

Chairman's Personal Message

A new beginning

One of the successful candidates had on his ballot paper "*A Fresh Voice for Steyning's Residents*". Another had "*Democratic Accountability, Openness and Transparency*".

I am determined to make these themes the golden thread which runs through everything this new council does. We are unlikely to be able to satisfy everyone, but everyone will be listened to with respect and have their views considered.

One of the first changes you will notice is that I want us to publish our personal contact details so that you can let us know of any concerns (or even praise!) if you want to. While the clerk's office will often be the preferred point of contact and he is always happy to help, I want everyone to also feel that they can directly approach their elected councillors. That is one of our most important roles and I am looking forward to engaging with as many as possible.

Another early change will be to our standing orders to encourage greater public participation during the open forum period at each meeting. No longer will our rules require you to stand up – though of course you can. Apart from that symbolic change, you will no longer be restricted to asking about matters already on the agenda. You will be able to ask about anything which falls within the Council or relevant committee's remit.

The seating arrangements at meetings will also be revised. Never again will councillors sit with their backs to the public.

Recordings of meetings will no longer be destroyed; they will be uploaded so that those unable to attend meetings can listen to them. We will also aim to have draft minutes produced very soon after each meeting.

With a genuine philosophy of engagement, I hope that our decisions will be regarded with widespread support and respect. We have difficult decisions to make over the next four years, particularly over the neighbourhood plan which aims to have a permanent and significant effect on our community. We must ensure that the effect is beneficial.

A final word is needed on "Steyning First" which was the banner some of us campaigned under. The name was chosen simply to signify to all that our intention is always to put Steyning, not ourselves, first.

Steyning First is registered at the Electoral Commission as a "minor party", not a "political party" and has absolutely no ideological connection with any far right party as some have mischievously suggested.

I hope that every part of our community will want to work with us and support us in our single aim which is to serve the people of Steyning to the very best of our ability.

Cllr. Rod Goldsmith (Chairman) 13th May 2019