

Councillor George Courtauld
Annual Report 2022-23

Braintree District Council

General:

In the last twelve months Braintree District Council has had to cope with the fall out from lockdown, shortages caused by the war in Ukraine, difficult relations with the European Union, the death of our wise and wonderful Queen, the only monarch many of us had ever known, and uncertainty in Westminster. The Council has risen to these challenges with remarkable competence and constancy.

Despite significant increases in costs and reductions in revenue, the Council's finances remain in remarkably good shape, and its administration of financial help, guidance, support, and other forms of relief has been exceptional. The current cost of living crisis has confirmed the wisdom of the Council's long term insistence on rationalisation and commercialisation, while maintaining the usual high level of service.

My Role:

Within the District Council itself I have been involved in scrutinising the Council's performance and our collaboration with partners outside the Council, and attending meetings on finance and corporate transformation.

Elected as a novice four years ago it took me some time to grasp the extent, and limit, of the District Council's remit.

Our most high profile role is clearly planning and I have been enormously lucky to have the knowledge, experience, insight and energy of my fellow ward councillor, Mrs Gabrielle Spray, to fall back on.

The Ward:

Still commuting up to London at least three days a week, along with so many of our residents, I am acutely aware of how the ramifications of lockdown are still affecting the way we commute, work and interact. "Working from home" has certainly had an impact on our region, for both good and ill, with a rise in the use of our beautiful countryside for leisure and tourism, but also an increase in fly tipping and trespass. From the perspective of a partner in a farm within the ward, I have been pleased with the way in which I have been able to understand and help with many of these issues, even though sometimes it has been simply a matter of reaching the right person in the County Council or at a local charity.

I have been enormously proud to have represented our Ward for the last four years. The depth of local generosity, compassion and community spirit has been heart warming and astounding. If re-elected, I very much look forward to doing so again.