

MP service to the Wokingham constituency

Along with all other MPs my job as an MP ends with the dissolution of Parliament just after midnight on 5th November. All outstanding cases will continue to be handled, and I will work on them as needed in my new role after that date as Conservative candidate.

Anyone wanting help can of course contact me and I will do what I can in my new role. I can be contacted through the Conservative office in Wokingham. Email john.redwood@wokinghamconservatives.org.uk

Constitutional reform?

The UK has a written constitution. It is recorded in a range of documents including various Acts of Parliament, the Standing Orders of Parliament and the law. It is more flexible than countries that have a single written constitutional document that usually is difficult to amend or change. The supremacy of Parliament is such that sometimes a simple alteration of the Standing Orders of the Commons can effect changes that would otherwise take a long time.

The Parliament which dissolves at midnight has discovered imperfections in our current constitution, and has flexed it in ways that many think unreasonable. The next Parliament, assuming it has a majority government, would be wise to look at how the constitution could be improved in the light of the tribulations of the outgoing one.

The first recommendation I have is the repeal of the Fixed Term Parliaments Act. This has given us 3 elections in four years when there is meant to be a five year gap, but it has also held a minority government hostage and got in the way of allowing a PM defeated in the Commons taking his case to the country. The previous system gave scope for the government to call for an early election if need arose. If a PM tried to do this for party advantage with no other good reason there was always the danger of a public backlash against a needless election.

The second is to legislate to place some limits on the capacity of the Supreme Court to intervene in Parliamentary matters. The advice a PM gives to the Queen, and the decision to prorogue should be matters for Parliament, not for the law courts. It makes little sense for Parliament as the ultimate embodiment of the people's sovereignty to need to ask the courts permission over when it sits or how it transacts its business. That was the view of the English senior judges when the case came before them.

The third is to clarify in Standing Orders that major legislation requires a Money resolution and Queens consent where government prerogative is involved (as with international negotiations and Treaties). Government needs to ensure legislation fits with its budget and foreign policy. Opposition is there to oppose and amend, not to run an alternative government.

Probate fees – a successful consultation

The government issued a Statutory Instrument to increase fees for probate considerably, based on the value of the estate being wound up. There were many objections to these proposals including my submission on behalf of constituents. The government has listened to these concerns. The Lord Chancellor has now written to me to say he has “decided to withdraw the previous proposals”.

He now intends to review the whole question of court fees including probate, in the light of the strong feelings that the probate increases were far too large.

The Royal Berkshire Hospital to receive two new CT scanners

As a result of new Government funding to upgrade cancer detection technology The Royal Berkshire Hospital will receive two new CT scanners with advanced capabilities. This is most welcome news for patients and their families as early diagnosis is vital to saving lives.



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Rt Hon Richard Benyon MP, Newbury
Rt Hon John Redwood MP, Wokingham
Matt Rodda MP, Reading East
Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP, Reading West

*From the Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care*

39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU
020 7210 4850

31st October 2019

New NHS Capital Funding – Imaging equipment

Yesterday I formally announced that 78 trusts will benefit from a multi-million pound funding injection to upgrade cancer testing and detection technology. This includes:

- CT and MRI scanners, bringing in alternatives with lower radiation levels
- Breast screening imaging and assessment equipment

This money comes from the £200 million of funding the Prime Minister announced last month to improve screening and early diagnosis of cancer. It is part of the Government's commitment to ensure 55,000 more people survive cancer each year.

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust is one of the trusts funded for the new scanners. It is all part of our Long Term Plan to ensure the NHS is always there for everyone.

Replacing and upgrading machines will improve efficiency as they are easier to use, they scan and construct images quicker, and reduce the need to re-scan. This will improve patient experience and will lead to earlier diagnosis, which is vital to saving lives.

This new equipment also brings new capability, with all machines AI enabled so the NHS is ready for the challenges of the future.

This is all part of our recent commitments to upgrade NHS facilities, and tackle the most urgent infrastructure projects and the largest hospital building programme in a generation, which will deliver at least 40 new hospitals over the next decade.

Yours ever,

MATT HANCOCK

Government consults on new police powers over unauthorised encampments

The Home Secretary is consulting on giving the police new powers “to arrest and seize the property and vehicles of trespassers who set up unauthorised caravan sites”. The idea is to have something similar in our law to that used in the Republic of Ireland.

The Home Secretary said “The public want their communities protected and for the police to crack down on trespassers. Our proposals aim to ensure encampments can be challenged and removed as quickly as possible”