



Fortnightly Update #73 - 15.10.2019

Good morning! Welcome to this update.

There's so much to mention. Trust managers' "engagement exercise" with the public on the future of **healthcare in Gloucestershire** closed yesterday. Thank you to the c.20,000 people who signed my petition to keep Cheltenham **A&E** open, and also to the several hundred who provided written responses to the "engagement" survey. I personally handed over more than 1,000 responses to the Trust's offices in Brockworth (see photo gallery below).

There was important news for **Cheltenham's schools** in the Queen's Speech. Funding for special education needs, a long-standing campaign of mine, is scheduled to go up by over 10% in Gloucestershire, helping to ease the pressures in mainstream and special schools like Belmont, Bettridge and the Ridge. And Gloucestershire **Police** are also recruiting as part of the plan to increase police numbers by 20,000 nationwide.

I was delighted to hear that of the seven **Cheltenham cyber start-ups** from our local "accelerator" visited Silicon Valley recently, and three were earmarked as potential "unicorns" (billion-dollar companies). So important for Cheltenham's future. Check out the video from Wayra UK below to find out more.

A particular highlight for me over the last fortnight included visiting [Remap Glos](http://www.remapglos.org.uk). The volunteers there are *amazing*. They're (mainly retired) engineers from Gloucestershire who volunteer to provide individually designed technical aids free of charge to people with disabilities. Their ingenuity is astonishing. Some of the solutions I heard about included (a) a remodelled wheelchair that allows a wounded veteran to continue his love of archery (b) a custom-made paralympic throwing stool for local disabled athletes (c) headband-mounted accelerometers to help National Star College students use wheelchairs for dancing. Truly inspiring. Do support them if you can. Referrals can be made online to www.remapglos.org.uk

There are updates too on the work to Cheltenham Spa **station car park**, an education debate in Cheltenham involving the BBC's Jeremy Vine and former Education and Home Secretary **David Blunkett**, and even the Sandford **Lido** dog swim!

And finally, I never cease to be amazed by the extraordinary things going on in Cheltenham without fanfare. For example, I recently visited **Microsoft's Cheltenham offices** in Cheltenham House (near Wagamama if that helps!) It's one of just four worldwide that protect Microsoft's cybersecurity. When a vulnerability affecting hundreds of millions of people worldwide was detected in the **Microsoft Explorer** browser, the patch was designed and deployed in Cheltenham. It's fantastic to think that our town makes such an important contribution in such a vital area.

Thank you for reading. I should add that if you want updates on Brexit, there is further info on that below too.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alex Chalk". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Alex Chalk MP

P.S I am joining the Spinathon on 4 January 2020 and cycling 100 miles on an indoor bike. Details below if you want to get involved



**COME AND JOIN IN THE FUN AT
SPINATHON 2020**

CYCLE 100 MILES & RAISE £100 FOR CHARITY

- **SATURDAY 4TH JANUARY 2020**
- **ENTER ON YOUR OWN OR AS A TEAM**
- **GET YOURSELF IN GREAT CONDITION FOR THE NEW YEAR**
- **LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE**

Each person or team to raise a minimum of £100. All proceeds go to Maggie's in memory of Dave Anderson, who died in 2018 from cancer.



MAGGIE'S

MAGGIE'S CENTRES OFFER PRACTICAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT TO PEOPLE AFFECTED BY CANCER

CLC SPORTS CENTRE, MALVERN ROAD, CHELTENHAM GL50 2NX

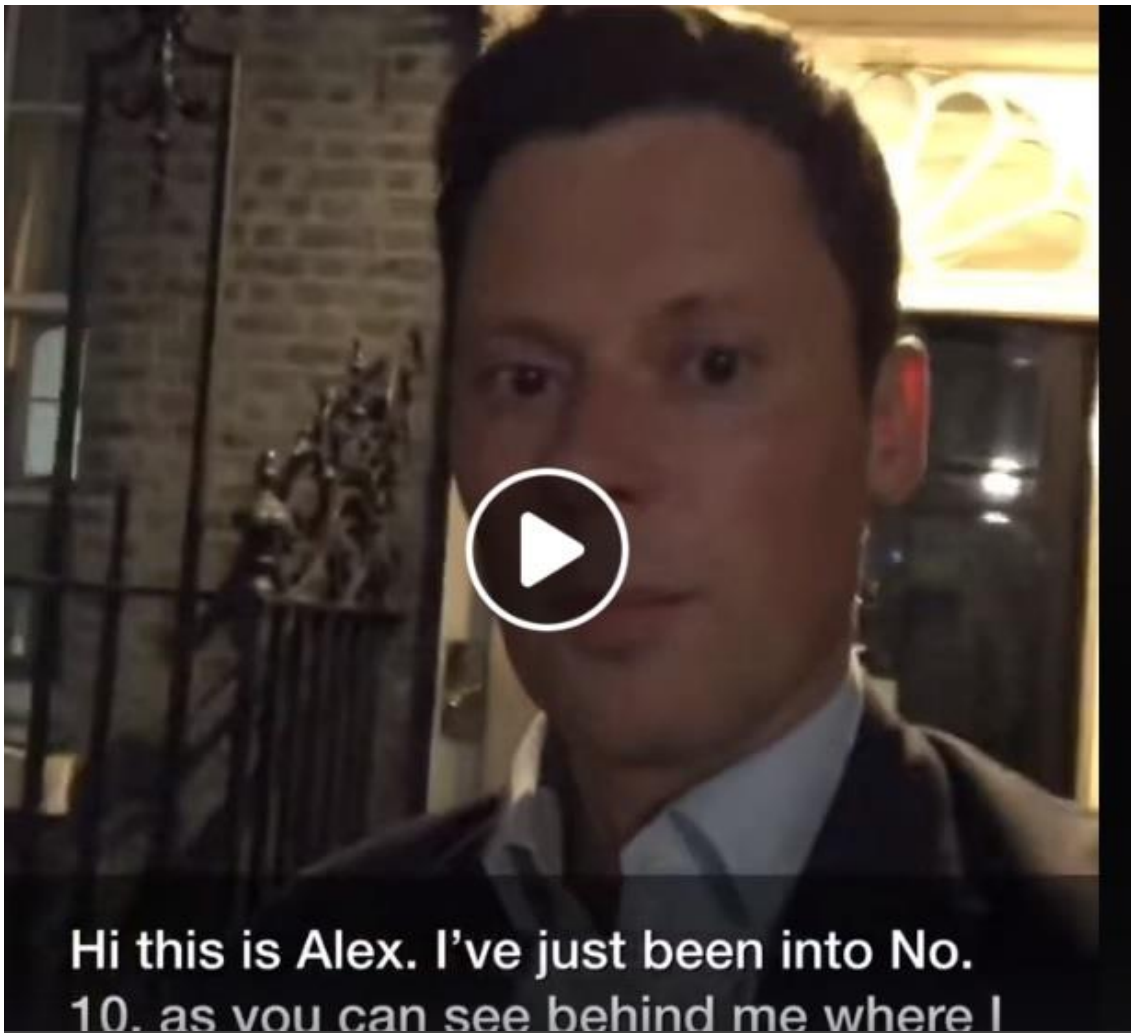
To find out more and book your place please contact Mark Beaney on 07766 550969 or by email markebeaney@googlemail.com



www.justgiving.com/fundraising/markbeaney1

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Hi this is Alex. I've just been into No. 10. as you can see behind me where I

[CLICK HERE OR ABOVE TO WATCH ALEX'S INITIAL REACTION TO THE GOVERNMENT'S BREXIT PROPOSALS, FOLLOWING A BRIEFING IN DOWNING STREET](#)



[CLICK HERE OR ABOVE TO WATCH ALEX'S CONTRIBUTION TO A DEBATE REGARDING THE BAN ON TROPHY HUNTING](#)



[CLICK HERE OR ABOVE TO WATCH A VIDEO ABOUT THE PROGRESS ALREADY MADE BY CHELTENHAM'S EXCITING NEW CYBER ACCELERATOR](#)

Since the last update, Alex has:

IN PARLIAMENT

- Intervened on the Prime Minister in the Queen's Speech debate to welcome additional funding for Cheltenham's **schools**, in particular to address the soaring demand for **special educational needs** provision in Gloucestershire [READ MORE HERE](#)
- Alex called on MPs to *compromise* on the way forward on Brexit, citing the aphorism that "those who insist on absolute victory risk absolute defeat" [READ MORE HERE](#)
- Met with representatives from the **APPG on Cyber** - Alex has been appointed its new Chair
- Welcomed the UK's global leadership on the **environment**, and the achievement of reducing carbon emissions by 42% on 1990 levels. Noted that **China** (which emits 25x as much as the UK) is not scheduled to start reducing emissions until 2030, and called for all nations to play their part [WATCH HERE](#)
- Called for better **access to justice**. Noted that if people on low incomes could not seek redress in the courts, laws passed in Parliament risked being a "dead letter" and the election of MPs a "meaningless charade" (cf Lord Reed in the UNISON case). You can [READ MORE HERE](#) and [WATCH HERE](#)

- Welcomed students from **Bournside** School to Parliament and answered their questions on politics, Brexit and more
- Spoken in the Chamber on the need to ensure that the **big global polluters** such as India and China “clean up their act” on global emissions [READ MORE HERE](#)
- Pressed **Labour** to clarify which element of Theresa May's deal (which dealt with the financial settlement, citizens' rights and the implementation period) they actually disagreed with [WATCH HERE](#)
- Spoken out in favour of a ban on **wildlife trophy imports**, and called for our international aid budget to be used for conservation as well as development [WATCH HERE](#)
- Pressed the **Attorney General** to confirm that the Government will not be looking to implement a US-style system of political appointment of judges [READ MORE HERE](#)
- Attended meeting of the **One Nation** Group of Conservative backbenchers
- Quizzed the Prime Minister at a meeting of the **1922** committee following the Supreme Court ruling
- Attended the Parliamentary launch event for The Times **Air Pollution Campaign**
- Represented constituents' concerns about IR35 and the **Loan Charge** at a private meeting with the Financial Secretary, Jesse Norman MP. If you have been affected by either of these issues, please get in touch by emailing alex.chalk.mp@parliament.uk
- Met with representatives from the **Nappy Alliance** to discuss joining forces to crack down on environmental waste caused by nappies
- Was chosen as the Parliamentary 'species champion' for his work in the House of Commons supporting **bees**, at an event hosted by the RSPB and Frank Gardner (BBC correspondent)

Delegated Legislation Committees

- Sat on the Delegated Legislation committee for ‘Trade in Animals and Animal Products (Legislative Functions) and Veterinary Surgeons (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019’ [READ MORE HERE](#)
- Sat on the Delegated Legislation Committee for the ‘The Common Organisation of the Markets in Agricultural Products and Common Agricultural Policy (Miscellaneous Amendments etc.) (EU Exit) (No. 2) Regulations 2019’ [READ MORE HERE](#)

Party Conference

- Chaired a discussion on the **access to justice** gap, and the need to improve access to justice for those on low incomes
- Spoken at a debate alongside Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps MP, to discuss what councils can do to improve **air quality** in towns like Cheltenham
- Sat on a panel to discuss how the UK can sustainably get to Net Zero by 2050

- Met with the **APPG on Woodland Trees**, of which Alex is Chair, to discuss the future direction Alex wants to set for the Group

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

- Attended meeting of officials and ministers at the FCO to discuss the British Government's response to issues including:
 - the **Harry Dunn case** (young man killed in a road traffic collision outside US army base suspected to have involved a US national)
 - Iran
 - Kashmir
 - US policy in Syria
- PPS'd a Westminster Hall debate on **British sanctions policy** and implementation
- Provided PPS support to Foreign Office Ministers regarding an Urgent Question on **Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe**
- Provided PPS support to Foreign Office Ministers regarding an Urgent Question on the conflict in **Syria**

Tours of Parliament

- Welcomed another c.50 constituents to Parliament on a Tour Day. If you'd be interested in joining one of these tours, please contact Chris (chris.shevlin@parliament.uk)

IN CHELTENHAM

Schools

- Welcomed the **announcement of a £17 million boost for Gloucestershire's schools (c.+5%)**, with a **£6 million (10%)** boost for local special education needs provision. Schools in Cheltenham are scheduled to receive a minimum of **£5,000** per pupil (and significantly more in the case of Pittville and All Saints'), up from c.£4,200 in 2015/16
- Taken part in an Question Time-style panel debate at **Dean Close School** with **Lord Blunkett** and other panellists, hosted **Jeremy Vine** on the topic of **Education**
- Supported the launch of the **Cheltenham Educational Partnership (CEP)** at the Queen's Hotel - *The CEP is an equal partnership which brings together nine schools from Cheltenham, both maintained and independent, together with the University of Gloucestershire, to work together to ensure that the best interests of young people are at the heart of education initiatives in Cheltenham, reaching out to all young people with potential regardless of social, economic or educational background. The driving ambition of the Partnership is to expand the horizons of young people in Cheltenham and to help them realise their full potential* [READ MORE HERE](#)
- Held regular conference call with the **Vice Chancellor of the University of Gloucestershire** to discuss university-related issues

Lit Fest

- Supported the **Young Writers Showcase** at the Literature Festival
- Heard **David Cameron** speak at the Racecourse
- Met up with **Rory Stewart** MP (Ind) and **Jess Phillips** MP (Lab) at the Festival

Police

- Welcomed the Government's announcement of funding for an additional **46 new officers in Gloucestershire**, as part of the first year of the Government's drive to recruit 20,000 additional police officers. This comes on top of the additional 74 new officers being appointed in Gloucestershire, funded by the £4.1 million funding boost for Gloucestershire Constabulary in 2019/2020

Cheltenham Spa Railway Station

- Received the following update from **Great Western Railway** regarding the **station car park expansion works**:

"You will be aware that we have been receiving emails from residents in Kensington Avenue concerned about noise and vibration from the car park work. This was exacerbated by the contractors working outside the promised start and finish times, on one occasion working on through the night.

Timings can be varied but prior notice must be given to residents. This was not done and it has caused some frustration. Residents have also engaged with the local Environmental Health Officer and we are working with our contractor to ease concerns. This has included providing a direct mobile contact for the site supervisor so they can report any infringement of the start and finish times directly.

We have also been asked to confirm the expected completion dates. As we noted previously the re-emergence of the Japanese knotweed has set us back a few weeks, but Phase 1 (the new spaces) is still on target to finish in October, with the work to the existing car park completing in November, and we will have the new spaces in use for the Festival."

Cyber Update

- Visited **Microsoft's Cheltenham offices**. The Cheltenham office is one of just four worldwide that protect Microsoft's cybersecurity. When a vulnerability affecting hundreds of millions of people worldwide was detected in the **Microsoft Explorer** browser, the patch was designed and deployed in Cheltenham

Charity Support

- Met residents at **Lewis Carroll Lodge** for their **MacMillan coffee morning**
- Supported the **LINC Charity Lunch** at **Prithvi**
- Celebrated the **Cotswold Male Voice Choir's 70th anniversary** at St Matthew's Church, supported by BBC Radio Gloucestershire
- Attended the **Mayor's Charity Auction** at **Sacred Heart's Church**

- Visited **Remap Gloucestershire**, a local charity made up of volunteer engineers and craftsmen who design and build bespoke equipment to enable disabled people to gain more independence or a better quality of life
- Attended the **Gloucestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre's Fundraising Auction** at the Doubletree Hotel on Cirencester Road

Community

- Taken part in a **Cheltenham in the 2020s event** at Cheltenham Bowling Club, organised by **Cheltenham Connect**, to set out priorities for our town's future. Key ones for Alex are:
 - retain an **A&E** at Cheltenham General
 - deliver a **cyber park** to retain young people in Cheltenham and drive social mobility
 - deliver **transport infrastructure** upgrades (from the Air Balloon scheme to the rollout of electric charging points) to make Cheltenham a more attractive place to live and visit
- Visited the **I-Migrate** exhibition at the Town Hall with students from the University of Gloucestershire
- Met a local artist, **Crawford Wilson**, to view his work depicting **Cheltenham most iconic sites** [SEE MORE HERE](#)
- Met a local resident to discuss **Baby Loss Awareness Week**
- Held a constituency surgery
- Attended the **Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra** concert at the Pump Room. Heard the remarkable Michael Foyle play
- Took the family **dog** swimming in the Sandford Parks Lido

Cheltenham Businesses

- Addressed group of 50+ **local businesses at the Star College to discuss Brexit and the Government's plans** to deliver new and affordable homes
- Visited the **newly refurbished Waitrose store**, to see how a grocer-style refill aisle has been rolled for cereals, rice, pasta and other staples, to cut down on **plastic use**
- Held talks with **BMW** senior management on Grovefield Way site to speak up for local **Benhall residents about local parking issues**, and to view mitigation measures (additional on-site parking for BMW staff)
- Met the **National Farmers Union** and **Cheltenham** farmers to discuss the Government's plans for the agriculture sector after Brexit

High Street and Grot Spot Updates

- Complained to the Council about **unsightly tarmac infills** outside Carphone Warehouse on the High Street. Alex has been assured that they will be replaced with slabs in the near future

- The Regent Arcade have announced plans for a new **Food Hall on the former BHS site** [READ MORE HERE](#)
- **Cafe Nero** have submitted a planning application to take over the former **LK Bennett** site on the Promenade [READ MORE HERE](#)

IN THE MEDIA

- Written several articles for the **Gloucestershire Echo** regarding his campaign to *save Cheltenham's A&E, Brexit and schools funding* [READ MORE HERE](#)
- Interviewed on **BBC Radio Gloucestershire** regarding:
 - the Literature Festival
 - the **Education** debate at Dean Close School with (Lord) David Blunkett and others, chaired by Jeremy Vine

NOTICE BOARD

Alex has been asked to share the following information:

- Did you know **@TNLComFund** awarded over half a billion pounds of #NationalLottery funding to more than 12,000 community projects across the UK last year? Find out more about their year-round funding opportunities: <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding>
- You can use your blue tokens in **TESCO** to support **Teens in Crisis (TIC+)** through October, November and December
- The **Pittville Breast Cancer Ball** in aid of **Cobalt Health** and Focus Charities is taking place on Saturday 26 October. Details below:

Pittville Breast Cancer *Ball*



In aid of Cobalt Health and Focus Charities

Live Band And DJ

Dance The Night Away

Saturday 26th October 2019

Dress Code: Black Tie (Wearing a splash of **Pink** is optional)

Tickets: £75 Individual and Tables of 10

Drinks Reception & Bar: 7.00pm Three Course Dinner: 7.45pm

Live Auction: 9.45pm Live Band: 10.30pm

DJ: 12.00am Carriages: 1.00am

Enjoy an evening of dinner, dancing, live auction and fun!
The Pittville Breast Cancer Ball event celebrates breast cancer survivors
and remembers those who have lost their battle, whilst raising funds
to save lives around Gloucestershire.

- Contact: 07907811744 • Email: pittvillebcball@gmail.com •
- Book Online Tickets: www.bookwhen.com/pittvillebreastcancerball •
- Pittville Pump Rooms, East Approach Drive, Cheltenham, GL52 3JE •

Designed By Jessica Tarrier

CONSTITUENCY SURGERIES

If you would like to book an appointment, please email reply to this email or email Alex on alex.chalk.mp@parliament.uk

CASEWORK

To raise a casework issue, please email reply to this email or email Alex.

PHOTO GALLERY



With Ange, at Waitrose's refill station



Delivering the latest batch of responses to the Engagement Process regarding the future of Cheltenham's A&E to the local NHS



With Jeremy Vine at the Cheltenham Education Question Time debate



Being interviewed at the Party Conference in Manchester



Meeting volunteers from Remap Gloucestershire



Supporting the Divest Parliament pledge



Listening to David Cameron at the Literature Festival



"Harvest with Hawks" at St Pip and Jim's



Speaking at the 'Cheltenham in the 2020s' event



Chairing a fringe event on legal aid and pro bono law



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