



**Parliamentary Report to Constituents
Hackney South and Shoreditch
June 2011**

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In my office Lisa and Carole are here to help with your individual issues. Julie deals with diary dates, communications and policy.

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Hackney’s Hidden Gems

If you know of a hidden gem or a person who is helping to make Hackney, great please let me know so that they can be featured in future reports.

Hoxton Station war memorial

I recently attended the re-dedication of the war memorial which commemorates the north London line railwaymen who fell during the First World War between 1914 and 1918.

The war memorial has been relocated to a site outside Hoxton overground station. The memorial was originally installed at the former Broad Street station on 10 February 1921. It was put in temporary storage at Richmond Station, south west London in 1989.

The memorial is tucked away by Hoxton station – just right as you leave the station.

As a trustee of the War memorials Trust I am committed to finding suitable sites for war memorials which remain in storage.

I am pleased that, after 22 years Transport for London has found a public site in Hackney to commemorate the 64 railwaymen who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Britain's lost talent

Youth unemployment is at worryingly high levels with almost a million young people unable to find a job.

In Hackney South and Shoreditch the number of people under the age of 24 claiming job seekers allowance was 1,240, this represented an annual increase of 16.4 per cent. In May there were 256 job vacancies advertised in Jobcentre plus in Hackney.

Hackney South and Shoreditch has the 9th highest number of job seekers allowance claimants (of all ages) in the UK and the 6th highest in England.

We need action to help create jobs for our young people – these levels of unemployment are a waste of talent but a waste of money too.

I will be voting for an amendment to the Finance bill next month which will call for a £2billion tax on bankers' bonuses. This tax could be used to create 100,000 jobs for young people.

Young People and gangs

The downside of being a local MP is the weeks like that a fortnight ago when I learn about the shooting or stabbing of four young men.

The shocking fact that two of the victims were only 15 years old underlines how this impacts on the lives of Hackney's young people.

More than one in five of those living in Hackney is under 16 – so the impact on young people and their families is immense.

My colleague Karen Buck MP is experiencing some of the same problems in west London and raised these issues in a Parliamentary debate.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm110610/>

She and I are joining forces with other London MPs to look at how we prevent young people getting involved in gangs.

The pattern of who is likely to become a perpetrator or a victim are, in most cases, predictable and the same.

We need to do more to prevent young people getting involved with gangs and crime in the first place. I'm glad that Hackney council is also focusing on this.

Our children should feel safe on the streets. We should be able to allow them the freedom and independence that many of us enjoyed when we were teenagers. We need to do more than just tackle the crime that this small group of people inflict on us. We need to break the gang culture once and for all.

Pensions

Last month I reported on the Government's plans to accelerate the state pension age. There are 800 women born between 6 December 1953 and 5 October 1954 who will have to wait an extra 18 months and some who will wait an extra two years, before they get their state pension.

The Pensions bill had its second reading on 20 June. I voted against but the bill was passed at second reading and will now go to the committee stage of the bill process.

Circus Animals

On 23 June there was a backbench business debate calling for the Government to use its powers under section 12 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 to ban the use of all wild animals in circuses. Backbench business is scheduled by a cross party group of backbench MPs free from the influence of the Government or Opposition.

After pressure from the Opposition and other MPs the Government backed down.

Other matters

ESOL students and fees

I met John Hayes MP, the Minister of State for further education, skills and lifelong learning. I was delighted that Ian Ashman, Principal at Hackney Community College was able to join me.

We raised our concerns about fees for ESOL courses, (English for speakers of other languages) which the Government now proposes charging for.

Over 50 per cent of Hackney Community College's adult students are on inactive benefits rising to 80 per cent of ESOL students. The proposed fee changes will hit Hackney students particularly hard.

Students want to learn English to integrate into society, to support their children to learn, to help them find work and to get off benefits and we made this point forcibly to the minister. Ian and I also raised our concerns that women will be particularly hit by the Government's proposal.

The minister was genuinely listening to our concern that mothers and those keen to integrate and get employment were being penalised by the new system. The Government is carrying out an equality impact assessment and will announce the outcome, we hope, in July. I shall continue to press the Government on this issue.

Welfare reform and cancer patients

The Welfare reform bill had its second reading in the House of Commons on 25 June. One of the reasons I voted against the bill was because of the impact on people recovering from cancer.

The bill proposes cutting off the contributory employment and support allowance after just 12 months. This will hit people recovering from cancer and mental health conditions.

Macmillan Cancer Support says that cancer patients will lose up to £94 a week. It estimates that 7,000 people across the UK

could be affected by this change. For many cancer patients recovery can take much longer than a year.

Cyclists and Lorry blind spots

I recently experienced for myself the danger to cyclists from lorry blind spots.

As part of a campaign to require equipment to be fitted to eliminate blind spots I sat in the cab of a stationary lorry while a cyclist rode by. I was surprised and concerned at the extent of a lorry driver's blind spot. The campaign has cross party support.

As I mentioned in my May Report Sir Alan Beith, MP for Berwick-Upon-Tweed called for a law to require equipment to be fitted to eliminate blind spots in a 10 minute rule bill.

As vice chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Cycling I continue to work to highlight the safety issues around lorries and cyclists.

A recent Department of Transport consultation on the length of heavy goods vehicles proposes increasing the maximum length to 18.75 metres. Please let me know your thoughts on this.

Mantra Films

My colleague Ian Mearns, MP for Gateshead, has launched a campaign against Mantra Films, a US pornography company, being allowed to film in the UK.

This film company approaches vulnerable young women, often intoxicated, and encourages them to behave in a sexually provocative way on camera.

Mantra Films has been sued in the United States and the founder of the company was put in prison after pleading no contest to charges of child abuse and prostitution.

I support Ian who is calling for urgent Government action to examine how young women can be protected and stop this company being able to do this in the UK.

Hackney Issues

Olympic Update

US Paralympic team and Hackney lido

During the 2012 Olympic Games, the US Paralympic swimming team will use the Hackney lido to train after an agreement between the Council and the US Olympic Committee.

Hackney Council has secured several benefits for the community as part of the arrangement. In addition to a financial contribution, the US Olympic Committee will provide coaching expertise for children of all abilities, meeting athletes and Olympic and Paralympic memorabilia.

The lido is London's largest outdoor heated pool.

Policing in Hackney

On 10 June Hackney's police borough commander, Chief Superintendent Steve Bending announced that Hackney will lose five police sergeants in Hackney.

Safer Neighbourhood Teams have played a key role in reducing crime in Hackney. Any reduction in numbers threaten that.

There will be no reduction in the number of police constables or police community support officers (PCSOs) within safer neighbourhood teams. These teams will continue to be aligned to electoral ward boundaries – that means they cover the same area as your local councillor.

Every ward will retain two PCs and three PCSOs, and will continue to be supervised by a sergeant. Sergeants will supervise more than one ward team.

I will be raising my concerns with the borough police commander.

New Secondary School

The Learning Trust and Hackney Council are consulting on a possible new secondary school in Hackney to be opened in 2014.

The number of children transferring to secondary school every year has been stable over a number of years at around 2200-2300 children. However from 2014 this number is expected to be higher by an additional 150-200 children. There has long been a need for a new school in south Hackney.

The Government will need to fund any new school and it will pay for only two types of school, an academy or a so called "free" school.

In order for the council and the Learning Trust to be able to persuade the Government to fund a new school they need to demonstrate that there is strong public support.

There is a good case for a new school in the south of Hackney. It is also important that as many people as possible respond to the consultation. The deadline is 8 July.

You can do so online at www.learningtrust.co.uk/consultation, write to Asa Melanda, Divisional Business Manager, The Learning Trust, 1 Reading Lane, London E8 1GQ or email asa.melander@learningtrust.co.uk

Home Office Legacy cases

The UK Border Agency established a team to deal specifically with older, unresolved asylum cases. The Home Office was aiming to resolve these cases by summer 2011

Many of the individuals who have contacted me regarding their situation have been advised that their case is amongst those which will be concluded by this summer. It is now half way through the summer many people are hoping that they will soon hear from the Home Office.

I have written to the Home office minister to ask how he is planning to deal with any outstanding cases as we reach the deadline. I am also asking whether the Home office will be contacting the individuals affected direct.

Police crackdown on violent crime

A new initiative by the police service was launched in June to crackdown on robbers and violent criminals.

The initiative, Operation Target, promises to be one of the most significant actions by the police to curb attacks on citizens and property in London. Extra uniformed patrols at key areas will use a variety of specialist tactics to catch suspected robbers and burglars while increasing police presence on the streets.

A third of the most serious violent crimes happen in only 2 per cent of London. There are two small areas of Hackney South included in this 2 per cent mostly relating to the night time economy.

Overall crime in Hackney dropped by 647 crimes from 2010 to 2011. Robbery dropped overall but rose slightly for some types of areas.

Apart from achieving instant reductions in crime, Operation Target seeks to enact several strategies to reduce robberies and burglaries over time.

National Citizen Service 2011 in Hackney

The Government has introduced a National Citizen Service. This new summer project, will bring together over 10,000 year 11 pupils.

Young people will spend two weeks away from home, and take part in a variety of activities designed to develop social action projects to benefit their area. These will include outdoor challenges, tasks to develop personal skills and visiting and helping groups in their local area.

There is still time for young people in Hackney to take part. There is a fee of £35 with a discount for on-line applications.

Anyone wanting to sponsor a place can also do this. Further details can be found by visiting the website at www.direct.gov.uk/nationalcitizenservice.

Hackney Wick Festival

The Hackney Wick Festival organising committee is carrying out a consultation with residents of Hackney Wick, on behalf of the Big Lottery Fund.

The festival committee want to hear views on the best way to make use of a £1million award which will be available to improve the area in 2012.

In the forthcoming months, there will be opportunities to get involved and tell them what you think.

To have your say have a look at the festival's website www.hackneywickfestival.co.uk

Olympic Torch Bearer

In May's report I invited residents to send me suggestions of local people who deserve the honour of being nominated as one of the Olympic torch bearers.

Thank you to those of you who sent in nominations.

I have nominated Takashi Bailey who was suggested by The Wilton Estate Community Youth Club and Tenants Association.

Takashi is a university student and volunteer sports coach who works with Wilton Estate youth club.

He joined the youth club as a teenager. He won a scholarship to University to study a sports science degree and came back and set up a community sports club and coached various sports on Wilton estate. He is developing disability sports and has won several volunteer and sports awards in the borough.

He works every week on the estate as a volunteer. He has also run sports activities for primary school children as a volunteer in the Gambia.

Winning torch bearers will be announced from January 2012 onwards. I wish him and other nominees the best of luck.

Meetings and events attended include

- 01/06 Green and energy businesses in West Cumbria
- 06/06 Co-operative Party National Executive committee AGM
- 07/06 Re-dedication of the Hoxton station war memorial
War Memorials Trust meeting
- 08/06 Launch of Vietnamese housing needs survey at AnViet
Colville Estate committee, de Beauvoir
- 09/06 Shoreditch tenants panel
- 10/06 Opening of the Anatolian cultural fete
- 15/06 Aldersgate Group green policy

- 7/06 NHS City and Hackney
- 19/06 Hoxton roving surgery
50th Anniversary of St Michael and all Angels, London Fields
- 20/06 Leeds to see a low carbon housing estate
Pembury Estate Committee
- 22/06 Microgeneration UK conference
- 23/06 Visit to Sharps solar manufacturers in Wrexham and Wylfa power station in Wales
- 28/06 John Hayes MP
- 30/06 Renewable UK offshore conference
Solar conference

Surgery Details	Meeting Hackney residents
<p>Next surgeries at:</p> <p>Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street, E8 from 10am to 12noon</p> <p>Monday 11 July</p> <p>Monday 25 July</p> <p>Future surgeries will usually be on 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month at Hackney Town Hall (except August and December) and by appointment as necessary.</p>	<p>I continue with my local 'meet the MP' events. These will be advertised in each area a week or so in advance. I have recently been in Hoxton, Haggerston and Hackney Central wards.</p> <p>I am keen to visit as many groups and organisations in Hackney as possible.</p> <p>Please contact me if you are interested in hosting an event or would like me to visit your area.</p>
Tours of Parliament	Tickets for question time
<p>Tours of the Houses of Parliament can be arranged for groups of up to 20 visitors.</p> <p>The tour start times are between 9am and 12pm on Mon and Tues, 9am - 9.20am on Wed and 15.30 – 17.00 on Fri (no Thurs tours).</p>	<p>I can arrange for visitors to attend departmental question time sessions, where ministers responsible for Government policy are questioned by backbench MPs.</p> <p>These are held at 2.30pm on Mon and Tues; 11.30am on Wed and 10.30am on Thurs.</p>
<p>If you are interested in any of the above please e-mail meghilliermp@parliament.uk</p>	