

Georgina Morgan-Denn

From: Georgina Morgan-Denn
Sent: 20 April 2026 12:48
To: Kirston Nelson; Helena Robinson
Cc: Jake Mee
Subject: Clerks Operational Meeting - recent observations and a request for an in person meeting

Dear Helena and Kirston

I hope this email finds you both well.

I would like to share some reflections following the recent Clerks Operational Meeting. I will be open in saying that I did leave the meeting early, as it was a particularly busy day of meetings and deadlines for me ahead of the Easter break, and I was increasingly frustrated by what appeared to be a lack of understanding and accountability, primarily from Simon Anthony, alongside a broader sense that we are not making meaningful progress. I therefore took the decision to step away and obtain a brief update from colleagues afterwards.

More broadly, there continues to be a growing sense of frustration around aspects of the current process, particularly in relation to communication and the timely response to parish-level queries. This is not a new issue, and despite ongoing discussions over a number of years, there remains little evidence of sustained improvement.

While there is a clear and stated commitment to partnership working between the borough and parish councils, this is not always reflected consistently in practice. Despite the drive for collaborative working, recent interactions have at times felt more formal than genuinely cooperative, and there remains significant scope to strengthen the relationship.

The Clerks' Operational Meeting continues to provide a useful channel for discussion; however, its overall effectiveness is increasingly being brought into question, largely due to the wider issues around communication, responsiveness, and follow-through.

Operational service updates on SBC's statutory obligations such as weed spraying and road sweeping are welcomed. However, these services are reported with increasing ambiguity and a constant threat of their withdrawal. This presents real challenges for parishes in terms of planning and budgeting, particularly where there is uncertainty around timing or continuity of delivery.

There also appears to be a lack of appreciation of the need for parishes to receive timely and reliable information to budget effectively, particularly where service delivery is uncertain or delayed.

In addition, there remains some inconsistency in understanding around parish deeds and the allocation of responsibilities, with assumptions occasionally being made without reference to the actual content of those documents. Greater shared clarity on this would help to avoid misunderstandings and ensure a consistent approach to responsibilities.

Overall, there is still a strong willingness at parish level to continue working constructively with the borough. However, this needs to be on the basis of a genuinely equal partnership, rather than the sense that parish councils are an afterthought. There is a clear opportunity to reset and improve how we work together, with a focus on communication, mutual understanding, and more effective collaboration.

Finally, to support improved communication, clarity, and accountability going forward, I would suggest that our next meeting would be best held in person. I believe this would help facilitate more constructive dialogue and a more effective working relationship moving forward.

Best wishes
Georgina

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