

Our Good County in our Attractive Country

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There are times when our countryside and coastal Sussex compare well with anywhere in the world.

The beauty of our surroundings can be overlooked when, with respect to the honourable trade of journalism, there is the risk that watching every television news broadcast and listening to non-stop radio news brings gloom and despair. That would be a mistake.

The British Council commissioned an international survey. Their conclusion: people will buy British because they trust the UK and they will choose to invest in, study in and visit the UK because we are an attractive location. Italy is equally popular this year; Canada is remains admired.

We have come up to the top of the table since the arguments five years ago about whether to withdraw from the European Union.

The United Kingdom retains its position as the most attractive country for young people across the G20. This is good for our future. It matters to our international influence, our security and our shared prosperity.

There is agreement across the mainstream political spectrum about a health service available to all regardless of the means to pay, and that Labour, Lib Dems and Conservatives will recognise together that the most attractive trustworthy countries are capitalist, democratic, free, liberal, rich and stable societies. I would add that we share wide concern and compassion for the vulnerable.

Parliament has heard a variety of views on how best to protect our most vulnerable from the new Omicron strain of Covid19. My own view is that we all need to stand together in any vaccine war to make life safer for the weakest among us.

We know the pressures our beloved NHS faces as staff are again asked to take the brunt of what is needed to ensure boosters are made available to all over 18 years in these coming weeks. Do not underestimate the strain on them.

Do understand the value to everyone if each person who can receive the vaccine does. In the debate this week, I quoted the constituent who wrote about the fears of his family and friends of being infected by those who were carefree about the consequences of the virus for others.

If we need to anticipate successive waves of variants of this respiratory virus, I think of two challenges. The first, from the start and continuing now, is to avoid a sudden overwhelming need to admit many extra people to hospital, with bad effects on patients with other critical conditions.

The second is to overcome apathy or ignorance about modern medicine. To any keyboard warrior who sends the occasional intemperate email, I think of the myriad volunteers assisting the permanent clinical staff with the vaccination and booster challenge. Think also of those queuing to be jabbed and to obtain testing kits.

There are differences of view. I say so when responding to constituents. To those who claim they will never support me again, I hope there is a greater number who prefer a representative who puts the views and the interests of the quiet many before the loud few.

It is good that the vast majority and an increasing number of healthcare staff have been vaccinated. Let the number grow.

We are coming into winter with nature sheltering from stronger winds and darker days. Better days and better weather will come.

I aim to continue helping constituents contribute to being a county within a country that is respected for most of our attributes, including politics that can be robust as well as cooperative in nature.