

Minutes of the **EXTRAORDINARY MEETING** of the Swanage Town Council held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **MONDAY, 17th OCTOBER 2016** at 6.30 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor S. Poultney – Chairman

Councillor J. Bishop

Councillor M.P. Bonfield

Councillor C. Finch

Councillor A. Harris

Councillor G. Marsh

Councillor T. Morris

Councillor G.M. Suttle

Councillor W.S. Trite

Councillor M. Whitwam

There were no members of the public in attendance at the meeting.

116. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors Green and Lejeune.

117. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare their interests and consider any requests for Grants of Dispensations in accordance with paragraphs 9 - 13 of the Council's Code of Conduct and regulations made under chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

There were no declarations to record on this occasion.

118. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION**

Further to Minute No. 100 of the Council meeting held on 26th September 2016, detailed consideration was given to the proposals for local government reorganisation as set out in the public consultation document entitled 'Reshaping your Councils'. A questionnaire to provide feedback on the proposals was also submitted for completion by the Town Council.

A lengthy and detailed discussion ensued, during which Members acknowledged that there was a duplication of administration costs in providing some services under the current local government structure, and that savings could be achieved as a result of reorganisation. However, Members felt strongly that a move to a unitary authority could result in a 'democratic deficit', and lead to an absence of democracy where it was needed at local level. Concerns expressed included the following:-

- Key issues and future options would be determined on a 'county wide' basis.
- The number of town and parish councillors represented on a larger authority would be reduced, which would result in less representation of local people.
- Difficult to protect and defend local services in the future.
- Isolation of local community – important to retain access to local services.
- Loss of democracy and heritage.

- Localism and subsidiarity should be the focus – proposals for unitary authorities moves power further away.

In light of the lack of information regarding the impact of the proposed reorganisation on local democracy and the delivery of services, it was agreed that the ‘Don’t know’ box should be ticked in answer to the majority of questions set out in the Town and Parish Council Survey response form.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Morris, and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the concerns raised at this meeting be submitted in response to the consultation on local government reorganisation, completion of the questionnaire to be delegated to the Town Clerk.

The meeting concluded at 7.45 p.m.
