

Successful Centenary for a Successful Club

Sir Peter Bottomley MP

Worthing Herald and Littlehampton Gazette Article

16th September 2021

Hundreds came together at Worthing Rugby Club on Saturday for the celebration lunch before the grand match with Bury St Edmunds (younger by four years). C-19 caused understandable delay from last year's centenary. Virginia and I were delighted to congratulate the Club for the contributions they make to the community in and around Worthing.

A farmer's field by Wallace Avenue, then a ground in Broadwater before moving to the suitably named Rugby road, and on to the grounds in Castle Road, West Tarring. The 44 years at Roundstone Lane, a short distance outside the Worthing West constituency have led to recognition of the ground as a Centre of Excellence.

The Worthing Raiders can be proud to have introduced mini rugby and for holding the first festival involving thousands. The Ladies' team is doing well.

Bob and Barnaby and all the off-field team wrap social and community enjoyment around the game. There are many clubs with similar achievements. Through our grandchildren's sports, we recognise some professionals and many volunteers come together to make available the fun of sport, the discipline of playing to the rules and the intergenerational mixing. These combine to create much of value.

Emma's triumphs at the United States' Open are the pinnacle of the pyramid of community clubs. She shared with Lewis the experience of go-karting. Let us hope his F1 sport maintains sportsmanship. What happened to him at the Grand Prix was worse and much more dangerous than the attacks on me during my water-polo years.

Helping local society and recruiting interest in national issues can also lend a hand by parties. The Lib Dems do it, Labour does it and the Conservatives do too. At a great gathering in Ferring, the raffle was drawn by an eight-year-old; some prize winners were eight times older.

I spoke about two non-party powerful political issues. We unite to try to require a further extension to the Rampion offshore wind 'farm' be placed properly offshore, not inshore. Representations and objections have been successful on the other end of the Solent.

The campaign to save our fields becomes ever more important. Welcome the report that government is to respond to Andrew Griffith MP. He had offered creative ways for appropriate housing developments that do not threaten our fields, hamlets and villages.

With constituents on the western borders of the constituency I serve, I have become terrified by the succession of indicative interest and actual applications to 'infill' or openly to rip up agricultural fields for housing estates.

Inside the town of Worthing and in the larger villages, there has been building, acceptable more-or-less. I reject the notion that enough homes can be built here to satisfy demand from those who want to come to live here. That is planning for madness.

Together we can cope with the consequences of 'coastal drift', younger families coming in from Hove, Brighton and the home counties. We want young people growing up here to have the option of choosing to stay or to head north, with the possibility of returning in later life.

There is growing recognition of the virtues and values of living between the Downs and the sea. Whether people are welcome incomers or long-established, we have the groups, societies and activities where participation is welcome. The best councillors in each party are firmly based in resident association, social care group, sport and faith group.

They help local members of parliament know about emerging issues and current projects of benefit. Worthing Rugby club's festival celebration brought these aspects together.