

Gareth Johnson MP for Dartford

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



23rd November 2020

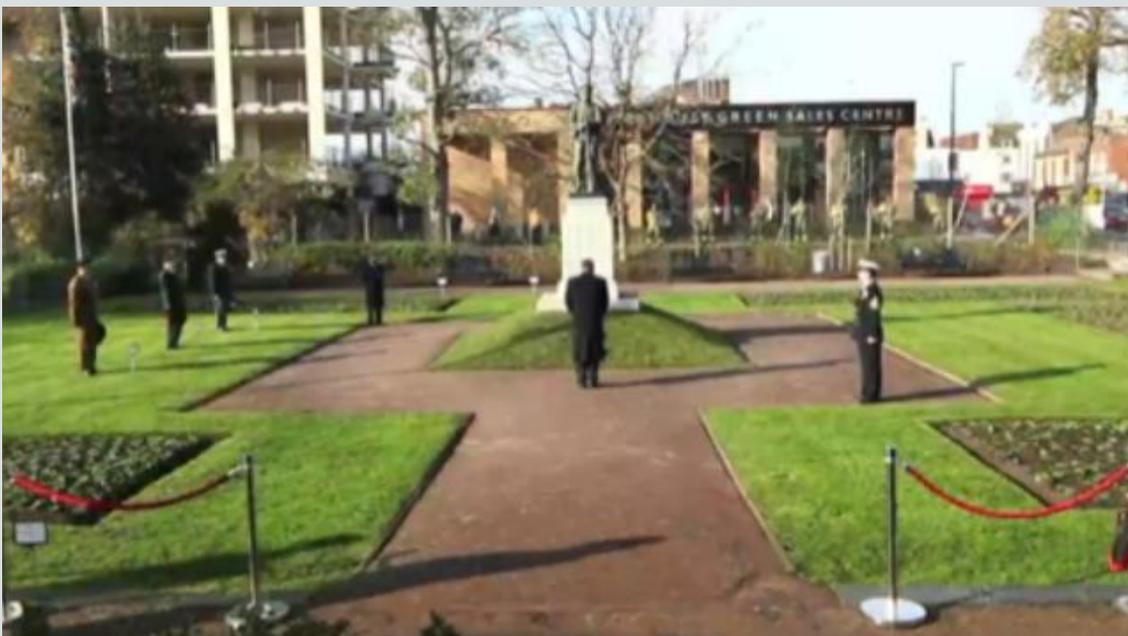


Remembrance Sunday

I was pleased to attend a much-reduced, socially-distanced, Remembrance Sunday commemoration in Dartford earlier this month. This year, because of the Coronavirus regulations, there was no public gathering or parade and there were far fewer wreaths and tributes.

The service was broadcast live by Dartford Borough Council on Dartford Together and can be watched on demand by clicking on the button below. (Video begins around 15 minutes in.)

[Dartford Together Remembrance Sunday](#)



Laying a wreath and paying my respects at Dartford War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday.



Suicide amongst doctors

During the Prime Minister's statement on the second lockdown at the beginning of November, I highlighted the issue of increased suicide rates amongst doctors.

Doctors are between two and five times more likely to take their own lives than the general population.

In 2018, my constituent, Dr Jagdip Sidhu, was a Consultant Cardiologist at Darent Valley Hospital. He was at the cutting edge of medical treatment but could not cope with the pressure he faced and sadly took his own life.

Following his death, his brother Amandip Sidhu founded the charity Doctors in Distress.

A doctor dies from suicide around every three weeks and the aim of this charity is to reduce the rate and raise awareness. As the number of Covid infections and hospital admissions increase, pressure on clinicians will inevitably rise too.

If you would like to view my contribution to the debate and the Prime Minister's answer, please click on the video above.



Davies Turner

Davies Turner, one of the UK's largest independent freight forwarding companies, based in Dartford, was approached by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to help with the video above. This is designed to showcase the services offered by the freight forwarding sector and to provide clarity to those businesses that have only ever been involved in the EU and Single Market with no previous experience of international trade in the wider world.

It also serves to encourage importers and exporters to use the services of freight forwarders as part of their preparations for the imminent end of the transition period.



Lockdown 2

At the time of writing, we are going into the final week of lockdown 2, which is due to end on 2nd December 2020.

In Dartford, we have seen the number of cases rise dramatically in the last month. The number of Covid admissions to Darent Valley Hospital is increasing and currently 314 people per 100,000 have been infected. This number was at 21 per 100,000 just a few weeks ago.

For a reminder of the current restrictions, click on the photo above to play the video.

[Covid-19 cases in Dartford](#)



UK Fostering

UK Fostering

Each month I like to feature a local business, large or small and this month's is UK Fostering which is an independent fostering agency with its head office in Dartford.

Kent County Council has its own fostering service called Kent Fostering, but all local authorities contract with agencies like UK Fostering to recruit more local foster carers to help them find the right match for the child requiring a foster home.

UK Fostering can provide foster carers for various different placement options including emergency fostering or long term, along with specialised placements such as therapeutic, remand fostering and parent & child.

All fostering families undergo a robust assessment and are also given 24/7 support which ensures there is always someone available for guidance and they are operating as part of a wider team of professionals.

Lockdown has provided many challenges for foster families and children, with zoom meetings and web training on the internet taking the place of home visits and physical trainings.

More foster carers are always needed and if you would like to find out more about UK Fostering, please click on the link below.

[UK Fostering](#)



Getting Away with Murder

I recently took part in a podcast as part of a 15-part series entitled The Case Files which is presented by award-winning journalist Kate Gerbeau. In this episode called 'Getting Away with Murder' she covers the brutal stabbing of Dartfordian George Low, whilst on holiday in Cyprus in August 2016.

Since George was murdered, I have tried all avenues to seek justice for him. In 2018, I travelled to Cyprus to meet Government Ministers, senior police officers and the Attorney General in a bid to have those responsible for George's murder returned to Cyprus and put before the courts. However, because of the complicated political situation in Cyprus, the suspects have been able to evade justice.

Some progress has been made, but the two suspects, Sali Ahmet and Mehmet Akpinar remain at large.

The podcast covers the desperate and continued search for justice for George.

A link can be found below.

[Getting Away with Murder](#)



HM Government

£16.5 BILLION MORE FOR DEFENCE OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

Investment in defence

The Prime Minister has announced the biggest programme of investment in British defence since the end of the Cold War. This is a £16.5 billion increase above the manifesto commitment over four years.

Since the Cold War, threats have been evolving and our UK defence therefore needs to operate at all times with leading, cutting-edge technology. Our Armed Forces are also working in a broader range of areas than ever before.

This extra spending will cement the UK's position as the largest defence spender in Europe and the second largest in NATO. It will allow the Government to invest in cutting-edge technology, positioning the UK as a global leader in domains such as cyber and space and addressing weaknesses in our defence arsenal.

To support these advancements, the Prime Minister has also announced a new agency dedicated to Artificial Intelligence, the creation of a National Cyber Force and

a new 'Space Command', capable of launching our first rocket in 2022. This will be underpinned by a record investment of at least £1.5 billion extra and £5.8 billion total on military research and development and a commitment to invest further in the Future Combat Air System.

These projects are expected to create up to 10,000 jobs annually across the UK.



Vaccine news

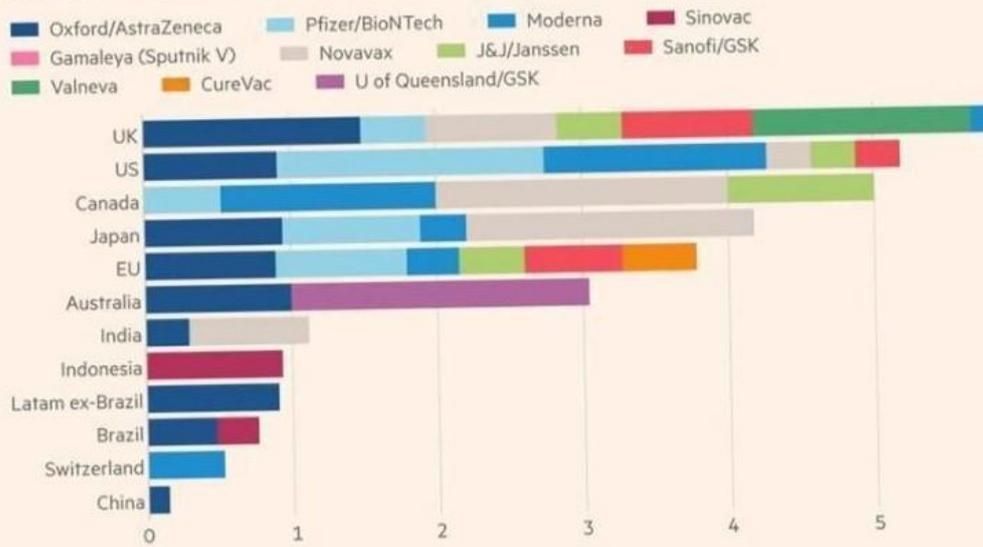
We have all seen the fantastic news that in trials, both the Pfizer and Moderna Covid-19 vaccines have been shown to be around 95% effective. We've also now had the exciting news that the Oxford vaccine is also 90% effective where people were given a half dose of the vaccine, followed by a full measure at least a month after. The Government has ordered 40 million Pfizer and 5 million Moderna vaccines and has 100 million doses of the Oxford vaccine on order.

If you would like to find out more about the Oxford vaccine, you can click on the video above.

Countries across the world have pre-ordered vaccines as shown in the chart below.

Who have built the biggest vaccine portfolios?

Vaccine pre-orders (doses per capita)



Source: Deutsche Bank
© FT



Gareth Johnson MP

House of Commons

London SW1A 0AA

Tel: 0207 219 7047

email: gareth.johnson.mp@parliament.uk

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