



News

Say No To Ageism

I voiced my support for the Older People's Commissioner for Wales' 'Say No to Ageism' campaign, which was launched to coincide with the International Day for Older Persons on October 1st.

It's a great shame that over a third of older people in Wales report experiencing ageism. I fully support the Say No to Ageism campaign, and the International Day of Older Persons – it's important that we recognise and celebrate the excellent contribution that older people make to society, including here in Newport. For more information on the campaign visit: www.olderpeoplewales.com

Smoking ban in cars with children

As of the 1st October, smoking is banned in cars carrying children. I am pleased that this ban is being introduced and want all residents in Newport East to be aware of its introduction on the 1st October.

Children are still growing and are affected more by second hand smoke. Statistics also point to children from poorer backgrounds being exposed to second hand smoke more often than those from more affluent backgrounds. Having spoken to residents since the ban was announced, I know that there is real public support for this measure, not least from the children it will benefit.

Network Rail in Undy

Network Rail are hosting a rail electrification drop-in information events in Undy Church Community Hall in November .

At the events members of Network Rail staff will be on hand to discuss planned construction work in Undy, Magor and Caldicot to support electrification of the South Wales Mainline.

A drop in event is taking place on Thursday 26th November. For more information visit www.networkrail.co.uk/monmouthshire



Follow me on
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How to get in touch

Always feel free to get in touch with me if there are any issues or concerns affecting you, your family or your neighbourhood.

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Black History Month

October marked Black History Month - an important time for recognising the significant contribution that black and minority ethnic people have made to our communities.

The social, economic and cultural life of Newport has always been shaped by a rich tradition of diversity – something all Newportonians can be proud of. Black History Month 2015 has an added poignancy as it marks the twentieth anniversary of the end of the racist apartheid regime in South Africa. This serves as a timely reminder that we must continue to challenge the scourge of racism and discrimination in 21st century Britain.

Newport Food Festival

I was pleased to be able to attend Newport Food Festival. The Festival has become an annual event which people look forward to.



There were a variety of stalls offering a broad range of products; while the public could enjoy numerous Chef demonstrations, including the final of the Teen Chef competition.

It was great to see Newport City Centre full of crowds attending the Festival, which has really helped to put Newport on the culinary map of South Wales.

Magor Station

I support the Magor Action Group on Rail campaign for a new walkway station for Magor with Undy. The group recently hosted a public awareness and investment day to promote their campaign, which has generated significant local support.

There is a clearly a strong local appetite for a station at Magor. The village has an ever-growing population, and almost half of its residents travel to work outside of the area. I am really interested in the potential of the station as a community hub, and the way it could link Magor and Undy with the South East Wales metro system. A station could provide real benefits to the village, both economically and environmentally; for example, the Magor Action Group on Rail have highlighted the potential to reduce traffic movement on the nearby B4245 by up to 60,000 vehicles per year. Great credit must go to the dedicated volunteers at the Magor Action Group on Rail who are driving this campaign forward – they are passionate local people with a strong vision for integrated transport in the Severnside area.

Wear It Pink campaign



I was glad to be able to show my support for Breast Cancer Now's Wear it Pink campaign - see pink wig above!

Right now breast cancer is at a tipping point. Every year around 2,600 women are diagnosed with breast cancer in Wales, and sadly nearly 600 people still lose their lives to the disease. This is why we all must come together to support Breast Cancer Now's cutting-edge research, and in 'Wear it pink' there is a fun and simple way for everyone to get involved. To find out more about the campaign visit www.wearitpink.org

Caldicot Male Voice Choir



I was pleased to attend the recent Caldicot Male Voice Choir Gala concert.

The concert was compered by iconic BBC Wales presenter Roy Noble, and was a great night of music; from 1960's pop to traditional Welsh choral classics.

Tax Credit Cuts

I am angry about the UK Government's plans to cut tax credits. Since their introduction in the early 2000s, tax credits have played a key role in securing one of the biggest reductions in child poverty since the Second World War.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) warns that the reductions to tax credits, which come into effect in April 2016, will leave 3 million British families £1,000 worse off.

In my constituency of Newport East nearly 4,000 working families with children receive tax credits; many of whom will be affected by the UK Government's planned changes to tax credits. David Cameron has reneged on his election campaign promise not to cut tax credits – a betrayal of the 'strivers' he once claimed to support.

Praise for local ambulance services in Newport



I was pleased to visit Bassaleg Ambulance Station with Jayne Bryant, Assembly candidate for Newport West, and Vaughan Gething AM, Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services, to show support for the work of ambulance staff across the city of Newport and beyond.

None of us ever want to think about a loved one needing an ambulance, but I feel it is important that we take the time to recognise and thank staff at the Welsh Ambulance Service for their vital work around the clock.

Gallery

Attending another successful Newport 50 Plus Information Day at Newport Centre.



Inspecting the great work of Wastesavers in Newport with Newport West Assembly candidate Jayne Bryant and Carl Sargeant AM, Minister for Natural Resources



Supporting the recent World Mental Health Day event at Newport Market with Jayne Bryant.

Plenary Update

Bedroom Tax

I recently spoke in Plenary about the impact of the Bedroom Tax on my constituents.

I said: "One consequence of the UK Tory Government's pernicious bedroom tax is that many social housing tenants face a choice of either remaining where they are and losing benefit, or finding somewhere else to live with one or more fewer bedrooms. Unfortunately, often those smaller homes are not available. Is there any progress in south-east Wales in improving the supply of smaller homes to help deal with these problems?"

Lesley Griffiths, Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty, responded: "We certainly saw a move away from one-bedroomed and two-bedroomed houses being built previously and now we're going back to that, because, as you say, people are having to make some very tough decisions when they're faced with that very spiteful bedroom tax. As a Government, we are giving £40 million over three years, invested through the social housing grant programme to specifically target investment in one-bedroomed and two-bedroomed homes for individuals and families."

Bus services

I receive a lot of concerns from constituents regarding local bus services and a lack of a comprehensive planned strategic approach to the provision of adequate services.

In a recent Plenary session, I took the opportunity to ask the First Minister if he shared my view that the Welsh Government should have further powers to allow it to properly regulate bus services in Wales, which I believe would also help deliver the step change of the proposed metro system. The First Minister agreed with me that this was an area which should be devolved to the Welsh Assembly.

Cycling in Wales

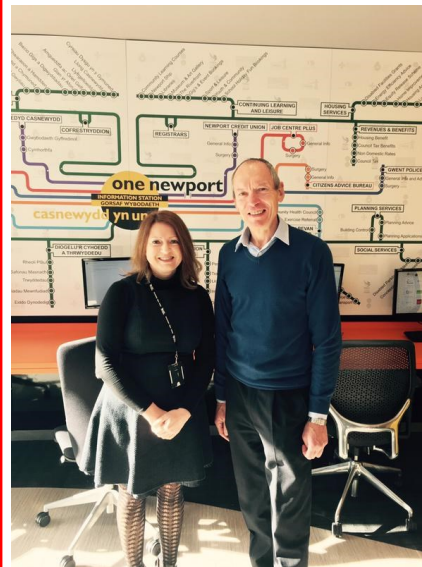
I pressed the First Minister on the need to improve cycling in Wales. We now have the Active Travel Act in force in Wales which will lead to a step change in encouraging many more people to get on their bikes.

The legislation requires councils to prepare maps of their existing cycle routes and then work up new maps showing the better joined-up routes they are tasked with delivering. Welsh Government must work with local authorities to ensure the maps and associated work are produced as quickly as possible and to a consistently high quality. The sooner the health, environmental and quality of life benefits are realised the better

Gallery



Jessica Morden MP and I visiting the ASPIRE project in Lliswerry. ASPIRE are doing great work developing an alternative curriculum.



Looking at the great facilities at Newport Information Station.



Inspecting Gwalia's excellent supported housing projects in Newport with Newport West Assembly candidate Jayne Bryant.



I was pleased to attend the International Federation of Artistic Photography Exhibition at Newport's Riverfront Theatre.