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MEDIA RELEASE

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Town Council Denies Takeover Talk

Bridport Town Council has denied reports that it is trying to incorporate neighbouring parishes within its boundaries under a review that is being carried out by West Dorset District Council.

Town Council Leader Cllr Sarah Williams expressed concern at suggestions that they are behind talk of including whole parishes within Bridport. "We have asked West Dorset District Council whether developments at Vearse Farm and Watton Park could be brought within Bridport's boundary, simply because we think the large number of new residents there will look towards Bridport Town Council for their local services, rather than to Symondsburry Parish Council. The District Council's report seems to include discussion of much bigger boundary changes that we haven't asked for and we don't support."

Cllr Williams stressed the importance of stability in local councils with the end of the District Council just a few months away. "With the huge upheaval of a new Dorset Council coming next April, it would be silly to consider major changes to town and parish councils at the same time, and I don't know why the idea has been raised. I hope West Dorset District Council will focus just on the two small areas we've asked about."

Partnership working between parish and town councils has increased in recent years, and Cllr Williams said that working together would help head off any further talk of major boundary changes. "We're already working jointly through the Bridport Local Area Partnership and on a Neighbourhood Plan, which shows what we can do together. I would hope if we continue to do more of this kind of work it will stop any more discussion of a takeover bid."

West Dorset will consider the findings of its review at a Strategy Committee meeting on 11 September.

ENDS

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