

Help By Thoughts and Words and Deeds

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There are problems to be faced at Westminster; there is the combined impact of external events together with the government dealing with the rights and wrongs of the initial mini-budget.

I am grateful to those who commented favourably on my contribution to Monday's mini debate on the replacement of the Chancellor; we noted adverse points made about admitted errors. Jeremy Hunt has taken a grown-up approach with candour. He trusts us with the truths of the awkward difficult situation we face together.

With urging and probing by opposition parties, ministers will do better. I do what I can to help, often by not accepting too many media invitations. I was interviewed by BBC Sussex on Monday by Allison Ferns and on Tuesday by Ayesha Hazarika on Times Radio. The week may have been more fun for journalists than for politicians?

Tim Loughton MP and I are continuing to talk with government ministers and agencies about the A27 problems. Every delay makes me share the gladness that at least we got on with Crossbush, Clapham and Patching, and the Brighton bypass during my time at Transport. I regret that local division led to the 1992 proposals for Worthing and Lancing being dropped four years later: lessons can be gained from that experience.

I enjoy welcoming constituents and others to Westminster. I spoke with BBC apprentices in the Great Hall when they sat on the Green Bench occupied last week by Worthing's Ukrainians. Also, I welcomed a High Salvington couple who had given significant support to Guild Care, our leading social care charity, helping people to live well, to enjoy life and to love every day. It is like a big family.

At the end of last week, I was asked to show Westminster to Mrs Gwanire Kalombe, the chief executive officer of a practical organisation in Zambia. Mechanics for Africa MfA is a Christian technical college that for 20 years has given quality education to underprivileged young Zambians. Their commercial workshop repairing vehicles generates profits that help to run the college. Virginia raised funds for MfA in its early years after a small Baptist congregation decided to give support.

On Sunday we went to hear Gwanire give an illustrated talk on how her team have now helped hundreds of young people learn a trade, absorb the point of treating others fairly and learn to drive too. They have the springboard to fuller lives.

On Wednesday I shared light breakfast in the Speaker's Apartments to hear sombre words about Syria from the Revd Nadim Nassar. In 2003 he founded a humanitarian charity The Awareness Foundation to build peace through education and training. Their core programmes include LITTLE HEROES and AMBASSADORS FOR PEACE, aiming to equip and to empower children and young people in Syria to become agents of peace and reconciliation.

He leads people to embrace diversity and to build peaceful and harmonious communities. We can agree with him that everywhere we need effective counterforces to the intolerance and the mistrust that now prevail in so many communities around the world, and to build understanding between faiths. We should remember that when international media leave a troubled country, it is seldom because the troubles ended.

Conditions here can be severe for many at times. We can learn from activists elsewhere as well as backing the individuals who make a difference overseas. Their bravery can be an inspiration. Here, there and everywhere: there are people doing good.

This week I have supported the road hauliers whose working lives have been frustrated by road blockers. Also I backed the initiatives of Lloyds bank to help black business founders of small enterprises.

It helps to think about the needs of others, to hear their voices and to take the actions to help and to be helped.