

DOWNSWOOD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 22 MAY 2024

BOROUGH COUNCILLOR REPORT BY CLLR DENIS SPOONER

MBC ELECTIONS 2 MAY

I have been a Borough Councillor for Bearsted Ward since 2017 and I am pleased to have been re-elected once again but, this time as a Borough Councillor for the newly created Ward of Bearsted and Downswood. It is my intention to attend as many Downswood Parish Council meetings as I can and to provide it each month with a written report explaining some MBC issues of particular interest and setting out my own personal Borough Councillor activities over the previous month. This is something that I have done for Bearsted Parish Council every month for the past 7 years.

The election for MBC has resulted in a hung council with no party in overall control. The leadership of MBC will be determined at the MBC AGM to be held on Saturday 18 May. I will not know to which committees I will be appointed to until after the AGM. The AGM will be followed by a Civic Parade through the town centre, including a march pass by the Gurkhas. I will be able to provide a verbal update on Wednesday.

BIN COLLECTIONS

So far as I am aware, the bin collection problems across the Borough from a few weeks ago have now been mostly resolved by the contactor, Suez. There are, however, some isolated continuing problems. I was aware of the collection problems in Downswood. I hope that by now they have all been resolved. If not, please let me know.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

The LPR was adopted by MBC on 20 March. After 6 years of meticulous preparation, it was found to be 'sound' by a Government Planning Inspector who spent two years scrutinising all its policies and proposals.

However, at the end of April, both Bredhurst PC and the 'Save Our Heathlands' Community Group lodged legal challenges in the High Court against MBC, the Planning Inspectorate and the landowners seeking the removal of, respectively, the proposed Lidsing and Heathlands Garden Communities from the LPR.

These challenges can be decided in a few weeks or could take several months. In the meantime, the policies and proposals of the LPR remain the prime

material consideration in the determination of all planning applications and other related planning matters.

MEETINGS ATTENDED

Up until just after the May election, I attended several meetings as a Borough Councillor for Bearsted Ward but, I have not yet attended any meetings as a Councillor for Bearsted and Downswood Ward.

Borough Councillor Denis Spooner

Bearsted and Downswood Ward

16 May 2024

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