

OBSERVER MAILBAG

FROM 4pm to 9m on July 27, I watched as the young and the elderly, the infirm and the healthy, came in cars, wheelchairs, buggies for the disabled, on sticks and on foot.

The long queue curled round the Memorial Hall in Icklesham as these 314 parishioners waited patiently in line to say a resounding no to Mr. Comotto's question.

Together with 402 residents of Winchelsea Beach, Rye Harbour and Winchelsea Town, they numbered 716 who sent a loud and clear no to Mr. Comotto and his supporters.

In the words of his referendum, we do not 'wish to become a separate Parish' and 716 people is 83% of those who voted.

As the Returning Officer stated at the count, this meant that the 'motion was lost'.

It also means the defeat of the instigator who 'demanded' this unnecessary and costly referendum involving the four wards of the Parish of Icklesham, see the returning officer's official statement on

http://www.rother.gov.uk/media/pdf/9/2/Official_Result.pdf

Now it is over. The public has spoken in a democratic voice. Let us hope Mr. Comotto accepts his overwhelming defeat with grace. Our message to him is clear. Keep doing your best for the good people of Winchelsea but leave the rest of us alone.

While I do not owe Mr. Comotto or Mr. Mears any explanation, their public snide remarks in your newspaper as to my marital status, my living arrangements, my M.B.E. and my social standing provoke me to sign my name with the following true clarification. I am, Sir, Yours sincerely,

Mrs ANN RACHLIN
Windmill Lane, Icklesham

I NOTE Chris Mears is back in the ring, along with Janet Mears who has also written a letter.

A few weeks ago, Mrs Ann Rachlin and I were chided by Mr Mears who, after having slouched it out, 'exposed' the fact we were both writing letters from the same shared address! Oh, shock and horror!

I have no desire to conduct any investigation to expose the Mears' domestic arrangements, but it is tiresome when he persists on harkening back to my not being present at a particular meeting.

For the record, I respectfully draw his and Mrs Mears attention to the fact that they and we were four out of the nine persons sitting in close proximity - swatting the same mosquitoes - in the Winchelsea New Hall on the evening of the referendum count and this is not the first time we have all been at meetings on parish council matters.

As Mr Mears is a comparative newcomer to Winchelsea, my attendance at community meetings in this area since 1979 must be considerably greater than his.

Moving on to the all-important referendum result a notice claiming

'a clear majority had voted in favour' has been posted outside the Little Shop in Winchelsea.

It states that 64.6% voted 'Yes' to the Comotto dream and only 35.4% opposed it. How can this be a 'clear majority' when only 195 registered Winchelsea electors voted and 206 abstained?

If the Action Group chooses to publish percentage results in this manner, then it is only democratic everyone should know what the complete results are.

The voting, after all, involved all four wards of the Parish and not just Winchelsea alone which has only 401 electors out of the total of 2,110.

In Icklesham, 96.9% voted 'No', in Winchelsea

Beach, 96.2% voted 'No' and in Rye Harbour, 98.1% voted 'No'.

A grand total of 863 votes were cast in the entire parish of which 83% said 'No' to Mr Comotto and only 17% said 'Yes' and that includes Winchelsea where more than half the registered voters of the town (52.53%) chose not to support him at all.

This is no landslide victory. Where was the 'majority' of well over 205 of which Richard Comotto boasted in his published letter of July 9?

Only 126 electors in Winchelsea out of 401 voted in his favour.

The people have responded clearly through the ballot box. Their democratic declaration of 83% against separation should be loud enough for Mr Comotto to understand they have no desire to become four separate parishes. Amen.

Maybe now the Pied Piper will put down his pipe and let all good folk resume their normal peaceful productive lives in our beautiful united parish.

Last Friday morning, a rather vocal lady announced to everyone waiting for the Little Shop to open, that Richard Comotto had scored a 'tremendous victory' in the referendum.

I was also present the previous night when, at the end of the count, the returning officer for Rother announced that only 147 had voted in favour but 716 were against.

How could she interpret that as a 'tremendous victory'?

I would respectfully suggest both she and Mr Comotto might find the first three chapters of the Book of Numbers from the Old Testament appropriate bedside reading.

IAIN KERR
Windmill Lane, Icklesham



VOTING at Icklesham last Thursday.