



# Pauline Latham OBE MP

## Working hard for Mid Derbyshire January 2015

Dear Constituent,

It's a new year, and there are lots of exciting things happening both in the constituency and in Parliament.

I have been particularly busy this month with the work I am doing on the Serious Crime Bill. For me this presents a valuable opportunity to ensure that young women are safeguarded from the threat of Female Genital Mutilation. I have been working on a clause that will ensure that courts are able to issue orders to protect girls from this abusive practice if there is a risk that they might undergo it.

You may also remember that last month, I was involved in a campaign to keep a pancreatic cancer drug called Abraxane on the Cancer Drugs Fund. The drug has been given a stay of execution by the Fund, and will remain on it, pending further investigation. Pancreatic cancer is one of the most aggressive forms of the disease, with very few treatment options, and that is why I think it is important to continue to fight for this drug.

In this month's Culture, Media and Sport Questions I pressed the Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries as to when connectivity issues to Superfast Broadband in Morley, Oakwood and Belper would be resolved. The Minister said that the Rural Broadband initiative had brought Superfast Broadband to 1,500 premises in Belper, but he later acknowledged that more needed to be done. It is with this in mind that I wrote to the Minister to press the need for better coverage.

I have also been kept busy in the constituency by a number of initiatives. Recently, I publicly raised my concerns about the potential loss of school crossing patrols in Derbyshire. Under the proposals, 4 schools in my constituency could lose, or not have their lollipop ladies replaced. Derbyshire County Council have found funding, but it would come out of their Public Health Budget, which funds care for the disabled.

I also paid a visit to Woodlands School, and spoke to the Year 7s about politics and being a politician. I also sat in on presentations given by the Year 8s about topics such as Ebola, smoking and women's health testing. I was very impressed by both groups.

In February, I am offering constituents the chance to meet me in person and discuss any issues they might have at one of my 'Meet your MP' coffee mornings. I will be visiting venues across Mid Derbyshire, including West Hallam, Allestree and Spondon. If you would like to attend one of these sessions, please contact my constituency office on the number below to secure your place.

On 16th February, I will also be hosting the Dementia Awareness Bus at the Park Farm Shopping Centre in Allestree. The bus will be parked at the location between 9am and 4pm and it is free to attend. Representatives from the Alzheimer's Society will be on hand to provide advice and support to those affected by dementia and their carers. Again, for more information on this event, please contact my Spondon Office on the number below.

As I am sure you are aware, there are fewer than 100 days until the General Election, and things in Parliament are pretty manis, so I hope to have lots of exciting news to report in my next newsletter!

Yours sincerely,

Pauline Latham

### Possible loss of school crossing patrols

This month, I have been concerned by the threat faced by the loss of school crossing patrols in my constituency, due to Derbyshire County Council's suspension of funding for the service. I am particularly worried about the loss of the crossing patrol at Pottery School, which is situated on a dangerous road. Crossings by a further three schools in Mid Derbyshire will either not have their lollipop ladies replaced when they leave, or will remain vacant.

The County Council now propose to fund the service by using money from the Public Health Budget, which also funds care for the elderly and disabled. As I previously said, I am fully behind any move to maintain crossing patrols, but this money should be allocated those that need it most, and I would urge the County Council to reconsider these plans before making any rash decisions.

In fact, I have written to them to press the need to maintain funding for adult social care, whilst finding some way to fund the school crossing patrols that are so vital in keeping children safe.



### Serious Crime Bill

This month I have been heavily involved in discussions over the Serious Crime Bill. It has been a fascinating experience to have such an in-depth role in the formation of policy, and I have greatly enjoyed my time on the Committee.

During my time as an MP, I have been involved in a number of campaigns involving the prevention of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and I think that it is important that there are more safeguards in law to protect victims of this abusive practice. That is why I am in the process of devising an amendment that will allow courts to hand down FGM Protection Orders if there is a risk that a girl could be subject to a Genital Mutilation offence.

FGM is a practice that is on the increase in the UK, and over the last decade, the number of cases reported has now doubled. The problem is that social workers and other bodies are afraid of coming forward about abuse of this kind, for fear of being branded culturally insensitive. Having seen the horrific consequences of this procedure, I think we must put cultural sensitivities aside and do our duty to protect those vulnerable girls who are at risk.



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### Superfast Broadband Connectivity in Mid Derbyshire

In this month's Culture, Media and Sport Questions, I asked the Minister of State for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries about the steps his Department were taking to roll out Superfast Broadband across previously poorly connected areas in Mid Derbyshire.

At present, Belper, Morley and Oakwood remain unable to connect to the Superfast Network. The Minister, the Rt Hon Ed Vaizey MP, replied that whilst 1,500 premises can now receive the service through the Government's Rural Broadband initiative, more needed to be done.

I am fully of the opinion that access to Superfast Broadband is of paramount importance to businesses and households in Mid Derbyshire, and I am concerned that the roll-out of this vital resource has not been quick enough. It is with this in mind that I have written to the Minister about this issue.



### Pancreatic Cancer Drug to stay on Cancer Drugs Fund

As some of you may remember, last month I was involved in a campaign to keep the drug Abraxane on the Cancer Drugs Fund, which will allow patients to continue to have access to it.

Pancreatic cancer is incredibly aggressive and there are very few treatment options for patients. This drug can increase a sufferers' life expectancy by around 2 months; 2 precious months that can be spent with family and friends.

After a review, the Cancer Drugs Fund gave Abraxane a stay of execution pending further investigations into the drug's viability. I am pleased that the drug is available through the Fund at least in the short term. However, the fight continues, and I will work hard to ensure that this drug continues to improve the last few months of pancreatic cancer patients' lives.

### Visit to Blue Box Community Centre

Like many of my constituents, I was saddened to hear that the Blue Box Community Centre had burned down. It was an important social hub, and its destruction represents a real loss to the youth of the community.

On Friday 23rd January, I visited the site of the former community centre and met with its service users and representatives from Derbyshire County Council and Amber Valley Borough Council. There were a number of exciting ideas laid on the table about the new building for the centre.

Whilst the loss of the old blue box is very sad, I think that this marks a real opportunity the group and young people in Belper as a whole. I will of course be keeping a close eye on this issue, and will continue to work with both the former centre's users and the Councils to resolve the lack of premises.

### Visit to Allestree Woodlands School

I recently visited the Year 7s at Allestree Woodlands School, who were about to begin their studies in politics. I was asked to tell the students a bit about what I do as a Member of Parliament, and what working in the House of Commons is like. I also stressed the importance of voting and explained that it was a right that many, particularly women, had died for. The other big topic we discussed was the General Election, and I advised them that watching the coverage might give them a better insight.

I then met with Year 8 pupils and watched several presentations on topics including smoking, women's health testing and Ebola. I was really impressed with the quality of the student's work, and hope my feedback to them was useful!

### Save the Date...

I have some exciting events coming up in next few weeks, and am offering several 'Meet your MP' sessions across my constituency on selected dates from 09.45 until 11.15 am.

The first I will be hosting will be in Allestree on 16th February, it will be taking place in St John's Methodist Church. On that day, I have also invited the Alzheimer's Society Dementia Bus to come to Park Farm Shopping Centre in Allestree between 9am and 4pm.

On 17th February, I will be holding a session at Spondon Village Club, followed by one at West Hallam Methodist Church on 18th February. And finally, there will be an opportunity to meet me at No.28 Belper on 19th.

I am hoping to see lots of you there for a coffee and a chat. However, if you do wish to attend any of the 'Meet your MP' sessions, please contact my constituency office by either sending an e-mail to hillab@parliament.uk or by calling 01332 676 679.

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