

Ruth's Rushcliffe Round-up



December 2022

Merry Christmas!

With everything wrapping up for Christmas (if you'll pardon the pun), I wanted to take the opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a happy new year! The celebrations in Parliament began with the annual switch on of Parliament's Christmas Tree lights outside Westminster hall on a very cold but beautiful December evening.

As we look forward to 2023, I hope you and your family have a wonderful start to the new year!



Campaign Win: Planning system reforms to benefit Rushcliffe and mitigate flooding

As you may know, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill is back in Parliament, with amendments and measures which will make the planning system work better for Rushcliffe.

Rushcliffe has historically drawn the short straw when it comes to housing, with new homes registered in 2021 amounting to 660% more than the national average. I was therefore pleased to vote through reforms which will benefit our area tremendously.

These reforms include:

- making house building targets advisory so local people have more control over how many homes can be built and the future of their communities;
 - allowing areas that have over delivered on previous targets, such as Rushcliffe, to build lower numbers of new houses in subsequent local plans;
 - strengthening the 'brownfield first' policy which incentivizes brownfield development over greenfield development with £800m to mayoral and local authorities to unlock over 60,000 new homes on brownfield land;
 - a new Infrastructure Levy which will raise more money to improve infrastructure than the previous system;
- allowing local planning authorities to refuse planning applications from developers who have built slowly in the past.

Crucially, the Government will now also consult on whether water companies should become statutory consultees in planning decisions. This would mean that infrastructure upgrades to mitigate flooding in new developments and their surrounding areas will be proactive and help us avoid increase to flood risk from new development. I was delighted to hear this, as one of the key actions from my [Rushcliffe Flood Report](#) in 2020 was to ensure that the risk of flooding should be a key test of whether any development is sustainable.

I know this will be welcomed by many who completed my Rushcliffe Planning and Development Survey and told me that they were unhappy with how the planning system is currently working - thank you to everyone who gave me their views. You can view the results [here](#).

Campaign Win: Improving the quality of our waterways

Some of you have contacted me with concerns about pollution in our rivers and seas. Like myself, many of you have been frustrated that the fines given to the water and sewerage companies did not seem to be helping to solve the problem.

The Government has therefore listened and acted to make sure the money

raised from fines is going to improving the quality of our waterways. Fines paid by water companies will now be invested directly back into water quality improvement projects. Since 2015, the Environment Agency has concluded 56 prosecutions against water and sewerage companies, securing fines of over £141m. This could include initiatives to restore our water environments by creating wetlands, revegetating river banks or reconnecting meanders to the main channel of rivers.

This is on top of the £56 billion investment we're requiring water companies to invest in improving our water infrastructure, as well as holding them to account through tough new targets.

As a member of the Conservative Environment Network, I have been pushing the government for tougher fines and to invest them back into worthwhile projects that restore water quality, so I am very pleased to see that the government has acted on this issue.

Best Pub and Local Shop in Rushcliffe competition: The Winners!

As you may have seen, I announced the winners and runners-up of my Best Pub in Rushcliffe and Best Local Shop competitions this month!

For the Best Pub competition, it was the year of the Plough!

Winner: The Plough Inn, Wysall

Runners-up: The Plough Inn, Normanton-on-the-Wolds and The Plough Inn, Hickling



For the Best Local Shop, we saw some familiar faces and a newcomer!

Winner: The Good Weigh, Lady Bay
Runners-up: Philo's, Ruddington and Phoenix Flowers, Ruddington

I'd like to say a huge congratulations to all of the winners and a thank you to everyone that got involved and voted this year, supporting these fantastic local businesses that we are lucky to have in Rushcliffe.



Questioning the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

As you may remember from my last newsletter, I recently became a member of the Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Select Committee.

At the beginning of the month, we had a public evidence session on critical mineral security, their supply chain resilience, and the new Critical Minerals Strategy.

I was able to question the Secretary of State for BEIS, Grant Schapps, on our critical mineral supply when he gave evidence to the Committee last week. I also asked him about the energy efficiency of homes, a topic that is close to all our hearts at the moment. The Government has done a good job of increasing energy efficiency of social housing and public sector buildings but we need to do more to improve the energy efficiency of private rented homes and owner occupier homes. Between 2010-2020 we have increased the number of homes with an EPC rating of 'C' from 14% to 46%. That is substantial progress but we have much more work to do!

You can watch this session in full [here](#).

New energy partnership with the USA

This month we announced a new energy partnership between the UK and USA, which will bring down energy prices for British consumers. In addition, this pact will step up collaboration on energy efficiency, nuclear and renewable technologies.

In the short-term, the US aims to more than double the amount of gas exported to the UK in 2021 to secure supply and reduce price volatility. Alongside this, the pact aims to increase energy efficiency and support the transition to clean energy, expediting the development of clean hydrogen globally and promoting nuclear power as a secure use of energy.

This is another way the government has shown it is willing to take global leadership on the rising cost of energy and work with partners to ensure the future of energy is green.

You can read more about this new partnership [here](#).

Meeting with the Fire Minister to protect West Bridgford's fire service

This month, I met with Police and Fire Minister Chris Philp to raise my concerns about proposed changes to Rushcliffe's only whole-time fire station in West Bridgford.

As you may remember from previous newsletters, there are proposals from Nottinghamshire's Fire Authority to convert West Bridgford's fire station from operating 24/7 to daytime only, which would result in a 43-second increase in the average response time. This is despite the fact that our station has higher call-out rates than others in the county.

Although the Fire Service has called this an operational decision and not a financial one, I have made it clear that I want to keep West Bridgford as a 24/7 station, so our local firefighters can continue to serve the community as bravely as they always have.

I was pleased that the Minister met with me and I will be writing to him with further details so he can best advise on our situation.



I also raised this with the Minister in Parliament when I asked about what options MPs have to challenge the decisions of local Fire Authorities when it is clear they are not acting in the best interests of residents or the brave firemen and women that keep us safe.

The minister replied that, thanks to our campaigning in Parliament, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service should have some financial good news announced very soon!

You can watch that [here](#).

Keeping people safe online

Parliament debated the Online Safety Bill again this month. It was a Report Stage reading, which meant that we got to vote on some of the important amendments which will strengthen its protections for internet users.

I spoke in support of measures tabled by my colleague Maria Miller, the Member of Parliament for Basingstoke, which build on the Government's strong record in criminalising the sharing, and threats to share, intimate images without the consent of the people pictured in them. I'm glad that the Minister agreed with us on this important issue and that the Government will be bringing forward its own version of these amendments when the Bill goes to the House of Lords.

Watch [here](#).

I also met with Stop Scams UK which is a collaboration of businesses across the banking, telecoms and technology sectors. They aim to help develop technical solutions that will prevent the harm and loss caused by scams.

As some of you may know, I have been working on this issue to ensure that big tech companies such as Google and Facebook play their part in preventing scams online. I'm looking forward to working with Stop Scams in the future to explore how we can further protect people online from harmful scams.

Out and About

It was a very special moment in Parliament this week as we were joined by His Majesty the King for a visit of thanksgiving and remembrance for our late Queen. The King unveiled a plaque to commemorate Her Late Majesty's Lying-in-State and a gift from members of both houses to celebrate her platinum jubilee - two ornate beacons decorated with bronze sculptures of heraldic beasts outside in New Palace Yard. Westminster Hall is full of history. Other plaques commemorating Lying-in-State there include Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, King George VI and Winston Churchill.



This month, I took some time to visit the Russian War Crimes exhibition in Portcullis House. It was a truly sobering experience. The images shown are some of the most horrific I have ever seen and I will never forget them. The exhibition was a reminder of just how important the support of the UK and our allies is in helping Ukraine defeat Putin.



It was wonderful to visit Rosecliffe Spencer Academy this month. I visited to talk to the pupils about being an MP and what that entails, as well as how Parliament and democracy in this country works. I always enjoy visiting schools in Rushcliffe and answering the (sometimes tricky!) questions the pupils have for me.

I also visited Carefound Home Care in West Bridgford to congratulate them on their 'Outstanding' CQC inspection and hear about the challenges facing the health and social care system. I am aware of the current difficulties in the social care sector and am always willing to listen to those on the ground and hear about their potential solutions.

Many congratulations to Jade and the Carefound Care Home team for their 'Outstanding' inspection!



This month, I joined the Conservative Friends of Israel (CFI) for their annual business lunch. I have enjoyed working with the CFI and was delighted to join them and other CFI MPs on a trip to Israel earlier this year.

While in Israel, we paid tribute to all those who lost their lives in the Holocaust, remembering their stories and the harrowing events that led up to their genocide.

In Parliament this month, we also paid tribute with a minute silence to mark 80 years since the UK officially recognised the Holocaust was taking place in Nazi-occupied Europe.

It is important we remember the Holocaust and the atrocities inflicted on the Jewish people and others in Europe so that they are never allowed to happen again.



It was also the APPG for Defibrillators' inaugural meeting. This group was set up to facilitate discussions surrounding out of hospital sudden cardiac arrest. My interests will include making it easier and cheaper for community groups to purchase defibrillators which are proven to massively improve chances of survival when a sudden cardiac arrest happens.

It was the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for the East Midland's inaugural meeting this month. This group is set up with MPs from across the Region, all with the same mission to ensure the East Midlands is at the forefront of Government policy. I'm looking forward to working with the group, especially as we see the East Midlands Freeport's establishment as the UK's only inland Freeport.

Finally, I attended the National Farmers Union's Christmas reception where I met with the Regional Chair for the East Midlands, Nick Dowler, to discuss some of the greatest challenges facing our farmers and the farming industry in Rushcliffe and the rest of the UK.

I look forward to meeting with farmers in Rushcliffe at my next Agriculture and Rural Affairs forum in January to discuss this further.



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Ruth Edwards MP
Houses of Parliament
Westminster, London, SW1A 0AA

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