

James MacCleary MP Newsletter

Summer recess is finally here! Parliament rose for the summer recently and I couldn't wait to get back down to Sussex. I have already been able to get out to lots of our villages and have plenty more to go as I begin my summer tour. If you see me out and about, please do feel free to come and say hello.

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1. Brighton's Land Grab

You may have seen in the news recently that Brighton and Hove City Council have proposed four options for the local government reorganisation that would split our communities up. I am furious. BHCC's proposals are nothing more than a panicked land grab, with little consultation or thought put into their suggestions. Most of my recent village hall visits have been dominated by this topic and the anger in our community is palpable.

The proposals made by Brighton and Hove make plain their ambitions to take over Newhaven, Kingston, Piddinghoe, Southease, Northease, Rodmell, Iford and Swanborough – completely ignoring the historical ties to the town of Lewes and demonstrating a huge lack of understanding of our rural communities. The City Council does not understand the challenges our farmers face or the flood risk to our villages along the Ouse.

Residents have until the 25th of August to complete both survey's, one from Brighton and Hove and the other from Lewes District Council in partnership with East Sussex. It is incredibly important that you have your say in both consultations, links below:

[Lewes District Council's consultation](#)

[Brighton & Hove City Council's consultation](#)

2. Summer Tour

At the start of this newsletter, I mentioned the summer tour I'm embarking on to get around as much of the constituency as I can. We're off to a flying start, having already visited parish councils and residents for Q&A sessions in Ringmer, Plumpton, Ditchling, Kingston, Rodmell, Alfriston, Loughton and Westmeston over the last few days amongst other visits to local businesses and organisations.

I'll also be visiting Wilmington, Bishopstone, Litlington and Ripe this week, please do drop me an email for more details and look forward to seeing residents there.

3. Glynde

The flower show in Glynde was a brilliant event, with kids and adults alike racing around on hobby horses and people enjoying slices of cakes baked by villagers. I'll certainly be back - next time with the kids!

I also managed to pop into the new Steamworks at the station whilst I was there, for a pint and some excellent food. Following on from the success of their site in Seaford, it's great to see Glynde having now not just the one, but two pubs now open, with the recent news of the Trevor Arms reopening.

4. Palestine

I recently signed a cross-party letter by Sarah Champion MP, Chair of the International Development Select Committee, and over 250 other MPs, to the Prime Minister calling for the immediate recognition of Palestine as a state. The situation that is unfolding before our eyes is horrific, particularly the impact on children who are being used as weapons and are innocent victims in Israel's onslaught.

It is incumbent on us to keep pressing the government to ensure that much needed aid gets in to alleviate the humanitarian crisis urgently and call out the Israeli government for withholding aid and targeting civilians in clear breach of the Geneva Convention. I will continue to work with MPs from all parties to put pressure on the Government to take stronger action including sanctions on key figures in the Israeli government (up to and including Benjamin Netanyahu), a comprehensive ban on arms sales including parts for F35 jets, and immediate recognition of the state of Palestine.

5. All aboard in Plumpton! (and Polegate, Berwick, Glynde, Lewes and Cooksbridge)

You may have seen that from December Thameslink have announced a new rush hour service from Eastbourne to London Bridge via Lewes. Plumpton had originally been left out of the list of stops, but [in the House ahead of the summer recess](#) I said I'd be writing to them to ask for a rethink. I am delighted to report that they listened and can now confirm that Govia Thameslink have since written to me to say they are adding in the stop. The new service will depart Plumpton at 07:25 with the return working arriving back at Plumpton at 17:57.

6. Campaigning on severe pregnancy sickness

Just before the House rose to recess I had the opportunity to ask a question at PMQs. I took the opportunity to ask if the PM would consider addressing the current postcode lottery that many women are faced with when trying to access a drug called Xonvea. It is used to treat Hyperemesis Gravidarum (HG) which is an extreme form of pregnancy sickness that can cause extreme discomfort, acute malnutrition, severe dehydration and have long term mental health consequences. It is deeply unfair that where you live decides whether you can have relief or not. The PM has promised that I will get a meeting with the relevant minister to discuss this and hopefully get the outcome that so many women deserve.

The Sunday Times wrote a piece on my partner's experience of this condition, that you can read [here](#) and [Sky News](#) covered my question too. I have been overwhelmed by the interest that this has generated, with many women getting in touch to share their experiences both locally and more widely.

7. Speaking out on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The broken SEND system is failing children each and every day. It is driving councils to the brink of bankruptcy, while forcing parents to fight long battles just to get the support their children need. It urgently needs reform, and it is welcome that the Government recognises that.

However, many parents are deeply worried about what's being reported regarding reforms to the Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and SEND system. It's not fair that they're being subjected to a drip-feeding of information about their children's future. The Government needs to come forward urgently to clarify what their reform plans are, so that SEND families have the certainty they need to live their lives. And that reform can't see children's rights rolled back. [The current system isn't working – we all agree on that.](#)

8. Phlebotomy services in Lewes

Residents in Lewes have contacted me about the lack of phlebotomy services being provided by Foundry Healthcare in Lewes. I have already written to the relevant health minister to raise this issue as I have also spoken with Foundry. I know that it is not a question of willingness, it is a question of cost, as the government has not adjusted the payment made to GP's for these services in line with inflation meaning that GPs cannot sustain this financially. The NHS has a new plan to build a more community-based service, providing the correct funding for Phlebotomy services to GP's as it is not unique to Lewes - matches that ambition. I will update residents when we receive a reply.

9. House building

[I recently spoke in Parliament](#) on the need to ensure that where housebuilding comes, the appropriate infrastructure must also follow. We cannot build family homes in places that do not have school places or GP appointments available. We also need to do more to tackle land banking by landlords that sit on planning permission approved developments, in Lewes District Council alone there are hundreds of homes that have already been approved but still not built.

Liberal Democrats submitted various amendments to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill to a vote during Report Stage, however, neither the Government, nor the Conservatives voted for them, meaning they were not included in the Bill. Unfortunately, the Government has chosen to continue the overly centralised, developer-led approach championed by the former Conservative government which completely failed to deliver the housing and infrastructure the country needs.

10. England Women's Win

What a tremendous victory, once again the Lionesses have brought it home! I have and will continue to push for equal prize money in the FA Cup for both the male and female teams. The prize money would be transformative to women's football, having already raised this directly with the Sports Minister, I am committed to seeking better investment in the women's game - we must turn this victory into a lasting legacy.

I spoke on [BBC Five Live](#) about the need to invest in the game now.

Alongside my summer tour, I will still be conducting advice surgeries around the constituency, please contact my team at james.maccleary.mp@parliament.uk to arrange one.

Best wishes,

James MacCleary
MP for Lewes Constituency
Liberal Democrats