

Councillor Reports – March Council Meeting

D. Cllr Lury

My first budget at Arun was one based on financial prudence and has resulted in cutting the budget deficit from £5.2 million two years ago to just £1.88 million achieved by approving £1.5 million of savings in 2024/2025 and by freezing non - essential growth for two years. The implementation of the policy of charging a council tax premium on second homes will increase income by £350 k or free up homes that often stand empty! Several other Financial Strategy workstreams are well under way, including an asset review and the retendering of the waste contract leading me to believe that we will be able to deliver further savings in 2025/2026 . Council tax next year will be increased by 2.99 % next year equating to an extra £6.23 per year or roughly just under 12 pence per week for an average Band D property for Arun services.

Local government reorganisation continues to occupy some of my time as we look to find the most advantageous unitary solution for Arun being mindful that compromise may be needed to ensure agreement cross - councils all seeking to protect their own interests with tax base and data vital to convince Government of an area 's viability as a unitary, given that future savings are seen as the driving force for unitarisation of authorities.

D. Cllr G. Yeates

District:

Mon 17th Feb – Informal planning policy bi-monthly catch-up, followed by briefing on plans for Watersmead Park (ex Body Shop premises)

Tues 18th Feb – unveiling of the wooden owl statue at Nursery Fields and viewing of show home

Wed 26th Feb – Arun DC full council to review the budget 2025/26

Mon 3rd Mar – briefing from the Neighbourhood Policing Team regarding unauthorised encampments

Wed 5th Mar – Devolution briefing

Parish:

Tue 12th – visit to local resident who had concerns about the traffic through Shripney village

Thur 13th Feb – Infrastructure meeting

Mon 17th Feb – Tea & coffee club (just long enough for the quiz and a couple of games of bingo)

Tues 18th Feb – informal catch-up with the Clerk

Tues 18th Feb – Finance & General Purposes meeting
Wed 19th Feb – hedge planting outside of cemetery on Chalcraft Lane edge
Tue 4th Mar – Planning meeting
Tue 11th Mar – agenda review with Clerks & Chair

Cllr B. Bellhouse

11th Feb – Full council meeting

28th February – Meeting with Community Clerk, Jacqui and John to discuss Playscheme, Men's Club idea and possible Half Term Activities. Jacqui will liaise with Bersted Green Hub to confirm booking the dates for the Playscheme and also discussed availability of Jubilee Hall for the Easter half term to run a session. June has some further links to make regarding what if anything, is already running a Men's group, so this is still being looked into.

6th March – bumped into Dominique Willson while I was volunteering with FSW and had a brief conversation about the residents at Bersted Green Court, concerns raised with isolation and risk of being victims of fraud.

-Meeting with Katie (Headmistress of Bersted green School) – I met with Katie to discuss the financial support we are giving them for the families who struggle with food costs. She is extremely grateful for what we give them and has said that the need for it is quite substantial at the school. Key points from this were – there is an ever increasing problem with children who access the school around health and hygiene, particularly balanced diets and oral health. Katie said that when she does the next round of vouchers to families she would like to include toothbrush & toothpaste for the children and also look at sending home items so each child can grow a pea plant (pot, pot dish, soil and pea), they have everything except the pots and dishes so this is something I have contacted a large local grower about possibly providing.

I am also looking into support (various), that we can get for the school and creating some strong community links to support this.

Please see entry for 7th March re toothbrushes and paste.

I have typed up full notes from this meeting and will share (or have already shared) with relevant Councillors and the Community Action team at our next meeting.

-Online Councillor and Chairman Training Course – The training was fantastic and really informative, I'd suggest anyone who hasn't done it, or not done it in the past couple of years gets themselves on the list to do it.

7th March – popped into office and had a catch up with Community Clerk. Also had a meeting with Councillor Greenway. Fantastic catch up with Community and Deputy Clerk around 6th March activities, very supportive and informative as always

Meeting with Councillor Greenway - I approached Keir as I know he has had a strong commitment to Bersted Green School, we discussed all of the things that came from my meeting with Katie and both agreed that action was needed. He is kindly going to organise a meeting with the two of us and someone from the Children and Family Centre so that we can work on building a positive and supportive relationship between them and the school. After our meeting he kindly went to Tesco's and purchased toothbrushes and toothpaste and delivered these to the school – so thank you again Keir

10th March – Meeting with Councillor Lury and Dominique Willson regarding Bersted Green Hub. This was a great meeting and I really appreciated both Martin and Dominique taking time to discuss concerns about The Hub not being utilised to it's, best regarding creating a community space that all can access. It is clear that residents from Bersted Green Court have found there is less for them to do there which has heightened social isolation. Going forward we would all like to see it becoming a community asset for those in the Bersted Green area again including residents and children from the school. Martin has an action plan on organising some meetings to gain further information and/or insight that will support moving this situation forward in the best way for the building itself and the local residents who relied on it.

Cllr W. Kapp

Just to advise in the last month I have

1. 7th March 2025 - Attended a drop in meeting with Jess Brown-Fuller MP which was held at the Parish Council. Jess indicated she might be able to meet the Parish Council at a future time to discuss

devolution and the way Parish Councils in Chichester were preparing for it

2. 8th March ran a litter pick on Bersted Brooks.

Cllr A. Van Koolbergen

18/2 chaired F&GP committee meeting and subsequently approved minutes for distribution thereafter

4/3 attended Planning committee meeting

11/3 attended Full council meeting

Have also been chatting with local residents regarding grass cutting, access, mess on A259 by Elbridge, traffic speed on Babsham Lane and the devolution process / consultation.