



EAST
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4(b)

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of East Cambridgeshire District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on Thursday 24 May 2018 at 6.48pm

PRESENT

Councillor Peter Cresswell (Chairman)	
Councillor Allen Alderson	Councillor Julia Huffer
Councillor Anna Bailey	Councillor Mark Hugo
Councillor Derrick Beckett	Councillor Bill Hunt
Councillor Mike Bradley	Councillor Chris Morris
Councillor David Chaplin	Councillor Charles Roberts
Councillor Steve Cheetham	Councillor Hamish Ross
Councillor Paul Cox	Councillor Mike Rouse
Councillor Lorna Dupré	Councillor Joshua Schumann
Councillor Lavinia Edwards	Councillor Carol Sennitt
Councillor Lis Every	Councillor Alan Sharp
Councillor Coralie Green	Councillor Stuart Smith
Councillor Elaine Griffin-Singh	Councillor Jo Webber
	Councillor Christine Whelan

The Chairman welcomed former Councillor Andy Wright and family.

19. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No public questions were submitted.

20. **TO CONFER THE TITLE OF HONORARY ALDERMAN ON FORMER COUNCILLOR ANDREW NORMAN WRIGHT**

The Chairman, Councillor Cresswell, noted that here was an opportunity to recommend that former Councillor Andy Wright be made an Honorary Alderman following his 39 years of service to the Council. When Councillor Cresswell had returned to the Council he had noted one familiar face was missing, that of former Councillor Wright. His wisdom and friendship had been sorely missed. The Chairman then invited Councillor Schumann to address the Council.

Councillor Schumann thanked the Chairman for permitting him to take the honour of making this proposal to confer this title on former Councillor Wright. After mentioning this wish, Councillor Schumann was taken aback by the pace and commitment shown by the Chairman to ensure that this happened.

It gave Councillor Schumann great pleasure to propose Andy Wright be granted the title of Honorary Alderman to East Cambs, in appreciation of his years of service to the District Council.

Andy was first elected in 1976 and served until 2015, an incredible 39 years of unbroken tenure. Councillor Schumann wished to start by embarrassing Andy and state that he was not born until 10 years after Andy was first elected. The headlines in 1976 read 'Britain basks in glorious sunshine' and in 2013 The Mirror newspaper wrote an article stating that 1976 was 'the best ever year for the UK' – not certain that they attributed all of that to Andy being elected but perhaps it played an important part. Petrol was 77p per gallon, 19p for a loaf of bread and the super-rich were enjoying Concorde flights from Heathrow to Bahrain – Andy would tell you what that was like if anyone wanted to speak to him afterwards. It was also the year that the Genuine Progress Indicator, an economic measure which had 26 measures of economic progress, peaked. It was continued to fall ever since but not sure all could be blamed on Andy.

In 39 years of service on the District Council Andy served on no fewer than 46 different committees, sub-committees, working groups or panels, offering his time to a huge range of areas of local government from the 'Money for Value' panel to the 'Civic Relations Sub-Committee'. Those who know Andy, many of which have known him far longer, would confirm Andy's dedication and commitment to every task he undertook which serves as a constant reminder to us all of our duty as elected Members and commitment to the Council and the residents who elected us. Andy also served as Chairman on 8 different committees including Licensing, Standards and Resources. It would be amiss not to acknowledge Andy's most noteworthy appointment to the 'Big Chair' in 1988-90 when he joined the illustrious list of Council Chairmen. It seemed fitting that 1988 marked Margaret Thatcher becoming the longest serving UK Prime Minister of the Century. Forgetting the political aspect, as Andy remain Independent throughout his time at the Council, that period must have been awash with a sense of service that Andy perfectly personified. Andy's dedication to that remarkable fenland village found on the Bedford levels, the wonderful Littleport, which always remained at the centre of Andy's heart and mind.

So often Andy provided an important voice in challenging decisions and recommendations in order to ensure the best outcome was achieved and gave many occasions when Members and officers could pause for thought before proceeding. The importance of constructive challenge and criticism that Andy exemplified, whilst maintaining good humour and objectivity, should not be underestimated.

In the short time that Councillor Schumann knew Andy they had become Councillor colleagues, opposition Members, Working Group associates but most importantly friends. Councillor Schumann was making this proposal as a Councillor who felt that the Council simply must appreciate and respect the remarkable contribution made by a rather remarkable man.

With selflessness, integrity, honesty and objectivity Councillor Schumann could not think of a more deserving recipient of this honour and it seemed fitting that this was the first time this Council had bestowed this recognition. Although the price of fuel had gone up a little since 1976 the priceless contribution of Andy would stay in the mind forever. Councillors were asked to stand and acknowledge the legacy and dedication to East Cambs of epic proportions and show appreciation to Andy Wright.

Councillor Beckett seconded the proposal and had great pleasure in doing so. 15 years ago he had joined the Council with no political party, so Andy, as Group Leader, took him under his wing. So Andy mentored him, gave him appropriate guidance and advice and was always available for discussion. Over the years Andy had been a Councillor and a great statesman, providing constructive criticism when need and was always somebody that ought to be listened to. His guidance in financial matters had helped laid the foundations for the sound financial position the Council found itself in now. He had worked tirelessly for the Council and the district, desiring the best outcomes for both and he treated all staff with respect. This work had come at some personal cost to himself. It has been a pleasure to work alongside Andy and he fully deserved this honour.

Councillor Rouse stated that he and Andy had some things in common. Both their fathers had served as local councillors and both were hard acts to follow. When Andy joined the Council most of its Members were Independent Councillors and they all respect him. Councillor Rouse was delighted when Andy become Vice Chairman of Council during his tenure as Chairman, as they worked so well together attending many meetings so they both knew what was going on. Throughout Andy's long service Andy had shown his independence of mind and had not been afraid to speak out in challenge. Sometimes he was a lone voice, but they did not appear to bother him. Their encounters were friendly and full of gruff cynicism. Councillor Rouse was delighted that the Council was conferring this honour, which was fully deserved for Andy's outstanding service.

Councillor Cox had known Andy most of his life, ever since their paths had crossed when Andy needed an electrical engineer. Andy had played his part in encouraging Councillor Cox to become a parish councillor. In Andy's 39 years of service he had carried the torch of Independent councillors and Councillor Cox could not think of a more worthy person to receive this award.

Councillor Bill Hunt recalled that when he was first allocated to the Licensing Committee Andy was its Chairman. Andy's wisdom, humour and experience had been a real asset for the Council and he was an example on how to behave and give respect.

The Chairman wanted it placed on record that Councillors C and D Ambrose Smith had given their warmest congratulations to Andy for this honour.

It was unanimously resolved:

- (i) That the Council's deep appreciation of the eminent services rendered by former Councillor Andrew Wright to the Council be placed on record;
- (ii) That, in recognition, the title of Honorary Alderman be conferred on him.

The Chairman then presented Andy Wright with a framed scroll.

Andy Wright then addressed the Council and gave his thanks for the kind words spoken. He had been told that the best speeches were brief and to the point. The 39 years had gone by in a flash and he had been fortunate to meet many good people, Members, staff and constituents. He had appreciated that a good Councillor needed good staff and a good Member/staff relationship was essential. When the Honorary Alderman award was recommended he could not think of a better award, as his father had also been honoured with it by the former Ely Urban Council.

The meeting concluded at 7:07pm.