

Ruth's Rushcliffe Round-up



January 2022

The Sue Gray Report

I want to start by addressing the issue of events at Downing Street over lockdown and the Sue Gray report into this. Over the past few weeks I've been contacted by many constituents who have felt angry and let down by the reports of events or parties at 10 Downing Street during the lockdowns. I understand why people are feeling like this because I do too. Like the vast majority of people across the country, I stuck to the lockdown rules and faced the consequences of lost time with loved ones and the additional stress brought by working from home for an extended period. I know many people in Rushcliffe, and across the country, faced the unimaginable pain of not being able to be with family members who were ill or dying. I extend my deepest condolences to all of them and I am sorry for the hurt which has been caused.

I had hoped that, by now, Sue Gray's complete report would be published and that all the facts, rather than reported allegations, would be laid out in full. This will happen as soon as the Metropolitan Police have concluded their investigations.

Although I understand the reasons for the delay, I am deeply frustrated by it as I think it is important that a full and impartial account is made available to the public and to Members of Parliament.

Based on the document that Sue Gray published this month however, it is clear that serious changes are needed within 10 Downing Street. It is right therefore that the Prime Minister has apologised for what has happened and has committed to implementing its findings in full. It is important that these changes are made quickly and I will continue to monitor the situation closely to make sure that they are.

The next step now is to wait for the full findings of the Gray report and the

investigation by the Metropolitan Police to be concluded and published. This will give us a full picture of what happened and allow all these matters to be considered carefully and independently.

If it is found that rules were broken, then appropriate action should follow.

Helping families cope with the rise in Energy Costs

This week I welcomed the Government's package to combat the rise in energy bills. I welcomed the support it lends to those on middle as well as low incomes.

For those who missed it, the Government is now stepping in to support people with up to £350 of relief for households.

In October, every household will receive a £200 discount on their electricity bills. This will be paid back over five years in instalments of £40 a year.

Further help is being provided to those who need it most with a further £150 rebate on Council Tax bills for those in council tax bands A to D - around 80% of all homes in England (73% of all households in Rushcliffe, or approximately 37,000 homes).

We're also providing local authorities with a discretionary fund of £144m to help lower income households in higher Council Tax bands, and households in bands A-D who are exempt from Council Tax.

Finally we're confirming that we will go ahead with the plan to expand the Warm Home Discount by almost a third, from 2.2 million to 3 million vulnerable households, and to increase the supplier rebate value of this to £150 per year.

Now is the time to be investing in our domestic energy industry with a particular focus on renewable technology.

Packages like these will increase energy security, create jobs and grow the economy of this country, unlike Labour's proposed windfall tax, which would discourage investment in the UK and could push wholesale prices up even further.

The UK's oil and gas sector's profits are already taxed more than double the rate those in most other sectors. Further taxes would cause stakeholders to look for alternative investments abroad. This means the companies generate less tax to pay for public services and offset the energy bills. It would also increase our reliance on volatile overseas supplies at a time of heightened political instability.

Watch here: https://fb.watch/a_lpsyWhbW/



Promoting Rushcliffe's Producers

We have some amazing local producers here in Rushcliffe. Big or small, they are the backbones of our communities and local economies and I want to support them as much as I can.

Last week, I brought Victoria Prentis MP, Minister for Farming, Fisheries, and Food, to Rushcliffe to see the production of authentic Stilton Cheese at Cropwell Bishop Creamery. We discussed the current challenges and opportunities our great local producers are facing and how we can continue to champion Great British food and drink at home and abroad.



In Parliament, I asked the Leader of the House of Commons, Jacob Rees-Mogg MP, what more we can do to promote our best of British producers. One way I suggested we could do this is by getting these producers stocked on the Parliamentary estate. In particular, I asked if we could look at getting Ruddy Fine Gin stocked as a guest gin (currently the House authorities only consider guest beers). I'm looking forward to continuing pushing for this and discussing what more we can do to promote Rushcliffe's producers.

Watch here: https://fb.watch/a_IA9-5vOr/



Meeting with the Education Secretary to Discuss School Places in Rushcliffe

We have fantastic schools here in Rushcliffe and I want all of the children in our communities to have access to top quality local education.

Recently, I secured an urgent meeting with Nadhim Zahawi, the Secretary of State for Education, to highlight the importance of Rushcliffe Spencer Academy's application to expand the number of school places they offer across all years to 2,310 pupils, including Sixth Form. I left the Secretary of State in no doubt of the importance of this issue and pressed him hard to ensure that an early decision would be made in this case. I also met with the Minister for the School System, Baroness Barran to go discuss the issue in greater detail.

I will look forward to seeing the outcome of the application and, in the meantime, I will continue working with Nottinghamshire County Council to increase the

number of school places available in Rushcliffe.

Read more here: https://westbridgfordwire.com/ruth-edwards-mp-pushes-case-for-expanding-rushcliffe-school-with-the-education-secretary-1/?fbclid=IwAR1ACvGcOtjvdsen3aRvjYu-Sq1IXq-yyy4CBNikx2C5ipRiT4_nFNqmq6E



Meeting with Inspector Rob Lawton to Discuss Policing Priorities in Rushcliffe

I met with Rob Lawton, the Neighbourhood Policing Inspector for Rushcliffe, for the first time in-person since his appointment. I have been having regular meetings with Rob and his team via zoom to discuss crime issues and policing in Rushcliffe. He reassured me that his priority remains keeping crime rates as low as possible in all parts of Rushcliffe, both urban and rural.

This month we discussed the results of my Ruddington Crime Survey which I sent out last year. Many thanks to those who completed a survey, you will be hearing from again soon. This survey asked people in Ruddington what their top crime concerns were and what they thought about policing in Ruddington. I am sending out similar surveys and letters to other parts of Rushcliffe so please do keep an eye out.



All Plan B COVID Regulations Lifted

This month we became one of the first countries out of the pandemic and on the road to recovery. I joined many across Rushcliffe and the UK in welcoming the easing of Coronavirus restrictions and our move back to plan A. On the 19th January, the Prime Minister announced that facemasks will no longer be mandatory and we will no longer need to show an NHS COVID pass at events and venues by law. These changes came into effect on Thursday 27 January.

In addition, from February 11 fully vaccinated travellers will no longer need to take a COVID-19 test either before or after arrival in the UK, but still need to complete a passenger locator form.

New cases and hospitalisations are falling which allows us to ease restrictions. This is thanks to our fantastic NHS and the booster vaccine programme. The Get Boosted Now appeal was instrumental in this, bringing the date for all adults to be offered a booster to the New Year. Currently, 65% of people have received their booster vaccine. You can still book your 1st, 2nd, or 3rd vaccine by going to <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>

As we steadily get back to normal life, public health will remain a priority. I asked the Prime Minister about mental health and how we ensure the NHS uses the record investment it has received to tackle COVID backlogs.

Watch here: https://fb.watch/a_IXUqcrfc/



Protecting People Online

Coming from a cybersecurity background, keeping people safe online has always been a priority of mine. Those who wish to do harm should not be protected just because they are behind a computer screen.

I raised this in Parliament this month when I asked the Minister for Security about clone scams - where fraudsters pose as legitimate companies online. These types of scams have cost the British people £78 million. To help stop this, we need big tech platforms, such as Google, to carry out robust identity checks on people wishing to advertise on their site.

Watch here: https://fb.watch/a_m5AUrlpU/



I also supported my friend Fay Jones MP in a debate on making cyberflashing illegal. I made the point that law needs to do more to keep pace with technology and tech companies need to do more to protect their customers. I was shocked to hear that nearly half of millennial women surveyed by the dating app Bumble have been victims of cyberflashing in the last year.

Watch here: https://fb.watch/a_magPgpu6/



Finally, I spoke in the second reading of the Product Security and Telecommunications Bill - a Bill to ensure internet-connected consumer products are as safe as possible for consumers to use without the fear of cyber criminals hacking their smart TV, smart speaker, or other devices.

Unfortunately, tech companies have historically shunted their responsibility for ensuring their products have a good defence against cyber attacks onto their customers. We need to call time on this - the digital economy is growing and holds huge opportunities, but those who invest in it should also be investing in the safety and security of its users.

Watch here: https://fb.watch/a_mo3guaGB/



The Future of Green Industries in Rushcliffe

In Parliament this month, I asked the Under-Secretary of State for Business and Industry about Intelligent Energy's bid for investment from the Automotive Transformation Fund (ATF) to bring a hydrogen fuel cell gigafactory and green jobs to Rushcliffe and the rest of our region.

The ATF is a funding programme created to support large-scale industrialisation. Up to £1 billion of funding will be invested in developing a high-value end-to-end electrified automotive supply chain in the UK. The fund is an important mechanism to reach targets in the Government's 10-point plan for a green industrial revolution and its recent Transport Decarbonisation Plan.

This would be a fantastic addition to the East Midlands Freeport site. In September, the outline business case for the Freeport was submitted to the Government which demonstrated how the freeport will contribute around £8.4 billion to the East Midlands economy over the next 30 years alongside its potential to support and create around 55,000 jobs.

The blueprint centres on the East Midlands Freeport's unique strengths as the UK's best-connected freeport, located at the heart of the nation's advanced manufacturing and logistics economy, with plans to boost skills and accelerate the region's commitment to cutting carbon emissions.

Watch here: https://fb.watch/a_mzpBBPF3/



Appearing on BBC Politics East Midlands

This month I appeared on BBC Politics East Midlands to talk about the latest political news, the cost of living, and empowering more women to start their own businesses. You can watch the full show for free here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m0013wsw/politics-east-midlands-23012022>



East Leake Pavilion Granted Funding!

Earlier this month we had the great news that East Leake Sports Pavilion has been awarded funding to help with the Pavilion's rebuild. The grant comes from the Premier League, The Football Association, and the Government via the Football Foundation.

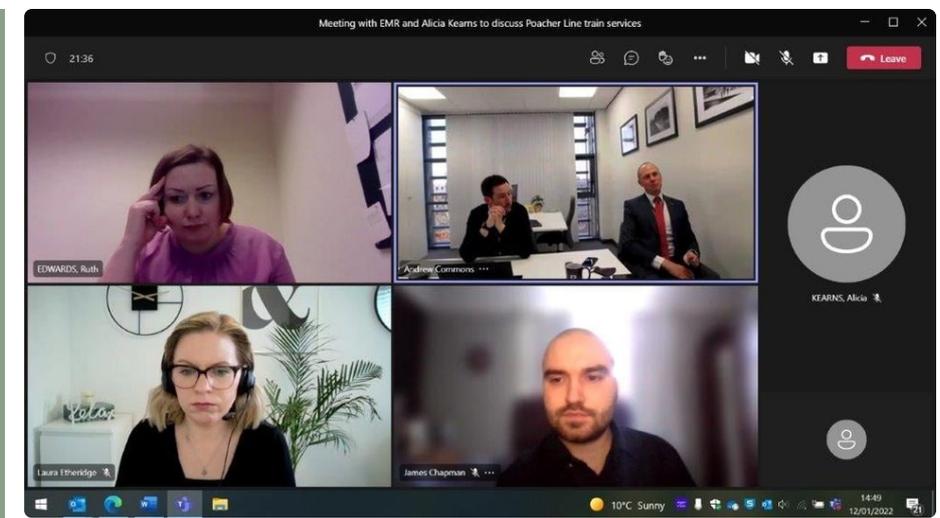
After visiting the Pavilion last year, it was clear it was in great need of refurbishment which is why I was more than happy to formally support East Leake Parish Council and the East Leake Playing Fields Charity in their bid to the Football Foundation.

The East Leake Playing Fields Charity have since launched a fundraising "Buy a Brick" scheme allowing people to support the rebuild. You can learn more and donate here: <https://eastleakepavilion.org.uk/?fbclid=IwAR0Tu0Zo3cOGutgMRkj3Bb7XgBU0L9ihe7Lk4B-25cejhrl3N378K7-QMYo>

Better Train Services for Rushcliffe!

Just before Christmas, EMR suspended some of its services on the Poacher Line, which runs from Nottingham to Skegness via Radcliffe and Grantham, due to an apparent decrease in demand on the line during the Winter Holidays. While I'm thankful only 2 services that run through Radcliffe were affected, I emphasised the importance that these services should be reinstated as soon as possible to East Midlands Railway when I met with them this month. Last year we secured a number of improvements for the service that stops at Radcliffe, but we still need more regular services so that residents can confidently commute for work and leisure via train and I made this abundantly clear in my meeting with EMR.

I then met with the Poacher Line Stakeholder group, which includes representatives from the Department for Transport (DfT) East Midlands Rail (EMR), Network Rail, and others. The group is currently looking at the business case for more regular services on the Poacher Line. They have undertaken demand and revenue modelling, looking at what infrastructure would need to be in place to support more services, and the financial constraints and opportunities of such a move. Work will continue on the business plan to make sure the latest data on housing growth and transport movement is taken into account. In the meantime, I will continue to press the case with both EMR and DfT for a better service for Radcliffe.



Discussing the Halt in Nature Loss and Environmental Conservation

I recently spoke at a Conservative Environment Network conference on conserving and restoring native habitats and species to discuss the relationship between conservation and communities.

I highlighted some of the projects taking place in Rushcliffe, such as the campaign for a new nature reserve at Wilford Field, which many residents rediscovered during the pandemic and are now campaigning to turn into a nature reserve with my full support. Conservation is now an issue many more people are interacting with and it is up to us to ensure that nature is restored and can thrive.

I also highlighted what the government is doing to restore nature, through the 25 year Environment Plan, the reform of farm payments and the Environment Bill.

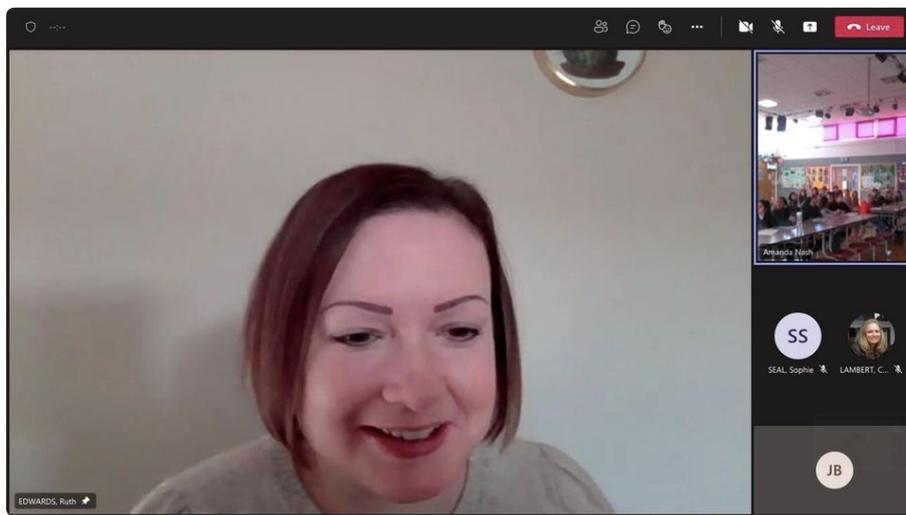
You can watch the discussion here: <https://youtu.be/nDV0ovMhD6o?t=11301>



Out and About in Rushcliffe!

I joined the children at Heymann Primary School for a Q&A session as part of a UK Parliament Education and Engagement Digital Workshop!

In these sessions students learn about our democracy, Parliament, and the work of MPs. If you'd like to book a session for your school, please visit https://learning.parliament.uk/en/session-workshop/primary-secondary-school-online-workshop/?fbclid=IwAR1JOvxFCxtEd3Qi5x_A30_XzFRuzt9W2qPw_sUq1Vw00yryyf9mWlpP7ZE



I also visited East Leake Academy to meet teachers and sixth form students, as well as the year 11 politics club.



It was great to visit Tiffin Tea House earlier this month, a local independent cafe in West Bridgford. Many thanks to Chris, Jo, Diane and the whole Tiffin team for hosting me! I definitely recommend visiting if you're in the area and want to enjoy a friendly and homely vibe complete with mouthwatering cake!



I crossed the Trent Bridge to visit the Royal Mail's South Nottingham Delivery Office this month to see their new fleet of electric vans which will be delivering mail throughout Rushcliffe.

They've recently added six more electric vehicles to their current fleet. Royal Mail has announced a ten-fold increase in the number of electric vehicles in their national fleet. It was fantastic to hear how committed they are to utilising green tech and that they reported the lowest CO2 emissions per parcel delivered amongst all major UK delivery companies.



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