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NEWSLETTER



January 12 2013

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"she has a record of unusually free speech" Simon Carr, The Independent
"the beating heart of the parliamentary Tory party" Quentin Letts, The Daily Mail

Hello again,

This is a rather short newsletter as Parliament returned on Monday and aside from Tuesday's vote on a 1% rise in Welfare benefits it has been a rather quiet week.

I am about to go to India for a week on what is grandly known as "Ministerial business". I am attending a world conference on Diabetes, visiting a number of health clinics and other services and promoting greater co-operation between the NHS and the Indian Government. This includes a number of opportunities for the NHS, British business and Universities, including the training of doctors. I can assure you that at the moment I have a two hour break in a packed schedule so it is no "junket"!

Transport matters

HS2/Tramworks/Nottingham Station works

There are a number of matters on the agenda when I meet the Secretary of State for Transport later this month. There is considerable speculation that the Leeds part of the planned HS2 line will include a station at Toton Sidings. I have supported the idea though remain opposed to Peverill's plans to develop on Green Belt land in Toton (if you are a regular reader you will be well familiar with my campaign to defend our Green Belt). I will also raise the matter of the tram works and in particular the intolerable disruption in and around Beeston (the planned closure of High Road and Chilwell Road though of course they remain open for business and shopping!). I am increasingly concerned about the lack of information to residents in the Lower Road/Queens Road area. I will also be raising the affect that the six week closure of Nottingham station this summer, will have on both Beeston and the A453.

Disabled access

A disabled constituent who had a somewhat disgraceful experience with Midland

Mainline and at Beeston station, has taken up my offer to give evidence to the Transport Select Committee on disabled access. It's been a pleasure to help her make her submission and we await the response!

BT

My team and I have been in regular contact with BT about the unacceptable, so called "service" to people in parts of Chilwell who have been without a line since before Christmas. If you know someone who has been affected please let me know as this is a serious matter which I have raised with BT at the highest level. Some people have had their service restored but others still wait. The problem was caused by flooding and whilst we all appreciate it would take some time to repair the damage, a delay of more than three weeks with no communication (BT seems unable to send letters!) to customers is unacceptable.

Health Matters

Change 4 Life and the Sugar Police!

You may have caught some of the publicity about the campaign launched this week, to give people more information about what's in their food, tips as to how to avoid too much salt, fat and sugar, recipes and advice on how to achieve a more healthy diet. Banning too much sugar in children's breakfast cereals was an easy headline for Labour but not thought through. If it's such a good idea you might have thought the last Government would have passed such a law. They didn't and I think they know it's not as simple as they now make out. There's no doubt we have a serious problem with obesity and over weight – 60% are in that category and a third of 11 year olds leave school overweight or obese. We are all responsible for what we eat and drink and as parents or carers responsible for the health of our children. But manufacturers and retailers also bear a responsibility and working with them through what's called the Responsibility Deal as opposed to regulation and legislation, has seen us achieve some of the lowest salt levels in the world and almost the elimination of trans fats. But, make no mistake if the people who make and sell our food and drink don't accept responsibility then I will call for legislation. However, I will never agree to "sugar police"!

Diabetes

My thanks to a constituent who came to see me last week about Diabetes 1; the result is there in Hansard as we debated the subject of Diabetes on Tuesday. You can read the debate by clicking [here](#) ; my speech is at the end of the debate.

NHS Christmas Card

I had a very good discussion with two constituents who came to deliver a Christmas Card from a campaign group and my thanks to them. They raised a number of issues and then handed over the card; like me they were somewhat shocked to see the tone and unpleasant "messages" (I am not quite sure how calling me a bitch advances their

argument!).

There is frankly, a great deal of misinformation being put out about the Coalition's reforms to the NHS and some of it is done deliberately, designed to scare people and all for party political advantage.

However, those campaigners who think it is acceptable to use personal abuse are in the minority and do their cause no service. People do have concerns and questions, like the two women who took the time and trouble to come and see me, to ask questions and raise concerns in a genuine and reasonable manner. I hope I dispelled some myths and gave them reassurance that the Government remains committed to an NHS based on need, free at the point of delivery and paid for by general taxation (that's why we put that principle into the recent legislation). The Government is spending more on the NHS – something Labour says it would not have done and something they are not doing in Wales where they are cutting health spending. And far from "privatising" the NHS we have created a level playing field, and are working to sort out the scandal of the last Government's PFI agreements, the private treatment centres that wasted millions of pounds and secure the future of our hospitals.

And finally...

An old friend advised me "don't give up the day job!" following my appearance as part of the Birmingham team on Univeristy Challenge. All I can say is "I did it for the money" - my £600 fee has gone to Headcase the local brain cancer charity I am proud to support.

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