

## Gareth Johnson MP for Dartford

17th September 2020



### HS1

During questions to the Transport Secretary last week, I raised the issue of Ebbsfleet Station being closed to international travellers until at least 2021. As a result of my question, the Rail Minister has agreed to meet me urgently to discuss the perilous position of HS1 due to coronavirus. HS1 is funded via Eurostar, a mainly French company, that is suffering significant financial problems during this outbreak. I am deeply concerned about its immediate future and I hope both the French and British Governments can act to keep it viable.

If you would like to watch my question and the Minister's response, please click on the video above.



## **Business loans in Dartford**

Earlier in August, The British Business Bank published new data which shows the regional distribution of loans offered under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs). I am pleased to see that these schemes are helping businesses across the UK to access the finance they need to survive and stabilise, putting them in a better position to grow as we move into recovery.

In **Dartford**, **2,714** loans worth **£99,899,943** have been offered across both CBILS and BBLs.



## New York Deli

Prior to the pandemic, I covered a local business each month, large or small and I am now including this again. This month's business is New York Deli which is located on Market Place in Dartford.

The business changed hands in November 2019, when it was taken over by Matt Smith and his sister Jo, who were both born and raised in Dartford. They have revamped the premises and are extremely proud of their food hygiene rating of 5 which was awarded in February 2020.

The deli offers freshly made sandwiches, coffee, cakes and milkshakes, as well as hot breakfast items and is open Monday to Saturday from 9.00 am until 2.30 pm for eat-in or takeaway. It is also available on Ubereats, Deliveroo and Just Eat.

This has been a tough year for many of the businesses in Dartford, especially those in the hospitality sector like the New York Deli. The deli re-opened 'Covid-secure' on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and has had various specials throughout the summer, including kids' picnic boxes and afternoon teas. The deli is also available for private hire for afternoon teas (subject to 'the rule of 6').

Our local businesses need all our support to recover and if you would like to find out more about the New York Deli, please check out its Facebook page below.

[New York Deli](#)



## **Violence and Abuse against Retail Workers**

I was recently invited to visit Boots in Dartford, where I met with the Lawrence Barber, who is the Store Manager and Rifka Chakkalal, Head of Retail Public Affairs.

Sadly the visit was to highlight the increasing problem of violence and abuse against retail workers which has worsened during lockdown.

Retail workers were recently described by the Government as 'Hidden Heroes' and were praised for their hard work to keep the nation fed and healthy during the Covid crisis and in fact, Boots in Dartford remained open throughout lockdown.

## **The Fisheries Bill**

The Fisheries Bill had its second reading debate in the House of Commons on 1st September.

The Common Fisheries Policy has long been seen by the fishing industry as a policy that symbolised the unfairness of our EU membership and the failure of our EU policy. It granted uncontrolled access to UK waters for EU vessels and because of quotas, the UK currently has access to just around half of the fishing opportunities that are in our waters.

As we leave the EU, we now have the opportunity for the first time in almost half a century to correct this inequality.

The Fisheries Bill gives us power to control access by individual foreign vessels to our Exclusive Economic Zone. This includes the power to stipulate where a vessel may fish within our EEZ, when it may fish, what fish it may catch and what type of fishing gear it may or may not use. The ability to control and manage access to our waters will be crucial in ensuring that a fairer arrangement prevails in the future.

The SNP tabled an amendment to this Bill to stop its progress before it is clear what kind of deal will be made with the EU after the implementation period. This amendment was defeated by 275 votes.



# Dartford and Gravesham

NHS Trust

## Extra funding for the NHS

The Health Secretary recently announced £300 million of additional capital funding for hospital upgrades as part of the Government's NHS winter preparations this year, with our local trust receiving just over £2.5 million.

This vital funding will help ensure the NHS is prepared to cope with winter pressures and reduce the risks associated with further outbreaks of Covid-19.

This funding forms part of the £1.5 billion additional capital funding announced by the Prime Minister in June.

On top of this, £3 billion of extra NHS funding has been announced to maintain the use of the Nightingale hospitals throughout the winter.



## Home Instead

I visited Home Instead shortly after it had opened, over a year ago and was pleased to be invited back this month.

The company provides care to people in their own home and supports several clients in the local area. It has employed close to 30 people with the number of care givers constantly growing.

Home Instead told me that the pandemic confronted it with challenges never anticipated in its first year and the husband and wife team (pictured above) explained to me how they had navigated their way through it.

Home Instead is looking to hire an additional 50 care givers within the next year to support people in our local community.



## **A2 Bean and Ebbsfleet junction improvements scheme**

Highways England started work on the A2 Bean and Ebbsfleet junction improvements scheme on 31st March 2020.

Work to date has consisted of surveys, hedgerow planting and work in the A2 central reservation. Work will continue on the A2 and is planned to start at both Bean and Ebbsfleet junctions this Autumn. Work on the A2 includes the installation of a concrete pier to support the new bridge across the A2, the replacement of an overhead gantry and the installation of a new concrete safety barrier in the central reservation.

A video showing a fly-through of the improvements can be seen above and if you would like to find out more information about the scheme, a newsletter can be found by clicking on the button below.

[\*\*A2 Bean and Ebbsfleet improvements - newsletter\*\*](#)

Due	Destination	Platform	Expected	Usual seat availability	Coaches
06:41	London Charing Cross	1	On time		<a href="#">See details</a>
06:51	London Charing Cross	1	On time		 <a href="#">See details</a>
07:11	London Charing Cross	1	On time		 <a href="#">See details</a>
07:21	London Charing Cross		On time		 <a href="#">See details</a>
07:41	London Charing Cross		On time		 <a href="#">See details</a>

## SeatFinder is now live on Southeastern

Southeastern has become the first train operator in the UK to publish train loading data to help passengers plan their journeys.

The new SeatFinder service uses train loading information from the previous week to show how busy services are likely to be at each stop. The data is gathered by technology, built into many carriages in the Southeastern fleet, predicting the number of passengers by analysing weight. This means that passengers planning their journey will be able to see how busy a service is likely to be and can plan accordingly.

Southeastern is the first train operator in the UK to collate its train capacity information in this way and share it directly with passengers, and the first to make this data available to third parties.

The new service covers 93% of stations and provides an innovative solution to help passengers make more informed decisions about their journey pattern.

The new tool was introduced ahead of Southeastern's timetable increasing to 98% of normal service levels on 7th September, at a critical time as commuters return to their offices and children return to school.

By checking live departure boards on the Southeastern website and at stations, passengers will be able to see red, amber or green indicators, showing the level of available capacity on trains. The capacity indicators will be set to social distancing

standards, to ensure there is sufficient space for passengers to keep 2m or 1m apart while on-board.



This is explosives detection dog Poppy. She was awarded the doggy equivalent of the OBE for her heroism during the 2017 Borough Market terrorist attack. She is one of the police 'sniffer' dogs who regularly check the House of Commons chamber.



## Face coverings

Having to wear a mask is not pleasant but sadly it is something we are going to have to get used to. The evidence surrounding mask-wearing has evolved during this crisis and it points to providing at least some protection for mask-wearers and others. Unless you are exempt, please stick to the rules.

The list of places where face coverings must be worn has expanded.

Find the full list here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own#when-to-wear-a-face-covering>



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