

Solve Problems and Build a Better Country

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Worthing Herald Article

24th November 2022

Travelling after Friday's constituency day to an event at Westminster with small businesses associated with electrical contracting, I reflected on the nature of political choices. We do not agree on everything; we do not argue about everything.

Together we want to improve the lives of all our people. We want to face challenges. Change and innovation, with investment, is good for business, just vitally as in developing public services.

Business people in West Sussex will have heard what Rishi Sunak and Sir Keir Starmer said at the CBI conference. Sensibly, there were common points. The leader of the official opposition and the prime minister each know we are worse off because of covid and the measures chosen to cope with it; our material standard of life (at the same time) has been reduced by the remarkable rise in the world price of hydrocarbons.

Because of the drive towards net-zero and carbon-free energy, usual market responses are subdued. Who knows whether the gas price may be halved within six months? We have to be prepared for whatever may happen during next year and in the foreseeable future.

Think of the victims of war in Ukraine, dead or freezing as their vital infrastructure and hospitals are targets for Russian shells and missiles. We rightly worry about coping with our problems; we must also will do all we can to help them with theirs.

Christ Church is across the road from my Worthing home. The pre-Christmas fair was held on Saturday. Their mission includes love for the parish and the community they serve, for each other and for to the town. I chose to help the Reverend Gary Guinness with his much needed and successful project to convert St Paul's hall into homes for people with special needs. I also spoke up when he was unfairly criticised for organising safe Christmas shelter for individuals whose chaotic lives excluded them from the range of hostels.

In parliament this week I attended the debate in Westminster Hall on staffing challenges within health and social care services. More is being done; the financial resources have grown steadily during the past 15 years, including when Labour were last in government. At my next advice session, this Friday in Rustington, care issues are likely to be discussed. Do please contact my office for further details if you would like to attend.

Questions continue about controlling and policing unauthorised caravan incursions on public, community and private land. In this regard, there was a bad summer with numbers and bad behaviour above levels in previous years. Later this week I will be in further consultations on next necessary steps with Sussex police, local authorities and neighbouring MPs. It is right to understand the travelling community; it is also right to require them not to break laws and trouble settled communities.

This week, I have again spoken up for those of our pensioners overseas who have their UK state pensions frozen. It is wrong that in half the world including Jamaica and the United States there are uplifts, but not in others including Trinidad, South Africa, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

I was main speaker this week at the cheerful, purposeful Parliamentary meeting for Ethnic Minority business people. They contribute greatly to our lives and they build better futures for us all. Generations and nationalities before have done the same.

We welcomed the president of South Africa to the Royal Gallery in the Palace of Westminster. I was asked by the Lord's Speaker and the Commons Speaker to talk with Cyril Ramaphosa in the Robing room before he addressed us. He moved from student activity through trade unions to his present role. If he had been prime minister there or president just after Nelson Mandela, life could have been better?

Discussing problems together with self-interest but without selfishness is the best way forward to build better nations.