

Press Release

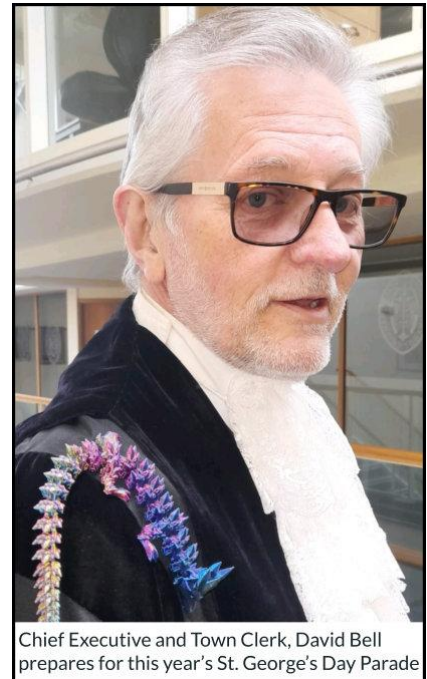
Chard Town Council Announces Departure of Chief Executive & Town Clerk David Bell and Appointment of New Town Clerk Stephen Hill

01 July 2026 - Chard, Somerset

Chard Town Council announces that **David Bell, Chief Executive & Town Clerk**, will be leaving his post on **5 July 2026** following the completion of the 18-month fixed-term contract he offered to the Council.

Stephen Hill, currently Town Clerk at Honiton Town Council in Devon, will take up the position of Town Clerk at Chard on **6 July 2026**, ensuring a smooth and well-managed transition in leadership.

At his final Full Council meeting, David presented a series of key reports that brought together several important strands of work, including an approved proposal for **Community Safety in Chard**. These reports marked the **culmination of a significant programme of projects, organisational stabilisation, strengthened governance, and modernisation delivered during his tenure.**



Chief Executive and Town Clerk, David Bell prepares for this year's St. George's Day Parade

The meeting concluded on an emotional note, with **Councillors, Council staff, and members of the public gallery rising to give David a standing ovation**, recognising his leadership, professionalism, and the positive impact he has made on the authority.

The Mayor of Chard, Councillor Tricia O'Brien, said:

"David has provided steady, principled leadership during a period of significant challenge for the Council. His work has helped restore stability and trust, and we are grateful for the dedication he has shown throughout his time with us."

Deputy Mayor, Councillor Craig Hussey, added:

"David's contribution has been transformative. He has helped create a more confident and capable organisation, and his efforts have laid strong foundations for the future. We thank him sincerely for his service and wish him well in the next chapter of his career."

The Council welcomed the appointment of Stephen Hill, noting his extensive experience in local government and his track record at Honiton Town Council. Stephen will lead the Council's ongoing work to strengthen governance, support elected Members, and deliver high-quality services for residents.

David Bell said:

"It has been a privilege to serve the people of Chard and to work with dedicated councillors and staff. I am proud of what we have achieved together, and I wish Stephen and the Council every success as they continue this important work."

Stephen Hill said:

“I am delighted to be appointed as Chard Town Council’s new Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer, joining the Council Monday 6 July 2026. My aim is to continue building on recent changes for an efficient and effective Council that is harmonious, well respected, open and transparent. I look forward to serving people in Chard, with individuals and the community at the forefront of what I can achieve.”

Chard Town Council remains committed to ensuring continuity of service and a positive handover as Stephen assumes the role of Town Clerk.