

Gareth Johnson MP for Dartford

Reporting back from Dartford
and Westminster - now reaching
over 5,000 people in the local
area



January 2019

Welcome to my latest newsletter.

Resignation as a Government Whip

On 14th January I resigned my position as a Minister in the Government Whips' Office so I could vote against the Government on the implementation of the European Withdrawal Agreement.

When I accepted the position as a Government Whip, the Withdrawal Agreement had not been finalised by the Prime Minister and it was not endorsed by the EU until the end of November.

My main concerns around the Prime Minister's deal, along with many of my colleagues, are in relation to the Irish back-stop, which prevents us from having a clear, unilateral path out of the EU, as well as hindering our ability to negotiate trade deals with other nations.

I was hopeful the Prime Minister would be able to negotiate further with the EU to address these concerns, enabling me to support her deal at the Meaningful Vote. It became apparent, however, that no significant changes had been made and I therefore had no option but to resign if I wanted to vote against it.

SURGERY DATES

By Appointment Only:

Bluewater

8th February - FULL

8th March

5th April

10th May



[Website](#)

Along with nearly two-thirds of people in Dartford, I supported 'leave' in the Referendum as I wanted to take back our sovereignty. Unfortunately, this agreement prevents us doing this and could leave us perpetually constrained by the EU. The deal does not remove us from the EU and therefore does not respect the outcome of the Referendum. In my view, it is clearly detrimental to our nation's interests. In addition, as a committed Unionist, I cannot accept Northern Ireland being treated differently to the rest of the UK.

I believe in Brexit and I want the UK to go forward with confidence and belief in our own ability to manage our future - this is sadly not what this Withdrawal Agreement represents.

This is not a decision I took lightly. I have been proud to support the Government as a loyal Member of Parliament since my election in 2010. I will continue to give Dartford my utmost commitment .

New mental health support for youngsters in Dartford

The Government recently announced that Dartford will be one of 25 areas nationally to trial a new scheme designed to better support children and young people who are experiencing mental health problems.

Roughly 10% of 5-16 year olds have a clinically diagnosable mental health problem. It is believed that half of all mental health conditions begin before the age of 14 and teenagers with a mental health disorder are over 2.5 times more likely to have a mental health disorder in adulthood.

The new scheme will see a specially trained,



Dynes Motor Group

Each month I like to feature a local business, large or small and this month's is Dynes Motor Group which operates a roadside rescue and recovery business out of Dartford.

Dynes is a family-run business which has been offering 24 hour breakdown and repairs for over 50 years. The company offers breakdown and tyre repair services 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. They can assist with the breakdown recovery of anything from a motorcycle to a fully loaded 44 tonne articulated lorry and trailer.

Dynes is part of the Campaign for Safer Roadside Rescue Recovery which was

allocated team, supporting children in local schools. It will allow the treatment of those with mild to moderate mental health issues to be treated in school. It will also assist youngsters with more severe needs to access the right support and provide a link to specialist NHS services.

This scheme is being funded by the additional £20.5 billion per year allocated by the Government to the NHS. £2 billion of additional funding will specifically be spent on mental health services and help to ensure comprehensive mental health support is available in every major A&E, alongside new children and young people's crisis teams across the country. The additional funding will also deliver more mental health ambulances, "safe havens" in the community; and a 24-hour mental health crisis hotline when people are in urgent need of help.



Darent Valley Hospital

Each Winter I pay a visit to Darent Valley Hospital to see first-hand how the hospital is coping at this time of year.

On this visit, I met with the new Chief Executive Officer, Louise Ashley. We discussed the pressures on the hospital during the winter, together with the

set up following the death of one of its employees who was tragically killed when he was carrying out a roadside recovery.

The aims of the campaign include raising awareness of the dangers posed to recovery operators and allowing workers to be able to display prominent red lights while they are attending accidents and breakdowns, rather than the amber light they are currently able to use. If a red light would help make it clearer that a recovery is taking place, I would support that change.

A link to Dynes website can be found below.

Dynes Motor Group

180 extra Police Officers for Kent

parking problems which result in an over-spill into local roads. She assured me the hospital is looking into solutions to this issue.

I also visited the A&E Department and met with Mr Asghar Wain, Clinical Director/Consultant in Emergency Medicine. As we all know, there is acute pressure on A&E at this time of year. People should be aware of the following guide which provides information on where you should go to receive the appropriate care.



The infographic consists of six horizontal bars, each with a different color and icon, providing guidance on where to go for various medical conditions:

- Self-Care** (Blue bar with bandage icon): Grazed knee, Sore throat, Coughs.
- Pharmacy** (Green bar with plus sign icon): Headaches, Upset stomachs, Aches & pains.
- NHS 111** (Teal bar with telephone icon): Call 111 for fast advice & support.
- GP Surgery** (Purple bar with stethoscope icon): For symptoms that don't seem to be going away.
- Urgent/Walk-In Center** (Orange bar with house and plus sign icon): Urgent but not life threatening, Sprains, Fractures, Minor burns.
- A&E or 999** (Red bar with 999 icon): Unconsciousness, Severe breathing difficulty, Heavy bleeding.

Matthew Scott, the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, is proposing an extra 180 Police Officers in Kent by increasing the policing element of council tax by £2 a month for a Band D property in 2019/20.

Over the last three years he has delivered 270 more police officers and this plan means that by next year there will be 450 more police officers in Kent.



NHS 10-year Plan

In January the Government launched its 10-year plan for the NHS. It will see £20.5 billion being injected into the NHS budget by 2023/24.



Meeting staff at the Arrow Riding Centre

Arrow Riding Centre

I am always delighted to visit the Arrow Riding Centre in Darenth which provides horse riding therapy for children with disabilities.

The centre is led by Val and Ken Blake and was started in 1982. It has 55 volunteers and currently provides for 140 regular riders who each have a specially formulated therapy programme to help their individual needs.

During my recent visit, I met Jeremy the mechanical horse. This simulator helps people experience their first trots and canters as well as reducing the waiting list for those waiting for therapy. He was named after Dartford Borough Council's leader in recognition of his support for the Arrow over the years.

At the heart of the plan is the message that 'prevention is better than cure' and the aim is for the NHS to do more to help people stay healthy.

The plan outlines the biggest funding of primary and community care ever and aims to improve cancer survival rates by having earlier diagnosis and new screening. In 10 years, the aim is to have 55,000 more people surviving cancer every year.

It is also hoped the plan will lead to 100,000 less heart attacks, strokes and dementia cases, as improvements are made in prevention, detection and treatment.

75th Anniversary of D-Day

June will mark the



Ebbsfleet Academy visit to Parliament

Students from Year 11 at Ebbsfleet Academy visited Parliament recently. They had a tour of the Palace of Westminster and their choice of themed workshop in the Education Centre, arranged via the Education Department. They took part in a mock debate about tuition fees and then had a question and answer session with me on a variety of subjects including, Brexit, the Prime Minister, tuition fees, legalisation of cannabis, housing, lowering the voting age to 16 and whether energy drinks should be banned for under 18s.



75th anniversary of the D-Day landings and the Defence Secretary has written an open letter to veterans of the Normandy landings inviting them to take part in D-Day 75.

Portsmouth will be the location of the national commemoration events, which start on 5th June and include flypasts, military parades, festivals, music and more. Before sunset, a specially chartered ship will transport veterans across the Channel to Normandy, where key events will include The Royal British Legion services at Bayeux Cathedral and the Commonwealth War Grave Commission's Bayeux Cemetery, followed by an evening of entertainment in Arromanches.

If you know anyone who took part in the D-Day landings, they can register to take

Ebbsfleet Garden City

Ebbsfleet Garden City has announced its first big-named convenience store to set up in the area. Co-op will open a store in the new Castle Hill local centre which is currently being created by Newcrest.

Newcrest is currently on site at Castle Hill building 10,000 square feet of ground floor retail, as well as apartments and houses.

There are now more than 1,300 completed homes at the Garden City, together with the new primary school, pub and hotel. Plans for a second pub and hotel are due to be submitted early this year and plans are being drawn up for a £55 million primary and secondary school campus in Eastern Quarry.

part in the commemorations and apply for a place on the ship by visiting The Royal British Legion's website.

'Fire it up' Apprenticeships

The Department for Education has launched its new campaign to help raise awareness of the huge variety of apprenticeship options available for people of all ages and backgrounds.

The huge range of apprenticeships include aerospace engineering, nuclear science, teaching, nursing, fashion and law with the opportunity to study right up to degree level.

The Government is also taking action to make sure schools and colleges promote apprenticeships alongside more traditional academic

News from Westminster



Food Labelling Laws

DEFRA has launched a consultation into food labelling laws to overhaul the labelling of pre-prepared foods which are made, packaged and sold in the same stores.

This follows the tragic death of Natasha Ednan-Laperouse who died after suffering an allergic reaction to sesame in a Pret A Manger baguette.

Currently foods prepared on the premises in which they are sold, are not required to display allergen information on the package. Under the proposed reforms, there could be a requirement for these foods to be labelled with their full ingredients.

The consultation is designed to give the two million food allergy sufferers in the UK confidence in the safety of their food.

A link to the consultation can be found below and it closes on 29th March.

[Food labelling consultation](#)

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routes.

The new campaign includes national TV and social media adverts and a new website which can be accessed via the link below.

**'Fire it up'
Apprenticeships**