

Emily O'Brien's Report – 21st June 2022 Meeting

It has been busy recently. My motion last month to Lewes District Council made us the first Council in the UK to ask developers to report on the impact of new development on the discharge of untreated waste water into rivers, a particular issue in Ringmer. There was a lot of media interest including interviews with BBC SE news and BBC Radio Sussex, and also from other councillors around the UK who want to do something similar. Locally I was invited to speak about the motion at a Ringmer Against Greenfield Development meeting. I arranged a meeting with senior Southern Water staff along with a tour of the Ringmer Sewage works on Neaves Lane – one of the worst offenders for raw sewage discharge - which I also them to invite parish council and RAGE representatives to attend. It was both fascinating and useful (and meant 3 trips to the sewage works in one week for me!). The fact that Southern Water turned out in force shows they are feeling the pressure.

Still on development I was furious that Croudace took the route of going to appeal regarding the Harrisons Lane Development, rather than going down the democratic process of determination by our local planning committee and this concern was covered in the Sussex Express. I am also really concerned about proposed planning reform by Government in the current Levelling Up White Paper – it does nothing to address loopholes like this one that let s developers by-pass local processes, drastically reduces community participation in the planning process and reduces the ability for district councils like ours to set local policy. I have raised these issues through my role as a deputy chair the Local Government Association as I feel they should be making a stronger response on behalf of local councils.

I continue to hear lots of concern about traffic and speed in Ringmer, as ever I am happy to work with Parish Council and others around finding creative ways of addressing this knotty problem.