



### **Fortnightly Update #79 - 03.03.2020**

Welcome to this latest update.

Lots going on in Parliament this week. It was a pleasure to announce, together with Home Office ministers, the introduction of the **Domestic Abuse Bill**, which will improve the effectiveness of the justice system in **protecting victims of domestic abuse**. I will be piloting the Bill through the committee stages. Further details of what the Bill actually does are available [here](#).

Victim protection is an area of public policy that Cheltenham has been closely involved in over the years. In 2017, you may recall that together with local stakeholders I led a campaign with the Gloucester MP to **double the maximum sentence for stalking** from five to ten years, following the ordeal local GP Ellie Aston. I was also acutely mindful during that campaign of the tragedy of local hairdresser, Hollie Gazzard, who was murdered by a former boyfriend. As a result of that campaign, we were able to get Parliament to change the law, giving judges the tools they needed to keep victims safe.

Last week I **also backed the Woodland Trust's Emergency Tree Plan**. The plan aims to reforest more of the UK, and makes key recommendations to both national government and local authorities. I called for **local authorities to identify land for a five-year tree-planting plan**, in the same way that they identify sites for a five-year supply of housing.

It was fantastic to head out on **police cycle patrol** in Cheltenham with Gloucestershire Police, from their base on Lansdown Road. We covered so much ground: from the Honeybourne Line to Pittville Park, Wellington Square and the Lower High Street. I've said to the Chief Constable that I would strongly support the recruitment of **more special constables** for visible beat policing - but we need to make sure the training requirements (currently over 6 months I'm told!) don't put great applicants off.

Meanwhile, progress continues to be made on resurfacing. I was pleased to see that the area round Eagle Tower has been fixed, as has **St George's Place**, and the terribly sections of the A40 near **Granley Road**. I'm pushing for more, not least the Prom (!) and will keep the pressure up.

Thank you for reading.

Best wishes,



**Alex Chalk MP**

PS On the **Coronavirus** issue, I am in daily contact with ministers and public health representatives and continue to monitor the situation (and any implications for Cheltenham) very closely.

PPSA commentary on Justice Oral Parliamentary Questions by Quentin Letts is set out below.



[Some choice words from Quentin Letts!]

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**Since the last update, Alex has...**

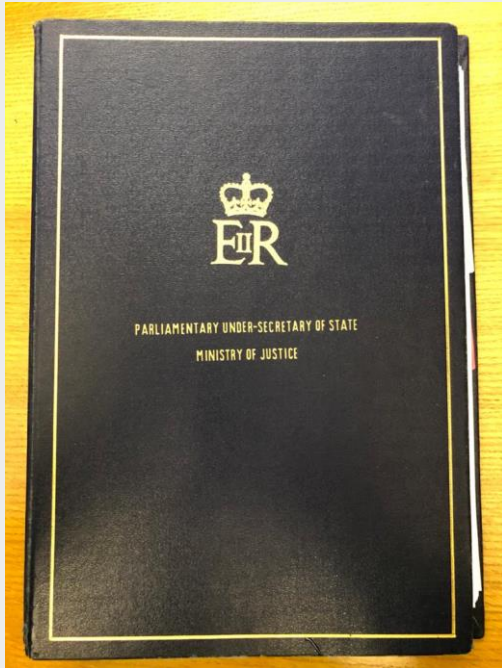
**IN PARLIAMENT:**



**ANSWERED JUSTICE QUESTIONS AND ANNOUNCED UPCOMING FIRST READING OF DOMESTIC ABUSE BILL**

**At Ministry of Justice Oral Parliamentary Questions**, Alex was at the Despatch Box for the first time (and the first time for a Cheltenham MP since the Crimean War) to answer questions on early legal advice, fraud, and the Post Office Horizon scandal - which Alex indicated had affected one of his own Cheltenham constituents. As he spoke, Alex was wearing a badge showing Cheltenham's municipal crest - see picture below.

Alex also announced that the **upcoming Domestic Abuse Bill** will have its first reading (ie introduction to the Commons) this week.



### **MINISTERIAL DUTIES:**

- **Held talks with the Secretary of State for Justice** (and Lord Chancellor) Robert Buckland QC to discuss Alex's priorities for strengthening victims' rights and access to justice - both civil and criminal

- **Published the Victims' Code** - which sets out the **services and information victims of crime are entitled to** from criminal justice agencies — like the police and courts — from the moment they report a crime to the end of the trial

- Led a **Statutory Instrument (SI) debate** on behalf of the Government regarding the Institute for Chartered Accounts in England and Wales and on Chartered Institute of Legal Executives, who wished to become authorised to provide additional legal services under the Legal Service Act 2007 (eg administration of oaths). Find out more about Statutory Instruments [here](#)

- Met MoJ officials to discuss the upcoming **Domestic Abuse Bill** which Alex, together with Home Office ministers, will be piloting through the House of Commons

- **Met Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan**, to discuss the Independent Monitoring Authority (IMA) for EU nationals. The IMA will ensure that the citizens' rights part of the Withdrawal Agreement is fully implemented and the **rights of EU citizens are protected**

- Held a meeting on the **Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)** relating to positions of trust. Find out more about the inquiry [here](#)

- Answered **Written Parliamentary Questions (WPQs)** on debt collection, fraud, family conciliation services, and on legal aid for inquests

- **Responded to several MP colleagues** by letter on issues ranging from the Post Office scandal to victims rights.



### **SPONSORED THE LAUNCH OF THE WOODLAND TRUST'S EMERGENCY TREE PLAN**

Alex recently chaired the APPG for Woods and Trees, and worked with them and the Woodland Trust to present MPs with a plan for reforesting the UK. The Woodland Trust's **Emergency Tree Plan makes three key recommendations** for national and local governments across the UK to:

- Look after the trees we have
- Create new policies, capacity and funding for woods and trees
- Take action to identify land for trees and increase canopy cover.

Find out more about the plan [here](#). Just as local authorities are required to identify land for a five-year housing supply, Alex has argued that the same obligation should exist in relation to a **five-year tree-planting plan**.

## OTHER

- **Supported "Justice Week"**, which aims to boost the profile of justice and the rule of law. This year focused on improving **young people's understanding of the rule of law**, and the relationship between their lives, Parliament, the government and the justice system.



[Alex with the Attorney General, Suella Braverman QC MP, and the Solicitor General at the Justice Week event]

- **Pledged to help improve Asthma outcomes**, at the launch of AstraZeneca's report "Addressing Stagnating Asthma Outcomes in the UK".



- Reaffirmed his commitment to the principles of the **Fairtrade initiative**: better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability, and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world.



- Met young campaigners at the reception for 'Teach the Future', who are leading a campaign to improve the role of **climate change in the school curriculum**.



- **Welcomed 50 Cheltenham constituents to Parliament** for the day. The group enjoyed a guided tour of the House of Commons, House of Lords, and the 1000-year-old Westminster Hall, before meeting with Alex for a Q&A session. **If you're interested in attending** one of our tour days (return transport from Cheltenham is included for £16pp), please **email Chris at [chris.shevlin@parliament.uk](mailto:chris.shevlin@parliament.uk)**.





## **IN THE MEDIA**

**In two articles for Gloucestershire Live:**

**1. Called for the recruitment of more special constables, to boost Gloucestershire's patrolling capacity. Read [here](#).**

**2. Challenged Cheltenham Borough Council to set the record straight on its recycling plans.** Alex called on CBC to rule out the closure of Swindon Road recycling centre, given that its closure makes little financial sense, and would have a detrimental impact on the environment. Read [here](#).

**IN CHELTENHAM:**



[Alex meets Tom Lloyd, of Rodney Road's The Renewable Design Company]

**JOINED RENEWABLE DESIGN COMPANY TO SEE THEIR LOW-CARBON HEAT SYSTEM IN ACTION**

Alex joined the Renewable Design Company - who he mentioned in Parliament earlier this month (see [here](#)) - at the Lewis Carroll Lodge, a new block developed by Churchill Retirement Living. The block will operate on "ground-source heat pumps", which work by extracting heat from the ground, via 8 boreholes, to heat over 60 flats and provide hot water. No fossil fuels are required.

You can read more about it [here](#).





[Newly-resurfaced St George's Place.]

### **WELCOMED FURTHER RESURFACING WORKS ON CHELTENHAM'S ROADS**

St George's Place has finally been resurfaced [pic above], as has the area around Eagle Tower, and also the A40 by Granley Road [pic below].

Alex also held a meeting with **County Councillors and the Highways Contract Manager**, to discuss the overall progress of the resurfacing programme and press for future works to include the Promenade, Rodney Road and others.



[Stretch of A40 by Granley Road that has just been resurfaced.]



## **SUPPORTED LOCAL POLICE ON CYCLE PATROL**

Alex joined officers on cycle patrol, and covered Honeybourne Line, Pittville Park, Wellington Square, Lower High Street. The patrol also stopped by the Bayshill pub to review external CCTV in relation to a suspected offence the previous week, and joined officers serving a closure notice on a property close to Alex's office in Henrietta Street.

## **ALSO THIS FORTNIGHT:**

- **Visited the pop-up café in Pittville Pump Room.** The "Pump Room Revival" group have worked hard to try and breathe new life into the old building, and refreshments were served for the first time in years.



[Alex with Laurie Bell and Peter Harkness, CEO and Chair of the Cheltenham Trust respectively.]

- Attended the **Hollie Gazzard Trust Glitter Ball Charity Dinner and Auction.** The Hollie Gazzard Trust aims to **positively change the lives of young people** through partnerships in communities, and in particular to tackle domestic abuse and promote healthy relationships. Find out more about their wonderful work [here](#).



- Met with representatives of the Gloucestershire branch of the **Older Drivers' Forum**, a not-for-profit organisation made up of experts in road safety who **provide advice and support to older motorists** to help them stay on the road for longer. Visit their website [here](#), or find them on Facebook [here](#).
- Supported gathering in Schmidt kitchens at which **world-renowned mountaineer Kenton Cool** talked about scaling Everest 14 times.
- Supported the annual **Rotary dinner in support of Nepali charity Kidasha**. The charity works to reduce the causes and impact of entrenched poverty and social exclusion, **stopping exploitation and violence against children in Nepal**. Find out more about it [here](#).

## OTHER NEWS:

### **BOURNSIDE SCHOOL SWIM TRAINING OPPORTUNITY**


**Cheltenham Swimming and Water Polo Club** are offering their **pool time and coaches to local schools one evening a week**. They are being supported by local businesses who “sponsor” lanes to help with costs, ensuring that families without direct access to aquatic sport through school can experience what is on offer in Cheltenham. **Bournside** are the first school to pilot the scheme this week. See full

details on the flyer below...

BOURNSIDE POOL ACCESS PROGRAMME 13 FEBRUARY 2020

## Swim Training

Thanks to The Building and Maintenance Company (TBMC)



### An Aquatic 2020


Did you know Bournside and Cheltenham Swimming and Water Polo Club have a long and proud history of producing national sports stars? And that hundreds of Cheltenham students use the pool for individual training and team sports - water polo, swimming, synchro and more.

#### The start of your pool adventure?

We hope you enjoy this evening, and that you will want to come back for the next 2 weeks of this pilot programme (if you have to miss half term, don't worry). If you have feedback to make it better, please email [swim@cswpc.co.uk](mailto:swim@cswpc.co.uk) - We'll be talent spotting throughout!

#### And then what next?

Three options: **join us for full time swim training** ([swim@cswpc.co.uk](mailto:swim@cswpc.co.uk)), **try another discipline** ([contact@cswpc.co.uk](mailto:contact@cswpc.co.uk)), or **help us raise commercial sponsorship to run this program through the summer term for all interested Bournside students** ([spwz4@cloud.com](mailto:spwz4@cloud.com)). If you'd like to see the dive section reinstated, we'd love to hear from you ([contact@cswpc.co.uk](mailto:contact@cswpc.co.uk))



#### Your coaches tonight:

**Tom Howells**  
Tom is CSWPC's full time head coach.

**Rebecca Ajulu-Bushell**  
'Chay' is a national champion and retired Team GB swimmer.

#### Volunteers

Other volunteers will be poolside with various backgrounds and specialisms - just ask!

Thanks to Cheltenham College

<h4>WATER POLO</h4> <p>Rob Parker: Team GB Cherie Brogan: British male player of the year 2019 Amy Berry: captain England schools.</p>	<h4>SWIM STARS</h4> <p>Matt Wincomb (ex head boy): triathlete, water polo national champion</p>	<h4>DIVE LEGENDS</h4> <p>Leon Taylor: Olympic silver</p>
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**BOURNSIDE AND CSWPC ROLL OF HONOUR . . . .**

## MARCH IS "ENDOMETRIOSIS AWARENESS" MONTH

Endometriosis is an **invisible illness which affects 1.5 million women** in the UK and is reported to cost the economy £8.2 billion a year. It is a long-term condition where tissue, similar to those the lining the womb, grows in other places such as on the ovaries, fallopian tubes, bowel and bladder. It can have a significant impact on sufferers - such as excruciating pelvic pain and infertility. Find out more [here](#).

The **APPG on Endometriosis** have recently **launched a survey** to encourage patients and healthcare practitioners to share their first-hand experiences, and to advise the Government on what steps need to be taken to ensure people with endometriosis are getting the right care at the right time. You can find the survey [here](#).



DAVID AMESS MP  
Member of Parliament for Southend West

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Alex Chalk MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

24 February 2020

Dear Alex,

It was good to talk to you at the weekend and I was glad to hear of your interest in the APPG for Endometriosis. Please find below some details on the work of the group:

Endometriosis is a gynaecological disease that affects 10% of women from puberty to menopause, although the impact can be felt for life. Currently the length of time for diagnosis is 7.5 years on average, and the disease costs the UK £8.2 billion a year in healthcare costs and loss of earnings. Recent research conducted by the BBC highlighted the potentially devastating impact endometriosis can have – including on education, career, and mental health, with around half of the 13,500 respondents stating they have experienced suicidal thoughts due to the disease.

The APPG on Endometriosis, with the support of Endometriosis UK, is currently conducting an inquiry to review the experiences of endometriosis in the UK, and to make recommendations on how care and support can be improved to better meet the needs of those with the condition.

A range of evidence is being gathered as part of the inquiry, with experiences of those with the disease being at the heart. The group launched a survey on Monday 10 February and within the first week it received over 10,000 responses. In addition to the survey the group is holding four oral evidence sessions where it will hear from patients, healthcare professionals and government ministers. The results of the various forms of evidence gathered will be analysed and published along with recommendations in a report in July.

The group is calling for as many people as possible to take part in the survey and it would be very much appreciated if you could share it with your constituents.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/APPGEndometriosis>

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Constituency Office 01702 472 391

*Surgeries:* The First and Third Fridays in each month  
Iveagh Hall, 67 Leigh Road, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 1JW 9:00 – 12:00  
No need to book – meetings on a first come, first served basis





DAVID AMESS MP  
Member of Parliament for Southend West

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
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If you have any questions, or if you would like any more information, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

With all good wishes,

Yours ever,

Sir David Amess MP

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[A letter Alex received from Sir David Amess, Chair of the APPG for Endometriosis.]

### **FREE TRAINING OPPORTUNITY FOR CHELTENHAM TEACHERS**

UK Parliament's Education and Engagement Service is running a course on **22-24 June 2020**, as part of the **UK Parliament Teacher Ambassador Programme**. The course offers teachers first-hand experience of Parliament, to allow them to return to their schools to share what they have learned with thousands of their pupils and colleagues.

#### **The course includes:**

- Q&A sessions with MPs and Peers

- Talks from subject specialists
- Interactive workshops on how to engage pupils in Parliament's work
- Tours of the Palace of Westminster.

Transport, accommodation and meal costs are covered, and applications are welcome from teachers, school/college leaders and teacher training providers working with young people aged 5-18.

Find out full details, including how to apply, [here](#). The closing date for applications is **Sunday 12 April 2020**.

## GET IN TOUCH

As always, if you would like to get in touch to raise any issues, big or small, feel free to contact the office by emailing [alex.chalk.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:alex.chalk.mp@parliament.uk) or by calling **01242 210473**.



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