

PRO3 ITEM 42

**Rother District Council**

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.....Working towards Excellence

from Councillor Bob White

Date: 26 July 2006

All Parish and Town Council Chairmen



Dear Chairman

**YOUTH ISSUES**

One of the pledges given at the 'Straight To The Top 2' young peoples Conference held at Eastbourne in November 2005 by the Leader of Rother District Council, Councillor Graham Gubby, was "to encourage Parish and Town Councils to consider 'youth issues' on their parish council agendas, and invite representatives of young people to speak at the meeting".

We at Rother believe that young people are the future of our communities and it is important that the District and Parish and Town Councils invest in them.

According to the Office of National Statistics, nearly a quarter of our national population is made up of people under the age of eighteen. They may not yet be able to vote yet but it is essential that these people are not ignored in our communities.

Despite all the bad press, the vast majority of young people are social, not anti-social. As legislation increases to 'protect' society against the 'anti-social behaviour' of the young (and the role of Parish and Town Councils will be increased in this area too), young people are finding themselves increasingly marginalised in their local communities. It is therefore important that young people are involved in the decisions made in the local community that affect them.

I am therefore sending this personal message to you in the hope that you will appreciate the benefits that the inclusion of young people in local issues will have on your community. You could, for example, have specific provision on your agenda to allow young people to voice their concerns or encourage the young people of your Parish to appoint their own youth councillors to attend your meetings. Anything that will enable the young people of our District to participate in local government and be empowered to take decisions and action to improve their local community must be to the benefit of us all.

Youth involvement enables Local Councils to truly represent the whole of the community they live in. It may also encourage young people to vote and become Councillors when they are old enough and it should result in improved services to young people.

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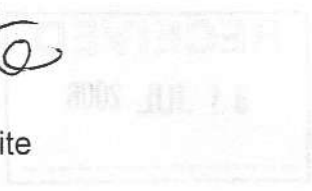
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Considering young people's problems and issues in our communities can lead to a safer, more vibrant and sustainable community for all residents.

Finally, thank you for your time in considering the importance of including young people and youth issues in your meetings. After all, the outstanding natural beauty and the historic heritage that we are so privileged to be a part of within Rother District are for everyone of whatever age to enjoy.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Bob White



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