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MEDIA RELEASE

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Councillor Sarah is Officially the Nation's Best!

Bridport Town Councillor Sarah Williams has scooped the coveted National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Councillor of the Year award for 2019.

Cllr Williams received the award, which recognises dedication and achievement within the community among the nation's 100,000 town and parish councillors, at NALC's national conference in Milton Keynes on 30 October.

Cllr Williams said "I was flabbergasted just to have been shortlisted, and was absolutely thrilled to have been chosen as Councillor of the Year. It isn't really about me though; the things we've achieved here in Bridport and West Bay are down to the efforts of councillors, officers, local organisations and the wider community – all working in partnership for the good of the town. I see the award as one for the whole town, which we already know is the one of the best in the country!"

Now also a councillor at Dorset Council, Cllr Williams served as Town Council Leader for six years between 2013 and 2019 and the award recognises her achievements during that time. She ensured the return of Bridport's Market Charter when the Town Council took over the running of the Tourist Information Centre. Under her leadership the Council brought local control to a range of services, including Bridport Youth & Community Centre, the round-town community bus, and highway verge maintenance. It was also one of the leading lights in the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan for the area, and established Bridport as 'Dorset's Eventful Town' and the UK's first Rights Respecting Town.

Cllr Sue Baxter, chairman of NALC, said: "The National Association of Local Councils is delighted to crown Cllr Sarah Williams this year's Star Council Awards, Councillor of the Year. The judging panel was particularly impressed with her engagement with the community to effect the changes they want to see, as well as her constant desire to share good practice with her peers."

Current Town Council Leader, Cllr Dave Rickard, said "I'm delighted for Sarah. The award is so well deserved and reflects her tireless work for the town, and her dedication to the role. It's great for Bridport that her commitment and capability as a councillor is now being shared with Dorset Council, and that her leadership of the Town Council provides a legacy that we can continue to build on."

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The award was presented by Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher, Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, at a ceremony on the first evening of the two-day NALC conference attended by some 250 people from across the local council sector. Town Clerk Will Austin said "Sarah didn't let the award stop her from working, and she returned from the conference armed with lots of new ideas and contacts. She's relentless in her drive to make Bridport even better, and we're lucky to have her."

ENDS

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Cllr Sarah Williams (front centre) at the NALC Star Council Awards ceremony