

PHILIP HOLLOBONE MP



KETTERING AT WESTMINSTER



MAKING SURE THE VIEWS AND CONCERNS OF LOCAL PEOPLE ARE HEARD AT THE HEART OF THE GOVERNMENT

Conservative Party Deputy Chairman Visits KCCA



On 4 March, Rachel Maclean MP, the Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party, was the guest speaker at the wonderful Spring Luncheon of KCCA's Conservative Women's Organisation.

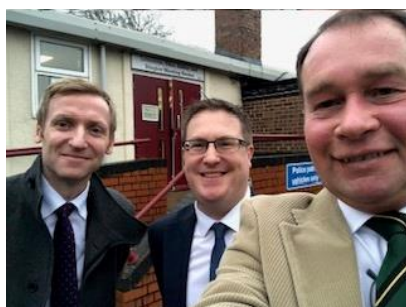
Chairman Linda Saunders led the event held at KCCA which was a marvellous occasion with superb food and a great atmosphere.

Rachel gave us an inspiring talk and it was obvious that everyone really enjoyed the event. Members particularly appreciated Rachel taking the time to go round the tables to speak with everyone and for helping to draw the raffle. Rachel also fielded quite a number of what turned out to be very diverse questions from the floor.

It was yet another triumph for the CWO!

GOVERNMENT MINISTERS VISIT KETTERING

Philip Hollobone MP writes: There are 650 Parliamentary constituencies in the country and all MPs are competing all the time for Government Ministers to visit their part of the world. I am pleased that this year we have already had two Ministerial visits and I am already lobbying for more.



On 8 February, the Minister for Housing and Planning at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Lee Rowley MP, visited Kettering to meet Cllr David Howes and myself to hear first-hand direct from local parish councillors and council officials about the local difficulties being faced by unauthorised gipsy and traveller developments in rural areas in Kettering and Corby.

Parish councils from Loddington, Cottingham, Middleton, Broughton, Gretton and Great Cransley were represented along with senior NNC officials responsible for planning and licensing. Whilst there are some well managed and

authorised gipsy sites in North Northamptonshire, with full planning and licensing provisions, a significant number are unauthorised and in breach of regulations. Despite this NNC has great difficulty enforcing against these planning breaches and so has recommended to the Government improvements to the regulations which would make enforcement easier, quicker, and more effective.

Cllr David Howes organises a quarterly meeting with local parish councils to keep local communities up-to-date with the action NNC is taking and to receive feedback on how local villages are being affected by unwanted developments. Cllr David Howes said: "We really appreciated the Minister coming to Kettering to hear our concerns first hand. Every parish council which attended was able to have their say and the Minister listened carefully to the views expressed. He took on board our constructive suggestions and promised to consider them closely." Philip Hollobone said: "NNC is doing its very best to get on top of the challenges with which it has been faced by unauthorised gipsy and traveller developments, but even when NNC wins planning appeals against such developments there is only so much NNC can do within the law to get these sites cleared. It's clear that the planning regulations around such developments need drastically tightening up and more powers need to be given to local councils so that they can effectively defend our local countryside against these unwelcome developments."



On 29 February, the Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education at the Department for Education, Rt. Hon. Robert Halfon MP, visited Kettering to meet students and educators at Tresham College and local organisation Youth Employment UK. The Minister was shown a range of work and training undertaken at the college and met students to discuss apprenticeships and T Levels, and how many of these options were presented to young people as an option when they were still in school. The Minister said: "I am thrilled to visit Tresham College today. The T Level students, apprentices and learners were an inspiration and a testament to how dedicated this college is to preparing the future workforce."

IN THE HOUSE *Standing Up and Speaking Out for Kettering*

21 March Questions to the Leader of the House of Commons

Philip Hollobone MP: I bring good news from Kettering, where Sainsbury's supermarket has restored free parking during the evenings in its town centre car park. It had planned to introduce charges for out-of-hours parking, but it has listened to local opinion and representations from me, Kettering Civic Society and others, and has amended its plans. That is great news for those in the close vicinity, such as the Salvation Army, the Sikh temple, popular local restaurants, and Kettering Arts Centre, which is based in St Andrew's church. May we have a statement from the Leader of the House both praising Sainsbury's for its social responsibility, and encouraging people to visit Kettering town centre?

Rt. Hon. Penny Mordaunt MP, Leader of the House: I congratulate my hon. Friend on his successful campaign. In addition to his constituency being one of the most dog-friendly places in the UK, as we learned last week, people can now park there for free. I join him in praising Sainsbury's, and everyone locally who has worked to ensure that, and to ensure that Kettering town centre remains vibrant and open to visitors.

14 March Questions to the Leader of the House of Commons

Philip Hollobone MP: I bring good news from Kettering, because Kettering has made it into the top 10 of the most dog-loving places in the UK. A study by pet insurer Waggel has found that, in Kettering, for every 1,000 people there were 252 of our furry friends. With so many local green spaces and countryside areas where residents can take their dog for a walk, such as the hugely popular Wicksteed park, it is clear that Kettering is a great place to own and love a dog. May we have a statement from my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House on celebrating Kettering as one of the most dog-friendly places in the whole country?

Rt. Hon. Penny Mordaunt MP, Leader of the House: I thank my hon. Friend for bringing us the good news, which we were all hoping for and anticipating, that there are more waggy tails per square mile in Kettering than almost anywhere else in the UK. I would encourage local authorities and communities to look to the example that has been set by Kettering, and I congratulate everyone who has made it such a dog-friendly place.

14 March Questions to the Environment Department

Philip Hollobone MP: One of the best ways we can support British farmers is by choosing to buy British food. It is good for the environment, reduces food miles and improves our food security, because we are importing less produce. Will my right hon. Friend the Farming Minister join me in specifically congratulating Morrisons, Aldi, Sainsbury's and Ocado, which all now have the "buy British" button online so that consumers can easily find British food to buy?

Rt. Hon. Mark Spencer MP, Farming Minister: I welcome the action taken by some supermarkets to introduce a "buy British" button online, and I strongly support their efforts to encourage consumers to pick high-quality British produce. What we see is that consumers want to buy top-quality British food. I congratulate those supermarkets, and I encourage others to consider whether they may want to introduce a "buy British" button for online sales.

22 February Questions to the Church Commissioners

Philip Hollobone MP: Will the Church will have discussions with the Secretary of State for the Home Department on the Church's guidance for clergy on supporting asylum seekers?

Andrew Selous MP, Church Commissioner: Both archbishops have offered to meet the Home Secretary, and the Church has provided advice and guidance for clergy to consider when dealing with requests for baptism from asylum seekers. The guidance refers to the need for discernment and recognises that there may be mixed motives on the part of asylum seekers requesting baptism.

Philip Hollobone MP: I welcome that meeting. Those who are genuinely seeking to convert to Christianity should of course be allowed to do so, but is my hon. Friend aware that there is growing concern in this country that the Church of England - naively at best, and perhaps deliberately at worst - is being seen to aid and abet asylum seekers in getting around the laws of this country and remaining in the United Kingdom? May I urge the Church of England to update its guidance entitled "Supporting Asylum Seekers—Guidance for Church of England Clergy" as soon as possible to ensure that it is in alignment with new legislation passed in this House?

Andrew Selous MP, Church Commissioner: That guidance is being updated, so I can reassure my hon. Friend on that point. He is right that clergy will always rightly tell everyone they come across about the love of Jesus, but clergy do not determine asylum claims. Of course, priests are expected to uphold the law and make truthful representations of character.

7 February Prime Minister's Questions

Philip Hollobone MP: Two remarkably talented and enthusiastic individuals from Kettering, Beccy Hurrell and Lindsey Atkins, have put together a really ambitious £2 million bid to repurpose the redundant Gala Bingo hall in Kettering high street into a community arts, music, business and family hub, which would be simply transformative for Kettering town centre. Will my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister please be kind enough to facilitate a meeting for us with the relevant culture and levelling-up Ministers so that we can explore how a combined community ownership fund and cultural development fund bid might get us across the line?

Rt. Hon. Rishi Sunak MP, Prime Minister: I thank my hon. Friend for highlighting this exciting initiative, and commend Beccy and Lindsey for their campaigning. He will know that our £150 million community ownership fund is there specifically to help to safeguard small but much-loved local assets. Our cultural development fund, which he mentions, is there to support further cultural projects as well. I will ensure that he gets a meeting with the relevant Minister to discuss the plans further and wish him and his constituents all the best with this redevelopment project.

25 January Questions to the Leader of the House of Commons

Philip Hollobone MP: I bring good news from Kettering, where 16 mature street trees have been saved from the chop. Gipsy Lane is one of the older and most attractive roads in Kettering, but there is going to be a 340-house development at the end of it, and under the original planning application, 21 very mature trees were to be chopped down to facilitate access. However, thanks to the proactive engagement of Councillor Jason Smithers, the leader of North Northamptonshire Council, and of the developer Places for People, the good news is that 16 of those trees will be saved. May we have a Government statement on the importance of keeping mature street trees wherever possible—they are attractive and good for the environment—and will my right hon. Friend praise the leader of the council and Places for People for the decision that they have taken?

Rt. Hon. Penny Mordaunt MP, Leader of the House: Good on my hon. Friend, good on Jason, and good on all the residents who supported their campaign. I will certainly make sure that the Secretary of State has heard that my hon. Friend's work has been triumphant and encourage him to make a statement, as my hon. Friend suggests.

Visits to the Houses of Parliament

Anyone can keep a track of what Philip is trying to do at Westminster on behalf of local residents via the independent website www.theyworkforyou.com. As always, if any member feels that Philip may be able to help with a particular issue, please do let Philip know via 01536 414715 or 020 7219 8373 or philip.hollobone.mp@parliament.uk or at House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. Philip is also very happy to arrange visits to Westminster for a tour and/or to watch Prime Minister's Questions.