

Peoples Lives Matter in Public Service

Sir Peter Bottomley MP

Worthing Herald Article

8th September 2022

Members of Parliament returned from constituencies or holidays to hear who succeeds Boris Johnson as Prime Minister. When called to speak, I intend to tell Liz Truss that on all sides of the House of Commons we wish her success for the good of our shared nation.

The new Cabinet is the most inclusive, the most diverse in terms of heritage and sex balance. Margaret Thatcher once included another female; she had many more colleagues whose parents had been refugees.

It is pleasing that people from every background are mixed around the Cabinet table. Let us judge them by what they do and how they think rather than by their schooling, skin colour or chromosomes.

The challenges of politics were illustrated on Monday when I joined the Speakers of the Lords and Commons in New Palace Yard under Big Ben for the solemn wreath laying in commemoration of the 1972 Munich Olympic massacre of eleven Israeli athletes, coaches, referee and judge, with a West German police officer.

Even if a tiny minority, terrorists and neo-Nazis have to be detected, deterred when possible and isolated. I have known people within the IRA and other groups who decided that undermining those dedicated to murder and mayhem did more good than continuing the violence.

We know that violence can also come from the top: Putin shows us that by killing opponents and invading neighbours. Fifty years ago in Uganda, President Idi Amin expelled all Ugandan Asians, wrongly accusing them of disloyalty, non-integration and commercial malpractice.

This month let us celebrate together their contributions to Britain in every field, including commerce, the professions and in public and political service.

On the gentler seas of campaigning, I give thanks to members of Surfers against Sewage for involving me in their persistent justified demands that only treated water should be discharged into our rivers and beaches.

On Tuesday in the Chamber I asked whether the water regulator OFWAT, the Environment Agency and the water companies had known the scale of the foul water discharges before detection monitors had been installed.

Locally, like other MPs, I have opportunities to be helpful with advice and signposting on a variety of issues. One on Friday was the sudden appearance of telegraph poles for City Fibre in Goring's Ardingly Drive, a street which had only had street lights for 90 years.

There is the same problem in High Salvington's lanes. A resident writes that on a day they were away, a 15ft pole was positioned without any notice or discussion just outside their boundary, best described as 'insensitive', degrading the rural location by the end of The Gallops. On the other side of the lane it would have been obscured in part within trees.

In past days, Tim Loughton and I met Dr George Findlay who now leads our hospitals, following the well-earned retirement of Dame Marianne Griffiths. As MPs, we helped to save the hospitals during the last Labour government and fought for the brilliant accident and emergency floor at Worthing hospital. I support practical cooperation between the coastal hospitals.

One of my lasting regrets was being too late in winning a protected walkers' crossing of the A259. By the time it was installed, a retired couple died when hit by a speeding car driven by an unlicensed driver. I do not want the same to happen outside Rustington Hall. The Residents' Association's leaders and I will continue to ask for a pedestrian crossing to aid children crossing to school, congregants crossing to church and helping all others too.

I admire people who devote their skills and time to children with special needs. Thank you to all at Bright Stars, the 'Outstanding' children's home at Durrington, and well done West Sussex County Council for backing it.