



ANDREW GRIFFITH MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR ARUNDEL AND SOUTH DOWNS

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Malcolm Llewellyn - Chairman
Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Parish Council
Trinity Road
Hurstpierpoint
BN6 9UY

20 February 2024

Dear Malcolm,

The start of the year has, I am sure, been exceptionally busy for us all. Between March and June I know that most parish councils will be holding their Annual Parish Meetings with residents – a time for you all to reflect on the good work and challenges of the past year and to present your plans for the next year. Meeting and listening to residents is something I have always prioritised, and it is one of the most important things you can do as an elected representative. This is why I have been continuing my series of *'In Conversation'* and *'Meet your MP'* events across the constituency. If you would like me to join your AGM or a similar meeting for that purpose please do let me know, and if Parliamentary business allows then I would like to be there.

As before, I thought it would be helpful to provide you with an update on things I have heard about that could be beneficial for the parish council.

1. Free official portrait of HM The King

We have a proud tradition of placing a portrait of the Monarch in our public buildings. The accession and coronation of His Majesty The King marked a new chapter in our national story. The Palace recently released the portrait of His Majesty, in naval uniform and the Government is providing a FREE portrait to public bodies across the UK and that scheme is now open to parish councils too. I hope you will take advantage of the offer and consider displaying the portrait in your offices.

Link to apply here: <https://portraitscheme.cubiquityonline.com> and you have until 28th March to do so.

2. Gatwick Development Consent Order (DCO)

The plans to expand Gatwick Airport are now being examined by a planning inspector.

Noise is a blight which many of the constituents I represent should not have to suffer in a part of the country where the ambient noise levels are otherwise very quiet. Aircraft are now descending lower for longer, over-flying many small villages.



Parish Councils' concerns are well represented by the Association of Parish Councils Against Gatwick (APCAG), and if you have not joined up but wish to be represented, please let me know so that I can put you in contact.

I am clear on my own position – I do not support it and I believe the UK should concentrate on having a world-class airport at London Heathrow instead of the further expansion of Gatwick. I am not however 'anti-flying': aviation is an important industry; the UK economy requires international trade in order to succeed and I am optimistic that new technologies such as sustainable aviation fuel and lighter materials will significantly reduce carbon emissions.

3. Community Ownership Fund

Just to let you know that the next application window is opening at the beginning of March.

I have already heard about some exciting projects and have written letters of support to the bids. Whether it is a pub or community asset at risk, a community business you wish to set up or relocating or refurbishing a place that has community value, you can make an application. You can apply for revenue funding no more than £50,000 **or** 20% of the total capital funding applied for, whichever is smaller as long as you are able to 'match' the capital grant from the Fund at the required match funding rate.

More details can be found here - <https://www.find-government-grants.service.gov.uk/grants/the-community-ownership-fund-1>

4. Ukrainian visa scheme extended

The Government has just announced they will be extending the Ukraine visa scheme for a further 18 months. The Home Office will be accepting applications for 18-month extensions from early 2025 onwards to ensure that Ukrainians who have been given safety in the U.K. from the war in their homeland have peace of mind and certainty. It is a good example of how we can simultaneously be firm on controlling who enters this country, whilst being generous of spirit to those in proven need. As a host myself, I know how much this extension matters.

The extension to the visa scheme will allow Ukrainians who are here under one of the three visa schemes to stay longer, and the first wave of visas are due to expire in March 2025. Now they will have certainty that they can continue to access work and stay in the U.K. until at least September 2026.

I have written personally to the host families that I know about in the area, but please do share this information through your own links to Ukraine hosts and support groups.



5. Planning – Local plans and neighbourhood plans

Planning is still the topic which continues to dominate my inbox. I am supporting villages up and down the constituency where certain planning applications are simply unacceptable – generally because they ignore neighbourhood plans which communities themselves have put a great deal of time and effort into producing.

I can, and I am standing up for those communities and making local views known to the planners. I am also raising concerns to water companies and highways and asking them to respond appropriately at the planning stage rather than allowing development to happen and then expressing concerns. Do let you me know if your parish council is objecting to a large scale planning application which you are particularly worried about.

6. SussExport 2024

I am pleased to confirm that the fourth annual SussExport event will be taking place on Friday 5th July at Wilton Park in Wiston (near Steyning), an event I helped to establish. It is about putting Sussex on the map as a place to do business.

It is always a privilege to welcome business leaders, international representatives, and ambassadors to Wilton Park for this trade event. The global delegation are always interested to hear about [Sussex](#) and to meet our producers and innovators. We are working together to make sure that business has the support it needs to create a skilled workforce fit for the future and providing opportunities for our young people here in West [Sussex](#).

If you know of any businesses in your parish who might like to come along, please send me their contact details and I will make sure they receive a free invitation for the one-day event.

A reminder that the best email address to contact me on is andrew.griffith.mp@parliament.uk.

Finally, important information about my work in both Westminster and here in the constituency is in my monthly newsletter. If for some reason you do not already receive it, please sign up here: andrewgriffithmp.com/sign-up.

Kind regards,

Andrew Griffith MP