Downswood Parish Council meeting- 6th October 2026

Borough Councillor report-Cllr Val Springett

I don't have any further updates on the call for sites exercise other than I understand that more land has been submitted than is needed to meet our assessed housing need for the new local plan.

At the recent MBC Full Council meeting, a motion was brought forward asking the leader of the council to write to the Government asking whether the housing requirement imposed on the borough remains appropriate and deliverable in light of current and projected infrastructure capacity, particularly water supply, and asking for a temporary pause in house-building until sufficient assurances can be provided by the relevant water companies that adequate water infrastructure is in place to support further development.

Unfortunately, the current administration would not support it for fear it would halt the council's programme for 1000 affordable houses for local people. It seems wrong that those in affordable housing should not be afforded the guarantee of water supply.
I understand the new Prime Minister is looking at the issue of loss of water supplies that have affected many areas this year, but it was felt that a letter should be sent from MBC to keep the pressure on Government to address this important issue. It is disappointing it was declined by 19 votes to 13.

I was pleased to see your chairman attend the recent Bearsted Parish Council meeting, where the proposal to install a 24/7 monitored CCTV system was approved. Whilst BPC will install the cameras at its own chosen locations initially, there will be the opportunity for other cameras from other areas to be added at a later date, which would permit cameras in Downswood to be added if considered appropriate, and allow DPC to consider and plan for the initial and ongoing costs in your next budget.

I am awaiting a decision on the proposals to convert the annexe at 17 Kings Acre into a separate dwelling, which I have objected to and called to committee if the officer is minded to approve it. This will probably be one of the last applications I can call to committee because the changes introduced by this Government to remove call-in power from councillors and parish councils take effect this month. The general view of most if not all MBC councillors, is that the changes made to the planning process will be disastrous and remove democratic decision making on planning at a local level.