
Like many of you, I had the pleasure of getting my first dose of the vaccine recently. I pay testament to all involved and am so grateful for the role they've played in getting us on the path to normal life.

Now that we can get out and about, I've been checking in on our local businesses like the Kindred Bakery in Whyteleafe and three of our fantastic local pubs - the Botley Hill Farmhouse in Warlingham, the Bell in Outwood, and the Station Pub in Nutfield. The food was, as always, delicious, and it was wonderful to hear that residents have been flocking back to support them.

I also called in on Deano Cline and Sara Jones at the Whyteleafe Hub. Set up in the back of Whyteleafe Tavern, the volunteers at the hub deliver food parcels to over 40 families from supplies donated locally. They now want to transform one of the pub's halls into a community space for social events and volunteer groups, so I was delighted to connect them to Your Fund Surrey - a £100 million for local community projects just like this one - and I'm really looking forward to seeing what they'll do next.

It was terrific to finally visit East Surrey's new Youth Hub recently too, which has a moving presence in Caterham, Oxted and Redhill, and I was delighted to be joined by the Minister for Employment, Mims Davies MP, as well as several local leaders. We had the chance to speak to Tanya and Grace, who shared their experiences of being two of the first people to use the Youth Hub. Best of luck to them both - I can't wait to hear about their progress in the coming weeks.

After visiting the Youth Hub, I also had the pleasure of meeting David Fletcher, who worked closely with Tandridge Council to set up the Workary in Caterham, which is a shared workspace located in the same building. The initiative was originally set up by David in Wimbledon but he's now working with a number of local councils to set up more sites across the country. I particularly enjoyed my tour of their podcast studio, run by one of the regulars at the Workary. It's a really impressive set-up and I can't wait to record a podcast there soon.

I also caught up with the Chief Executive of Gatwick Airport, Stewart Wingate, recently. One of the issues raised was making green list travel easier and we also talked about the importance of getting international agreement on travel arrangements. I asked them to consider including the RH6 7 and RH6 8 postcodes in Horley in their Local Commuter Scheme, which provides access for two free visits per day to the South Terminal drop off zone, and this is something they have agreed to consider. I also raised concerns with the council about access for cyclists to the airport and I'm pleased to say consultations and workshops are currently taking place and I expect to hear more from them soon.

Another focus of mine this month has been HGVs in Smallfield, Burstow, Outwood and Horne. I recently met with the Roads Minister, Baroness Charlotte Vere, to discuss the local concerns and proposals I put to the Department for Transport following the public meeting I held in January. And I am so delighted to share that, after my question to the Prime Minister on the topic at PMQs, the Government will be formally reviewing the role of the Traffic Commissioner – which was one of our key asks. I am also pleased to share that the Government will be bringing forward legislation this year to give local authorities enforcement powers against moving traffic offences. Crucially, the Minister agreed this will include HGVs using the wrong roads and ignoring 'unsuitable for HGV' signs.

And after much banging on doors over recent months, I am also so pleased to share that resurfacing works have now been completed on Massetts Road. I want to pay tribute to Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Highways at Surrey County Council, for agreeing to make this work a priority, and to all the Horley Town Councillors for their efforts.

NEWS UPDATE FROM CLAIRE COUTINHO
Friday, 18th June 2021



Finally, it's been a long time coming but I know how much we are all looking forward to 19 July - I do hope you're all able to spend some time this summer catching up with much-loved family and friends.