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After a year and a half of virtual meetings, it's been amazing to be out and about over the summer months. It's really felt like going back to the normal role of a local MP.

Earlier this month, I was delighted to visit the team at Pedrick's Zero Waste Shop. Pedrick's was founded to help people reduce their plastic waste, which is something I've personally been passionate about for a long time.

They are so community minded and are working with some of our amazing local suppliers to offer people great local produce in a way that reduces waste - and therefore carbon emissions - as much as possible. Zero waste isn't only environmentally friendly though, it was also friendly on my purse! I bought a couple of jars of lentils, and it cost me less than it does in one of the big shops.

You can order deliveries from Pedrick's just like you would with any of the big shops, and they also offer weekly supply boxes with all of your basics delivered to your door at the click of a button. Please do drop by the shop or visit their website at [pedricks.co.uk](http://pedricks.co.uk) to find out more.

Thanks so much to Emily and team for taking the time to show me around and chat - they are green giants in our local community and we are so lucky to have them.

Last week I also attended the opening of the new café in the Horley Recreation Ground. Thanks to Horley Town Council, Ed and Debbie for a wonderful afternoon and a lovely cup of tea. Later in the day I went to a Whyteleafe Village Council meeting and enjoyed hearing from residents their ideas to improve the local community. Thanks to Deano and Marcus from the Village Council for organising.

In lieu of their annual fair, I also had the pleasure of visiting Limpsfield Chart's street party recently. Thank you so much to Dr Diana Davy CBE for all her efforts to put on this amazing community event. I got to see Titsey Rotary Club's unrideable horse in action and buy some lovely honey from one of the stalls. I would also highly recommend the beautiful body scrub I bought from local producer Fergie. It is honestly one of the best I've ever used.

Another highlight from the past month was visiting the orchard in Woldingham for some hay raking. It was wonderful to see the community garden that Ann Richardson and team have set up next to the Glebe. It was also brilliant to hear about the community work Janine Battersby and others are doing there. Thank you so much to Ann, Janine and team for your work - true community heroes.

If there's anywhere you think I should visit in the next month, please do get in touch with me at [claire.coutinho.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:claire.coutinho.mp@parliament.uk) and I'll get back to you as soon as I can.

Now that we're allowed visitors in Parliament again, if you're a resident of East Surrey I'd be delighted to welcome you to Westminster for a tour of the Palace of Westminster. It's full of fascinating information about how our parliamentary system works, the history of the palace, and what it's like to work here day-to-day. You'll be able to see the House of Commons, House of Lords, Westminster Hall, the Queen's Robing Room, and more. You can register your interest on my website at [clairecoutinho.com](http://clairecoutinho.com).

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Many of you will know that one of my key priorities as your local MP is protecting and enhancing our environment. That's why I was so excited to bring back my Greentember campaign again this year. One of the main reasons I launched the campaign - a whole month of pushing for environmental progress - was to help identify the changes we can all make in our day-to-day lives to help the environment.

And this year my three main Greentember pledges are: shopping for only second-hand clothes, using a greener mode of transport than my normal routine, and reducing my food waste by keeping a food waste diary, reducing overbuying, and saving leftovers as much as possible.

In late October I'll also be hosting Surrey's very own COP summit to raise awareness of the COP26 meeting in Glasgow, increase engagement with the conference at a local level, and give all of you an opportunity to have your voices heard.

Over recent weeks, many of you have also got in touch with me with your concerns about the changes Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) have recently made to their timetables, especially with respect to services between East Grinstead and London Bridge. I completely understand these concerns and will be meeting with the Managing Director of GTR alongside the Deputy Leader of Surrey County Council, Cllr Becky Rush, to ask them to look again at the proposed timetable.

Finally, I know that we were all deeply moved by the horrors that unfolded in Afghanistan. The situation was – and remains – tragic beyond words. From the very beginning, my focus was on helping constituents who had family on the ground in Afghanistan. I was so pleased - and relieved - that we were able to help one constituent, a former interpreter now living here in Surrey, to bring his wife and three children from Afghanistan over here to safety.

My focus remains on assisting several other local families to bring their loved ones to safety, and I am continuing to speak to Ministers every day to help make that happen. If you know anyone who is in a similar situation, please ask them to email me and I'll do everything in my power to help.