

WINTERBORNE ANNUAL REPORT 2019

Dear All

This is the last report from your county councillor for the Winterborne Division....since April and the recent elections you now have new councillors in changed wards and Dorset Council. So I will start by wishing all the Parish Councils and the Dorset Councillors all the best for the future. I am confident that you will be able to work together much better for the benefit of your residents than has been in the old two-tier system, which seemed to be rather inefficient and overly complicated.

The last year at DCC was rather taken up with planning for the change to Dorset Council, numerous seminars and task groups meeting to ensure a seamless transition in April. Obviously, the hours spent were worthwhile as the sky didn't fall in and service continued. I was involved in the writing of the constitution, pretty dry stuff but essential for the governance of the Council. One rather strange anomaly however is that although no longer a councillor I remain the Chairman of the new Council until their first meeting on 16th May when I will hand over the chain to the new Chairman!

I have been honoured to serve as Chairman of DCC for the last two years, the role is not just civic but actually involves much more behind the scenes work. The Chairman is the last resort before issues go elsewhere in many instances. Saying farewell to the County Council after 130 years of existence was somewhat sad but the birth of the new unitary after reorganisation more than compensates.

Since being elected in 1997 I have enjoyed working for the residents of Dorset and most particularly for the villages I represented. To recap, the Division stretched from Granvilles Wooten to Spetisbury then, later local boundary changes lost the far west but then brought in Okeford Fitzpaine for a time. When there were over 15 Parish Council meetings each month we started the Division meetings usually held in Milton Abbas which brought senior officers out to meet you and discuss 'hot topics' which seemed to go down rather well on the whole.

Many issues have been resolved over the years but although I have had some success there have also been some failures. The A350 south of Blandford through Charlton Marshall and Spetisbury being a thorn in my side still. The increase in demand for housing with the pressure on the highway network will also continue to cause you problems no doubt, it has always been hard to allay your concerns but I hope I did my best. The state of our roads and potholes in particular, still upset many people, however the system of online reporting and our local Highway contact has greatly

improved our ability to get things fixed. Building a good working relationship is key to this for the Parishes, likewise with the countryside rangers for Rights of Way, who now do the verge trimming of course.

As to the future ... well I will have more time to walk through the countryside enjoying our rights of Way networks and stopping off in the pubs, perhaps recognising members of local communities I once represented!

Good luck and good bye.

Yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hilary Cox'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some loops and flourishes.

Hilary Cox

Councillor for Winterborne Division - 1997-2019

Chairman, Dorset County Council - 2017-2019

Chairman, Dorset Council - April-May 2019