



Fire station revamp



Lynda meets with Stourbridge firefighters

It was a privilege to preview Stourbridge's revamped fire station before it officially opens during the summer months.

My tour of the new facilities included 'Calamity Cottage.' The facility shows school and community groups the potential fire hazards within the home.

It was interesting to watch a drill by the Hazardous Chemicals Unit based at Stourbridge Fire station. There is also a new community room for groups to use for presentations and meetings.

The firefighters' work within the community, outside of fire fighting, is very impressive. It provides a diversion for young people from otherwise anti-social behaviour, in some cases leading to arson. In addition to carrying out fire prevention assessments in people's homes, this is a real asset to the people of Stourbridge.

As ever I came away with a renewed level of respect for their dedication to duty and our safety.

Mount Pleasant school visit



Lynda joined Year 4 pupils rehearsing their Tudor Presentation at Mount Pleasant Primary School

It was a great honour to visit Mount Pleasant Primary School to meet with pupils and staff and to see a fantastic presentation of talent from the children. For the past year they have been working with the Arts Council which has promoted the take up of musical activities throughout the school.

It was really impressive to see pupils enthusiastically embracing singing and music-making and particularly so when they sang a song in Latin and played a Tudor madrigal!

Later I met with the school council. The children asked very sensible and well informed questions and I came away from the school with such a favourable impression that I have written to the Education and Culture Ministers praising the excellent work that is going on at Mount Pleasant.

In Westminster

- During Prime Minister's Questions, I requested the ongoing support of the PM, Tony Blair on domestic violence and also spoke in favour of further spending on this issue during a debate in the Commons on International Women's Day.
- I was called to speak on the Opposition Day debate on Occupational Pensions. This has been an issue I have been dealing with since first elected and I have continually lobbied Ministers for an extension of the Financial Assistance Scheme and other measures for Stourbridge people who have lost out. It is particularly pleasing that the Chancellor announced an extension of the Financial Assistance Scheme and increases to the funds available to assist with the shortfall some constituents were facing.
- It was interesting to serve on the Committee for the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill. The Bill will modernise the way in which Local Governments work and will, hopefully, make Local Authorities more accountable to the communities they represent.
- I was glad to be appointed Secretary of the newly formed All-Party Parliamentary Group on Speech and Language Difficulties. I am also a co-sponsor of an Early Day Motion calling for the development and implementation of a screening tool to detect learning disabilities and difficulties for youths entering the Criminal Justice System for the first time.
- In recent months I have taken part in both debates and the lobbying of Ministers in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to secure the future safeguarding of Government funding to British Waterways for the further improvement of Britain's inland waterways.

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Constituency

- It was good to see so many people turn out for the public consultation event on the proposals to develop the Foster and Rastrick site. As a founder member of the FARsite group set up to protect this special heritage site it was pleasing to see so many local people taking the time to view all the options and leave their comments to assist us.
- Climate change is proving to be a subject that is filling my postbag and email in box, so I was pleased to be asked to chair an audience with the Climate Change Minister, my local colleague, Ian Pearson, MP. The meeting was open to anybody in the whole Dudley area. There were some excellent contributions from the floor and I know the Minister took note of all of them.
- I was pleased to be able to get along to see the match between The Glassboys and Malvern Town. Once again I was impressed with the dedication of the staff and volunteers who provide the back-up for this club and delighted that, luckily, they drew 1-1 with a late penalty!
- I was also pleased to be able to take a trip through the Netherton Tunnel to look at some of the engineering problems that beset this essential link to the network for our local canal. One of the towpaths is to be reopened in the summer and we are awaiting the final results of an inspection as to its future.
- A recent highlight was the excellent St Georges' Day celebration in Stourbridge. What a great day it was, with a parade through the town and participation from all sectors of our local community.

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