

Sojan Joseph MP

Ashford, Hawkinge, and the Villages



Welcome to my monthly newsletter. I will be using this to keep you informed about my work in the constituency and Westminster.

This month I attended and spoke at a local NFU meeting on rural crime. This is an issue which is frequently overlooked when discussing crime and policing on a national scale. We can often be slightly too focussed on the issues in urban areas.

The issues raised by the NFU and the farmers in attendance were incredibly insightful and highlighted areas which still need to be fixed.

I am pleased the Government is taking steps to rectify the gaps - for example by introducing new standards which will ensure that police will be expected to reach incidents in rural areas within 20 minutes. However, it is clear that there is still a lot of work to do.



I was pleased to host the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) in Parliament to launch 'Towards a National Care Service: raising national standards of care' in my capacity as the Chair of the APPG on Adult Social Care. The report highlighted the need to fix the current postcode lottery which determines the standard of adult social care someone receives.

The issues caused by the poor standard of adult social care are very wide ranging - they are a contributing factor to many issues we are facing in the NHS, such as delays in discharge or corridor care. It is clear that we can only build a healthcare system fit for the future if it includes a high standard national care service.



Joined by the Minister for Social Care, Stephen Kinnock MP for the Launch of SCIE's Report



SOJAN JOSEPH

Member of Parliament for Ashford, Hawkinge, and the Villages

Get in touch!

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I will be holding more surgeries across the constituency - I have had discussions with constituents regarding the following:

- Local healthcare
- Pensions, benefits, or welfare concerns
- Council disputes
- Political Policy
- School issues

Please make an appointment!

Surgery Sign-Up:
<https://www.sojanjosephmp.com/surgeries/>



This month also marked 40 years since the signing of the Treaty of Canterbury. This was a bilateral agreement between the UK and French Governments to set out the legal framework to allow a private operator to set up a rail link under the English Channel. This of course is incredibly significant for Kent and Ashford - as we continue the campaign to bring our stop back to Ashford International.

I marked it by attending a special ceremony, hosted by Getlink, the operators of the Channel Tunnel, at Canterbury Cathedral.



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Every month, I will update you on the progress I am making on your behalf in Ashford, Hawkinge, and the Villages – and in Westminster too.



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I met with Stagecoach Buses last month to discuss the issue of regional connectivity.

I have been actively campaigning to improve transport connectivity in Ashford, Hawkinge, and the Villages as I completely understand the benefits this would provide. Many people who do not have access to cars, particularly in rural areas of the constituency, are locked out of opportunities simply because they do not have adequate public transport infrastructure. This lack of connectivity, which disproportionately affects older and disabled people, hugely damages our regional economy. Greater regional connectivity will be a boost to jobs, our high streets, growth in Kent, and give greater opportunities for people who were previously excluded.



I raised the issue of rural connectivity – and other ways of boosting economic growth through improving transport – in a Westminster Hall Debate on transport in the South East.

If we can resolve the issues we have around potholes it will save road users money on repairs to their vehicles and encourage them to travel to our highstreets. This is why I welcomed the £274,036,000 to designated to road maintenance and the £78.2 million for local buses over the next three years in Kent from the Government. It's also why I'll keep pushing to see Ashford International become an international station again.

Transport will be key to bringing growth to our region.

I will be hosting a community engagement meeting to discuss concerns with Southern Water on 27th February.

I understand why so many of my constituents are frustrated with the current state of our water services. Especially the smell caused by the Treatment Works in Kennington.

Years of deregulation and underinvestment have badly damaged the standard of our water services – and I am pleased that the Government is taking steps to fix many of the problems. For example, the Water (Special Measures) Act – designed to help reform the water industry by banning unfair bonuses and ringfencing money for investment, and introducing tougher punishments for water company CEOs who have broken the law.

I also welcome the new White Paper, set to be published on Water. This will include a new, single water regulator to remove the confusion, duplication and gaps in the current system. There will also be an MOT approach to water company infrastructure, ensuring maintenance checks on pipes, pumps and water treatment works, and a performance improvement regime on water companies to allow the regulator power to step in faster. I also look forward to the introduction of an independent water ombudsman to resolve consumer disputes fairly, water efficiency labels for appliances, and the increased use of smart meters to keep bills affordable. We must also tighten agricultural standards to reduce pollution at source.

To sign up, click the link attached to the bottom of this the email.

