



Pauline Latham OBE MP

Working hard for Mid Derbyshire October 2014

Dear Constituent,

The period after the conference season leading up until Christmas is always extremely busy, but it has certainly been an exciting time to be in Parliament.

Thankfully, however, I have had time during October to focus on issues in the constituency. This month’s big event was the ‘Over 55’s Fair’ I hosted at St Peter’s Church in Derby on 24th October. It was a great day, with a huge range of exhibitors offering advice, samples and services like diabetes testing. I was very pleased to see so many local people there.

The hot topic in the area, however, was undoubtedly the public meeting held by Amber Valley Borough Council to discuss the proposed changes to their Core Strategy. I felt that the behaviour of the Councillors of the controlling group at the meeting was appalling, and it is clear that the right of residents to speak against the changes was completely ignored by them. The decision had obviously been made before the meeting even started because they were able to hand out pre-printed lists of which sites were in and which were out. I will continue to support my constituents in this issue, and will make representations to the Planning Inspector on the developments that they feel are inappropriate.

October has been a busy month in the Commons too. I spoke in the ‘Get Britain Cycling Debate’, pressing the need for more safe cycle routes in Derbyshire. In that debate, I called for some of the additional funding for cycling to go towards realising Derwent Valley Cycleway Group’s aim of improving commuter networks from places in Mid Derbyshire to Derby City Centre and creating a route through the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. This is the group I set up when responding to constituent’s concerns that the cycling offer in the Derwent Valley was not safe enough for cyclists especially those with young children.

I visited local artist Paul Cummins’ exhibition “Bloodswept Lands and Seas of Red” at the Tower of London again. It was amazing to see how the installation had grown, and with 50,000 additional poppies planted every week and it will continue to grow until 11th November. I would strongly recommend a visit before it starts to be removed after that day.

I had the opportunity to meet a number of my younger constituents this month. I congratulated Luke Clarke from Oakwood on his nomination in 2014’s Young Builder of the Year Awards. Meeting Luke was great, and it is clear he is a very determined young man, who I wish the greatest of success in the future.

I am always happy to receive a visit from schools from Mid Derbyshire. This month, Portway Junior School came to the Houses of Parliament, and I was able to talk to the children after their tour of the House. It is always great to see young people engage with politics, and I was greatly encouraged by Portway’s pupils’ curiosity and the quality of their questions.

November promises to be an exciting month, and I hope to have lots more news to report back then!

Yours sincerely,

Pauline Latham

Over 55’s Fair

On 24th October, I hosted an ‘Over 55’s Fair’ at St Peter’s Church in Derby. The aim of the day was to provide a ‘one stop shop’ of free advice to local people over the age of 55.

I was very pleased to see that the event was so well attended, with a steady stream of people coming in throughout the day. Exhibitors at the event included Age UK, Active Derbyshire, Futures Homescape, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service, Deda Dance and many more. AMG Wealth Management, who kindly sponsored the event were also present.

As well as advice, attendees could take advantage of a range of services on offer on the day. Icare, the ‘meals on wheels’ provider, offered samples of their meals to those present. In addition to this, Silver Star Diabetes had a mobile testing unit stationed outside the Church, and were providing free diabetes testing all day.

I hope that what was on offer at the Fair was useful to those who attended. For me, it was a great opportunity to meet constituents and for them to raise local concerns or questions that they might have had about my role as an MP with me.



I meet with a representative from the event’s sponsor, AMG Wealth Management



Amber Valley Borough Council’s Core Strategy

One of the issues that has loomed particularly large in Mid Derbyshire over the past few months are the proposed changes to Amber Valley Borough Council’s Core Strategy.

On 15th October, there was a public meeting of the Borough Council to discuss the proposals. Whilst I could unfortunately not attend, due to prior commitments in the Commons, I was shocked by reports of the way the Councillors behaved at the meeting.

Firstly only a very limited number of people were permitted to attend the meeting to voice their concerns, and one of the Councillors said that the meeting would not continue past 9.30pm, due to ‘the work/life balance of the officers’. There was also a limit put on the number of people who could speak, in spite of the hard work many had given to putting together their cases.

I was also very concerned to hear that during the meeting, a sheet of paper was handed out detailing the final list of sites that had been designated for development.

I feel that the behaviour of the Labour-run Council was unacceptable, and I am hoping that the Planning Inspector will block some of the more controversial sites, like the one on Kedleston Road.



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‘Get Britain Cycling’ Debate

One of the hot topics in Parliament this month was what the Government can do to get more people cycling. This came after the All-Party Cycling Group produced a report in which it was revealed that only 2% of journeys in the UK were undertaken by cycling.

I felt that this debate was particularly pertinent to Mid Derbyshire, especially when one considers the hard work the Derwent Valley Cycleway Group are doing to improve cycle access to the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and commuter links from places in Mid Derbyshire like Belper to Derby.

In the debate, I paid tribute to all the work being done by the Group, and said that I was hopeful that the rise in Government spending on cycling per head would be passed on to cycling in Derby and the work the Group is doing to extend the cycle network in Derbyshire.



Meeting with Luke Clarke

Earlier this month, the annual Young Builder of the Year Awards were held in the House of Commons. I was delighted to hear that Luke Clarke, a young constituent from Oakwood had been nominated for Young Builder of the Year in the under 16s’ category.

Luke is an extraordinary young man who sees his passion for construction as an escape from his dyslexia, and owing to his incredible story received a commendation at the awards.

I went to congratulate him on his award, and I was very taken with how determined he was to pursue construction as a career in construction. I of course wish Luke all the best for the future.



Visit to the Tower of London

As you may remember from my last newsletter, I have been a supporter of the work of Derby artist Paul Cummins for some time. On 23rd October, I took the opportunity to see his exhibition “Bloodswept Lands and Seas of Red” at the Tower of London.

When it is complete, the exhibition will consist of 888,246 ceramic poppies handmade in Derby, which represent each of the lives lost in the First World War. Every week, an additional 50,000 poppies are being planted by an army of volunteers from all over the world, some of whose ancestors were those that took part in the conflict.

Like the lives of those that fell in World War One, the exhibition is intended to convey transience, which is reflected in the fact that it will only be running until 11th November, when all of the poppies have been planted. The installation is remarkably beautiful, and I would strongly recommend a visit over the next few days.

Falling Crime in Derbyshire

The Independent Crime Survey of England and Wales has recently revealed that crime has fallen significantly since 2010, with an average drop of 20% across the nation. This means that more than 2.3 million fewer crimes are committed every year, with 413,000 fewer incidences of violent crime reported. Derbyshire has also seen a decline in crime figures exceeding the national average, with a 21% reduction in crime across the county.

The fall has been contributed to by the Government’s new crime fighting strategy, with police forces now having more autonomy to deal with issues that affect their area through the installation of Police and Crime Commissioners, and more high-quality data available to forces on street-level crime.

It also goes without saying that the contribution made by the Derbyshire Constabulary to the fall in crime in the county has been huge.

The Derbyshire Constabulary are also celebrating an additional £1.5 million of government funding, which will be used to establish a joint headquarters to be shared with the Fire and Rescue Service.



Portway Junior School visit the Houses of Parliament

Every month, I meet a number of schoolchildren from my constituency in London. This month, I was visited by Portway Junior School.

When I met them, the children told me they had enjoyed their day, and particularly their tour of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. I gave a talk on my role as an MP, and took questions from the children about it and Parliament as a whole.

The questions ranged from how I became an MP, to working conditions for doctors. I was very impressed with how the children engaged with the experience, and with the questions they asked me.

