



FOR THE COMMUNITY STADIUM FOR THE COMMUNITY GOOD

**Speech by Paul Samrah at the Press Conference Launch
Monday 5 June 2006 – Pelham House, Lewes.**

Good afternoon and thank you for coming today.

This afternoon, I am proud to announce the formation of a new political party, The Seagulls Party.

The new party is registered with the Electoral Commission and intends to field candidates at future elections.

We stand for

Openness;
Honesty;
Accountability; and
Engagement.

The Party has been born out of frustration and anger over the political process that has thwarted the delivery of a Community Stadium for Sussex.

It's not just about football, it's more important than that.

Exactly **what** is the cause of our anger and frustration?

It's been **7 years** since 45,000 people of Brighton & Hove voted in the City's Referendum in support of Falmer as the proposed site;
It's been **5 years** since the Planning Application was lodged;
It's been **4 years** since Brighton & Hove Council approved it by 11-1.

And then the fun started.....

62 days of Public Inquiry, spread over 2 ½ years;
Over a £¼ million spent by Lewes District Council opposing the Stadium;
And at no point has the Council ever asked its residents for their views – certainly not by way of a Referendum;
Not only have the Council failed to consult their Electorate properly, but they have attempted to mislead residents with the doctored photographs in this Council publication.

However, when Lewes District Council announced their challenge to the planning permission, stadium campaigners took less than 7 days to amass over 5,000 signatures from Lewes District residents. That tells you the real story.

The pro-stadium campaign has remained open and honest and The Seagulls Party will carry those values forward, as I stated in my opening.

We are here today to say Enough is Enough – but Lewes District Council plough on..... The excuse they use is that there are other sites. The Inspector found that there was nowhere which offered (and I quote)"feasible, practical and realistic alternatives that should be preferred to Falmer".

Can Lewes District Council name another site, which has a realistic prospect of gaining planning permission? The Inspector couldn't find one.

Having been reviewed by the foremost legal body of the Government, the Treasury Solicitor, only one of the 16 issues raised by LDC was deemed to be worthy of correction.

To facilitate this, the Treasury Solicitor has offered to 'Submit to Judgement' in the High Court and allow the planning permission granted by the Deputy Prime Minister to be quashed. They have sent LDC a draft Consent Order.

Both the Football Club and Brighton & Hove City Council have confirmed their agreement to it. It still awaits the agreement of LDC.

It is apposite to quote from the House of Lords judgement in the case of Tesco Stores Limited v The Secretary of State for the Environment: ***"If there is one principle of planning law more firmly settled than any other, it is that matters of planning judgement are within the exclusive province of the Secretary of State"***.

We therefore call on LDC to accept the Consent Order at their Cabinet meeting tomorrow, so that this matter is determined once and for all.

We also call on LDC to accept the new decision of the Secretary of State, whichever way it goes.

A second challenge would only add weight to the view that the District Council is trying to delay the decision, in the hope that Brighton & Hove Albion goes bust in the meantime.

Given :

The obfuscation and continued obduracy of the Council;

The lack of any public mandate whatsoever for Lewes District Council's continued legal action;

And the Council's deliberate deception in order to defend the indefensible ...

... there is a significant question mark over Lewes District Council's integrity to hold office.

It is difficult to see how LDC's actions relate to that part of the Council's constitution which states "the Council's principal aim is to serve the public, who expect a high standard of integrity and service from the Council".

Serving the public with integrity. That will be at the heart of this Party.

Thank you.