

Ruth's Rushcliffe Round-up



August 2021

The Situation in Afghanistan

This month saw the withdrawal of our armed forces from Afghanistan after nearly 20 years. The scenes of desperate people trying to leave the country have been heartbreaking and will stay with me forever. Like many MPs I have been working with constituents to bring urgent cases of people who have worked with the UK to the Government's attention and I want to thank everyone who got in touch with me about their friends and colleagues.

In the last two weeks the UK has evacuated over 13,000 people from Afghanistan in difficult and dangerous circumstances. I want to thank every member of our armed forces and the civilian staff at the Ministry of Defence, Foreign Office and Home Office who have put their lives on the line to help others escape to safety. They should be proud of what they have achieved.

None of this detracts from the very real and hard truth that we have not been able to evacuate everyone we wanted to. I know the Home Office is working very quickly to establish the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme which will see up to 20,000 people from Afghanistan resettled here in the UK. This programme will run alongside the Ministry of Defence led programme to resettle those who have directly supported the work of our armed forces and the Government.

I don't agree with those who say that the entire mission is now a failure. We first went into Afghanistan shortly after the tragic events of September 11 2001 with a clear purpose in mind; destroy the terrorist training camps and degrade Al-Qaeda's ability to launch organised attacks on the scale of 9/11 and later 7/7.

We did so as part of an international coalition of dozens of nations with UN backing.

Thanks to the brave efforts and sacrifices of our military and those of our allies,

we achieved those aims and effectively destroyed Al-Qaeda in the country. In the process, we also improved the lives of millions of Afghan citizens and helped their economy to develop and grow.

We should be incredibly proud of what we have achieved in Afghanistan in the last two decades. We know that these achievements now hang in the balance and that we need to work with our international partners to safeguard them. But this doesn't, in any way, make the hard work and sacrifice of our military personnel wasted or forgotten. Tragically, 457 of our troops lost their lives and hundreds more sustained life-changing injuries.

This was a point I highlighted to the Foreign Secretary when Parliament was recalled from summer recess earlier this month (which you can watch here: <https://fb.watch/7L4GDLa7nR/>) when I praised the work of the Defence and National Rehabilitation Centre at Stanford Hall in Rushcliffe. This institution has been vital in rehabilitating and providing support to injured service personnel.

Beyond all the noise, recriminations and political point scoring, we must remember that every one of those killed or injured were part of a family. We must never stop remembering their sacrifice or thanking them for everything they have done in twenty years of conflict.



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Working with Residents to Fight a Gravel Pit Planning Application

Last month I set-out my concerns about the application for a gravel pit near to Barton in Fabis. Particularly the damage this application will cause to the Attenborough Nature Reserve and local wildlife sites such as Brandshill & Clifton Grove Ancient Woodland and Holme Pit. I spoke at a local meeting [LINK TO VIDEO](#) to more than 150 people and have been working with residents to get objections marshalled ahead of the 10th September deadline.

I am also meeting with key consultees, such as Cadant Gas, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and Natural England to discuss whether they are worried about the application too. The message I am receiving is that the detail of these plans is not good enough and the environmental impacts do not appear to have been properly considered.

I am asking everyone who is worried about the future of the ecologically important site to submit an objection to the Nottinghamshire County Council website and join the campaign by visiting https://www.barton-in-fabis.net/wp/?page_id=214

You can also read more about this campaign and watch a video of the recent



Fighting Crime in our Communities

During the election in 2019, I promised to support our police and back their efforts to cut crime in our communities. The Government has been taking action on a national level on this by launching the Beating Crime Plan (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/beating-crime-plan>) which sets out priorities of: '...cutting homicide, serious violence and neighbourhood crime; exposing and ending hidden harms; and building capability and capacity to deal with fraud and online crime...'

This gives police forces a clear framework and set of priorities but it does not take account of individual local circumstances.

To ensure I have a full view of how crime affects communities across Rushcliffe and how those communities perceive the threat of crime, I am launching a series of local crime surveys which will allow local people to feedback their worries and to highlight crime they have experienced in their area.

For example, residents in Ruddington have been in touch to raise concerns about speeding and anti-social behaviour. I want to understand how many people these issues impact and whether they are the biggest crime concern to people in the village. I will therefore be sending my first survey to the village and asking residents to respond.

Other residents in villages and particularly farmers have highlighted rural crime and farm theft as a particular concern. I want to focus on this rural crime and intend to use the results of the survey to work with our Police and Crime Commissioner Caroline Henry to tackle these issues and ensure crime problems across Rushcliffe are dealt with by the police.

Securing Funding from Highways England to Improve Active Travel

As you will remember from last month's newsletter, I have been working with councillors, local residents and campaign organisations to push Highways England to open the A52 underpass near Sharphill. Originally a cattle and sheep crossing, campaigners believe this could be a vital route for walkers, cyclists, and horse riders to link West Bridgford and Ruddington without having to cross the dangerous A52.

I am very pleased to report that Highways England have accepted the safety concerns we raised around the current crossing of the road and have agreed to conduct a study into the feasibility of opening up the underpass as an alternative. This study will be finished by the spring of next year and will hopefully allow work to quickly progress to bring the underpass into use.

I will continue to keep you all updated on progress and hope to have good news very soon.



Protecting the Environment and Fighting Climate Change

There was big news this month from the government on our fight against climate change and our net-zero target by 2050.

The government has opened 2 key consultations on Nature Recovery and aviation decarbonisation.

The Nature Recovery consultation, which you can find and complete here: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/land-use/local-nature-recovery-strategies/>, will inform how local nature recovery strategies will work in England. The government's overall ambition is that Local Nature Recovery Strategies will be a powerful new tool that will help the public, private and voluntary sectors work more effectively together for nature's recovery, and enable collective effort to be focussed where it will have most benefit.

The aviation decarbonisation consultation, also known as 'Jet Zero', which you can find here <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/achieving-net-zero-aviation-by-2050>, will inform our final strategy to decarbonise one of the most polluting industries in the world - the aviation industry. We are proposing a suite of policies to support industry to reduce and, where possible, eliminate carbon dioxide emissions from aviation. These policies span 5 different measures that aim to:

- improve the efficiency of our aviation system
- accelerate the development and deployment of sustainable aviation fuels
- support the development of zero emission flight
- ensure we use markets to drive down emissions in the most cost-effective way
- influence the behaviour of consumers

In addition to these two important consultations, the government also launched its plan for a world-leading UK hydrogen economy. The aim of this is to support 9,000 UK jobs and unlock £4 billion investment by 2030, all while contributing to our important targets on tackling climate change. You can read more about this here <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-government-launches-plan-for-a-world-leading-hydrogen-economy?fbclid=IwAR2mjASx-452BbhIGGNDgAJDOzqNA-E9sq8sF1ptlpycsnyaEp7oESHIEFE>

More locally, I recently met with 6 year old Aleesha who is doing amazing things to raise money for CoolEarth, an environmental organisation committed to fighting climate change and deforestation. She is riding her scooter for 50 miles to save the rainforests and has raised over £3000. You can find out more about Aleesha's campaign, as well as all of the people and organisations (including the Queen!) that have congratulated her efforts here: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/aleesha-gadhia>



Celebrating the First Ever Nottinghamshire Day

This month we celebrated the first ever Nottinghamshire Day on 25th August, a day in which we celebrate all the great things about our historic county. The local economy was the main theme of this year's Notts Day with residents encouraged to shop local and support businesses that are Nottinghamshire-based.

I began the day by displaying our county flag in the window of my West Bridgford office before heading down to County Hall for the official flag raising ceremony. I was pleased to welcome MPs, councillors and others from across Nottinghamshire to West Bridgford for the event which saw the Nottinghamshire flag raised next to the Union Flag over the River Trent.

Rushcliffe's place in Nottinghamshire is a very special one, we are the best part of the county after all. We are the sporting capital of Nottinghamshire (and I would say the country) and we produce the best Stilton in the world at Cropwell Bishop and Colston Bassett. We also have some of the most fantastic local communities, groups, clubs and nature conservation sites.

It was great to give our county a day of its own and to proudly show off everything our area has to offer.



Out and About in Rushcliffe!

This month I met with Rory and Cheryl from Ruddy Fine Gin at their distillery site. They showed me around the site and demonstrated how they make their fantastic local product and told me about their plans for the future.

Local businesses like this are so vital and I was so pleased to hear that the community in Ruddington and South Notts are so supportive of Cheryl and Rory's work. Do check them out if you're looking for an amazing range of Gin products that are produced in our community right here in Rushcliffe:

<https://ruddyfine.co.uk/>



I also had the chance to take a look around Nottingham Rugby Club with Alistair and Steve who showed me around. It was great to hear about all the different teams using the sites and the exciting plans to create a community sports club.



Although the weather wasn't great this month, I still managed to get out during a sunny spell with Councillor Richard Butler to help the volunteers at Cotgrave Community Garden with their harvesting and planting.

The garden is run by an amazing group of volunteers so if you want to join them and get involved contact cotgravecommunitygarden@gmail.com



I recently went to see how BeadaMoss are getting on in their mission to propagate sphagnum moss which is used in the restoration of peatlands. I went to see their East Leake site earlier this year which you can read about here: <https://www.ruthedwards.org.uk/news/my-visit-beadamoss>

Sphagnum moss is used because it blocks carbon from entering the atmosphere from the Earth, so it is key in ensuring our carbon emissions are kept low. That is why the work of BeadaMoss is so important and I look forward to working with them in the future to ensure our peatland strategy is effective.



Finally, it was great to meet the team at Treeline Dental Care recently to hear how they have been coping throughout the last 2 years.

Surgeries like this are assets to communities and people in Keyworth are very lucky to have such a dedicated team in their area.



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