

**COUNTY COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
17 MAY 2019**

INCOMING CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members, Honorary Aldermen, Ladies and Gentleman, Officers of the Council and colleagues. May I start by thanking you all for setting your alarms to arrive in time for the Annual meeting this morning!

It is with a deep sense of responsibility, humility, honour and, of course, pleasure that I accept your nomination to serve as Chairman of Hampshire County Council.

Thank you for the support you have given me and for the trust you have placed in me.

May I thank Cllr Roger Huxstep and Cllr Roland Dibbs for proposing and seconding my nomination and for their kind words.

I would now like to take the opportunity to congratulate and thank Councillor Still for her outstanding service as Chairman over the past year. Elaine, it was a pleasure to have had the opportunity to support you as Vice-Chairman and to witness first hand your energy and commitment. Thank you for your distinguished contribution to the County and congratulations on the success of your theme of "All things Healthy and Green, All Creatures Great and Small". I trust you are all now, at least, eating your brussel sprouts in support! Elaine, you have much to be proud of as you reflect on the success of your term as Chairman.

Can I also give a special thanks to Roy Perry as retiring Leader of Hampshire County Council. Roy was first elected to Hampshire County Council in 2005 and has been Leader of the County Council since May 2013. He has previously held many eminent positions. From 2010 to 2013 he was Executive Lead Member for Childrens Services in Hampshire and you will know, from 1994 to 2004, he was a Member of the European Parliament, initially for Wight and Hampshire South and then as one of the 11 MEPs for South East England. He was Conservative spokesman on the Parliament Culture and Education Committee and Vice President of the Petitions Committee. We are enormously grateful for the service you have given, your unfailing championing of local democracy and your leadership of our Hampshire County.

A warm welcome and support for our incoming Leader of the Council, Keith Mans and Rob Humby as Deputy.

We must not forget those who are no longer with us. A long serving Officer of the County Council, Edward Mason, who many of you knew as Ted, sadly passed away on the 14th of April this year. Ted's local government career spanned 42 years having started his career in 1957 working for Southampton County Council later joining Hampshire County Council in 1974. At the time of his retirement in 1999, he held the

position of Assistant County Secretary, responsible for the Recreation Committee. A service of thanksgiving for his life was held on 25th April at Romsey Abbey.

I have been a Councillor now for 27 years, with six of those years here at County, supported and encouraged by my lovely wife and caring daughters. My youngest, Zoonia, has asked for a special mention as she believes it's all her doing!

My theme, during my year in office, is one of health and wellbeing, specifically looking after our mental health and the mental health of our wider community, by being aware and understanding early warning signs and symptoms. The World Health Organisation recognises World Mental Health Day on 10th October and it is Mental Health Awareness Week, this week (13-17 May). Unfortunately, unlike other ailments, there is still a stigma surrounding mental health issues.

The mental health of our Hampshire residents is recognised by the Council to be of equal importance to their physical health. With one in four of us across all age ranges experiencing a mental health problem at any time in our lives, we recognise the significance of people needing to have greater access to help and support to cope with difficulties which might be time limited or across lifelong conditions. Whilst recognising the growing prevalence of mental health concerns for younger and older people in our communities, Hampshire County Council is committed to providing services which enable people to manage their mental health in a manner which offers choice and control. It is essential to promote access to services in a timely way in order to prevent circumstances from deteriorating. We aim to develop this agenda with key partners, stakeholders and people using mental health and substance misuse services to continuously improve this provision.”

As a Council we are at the forefront of keeping the fabric of local communities strong and cohesive, and it is right that we remind ourselves about the contribution our councils make. I will continue to uphold our values and make a stronger connection, where needed, with other bodies.

Like many of you, whether elected Councillors or Officers of the Council, we can make a positive difference to people's lives. We have the power and potential of local democracy to strengthen local communities.

I commend the work that we as an authority do. I am conscious that as the Chairman for the County there is a need for a deep sense of engagement in all civic activities and duties. I will continue with our ambition to be seen as an effective and practical authority striving for the good of our fellow citizens.

Finally, thank you once again for attending today. With your support, I am certain that we can all be the catalyst for greater involvement among our fellow citizens; to aspire to support our communities and individuals to be happy, healthy and productive, and, to gain continued appreciation and public trust and support for what we do.