

Ward Report- July 2022- St Stephens. Richard Thomas.

Rother District Housing Company.

Ongoing. This involves discussion with fellow Directors, with Company and Rother Officers and advisors, and entails reading and discussing complex and intricate documents relating to company governance, strategy and policy. The work is demanding but satisfying on account of the importance of the goal- to provide ecologically sound, affordable, well-designed homes throughout the District. The company has a healthy culture of self-examination and self-criticism, and I have total confidence in the team which is leading and advising it, and in my fellow Board members. Councillor Drayson has had to leave the Board because of a conflict of interest with his other Rother duties, and I would like to pay tribute to him for his intelligent and insightful contributions to the Board.

Ward work

I have had a deluge of issues relation to planning and enforcement issues, and have been pursuing these in conjunction with other Councillors, residents and stakeholders. I have called a number of proposals to the Planning Committee and am currently dealing with a demolition issue relating to Moleyns Mead.

Environment Day. An outstanding day, a wonderful TC success!

Rother DC. Meetings

I have attended Full Council meetings, a Licensing Committee meeting and an Overview and Scrutiny Meeting at which I highlighted the withdrawal of government grants for housing rough sleepers. In the absence of Councillor Drayson, I chaired a meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee. I am pleased to report that the auditors are happy with the financial management of the authority. The Audit and Standards Committee have decided to set up a group to consider in depth the issue of the relationship between the Code of Conduct and Social media, a move which I support.

Licensing Sub-group.

In practice, the Licensing Committee has evolved a three-person sub-group, on which I sit, to consider individual licensing issues. This is very satisfying work.

Boards I sit on

I have attended meetings of the Hastings and Rother Mediation group for RDC, and also of the Pevensey and Westham Water Levels Management Board, the latter reflecting my interest in the ecology of the Pevensey Levels, and the implications of housing developments for the safeguarding of that. I am not sorry that continuing controversies around Sustainable Drainage systems is delaying the Spindlewood and Clavering Walk housing schemes.

Healthy Rother

This was an initiative that began life as a working group which I chaired within the Rother Alliance. I am very pleased indeed that one of our recommendations-for a comprehensive Leisure Survey- is now taking place, and even more pleased that Rother is going to launch a Health and Well-being policy. District and Town Councils have the potential to make a substantial contribution to the health and welfare of their residents, and so I hope all Town Councillors will welcome these developments.

Town Hall Renaissance Project.

I have attended an online meeting about this as well as the Exhibition in the Town Hall.

Bexhill in Bloom

This is a splendid organisation. Most recently, I have helped to arrange the 'Meet the Judge' event in the park attended by the Mayor and other District and Town Councillors. The Mayor, in his rich baritone, inaugurated the use of the Jubilee Bench presented to B-i-B and the citizens of Bexhill. We contributed the left-over food to Warming Up the Homeless.

It has been a busy but very rewarding time, made possible by all the hard-working people of Bexhill in so many different organisations and ways. Thank you!