



In Parliament: Adjournment debate on aircraft noise mitigation

I held a well-attended Adjournment Debate in the House of Commons earlier this month to address the concerns raised by many of my constituents about the intolerable aircraft noise which they have been suffering from.

It was only after pursuing these complaints that we established that the National Air Traffic Services (NATS) had made significant changes to the Compton flight route. Calling for change alongside me in the chamber were other Members of Parliament representing local constituencies who had been similarly affected such as The Right Honourable John Redwood MP.

In recent months, NATS have consolidated flight paths to the north of Bracknell, however doing so without informing either Heathrow or Bracknell residents, nor fully explaining their reasoning for doing so. Without such a justification, I am calling for NATS to revert to its former setting, and to be mandated to properly take noise mitigation into serious consideration.

During the debate I set out measures that I believe should be introduced to mitigate the controllable noise impact on local residents. Principally, I called on the aviation minister to prohibit flights between 9:30pm and 7:30am in order to provide residents with much needed rest at night.

Whilst I am in principle in favour of Heathrow expansion, it is imperative that the operation of Heathrow is undertaken with a conscious appreciation of its local residents. This can be achieved through the implementation of better piloting and operating techniques. Retrofitting noise-reducing devices, and the retirement or strategic placement of older and noisier aircraft would provide substantial solutions to the problems of excessive noise. The benefits that Heathrow expansion could provide should not come at the expense of the health and wellbeing of the local community. You can watch the debate in full at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-wsFV15T8Y8>



At the Noise Mitigation Adjournment debate

South West Trains: victory for commuters

After contacting South West Trains and the Department for Transport regarding the decision to suspend a morning rush hour service, I welcomed the news that this was to be overturned.

The service was already grossly overcrowded and the decision taken by South West Trains demonstrated a lack of foresight to the problems that this would create. Nevertheless, I am continuing to contend for the much needed and overdue investment into the train line that passes through Bracknell.

Lancet Commission on Liver Disease

I attended a reception jointly hosted by the Lancet Commission on liver disease and the All-Party Parliamentary Hepatology Group. The reception was attended by parliamentarians, peers and leading clinicians with the aim of raising awareness of the increasing burden of liver disease, and to call for improvements in the prevention and management of liver disease in the UK. Liver disease is a major cause of premature mortality in the UK, and is on the rise. This contrasts to other European countries, which have seen liver disease mortality rates steadily falling. Action needs to be urgently taken to improve the present rates of premature liver disease mortality as well as the standards of care being afforded to patients with liver disorders.



Engaging with Bracknell youth

Next month I shall be launching an essay competition for sixth form students within the constituency, to get the voters of tomorrow engaged in politics. It always strikes me when I meet students in the constituency just how engaged and interested they are in topical matters of debate. This month for instance I undertook a Q&A session at Bracknell & Wokingham college – with topics ranging from the NHS to the 2010 Equality Act and a recent judicial decision. However, there is undeniably also a disillusionment with politics demonstrated by the low youth voter turnout at the election which is important to address. Further details can be found shortly on my website.

**St Michael's Primary School visit**

I was recently invited to attend an assembly at St Michael's Easthampstead primary school by student Molly Freeman. Molly had contacted me to ask 'why is it that we elect a party and not a leader? It was a great opportunity to see the recent work of the school, and to see the curious minds that are being fostered at the school.

**Visit to Thames Hospice**

I had the opportunity to be shown the work of the Thames Hospice Community Therapy Unit in Ascot by the Chief Executive, Debbie Raven. Situated in the grounds of Heatherwood hospital, it is one of two of Thames Hospice's sites in East Berkshire providing free care to adults with life limiting illnesses. It was remarkable to see the expert quality of care and how the team adapt and respond to the regional demands.

**Improving football provision in the constituency**

In the last newsletter, I explained about a football summit which I organized and chaired this month at the Coppid Beach Hotel. Alongside representatives from the leading football clubs around Bracknell, our aim was to develop a long term strategy for the game in the constituency.

Also in attendance were representatives from the County FA, the Football Foundation, Bracknell Forest Council and Waitrose, the town's largest employer.

It was really encouraging to see the overwhelming support for local football and the efforts that volunteers put in to ensure that all, regardless of age, skill or background, get to participate in football. At the summit it seemed clear to me that potential solutions have begun to surface, and hence we shall be following these up through a steering committee over the coming months.

Questions in the Chamber

On 20th October, I posed a question in the Chamber to the Foreign Secretary about the situation in Iraq and the military strategy against the so-called Islamic State (IS). I believe that it is of paramount importance that Britain plays its role in the world and works with its international partners to ensure that the scourge of IS is removed.

Singing for Syrians

We have all been struck by the recent Syrian refugee crisis, and the perils that many have had in escaping the civil war. I have been informed by my colleague, Victoria Prentis, Member of Parliament for North Oxfordshire, of her current charitable project. Victoria has a lot of experience in organising charitable carol concerts, and has launched a scheme called Singing for Syrians to raise money for some of Syria's most vulnerable people. The project is encouraging individuals, local communities, and churches, across the UK to hold their own carol concerts to raise money for the Hands up Foundation, and Christian Aid. To get more information and your 'How To' Pack, please email: singingforsyrians@gmail.com or telephone: 01189 233 685.