

Lynda Waltho MP



Constituency Report August 2005

Representing Amblecote, Cradley, Quarry Bank, Lye, Norton, Oldswinford, Pedmore, Wollaston, Wollescote and Stourbridge Town

Dear Members,

Although Parliament is now in recess, August has been another busy month! I have been able to devote the majority of my time to meeting constituents, visiting local organisations, and attending events in Stourbridge.

I've held two advice surgeries in Cradley and Lye this month, which have proved to be both informative and very busy-both taking four hours each! The majority of the cases are council related, noticeably from the wards that are represented by Tory Councillors – a telling indictment of their attitude towards the people they are supposed to represent.

We are settling into the new office above the Labour Club on Hagley Road. There is still some decorating work to do but you are welcome to drop in to see us and we might be able to rustle up a cup of tea as well. Just give us a quick call on 01384 374356 to check we're there and not at a marathon surgery first!

There are also lots of small jobs we need help with, like labelling letters, archiving newspaper items and general clerical jobs. If you could spare a few hours per week on a fairly regular basis, it would be great to see you. Just give Chris or Sue a call on the above number.

That's about all for this month. If you would like any further information on anything contained within this report, or indeed anything else, please do not hesitate to contact me.

*Best wishes,
Lynda*

100 Years of Stourbridge Library!



On 1st August, I was kindly invited to attend the Centenary of Stourbridge Library. It was a pleasure to see around the Old Stourbridge Library on Hagley Road, and to listen to some of the tales of former members. It was a real privilege to be able to be part of their celebration. There is also a series of old photographs on display at the Library in the Crown Centre throughout the summer.

Head Librarian David Hickman, Lynda, Cllr David Vickers, Deputy Mayor and Mayoress of Dudley and former staff in the background.

B+Q's commitment to skills and equal opportunities



Lynda with B+Q employees Sabrina Baker and Louise Muncie looking through some of the e-learning modules available at B+Q

On 18th August I visited B+Q in Stourbridge to learn about the skills and training initiatives and equal opportunities policy of B+Q. As a former shop steward I am very much aware of the need to have employers who are willing to invest in the skills of their workforce and who are committed to lifelong learning. B+Q is an excellent

example to set other companies. I was also very impressed with B+Q's commitment to Equal Opportunities and their willingness to encourage over 50s to apply for employment in their stores. Once again, this is an excellent example of good practice.

A snapshot of some of my other activities over August...

Acorns Children's Hospice. I was invited to attend a briefing and tour of the hospice which is based in Selly Oak but covers the whole of South Birmingham and Dudley in terms of catchment area. I was very impressed with the standards of care and of support at the hospice for life limited children and their families. However, I was amazed to learn that they receive only 10% of their funding from the NHS in comparison to the adult hospice sector which receives 30%. I have agreed to lobby Liam Byrne, the Health Minister with responsibility for children's hospices on behalf of the hospice as well as to highlight this distortion in funding with the general public.

Foster Street Subway. I was invited to meet Trudy Curnin, 90 year old campaigner, who is fighting to get the hated Foster Street Subway filled in. Mrs. Curnin was attacked and left injured in the puddles of urine and vomit we have got used to in the Subway two years ago. The Tories answer to this was to convince the local police to open a kiosk in the subway which was too small for them to work in, where their communication sets would not work and where they were unable to see what was going on in the individual tunnels. As you may recall, it was opened in a blaze of glory by Michael Howard and Diana Coad. You may also recall that she was then taken through the Subway on the arm of Cllr Les Jones and photographed looking half out of her wits with fright for the local papers!

I was impressed by the dignity and determination of this lady who is dedicated to getting an alternative crossing not just because of what she has suffered but to assist the hundreds of elderly people who are forced to use this smelly and dangerous route several times a week if they use public transport or walk into town for their pensions or shopping. I agreed to support the campaign publicly and to assist her in her endeavours.

VJ Day. I was honoured to be asked to march with the War Veterans in Mary Stevens Park to commemorate VJ Day. It was a very moving experience and I was privileged to hear the tales of bravery and sacrifice displayed by servicemen and women as well as the folks back home.

Stourbridge Radio. I met with the Steering Group for the new Stourbridge Radio group, who asked me to support their bid for a new and permanent licence for a community radio station based in Stourbridge. I was very impressed with their bid which intends to support action and to campaign on local issues as well as showcase local talent and reflect local opinion.

Sheltered Housing. I visited several sheltered housing schemes with the Manager of the sector, Lorraine Struebig. Once again, I was really impressed with the standard of care and assistance provided for those of my constituents who live in sheltered housing and particularly of the dedication of the staff. I came away with a very high opinion of this service and intend to keep an eye on the present Tory administration to ensure that this sector is not squeezed in the run up to the new budget and council tax setting season!

Dates for your Diary!

Saturday 10th September, at 10:30

a.m. – Lynda will be going on a short walk with the Ramblers Association, meeting at Wollescote Community Centre, Wassell Road, Stourbridge. Please call the constituency office if you would like to accompany Lynda!

Friday 16th September, at 7:30 p.m. –

There is Quiz Night being held by the Stourbridge Constituency Labour Party, at Cradley Community Centre, Colley Lane, Cradley. Please call the constituency office for tickets, or just turn up on the night!

How to contact Lynda Waltho MP

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