

A VISION FOR SUSSEX

The time for Sussex to unite has come. Whilst I am unfamiliar to the Council, the importance of what I have to say (and the danger of avoiding it) cannot be ignored. And though I am young and inexperienced in the art of politics, I have come to rely on the wise words of Aristotle and Cicero to guide my judgements. And so where I lack in personal experience, I exceed others in theory and the common experiences we call history.

My name is Christian Pitt, descendant of William Pitt the Elder and the Younger, and I stand before you today to argue for the unification of West Sussex County Council, East Sussex County Council, their dependant districts and the Brighton and Hove unitary authority into a single unitary authority. It is a project that may take a generation. It will require much diplomacy, and ever more long term spirit, yet it is one that will solve the historic county's many ills by keeping ahead of the country.

What I say to you today I say as a citizen of Sussex, as much as I speak for the standards of my ancestors as I do for my thorough training in the natural law.

The unification of the councils will solve the confusion, mistrust and inefficiency the people of Sussex see in their councils. It is an advantage that will ultimately serve the common interest in a way beneficial to all. Without unification, the mistrust between local identity and local power will grow until the situation is beyond manageable.

And so, I stand before you today to advocate for the unification of Sussex. With the natural law guiding my hand, a united Sussex will bring growth and protection to our local economy, our citizens' welfare and our trade. Let us examine each in turn.

Before we can gain from unification, the people of Sussex must unite. The narrow powers of the councils must match the broad identity of the citizens of Sussex. By dissolving the county, district and unitary authority councils, and having a single unitary authority for Sussex, with Haywards Heath as its capital — and delegating council authority to the six historic rapes of Sussex — Sussex will go a long way to growing its authority by reconciling identity with political power. In geography, culture and transport, Sussex is so close together that unity is an inevitability. The councils depend on each other as much as they do on Westminster. Because this is so, would it not be wiser to lower our costs by pooling our resources together to serve our common interests? With a strong local government, we shall have the authority, the autonomy, to tower on our own two feet and so do what is in our citizens' best interests. This task is Sussex's greatest priority. Though the negotiations will be long and tough, and spread over a long period of time, the effort will not be in vain. For Sussex has the future to gain, or the future to lose... It is in this way, therefore, that Sussex must unite.

Once the county has united, Sussex will benefit from growth in its economy, welfare and trade.

To begin, a united Sussex will provide economic growth. At the political level, economic growth comes from three sources: taxation, resources and merchandise. The councils are most familiar with taxation, and merchandise is more appropriately dealt with by merchants. As for resources, the

councils have failed to make best use in one of the most valuable assets in our county: land. In particular, property. As the modern lord of the county, the council has a profitable right as well as a moral duty to buy residential and commercial property to let to tenants. Not under landlord and tenant legislation, but through trusts and custodianship of common property. By entrusting property to residential and commercial tenants, not only will the council have a permanent long term passive supply of income, but tenants will have the freedom of trusts and the protection of the council to safeguard their property and their livelihoods. Of course, the upstart cost is high. But as the precedent set by the Crown and the Duke of Westminster proves, it is one well worth the cost. For with greater revenue, the council will become less reliant on other councils and central government, and with this, the authority to do what is best for the people of Sussex.

In addition to economic growth, a united Sussex will improve citizen welfare. Let us not forget that the foundation of local government is to keep the peace. And keeping the peace involves minimising disputes between citizens. For centuries, this job has been the task of the police, and our schools. But where are the police to be seen? It was once a common place to have a policeman walk by regularly on every street across the county. The beacon of peace in daily life. It should be no different today. Cameras do not prevent crime, policemen do. Considering our police force is identified as a Sussex police force, it not only makes sense but is a duty of the council to reconcile its authority with that of its peacekeepers. Peacekeepers that should continue to identify with their people rather than keep themselves remote from them. It is true that the police are separate from the council, but do they not serve the same purpose? They both serve the common interest, and so they should work together to meet this noble vision by collaborating on strategy and operations.

Alongside the police, our schools will greatly benefit from a united Sussex. By shaping a common curriculum that teaches our common Sussex history, with emphasis on science and art, taught in symposium style schools, our children will be the best equipped children in Europe for competency in life. Learning the necessary knowledge with a child centred approach will give our children the skills and virtues needed to live a happy life. This applies as much to our nurseries as it does to our universities. This change in education is the right thing to do. The noble thing to do. It will improve our county's honour as much as it will improve the physical and intellectual advantages of our population. It is a goal that has as much importance as the county's unification, and one that, without urgent attention, risks the future of our county. And so with unification, Sussex will gain best from these policing and schooling advantages.

With economic growth and growth in welfare, a united Sussex will also improve trade and commerce. Two key benefits that can only come about from a united Sussex is a county public Postbus network and a county bicycle network. With shared income from taxation and rents gained from letting property, the council's long run average costs will become less than they currently are under these divisive authorities. Because of this, the council will have enough to fund a public owned, county wide, high quality public Postbus network. With growing concern on environmental costs, and the natural efficiency that public transport brings with urbanisation — with a strong system and a strong culture behind it — a county wide public Postbus network will solve many problems with one solution. The Postbus network, very much like the Austrian ski bus network, will also complement a county bicycle network. Bicycle riding continues to be a growing popular alternative means of transport. Although, the infrastructure is not fully in place which therefore affects riders' safety as much as it clogs our roads with bicycles. Is it not appropriate, therefore, and possible with the economic reforms, that a leading bicycle network is build across the county? Sussex is already a popular destination for bicycle tourists across the world. Like the Continental

ski resorts, if we build a bicycle resort network across the county, think of the many industries and many jobs that will serve alongside this network. Cafés, bicycle repair workshops, Sussex souvenirs. These are only a few. This too will have a high start up cost, but a bicycle network will also be well worth the cost for Sussex's economy and its welfare. And so with the unification of Sussex, our trade will grow in ways that are present disunity forbids to come about.

Members of the Council, the time for Sussex to unite has come. Some will have you believe that the old ways are best; that our present tradition must continue. But we are in no position to continue with failure. By uniting Sussex, we shall place ourselves amongst the standing of ancient Athens; to end the confusion, inefficiency and danger that the present system breeds. Uniting Sussex will bring long term and continuous advantages to our economy, our people and our trade. Unite, and these benefits — alongside many others — will come to the council and the county. Remain divided, and we jeopardise our future. Join my vision, unite the county, defend our prosperity.