor Office Solutions - Photocopier Lease	£148.74
2041	DD190201B	£260.34	£43.39	£216.95	01/02/19	Prodigy PC - Monthly Silver Support	£260.34
2051	DD190228N	£654.78	£109.13	£545.65	01/02/19	Isuzu Contract Hire - Monthly Lease and Service Rentals	£654.78
2049	DD190228L	£11.92	£0.00	£11.92	06/02/19	Natwest Bank Plc - Monthly Bank Charges	£11.92
2042	DD190215C	£11.60	£0.00	£11.60	15/02/19	Bankline - Monthly Charges	£11.60
2043	DD190218D	£150.67	£7.17	£143.50	18/02/19	Total Gas & Power Ltd - Gas Useage Pavillion 31/10-30/01	£150.67
2044	DD190220F	£17.35	£0.82	£16.53	20/02/19	Total Gas & Power Ltd - Electricity 1/1/19-31/1/19 Sturminster Mill	£17.35
2046	DD190220H	£216.56	£36.10	£180.46	20/02/19	Total Gas & Power Ltd - Electricity 1/1/19-31/1/19 Pavillion	£216.56
2047	DD190220J	£17.75	£0.84	£16.91	20/02/19	Total Gas & Power Ltd - Electricity 1/1-31/1 Town Clock	£17.75
2048	DD190220K	£147.00	£24.50	£122.50	21/02/19	British Telecommunications Plc - Office Broadband - 01258 473835	£147.00
2050	DD190228 M	£6.46	£1.08	£5.38	26/02/19	Print 24 - Redelivery Charge Who's Who Leaflet	£6.46
Total		£1,717.17	£251.34	£1,465.83			

Chair's initials

Sturminster Newton Town Council

February 2019 Petty Cash

Start of year 01/04/18

Tn no	Cheque	Gross	Vat	Net Invoice date	Details	Cheque Total
2053	Petty Cash	£10.10	£0.00	£10.10 01/02/19	Co-op - Milk & Coffee	£26.44
2054	Petty Cash	£2.64	£0.00	£2.64 06/02/19	Co-op - Milk and Sweetener	£26.44
2055	Petty Cash	£1.34	£0.00	£1.34 07/02/19	Post Office Ltd - Stamps	£17.42
2056	Petty Cash	£0.95	£0.00	£0.95 11/02/19	Co-op - Milk	£26.44
2057	Petty Cash	£16.08	£0.00	£16.08 13/02/19	Post Office Ltd - Stamps for Civic Event	£17.42
2058	Petty Cash	£0.55	£0.00	£0.55 15/02/19	Co-op - Milk	£26.44
2059	Petty Cash	£0.95	£0.00	£0.95 25/02/19	Co-op - Milk	£26.44
2060	Petty Cash	£6.00	£0.00	£6.00 26/02/19	The Original Factory Shop - Tea Bags for Civic Event	£6.00
2061	Petty Cash	£21.00	£0.00	£21.00 26/02/19	Marks and Spencer - Flowers for Civic Day	£21.00
2062	Petty Cash	£40.75	£0.00	£40.75 26/02/19	Tesco - Refreshments and Sundries for Civic Event	£40.75
2063	Petty Cash	£5.00	£0.00	£5.00 28/02/19	Co-op - Milk for Civic Event	£26.44
2064	Petty Cash	£25.00	£0.00	£25.00 28/02/19	Daisy Delbridge Florists - Presentation Flowers for Civic Event	£25.00
2065	Petty Cash	£6.25	£0.00	£6.25 28/02/19	Co-op - Food for Civic Event	£26.44
Total		£136.61	£0.00	£136.61		

Cheque raised for Petty Cash Top Up

£136.61 Cheque Number

Sturminster Newton Town Council

February 2019 Salaries

Start of year 01/04/18

Total £10,589.04

Chair's initials

Financial Budget Comparison

Comparison between 01/04/18 and 28/02/19 inclusive.
Excludes transactions with an invoice date prior to 01/04/18

	2018/2019	Actual Net	Balance	
INCOME				
Office & Administration				
100	Precept	£277,182.00	£277,182.00	£0.00
105	Contributions to Expenditure	£970.00	£0.00	-£970.00
110	Interest - Public Sector Deposit Fund	£150.00	£382.82	£232.82
115	Interest - Bath Building Society	£150.00	£0.00	-£150.00
120	Chamber hire	£800.00	£105.00	-£695.00
125	Grants received	£0.00	£788.00	£788.00
130	Photocopying, printing, etc.	£5.00	£0.00	-£5.00
135	Insurance Settlements	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
140	VAT reclaimed	£0.00	£7,929.79	£7,929.79
199	Other	£0.00	£184.20	£184.20
Total Office & Administration		£279,257.00	£286,571.81	-£7,314.81
Amenities & Services				
200	Recreation Grounds	£4,250.00	£1,616.28	-£2,633.72
205	Cemetery	£4,500.00	£4,365.00	-£135.00
210	Agency Agreements	£6,200.00	£3,008.62	-£3,191.38
215	Street cleansing	£9,000.00	£9,000.00	£0.00
220	Contributions	£625.00	£11,366.29	£10,741.29
225	Allotments	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
299	Other	£0.00	£4,770.00	£4,770.00
Total Amenities & Services		£24,575.00	£34,126.19	-£9,551.19
Capital Projects				
300	Developer Contributions	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
399	Other contributions, grants & donations	£0.00	£1,650.05	£1,650.05
Total Capital Projects		£0.00	£1,650.05	-£1,650.05
Total Income		£303,832.00	£322,348.05	£18,516.05
EXPENDITURE				
Office & Administration				
1000	Office staff payroll	£91,938.00	£81,082.77	£10,855.23
1010	Office premises	£8,446.00	£7,343.54	£1,102.46
1020	Office facilities & operations	£13,390.00	£11,018.37	£2,371.63
1030	Insurance	£7,004.00	£7,246.43	-£242.43
1040	Bank Charges	£515.00	£268.64	£246.36
1045	Professional fees	£5,150.00	£4,150.00	£1,000.00
1050	Civic & ceremonial	£1,700.00	£398.98	£1,301.02
1060	Training	£3,090.00	£2,593.56	£496.44
1070	Subscriptions	£1,227.00	£1,274.74	-£47.74
1080	Loan repayments	£15,418.00	£15,417.52	£0.48

Financial Budget Comparison

Comparison between 01/04/18 and 28/02/19 inclusive.

Excludes transactions with an invoice date prior to 01/04/18

	2018/2019	Actual Net	Balance
1090 VAT paid	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
1999 Other	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
3050 Petty Cash	£0.00	£175.15	-£175.15
Total Office & Administration	£147,878.00	£130,969.70	-£16,908.30
Amenities & Services			
2000 Grounds staff payroll	£116,826.00	£97,494.10	£19,331.90
2010 Workshop premises	£2,652.00	£2,198.68	£453.32
2020 Grounds operations	£10,249.00	£15,209.45	-£4,960.45
2030 Sports pavilion & facilities	£2,395.00	£2,541.49	-£146.49
2040 Town Clock	£546.00	£173.06	£372.94
2050 Play facilities	£8,652.00	£350.00	£8,302.00
2060 Gardens & ornamental	£1,251.00	£737.92	£513.08
2070 Car Parks	£103.00	£31.25	£71.75
2080 Public toilets	£10,197.00	£4,926.52	£5,270.48
2090 Allotments	£52.00	£59.58	-£7.58
2100 Cemetery	£1,906.00	£1,692.05	£213.95
2110 Sturminster Mill	£3,502.00	£12,425.47	-£8,923.47
2120 Footway lighting	£4,069.00	£4,555.07	-£486.07
2130 Town Centre	£412.00	£151.59	£260.41
2140 Open Spaces	£2,163.00	£0.00	£2,163.00
2150 Benches & Other Infrastructure	£206.00	£0.00	£206.00
2160 Events & Festivals	£309.00	£472.00	-£163.00
2170 Rights of Way	£1,288.00	£0.00	£1,288.00
2180 Traffic management	£515.00	£0.00	£515.00
2190 Tree management	£1,545.00	£680.00	£865.00
2999 Other	£0.00	£1.00	-£1.00
Total Amenities & Services	£168,838.00	£143,699.23	-£25,138.77
Capital Projects			
3000 Section 137	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
3010 Grants	£4,481.00	£1,750.00	£2,731.00
3020 Skate Bowl Project	£0.00	£2,200.00	-£2,200.00
3030 Neighbourhood Development Plan	£0.00	£113.83	-£113.83
3035 WW1 Centenary Commemoration	£0.00	£982.00	-£982.00
3040 Economic Development Plan	£0.00	£10,000.00	-£10,000.00
3045 Community Resource Support	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Total Capital Projects	£4,481.00	£15,045.83	£10,564.83
Total Expenditure	£321,197.00	£289,714.76	£31,482.24
Total Income	£303,832.00	£322,348.05	£18,516.05
Total Expenditure	£321,197.00	£289,714.76	£31,482.24
Funded by reserves		£0.00	
Total Net Balance	-£17,365.00	£32,633.29	

Approved On Signed.....

Chair's initials

District Councillor report for February 2019.

This month I attended an update briefing on the budget preparations and the issues facing the new Dorset Council with a major cost being nearly 500 children in care.

On the 20th the Shadow Council met to decide the budget and set the Council Tax for the next municipal year and although it included a substantial rise for many (including myself) the move to a single charge for the whole area makes sense for the new council to start with a level figure rather than try and bring 5 different District charges together over several years.

The NDDC Planning Committee did some informal site visits before the long meeting on the 26th. This was one of our longest meetings with an agenda running to 208 pages! We gave outline permission for over 1600 houses including the demolition and redevelopment of the old NDDC offices at Nordon, not an easy decision as it had been the home of NDDC since it was formed in 1974.

Cllr Victor Fox NDDC.

County Councillor's Report on the month of February 2018.

County Council meetings slowed down a bit during February as we head towards the new Dorset Council being vested on 1st April. There was one Shadow Executive Council, one Organisational Transformation Board and one Shadow Dorset Council with a budget briefing in between. The new Dorset Council's budget was agreed on 20th February with one rate of Council tax being set across all the former Districts so that all residents at each Council Tax Band pay the same for the same services from Day 1. To do anything else would have cost the new Dorset Council £6m per year recurring which it could not afford to do. To even up the contribution for North Dorset residents has meant an increase of 6.29% on what was previously the North Dorset portion because of the previous work to keep the Council Tax as one of the lowest in the country. Additional funds of £5.8m have been put into Children's Services plus a further £900K to improve our fostering service (which will save money in the longer term), £1.5m into services for vulnerable Adults, and £150K into combatting homelessness. There are no cuts to services.

Also at the County Council I attended one County Farms Liaison Panel where the discussion turned to how the County Farmers might be able to provide some support to Children's Services for example by having children with special needs to visit some farms or even at the other end of the scale by providing apprenticeships for children in care. There was a Corporate Parenting Board during the month at which these suggestions were welcomed. I had the pleasure of introducing the new Children's Services Executive Director Sarah Parker to Stur. on 22nd February and thank you to all those who gave up their time to meet her. As well as having a Turkish Coffee with Yasar on arrival and hearing of his one man social services operation for migrants, she also met various colleagues in the Exchange to tell her about the issues for children and families in our town. We then drove up to have a look at the Skatebowl and out to a Gypsy family living in Stoke Wake where the young mother was previously one of our Children's Services employees. Unfortunately there was thick fog when we drove over the top of Bulbarrow so she did not get to see the views.

I am one of two representatives on the Community Safety and Criminal Justice Board which met in Upton House to discuss future crime reduction strategy on 27th February. It was noted that although our young people are worried about the risks of knife crime, that is not currently an issue here, but County Lines for drug distribution are and that in turn can impact on more young people and put them in danger. In respect of both Anti-social Behaviour and Domestic Abuse, there are more prosecutions taking place and fewer "Incidents" being recorded. In other words the police are more likely to take legal action which is a positive move although the increase in numbers may appear worrying at first glance.

I chaired a meeting of the Dorset Race Equality Council (DREC) Board and subsequently attended a meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner who presented a report which he had commissioned to try and explain the very high use of “stop and search” powers on black young people in the conurbation – by far and away the highest in the country. There would appear to be a number of issues giving rise to this and the police have 13 recommendations to address as a consequence. There was one meeting of the KnowStur Group in Sturminster and in particular, with the help of the William Williams Charity, we are trying to facilitate English as a Foreign Language classes for those Eastern Europeans who want to get a qualification. Finding satisfactory accommodation is also a problem for Eastern Europeans coming here to work in our businesses.

Also during the month I attended five Parish Council Meetings and two at The Town Council. The Newton Residents Association had its Annual General Meeting. We have had a meeting of the group planning the Hardy, Barnes and Young Literary Festival to be held on 15th June which is going well. I attended a meeting of the NordCat Board and Helen R. and I are working together to help NordCat make progress and extend its services which are especially important given the concerns of residents about the lack of rural public transport. I enjoyed three coffee mornings in the villages during the month and have come to the conclusion that rather than having surgeries which residents rarely attend I just need to hunt the cake, because where there are coffee mornings there are residents who want to talk.

Pauline Batstone,

County Councillor, Blackmore Vale Division and District Councillor Lydden Vale Ward.

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