

**Emily O'Brien's March 2023 Report  
Lewes District Council**

We had our District Council budget meeting in February. There was a continued focus on supporting people through the cost of living crisis. I was delighted that we also set aside funds for bringing Ringmer pool back into use. With the influx of new developments, the pool is more important now than ever. With the dearth of infrastructure to meet the growing population, we can't afford to lose any community facilities – let alone ones with such important social benefits as well as health benefits including teaching of vital water safety skills. While an agreement with East Sussex County Council is still being worked on, the hope is that the vital works needed to open the pool will start in just a few months.

On the endless saga of planning, their overturning by government inspectors of locally made decisions continues – from an LDC perspective this is both expensive and deeply depressing. I was particularly disappointed, having spoken at the appeal hearing, to see the Avery's refusal overturned by the Government inspector - it had a really strong case for being upheld given its location. It will be a real 'dormitory development' - car dependent and lacking access to village facilities.

I continue to campaign around the 'five year review rule' which has effectively invalidated the protection of our local plan along with many of our precious neighbourhood plans. 50 people responded to an email action which I set up which allowed them to respond with a click to the consultation on this topic. The issue was included in the LDC response and amplified in the SE council's consultation response on our behalf. Fingers crossed this leads to a change.

In better news, we had a wonderful visit to Ringmer Community Library to see how their 'warm space' is progressing - a warm welcome there indeed for everyone and I'd strongly encourage residents to pop by for a cup of tea – a reminder they are open Tues and Thurs 2- 5pm and Wed and Sat 10-12pm. Up to the end of March they are also open Fridays from 2-5pm.