

8 November 2006

DAVID WHITEHEAD, LEADER OF NORTH DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cllr. David Whitehead, Leader of North Dorset District Council (NDDC), was a passionate campaigner for affordable housing and community safety in the district.

He and his wife Gill came to North Dorset with the Royal Corps of Signals and he became an active member of the Tarrant Valley community before joining the District Council in 1999, after retiring from the army. Having been Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety, David Whitehead was elected Leader of the Council in September 2003.

Cllr Michael Oliver, Chairman of NDDC, said: "I am extremely saddened by the death of David. He was a great friend to me as Chairman of the Council and often gave me super advice. He has done tremendous service to the Council as Leader and was totally dedicated to his work. Our thoughts and prayers are with Gill and his family."

Fellow Members and Officers at Nordon, the offices of NDDC, found him to be a tireless worker for numerous local causes. He felt very strongly that local people should be able to live and work in the area and campaigned endlessly for the supply of homes that were genuinely affordable for local families.

Mrs Liz Goodall, Chief Executive of NDDC, said: "Cllr Whitehead will be greatly missed in the Council. He kept a motto on the wall of his office: 'If there is one thing more important than the will to succeed, it is that the will shall not falter ...' It is a good description of his view of life and his expectations of employees. He demanded full commitment but also gave strong support.

"As a Leader, he had a clear vision about the changes and difficulties facing the district and became a leading light in the Dorset group of councils. He believed passionately in enabling people to have a voice in shaping the future of the district and was an impressive champion for increasing affordable housing. A strong advocate of partnership working, he played a key role with the Police and with voluntary organisations to help people in difficulties and to improve the safety and wellbeing of residents. He will be remembered with great affection by those who worked with him."

His boundless energy was not solely channelled into Council work: he was Chairman of the North Dorset Citizens Advice Bureau and a champion of community planning where he advocated for local people to have more say about public services.

Cllr David Whitehead continued ...

A long and distinguished career in the army ensured that ties with his old regiment remained strong in retirement. He retained contact with many former comrades and, more recently, he had taken a very active role in the campaign to save the Defence College of Communications and Information Systems at Blandford Camp.

David Whitehead died in the early hours of Wednesday 8 November in the Winterbourne Hospital, Dorchester, after a valiant battle with cancer. He was 71 and is survived by his wife Gill, two daughters and a much loved grandson.

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For more information contact: Liz Goodall, Chief Executive of North Dorset District Council on 01258 454111 or the Communications Office on 01258 484100.