

Politics For People Of All Ages

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When asked what an MP can do, I answer: 'Listen, carefully and with compassion.'

The reflection comes in welcome remarks, even when a constituent is writing strongly with their views on our relationship with the EU, on political leadership or on other issues, about recognition for what I do in work for local residents.

The Windsor Framework is welcome. It is the result of grown-up discussions, based on trust. It could, it should have come earlier. This Sunday I shall be flying over Windsor to Belfast for a meeting of the British Irish parliamentary assembly. My specialty there is on economic and trade issues. In 1992, I was flying over the castle when the devastating fire was destroying St George's Hall, Windsor. Five years later after the brilliant restoration, Virginia presented the skilled craft workers to The Queen

We can hope unnecessary restrictions evaporate. I spoke to the prime minister about resolution of problems known to be in the Northern Ireland Protocol, with the expectation that the Framework would help tackle future issues. Sensible commentators advise not giving a veto to the Democratic Unionists. I wonder when they will help re-establish the power sharing agreement, knowing they came second, not first in the last provincial elections.

This Friday, after constituency meetings, I am submitting my application for adoption as prospective parliamentary candidate for the proposed reformed Worthing West constituency. It is expected that Angmering and Findon will come in to replace Rustington. Ward issues include primary school provision in the growing area south of the village, the need for full infrastructure . . . and the overloaded roads. Do builders deliver all they promise when winning planning permissions for development?

These boundaries if confirmed will last for about eight years because the law now requires regular changes to maintain roughly equal number of voters. As UK nationals overseas vote from abroad beyond the present 15 year limit, their numbers and influence will make a difference, especially to the scandal that British pensioners in say Singapore, India, Trinidad, Canada, and New Zealand do not receive inflation increases that are paid in Jamaica, France and the United States.

Climate change issues continue to require attention and effort. Consider the changes needed in aviation, surface transport, energy for households, factories and offices, in concrete production and in every field.

The children entering primary education will before the age of forty see just about everything change, here and around the world. We will share the benefits when we succeed. We must contribute to making the decisions and sharing the costs, fairly and by insulating the poorest and the most vulnerable.

World Book Day: one of the greatest contributions a parent can make is to read to and to read with their child. It will lead to a life of fun, study and inspiration. Teachers, relatives and family friends also are important role models for every new generation.

Some face greater challenges. Before the Thursday announcement on meeting special needs, familiar to many as SEND, I met the minister Claire Coutinho to make the case for the WSCC application for extra provision including for Worthing. Parents tell me how adversarial the process of assessment can be, even before finding appropriate provision. I hope for major growth in training the professional staff needed to reduce delays.

Turning to addictions, we need to make known the ways lives can be rescued when an individual recognises that help is accessible. The 12 step process has been found effective by many, though not always the first time. I support the all-party group and this Friday I will be at the Worthing event. There are specialist groups additional to the known ones for alcohol and drugs.

Listening, helping and acting with compassion are ways to make lives better.