

## **Biographies of those nominated for the title of Honorary Alderman**

### **Sandra Barnes MBE**

Sandra was first elected to the former South Northamptonshire Council in 1995 and represented Tove Ward until 2021. In 1999 she was later elected Leader, a post that she held for 11 years. During her time with SNC, Sandra also held other leadership positions including Chairman of the Council, and was a member of several other groups. Sandra was involved in appointing two Chief Executives, several senior officers and Housing Associations.

Prior to the establishment of the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation in 2004, Sandra was called to give evidence, under oath, to a House of Lords committee looking into the setting up and representation of local authorities on this body. She was appointed to the Board for 6 years.

In 1999 Sandra was appointed by the Minister to be a member of the UK delegation to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities to the Council of Europe. Sandra fulfilled this role for 16 years and is said to have found it challenging but very stimulating and enjoyable. She was elected Leader of the delegation, which comprised 18 full members and 18 substitutes.

Sandra was also elected President of the Social Cohesion committee, and perhaps her most significant role as President was when she was appointed rapporteur to the two important committees drafting the Convention on Trafficking Human Beings and the Convention on Violence against Women including Domestic Violence Abuse.

Sandra's list of achievements goes on - she was also involved in work with the Committee of the Regions at the EU Parliament. She was appointed to various other European Municipalities committees. She was a Director of the LGIB and on the LGA Management Committee. She was appointed to the East Midlands Cultural Consortium and was a member of the East Midlands Regional Assembly.

Sandra has been a Board member of various health bodies for many years including a stint as Chairman of the Family Health Services Authority. She has also been a Parish Councillor and Chairman of School Governors.

In 2010, Sandra was awarded the MBE for her service in the community and the NHS.

### **Caryl Billingham MBE**

Caryl began her time in politics when she joined Brackley Town Council in 1975. She served on the Town Council until 2012 and during her many years of service, was elected Mayor of Brackley on five occasions.

In 1990, Caryl became a district Councillor for the former South Northamptonshire Council and went on to be elected as Chairman of the Council twice.

Since retiring from her role as Councillor, Caryl has continued to be an important figurehead for the town of Brackley and has been involved with almost every charity and organisation in the town in some way. Caryl was a board member for the South Northants Homes housing association, a trustee for the Home-Start Daventry and South Northants charity, as well as being Chairman of Brackley United Feoffee Charity.

Caryl has played an active role as a member of the Rotary club, been President of the Brackley Royal British Legion branch, President of the local amateur dramatic society and Chairman of the Brackley & District Band.

Caryl is also the Chair of Trustees for the Northamptonshire Yeomanry Association Benevolent Fund and has previously organised trips for veterans and their families to villages across France and Belgium.

In 2016, Caryl was awarded the MBE in the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday honours for her dedication and service to the community of Brackley.

### **Liz Griffin**

Liz was first elected as Councillor in May 1999, serving for over two decades at the former Daventry District Council before retiring from her role in 2021 at the end of DDC. During her time at the Council, Liz was elected to the position of Deputy Leader in 2004, serving in this position until 2020 when she stepped down to make way for a new leadership to be selected for the shadow authority.

Within her portfolio as Deputy Leader of the Council, Liz had responsibility for HR, and when asked about the highlights of her time in post, she notes this as being one of the elements that she most enjoyed.

During her time at Daventry District Council, Liz also enjoyed being elected to the position of Chairman in 2005. Throughout her year in office, she had the opportunity to represent the Council and various events and functions, whilst raising funds for charity at the same time.

Liz's desire to stand for Council was driven by her passion for her community and her ambition to try to make a difference. Throughout her two decades of service, Liz was a committed Councillor for her ward and acted as a real champion for her local community, standing up for her residents on many issues and attending the Woodford cum Membris Parish Council meeting each month without fail.

### **David Harries BEM**

David was elected to Bugbrooke Parish Council in 1980 and has dedicated nearly 50 years to the parish as a member of the Council, currently serving as Vice-Chair. David also served as Councillor at the former South Northamptonshire Council between 2003 and 2021.

David has given much of his time to the community of Bugbrooke, chairing a number of organisations and charities in the area. He is currently the Chair of the Bugbrooke Millenium Green Trust, a charity which seeks to provide a green space for all and to promote native flora and fauna. David is also Chair of the Bugbrooke Sports and Community Centre Association.

David is well known for the work he has undertaken with the history society and for his continued efforts to promote and develop Bugbrooke and the surrounding area.

In 2016, David was awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) for services to this community.

### **Chris Millar**

Chris was first elected to the former Daventry District Council in 1998 and served as Leader for over 20 years, taking over in August 1999 and stepping down in October 2019. Chris served the local

community and wards of Brixworth and Long Buckby with distinction during this time and oversaw a well-respected local authority.

In 2020, he went on to become the 48<sup>th</sup> and final Chairman of Daventry District Council, a role that he had been due to take on back in 2000 prior to becoming Leader. During his time as Chairman, Chris fundraised widely for Time2Talk and Marie Curie, whilst championing the town of Daventry and its surrounding area.

During his political career, Chris also served a short stint as a County Councillor and has acted as a supportive mentor to many new Councillors over the years.

### **Suresh Patel**

Suresh was first elected to the former Northamptonshire County Council in 2009, initially representing St James and Briar Hill, which, following subsequent boundary changes became known as Old Duston. He was later elected on to Northampton Borough Council in 2011.

During his time at Northamptonshire County Council, Suresh served as Cabinet member for Adult Social Care and Children's Services. Suresh also held the offices of Chief Whip and Business Manager, contributing a great deal to his political party during the transition to West Northamptonshire Council.

When the new unitary authorities were established in 2021, Suresh went on to represent East Hunsbury and the Nene Valley Ward. His experience serving on the Council's Standards Committee, and Audit and Licensing Committee, was complemented by his work in the community, as he also served on the Parish Councils of Duston and East Hunsbury & Wootton prior to his retirement in 2023.

### **Mary-Anne Sergison-Brooke**

Mary-Anne served as Councillor at the former South Northants Council for almost 40 years, from 1983 to 2021. She was the Chair of Planning and played a major part in transferring housing from South Northants Council to Grand Union, a move that tenants were very pleased with.

Mary-Anne also played a large role in the Housing Design Code for South Northants Council which produced housing stock which is well-regarded to date.

Following her retirement from the role of Councillor, Mary-Anne now serves as Trustee on Lady Blakenham's Charity Trust which gives grants to children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities.

Mary-Anne has devoted many years to serving at both District and Parish Council level and plays an active role in the local community.

### **Judy Shephard**

Judy first joined the former Northamptonshire County Council in 1997 and was elected as Councillor for 6 terms. Judy served for over 20 years for the Moulton Division, comprising the villages of Boughton, the Bramptons, Hannington, the Harlestons, Holcot, Moulton, Old, Overstone, Pitsford, Spratton and Walgrave.

During her time as a County Councillor, Judy was involved with a number of committees and initiatives. Most notably, she was Chairman of Development Control and Chairman of Heath, Adult Social Care

and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee. In 2008, Judy was elected as Chairman of the County Council and undertook a successful term in this role.

Throughout her political career, Judy is known to have been a popular ward member, with a welcoming and positive attitude which allowed her to be accepted by all political parties.