**District Councillor Martin Lury**

A strange year , all in all , at Arun District Council during which last May , after a fit of pique from Councillor Gunner , The Conservatives’ leader , all Liberal Democrats were summarily removed from any Vice Chair positions they had and I ceased to be Vice Chair of Planning . The irony since is that I have been asked to fill in ( which I did out of a sense of duty ) on no fewer than four or five occasions for the Conservative Vice Chair and have had another year of making agonising planning decisions where we have to be so mindful of the planning appeal system which so favours developers . I have always sought to make The Planning Committee less divisive and feel that we are at our most harmonious now , although we are all astonished and dismayed by extraordinary decisions by Government Inspectors with Rustington Golf Course being the latest example thereof.

Last Thursday night’s ADC Budget meeting hit an unprecedented new low as I was bemused ( and later mused as to the legality ) by The Monitoring Officer at first declaring the recorded vote as lost 23 to 22 and maintaining that was final , but after The Chair protesting , eventually acceded to her request that a certain councillor could change his vote . This is a most dangerous precedent in my view and must have puzzled any avid watchers . Bizarrely the vote was not re - run - the councillor was able to change his vote and thus alter the decision ! Two Conservative councillors I spoke to were uncomfortable with the turn of events and I began to recall events last May when The Vice Chair was pronounced elected and no change was made when we pointed out three ballot papers had been wrongly discounted ! As Shakespeare would say that there is something rotten in the state of Denmark , he might now comment on the state of Arun .

**Report, D. Cllr Gill Yeates, for Bersted Parish Council 14.02.23**

Just finished a cycle of meetings at Arun DC. Here are some of the relevant points:

1 12th Jan. Initial ‘visioning’ around options for the area surrounding the Regis Centre site. Officers suggested options to see what Members would be interested in or prepared to consider.

2 17th Jan. Elections Act briefing. Mainly surrounding the new requirement to take photo ID (passport, driver’s licence, or the free ID which comes in the form of a letter)

3 18th Jan. Full Council. A petition to ensure that services continued to be provided from BR Town Hall was received and Members voted to give that assurance. Most debated item was ADC response to National Highways re A27 scheme at Arundel. Also agreed our support for the Bognor BID (Business Improvement District) ahead of their ballot.

4 24th Jan. Target Operating Model (following questionnaires last year to staff & Members about improving the way ADC works). A more ‘social’ meeting to elicit ideas.

5 25th Jan. Housing & Wellbeing. The key debate related to the projected problems around the Housing Revenue Account project balances which are likely to remain below the previously agreed £2M level for the next few years. This is mainly due to cost increases and reactive rather than planned maintenance. The PSPO (Public Space Protection Order) was agreed for a further 3 years.

6 26th Jan. Planning Policy. Key debate around response to Water Resources Management consultation – relating to water supply ‘stresses’ in this area. Some plans under consideration include desalination and water recycling plants. Felt there was insufficient emphasis on managing/storing water during the wetter months to supply in drier times. Also considered further the Infrastructure Investment Plan, particularly around bringing forward expansion to Waste Centre at Littlehampton and delaying works to the Waste Transfer Station in Chichester. Members expressed concerns about the poor facilities in BR and the possibility of that closing and residents having to use Chichester or Littlehampton.

7 2nd Feb. Economy. Committee considered application to Brownfield Land Release Fund for assistance with the costs associated with developing floor(s) above the ground floor shops in the Arcade, BR. The amount available, even if granted, of less than 10% would mean that any of the development options would remain ‘challenging’. In exempt business, we also considered the bids for the London Road coach and lorry park. These were disappointing as expected and Members requested that a Masterplan for the site be developed.

8 6th Feb. Briefing on Housing Market Absorption Study. This will be considered at a Special Planning Policy Committee later this month. Cllr Lury has probably included in his report but I will update mine next month after that meeting.

At BPC:

2nd Feb – Infrastructure & 7th Feb - Planning