

Gareth Johnson MP for Dartford

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

May/June 2019



Welcome to my latest newsletter.



Prince's Trust Team programme in Dartford

Earlier in May, I joined a group of unemployed local people taking part in the Prince's Trust Team programme in Dartford. Delivered by south-east charity CXK, the Prince's Trust Team programme is a personal development programme which provides unemployed

SURGERY DATES

By Appointment Only:

Bluewater

5th July - FULL
13th September
18th October
22nd November
13th December

Dartford Festival

13th July

youngsters aged 16-25 with the chance to take on new challenges, take a qualification, make long-lasting friendships and develop vital skills that will help them to find work. The programme is completely free of charge and doesn't affect participants' Jobseeker's Allowance or Universal Credit. Travel costs are paid and individuals may be entitled to meals and bursary payments.

It was great to meet with the Prince's Trust team and to hear their concerns and aspirations for the future of both Dartford and the whole country. This development programme has been very successful in helping thousands of young people improve their confidence, social skills and knowledge of the opportunities they have in life. It also enables the young people taking part to work on a community programme to provide assistance to others in Dartford. It is a genuine success story for the local area and I am confident it will continue to grow in strength over the coming months and years.

CXK runs programmes in Dartford, Ashford and Sittingbourne and you can find further information by clicking on the link below.

[CXK](#)



[Website](#)



SMN Will Writing Services

Each month I like to feature a local business, large or small and this month's is SMN Will Writing Services based in Dartford and owned by Susan Norris.

Susan is a qualified Will Writer and a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives. She

Patrick Mackay

I have continued to raise my concerns about the release of Patrick Mackay during questions to the Justice Secretary.

Mackay, originally from Dartford, was convicted of killing three people in 1975 and has been serving a life sentence ever since. He is eligible for parole and a hearing is due to take place in August.

Speaking in the House of Commons, I said "Patrick Mackay, formerly of my constituency, is one of Britain's least known, but most dangerous serial killers. In 1975, he admitted to three counts of manslaughter, but he is strongly suspected of carrying out a further ten killings, including that of a four-year-old boy. Mackay is now eligible for parole and may well have already been moved to an open prison. Does the Secretary of State share my deep concern about the potential release of this man, still only in his 60s and will he enable me to make the fullest possible representations to the Parole Board?"

In response, Justice Secretary, David Gauke, said: "I pay tribute to my Honourable Friend who has taken up this issue tirelessly. As he knows, the Parole Board will release a life sentence prisoner only when, in its view, it is no longer necessary on the grounds of public protection for a prisoner to remain in custody. In making its determination, the Board will consider reports from those who manage

has 40 years legal experience and is a member of the Institute of Professional Will Writers.

SMN Will Writing Services is a small local firm specialising in Wills, Probate, Trusts and Lasting Power of Attorney. The firm is fully insured for £2m.

SMN will write your Will and can visit you in your own home if you are unable to come to their office. The business specialises in single, mirror, guardian clauses, IHT trust clauses and property clauses Wills.

Last year, approximately 70% of people who died in the UK did not leave a Will,

the prisoner and have assessed the risk of harm he presents.

The Board will also consider all relevant evidence of the prisoner's risk of harm and if my Honourable Friend has such evidence, I am sure it will be listened to closely. We will ensure that it is fully considered for inclusion in the dossier of reports given to the Parole Board."

I will be making representations to the Parole Board shortly.

A link to Justice Questions can be found by clicking on the photo below.



Justice Questions - Patrick Mackay

potentially reducing the amount of their family's inheritance and causing stress, problems and additional costs at a time when it is least needed.

If you would like to find out more about SMN Will Writing Services, you can check out their website by clicking on the button below.

[SMN Will Writing Services](#)



Go Train

I recently met the team at Go Train which has an office in Dartford.

Go Train is a government-funded organisation that works with employers to help them fill their vacancies. It can also help develop new or existing staff, providing them with the training they need to improve productivity, increase retention and grow the business. Courses include IT and computing, customer service or retail.

In addition, Go Train helps people find work and has helped thousands of people improve their skills and confidence to gain employment. The organisation provides training in IT and computers, employment and work skills, customer service, retail and employability.

Go Train can also help with personal action plans and provide specific training for lone parents and older workers, as well as assistance with CV and application letter writing, managing finances and interview techniques.



Lighting issues at Longfield Station resolved

After a two-year campaign, I am pleased that a footbridge at Longfield Station has finally had its lighting improved.

I was contacted by a number of residents who use the bridge, which links Station Road to the back of Bramblefield Close. It was unclear who had responsibility for the upkeep of the bridge and its lighting and it unfortunately took two years to finally get to the bottom of who is actually



Delay Repay 15

I am delighted the Government has announced that Delay Repay 15 will be introduced on Southeastern trains in November. This means that any passenger who faces a delay of more than 15 minutes will be able to claim a refund for part of their ticket. At present, this only applies to delays of 30 minutes or more.

I have repeatedly asked the Government to introduce Delay Repay 15 and I hope this will lead to less delays in Southeastern's services.

I have also repeatedly called for smart ticketing at all stations across Dartford and I hope that when the new franchise operator is announced for the South Eastern network in the near future, this will be part of the agreement.

responsible.

In May, Network Rail said they would fix the lighting and since that decision they have acted quickly to resolve the issue.



Armed Forces Day

It was a pleasure to attend the Greenhithe and Swanscombe Royal British Legion Armed Forces Day again this year. It is always a great family event and a good way to show support for our Armed Forces.

Entering into the spirit and raising

'Most Wanted' images of criminals displayed in Dartford Town Centre

This week, images of people wanted by Kent Police have been displayed on two digital media screens located in the Orchards Shopping Centre.

The initiative, by CrimeStoppers and Kent Police, is aimed at letting criminals know that Dartford Town Centre is no place for criminal behaviour.

If you spot someone in the images, you can report it to CrimeStoppers anonymously.

In due course, it is hoped this scheme will be rolled out to other towns across the UK. I hope it will be a success in helping to prevent crime in Dartford and bring some of those responsible to justice.

valuable funds is our new Mayor of Dartford, Cllr Roger Perfitt, shown in the above photo getting a thorough soaking in the stocks!



News from Westminster



Finn's Law

New legislation to protect service animals such as police dogs and horses has come into force.

The Animal Welfare (Service Animals) Bill, known as Finn's Law, will prevent those who attack or injure service animals from claiming self-defence.

Prime Minister's resignation and leadership contest

Earlier in May, the Prime Minister announced her resignation and agreed a timetable to leave which commenced on 7th June. A leadership contest is therefore taking place to determine who succeeds her as Leader of the Conservative Party and ultimately becomes the next Prime Minister. This process involved Conservative MPs selecting their two preferred candidates through a series of votes which is then being put to Conservative Party members to make the final decision.

The Prime Minister was correct that delivering Brexit was always going to be challenging. However, having repeatedly committed to lead the UK out of the EU on 29th March 2019, she lost the respect of many of those who voted for Brexit when she failed to do so. Her subsequent announcement that there would be a vote by MPs on whether a second referendum should be held, was not in keeping with the manifesto that I, or my colleagues stood on in the 2017 General Election. Having lost the support of her party and cabinet, it was right that she made the decision to resign.

Brexit needs a fresh approach, with a new negotiating team and the country needs to be led by someone committed to delivering a genuine Brexit.

As you may know, the law is named after Finn, a police dog, who was stabbed in the chest and head whilst chasing a suspect with his handler, PC David Wardell. Only criminal damage charges could be brought against his attacker.

The new legislation, coupled with the Government's plans to increase maximum sentences for animal cruelty offences to five years in prison, will make sure those who harm service animals are punished accordingly.

I supported Dominic Raab in the first stage of the leadership contest. I was his Parliamentary Private Secretary during his time as Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union and I had no doubt that he has the ability and attributes necessary to be an excellent Prime Minister. Dominic Raab did not reach the last two and since then, I have given my support to Boris Johnson.

Hustings are currently taking place the length and breadth of the country up until 13th July, with postal ballots going out to Conservative party members between 6th and 8th July. Voting closes at 5.00 pm on Monday 22nd July and the next leader will be announced on 23rd July.

Offensive Weapons Act receives Royal Assent

The Offensive Weapons Act has recently received Royal Assent, bringing in tough new measures that strengthen law enforcement's response to violent crime.

The Act will make it illegal to possess dangerous weapons in private, including knuckledusters, zombie knives and death star knives and will make it a criminal offence to dispatch bladed products sold online without verifying the buyer is over 18.

The police are also being provided with

Lucy's Law

Following on from Finn's Law, new legislation to end puppy and kitten farming was laid in Parliament on 13th May. Known as Lucy's Law, it will mean that puppies and kittens can no longer be sold by a third-party seller, such as a pet shop or commercial dealer, unless they have bred the animal themselves. Instead, anyone looking to buy or adopt a puppy or kitten under six months must either deal directly with the breeder or an animal re-homing centre.

The law is named after Lucy, a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, who died in 2016 after being subjected to

additional support through Knife Crime Prevention Orders. These Orders will act as a deterrent to those vulnerable to becoming involved in knife crime. They will also enable the courts to place restrictions on individuals to help the police manage those at risk in the community.

Guidance on the process for Knife Crime Prevention Orders will be published ahead of a pilot in London.

The Act includes a number of other measures to tackle serious violence, including:

- a ban on the possession, manufacture and sale of rapid firing rifles and bump stocks, which increase a rifles rate of fire with immediate effect
- a ban on selling bladed products to a residential address without age verification
- updating the definition of flick knives to reflect changing weapon designs and banning private possession of flick knives and gravity knives
- changing the legal definition for threatening someone with an offensive weapon to make prosecutions easier
- banning the sale of corrosive products to under 18s
- making it an offence to possess a corrosive substance in a public place.

terrible conditions on a puppy farm. Dogs like Lucy are often kept by breeders to produce multiple litters of puppies, which are taken from their mothers at just a few weeks' old and advertised online or sold in pet shops. This legislation will ensure that puppies and kittens are born and reared in a safe environment, with their mother and sold from their place of birth.

The ban will also deter puppy smugglers who abuse the Pet Travel Scheme by bringing underage puppies into the UK which are then sold on for financial gain.

75th Anniversary of VE Day 2020

The early May bank-holiday in 2020 will move from Monday 4th May to Friday 8th May to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day which takes place on 8th May 2020. This will give people the chance to pay tribute to those who served in one of the most significant events in our country's history.

Commemorative events will take place over the 3-day weekend including:

- the Nation's Toast, where over 20,000 pubs will encourage patrons to raise a glass to the Heroes of World War II
- bagpipers playing the traditional Battle's O'er at the top of the 4 highest peaks in the UK
- bells in churches and cathedrals across the country joining forces in a special Ringing Out for Peace
- local street parties and celebrations.

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