

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 held my first coffee morning. It was great to meet so many constituents and have the opportunity to hear so many of the issues that matter to them in a more informal setting.

I look forward to hosting more of these events and hopefully meeting some more of you over the coming months!



My first 'meet your MP' coffee morning - held at Harper's Café in Victoria Park

I also met with Ashford Cadets - something very close to me personally as I have family who have made use of this brilliant organisation.

The Cadet Services provide a great service for young people - teaching them important life-skills, providing them with an important space to improve their physical and mental wellbeing. I've championed their importance in Parliament, so I'm very pleased the Labour Government is backing them with the '30 by 30' plan—30% more cadets by 2030 and £70m extra funding.



With the Ashford Cadet Forces



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/>



Since my last newsletter, I attended a celebration of our Gurkha Community hosted by the Mayor of Ashford, Lyn Suddards. The Gurkhas have contributed so much to Ashford and it was great to have an evening to celebrate our shared history, highlighting their courage in the Second World War and other conflicts, both past and present.



October 2025



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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.

I was very concerned about the recent case of a café being used as makeshift ward at the William Harvey Hospital. Although, there has been some very positive progress made with A&E waiting times nationally, there is still a lot of work to do in order to relieve pressure on our hospitals and end corridor care. This is why I chose to raise the case with Wes Streeting when I was drawn for Health Questions. I am pleased the Health Secretary is taking this issue seriously and he assured me he is look into the case at the William Harvey.



Outside Demelza Children's Hospice

I recently visited Demelza Children's Hospice in Sittingbourne – our nearest children's hospice. I have raised this issue through a Written Parliamentary Question, so I was very pleased to hear the Government announce an £80 million funding for children's hospices with £1.75 million allocated for Demelza.

Finally, I would like to finish on the issue of flags. This has been something widely discussed and raised across the constituency. I believe we should never discourage people from displaying the St. George's Flag or Union Flag on their own private property or any authorised public buildings – they're signs of unity and national pride.

However, the trend we saw over the summer – people raising them on lampposts, spray-painting roundabouts, and on occasion defacing private property – is unacceptable.

I completely understand wanting to show patriotism – I feel immense pride for our country. However, it is also important that we are unified in Ashford, Hawkinge, and the Villages, so our flag should never be misappropriated by a small group of people trying to create tensions in our community.



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Last month, I visited the Beacon Centre in Ashford – a facility which supports rough sleepers in our community.

They do absolutely invaluable work and I really appreciate them sharing their concerns and views on how we can tackle this major issue.



At my Advice Surgery in Hawkinge, held before the Summer Fair last month

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