

# Oliver Dowden CBE MP

Member of Parliament for Hertsmere

## Summer Report – 2019

It has been another very busy few months in Parliament, but I want to take the opportunity here in my latest End of Term Report to update you on some highlights of my work as Hertsmere's local MP.

Following Boris Johnson's election as Leader of the Conservative Party and Prime Minister, I was honoured to join the Cabinet as Paymaster General and Minister for the Cabinet Office.

There are some enormous challenges ahead, but I am looking forward to focusing on the things that matter for the people of Hertsmere and the United Kingdom. To read more about my position on our withdrawal from the European Union, I have prepared a separate statement covering this in detail. If you would like a copy, please request one by replying to this email.

As ever I will defend and promote the interests of Hertsmere, through my contribution to protecting the national interest as a Minister and in my duty as your Member of Parliament.



### OYSTER DELIVERED

I am delighted that **Oyster** is now up and running at **Potters Bar** and **Radlett** after I formally opened the system with the Transport Secretary this week.

This is the successful end to my long campaign, and I know how important the extension of Oyster and contactless cards is. It will allow people to travel much more easily by train and will give people greater flexibility over how they pay for their travel.



### UPGRADING LOCAL TRANSPORT

At the same time, I am pleased to have delivered upgrades for facilities at our railway stations. After I pressed **Thameslink**, **Borehamwood** has now received a complete modernisation and overhaul, while **Potters Bar** and **Radlett** will be receiving money from the £15m Passenger Benefit Fund.

However, I know that there are still problems with services. I continue to be in touch with rail executives and Network Rail to stress the unacceptable impact disruption has on people across **Borehamwood**, **Bushey**, **Potters Bar** and **Radlett**. Nearly £20m has been paid out in compensation under the scheme I secured last year and I encourage everyone to claim for the Delay Repay compensation they are owed.

Finally, I enjoyed visiting **Elstree Aerodrome** again, particularly the chance to see my constituency from the sky! The aerodrome is a fantastic local asset, and the last of its kind in the county. It supports many skilled jobs, boosts the area's wider economy and enhances our transport infrastructure. While steps must always be taken to achieve a balance between its operations and the rights of residents, the aerodrome's future is important to Hertsmere.

## BOOSTING LOCAL SERVICES

I owe a debt of gratitude for the excellent state **education** I received at Parmiter's, near Bushey, and **improving schools** is one of the main reasons I entered politics.

That's why I called a new meeting with Hertfordshire County Council to press them on their plans for delivering good school places for Hertsmere. I secured assurances that plans are in place. In the short term this will mean investing in existing schools to improve their facilities and increase capacity. Subsequently if our communities grow, they will then begin the construction of new schools to serve Hertsmere.

At the same time, I am working with my colleagues in the Government to ensure our schools receive the funding they deserve.

It was also wonderful to attend the opening of the new school in **Borehamwood, Yavneh Primary**, with the Education Secretary and the Chief Rabbi. I've backed this project from the beginning, and it is wonderful to see the Jewish community go from strength to strength.

It's been a pleasure to visit many of our local schools over the past few months, including playing rounders at **Cowley Hill Primary**, seeing the new building at **Hertswood Academy** near completion and **Newberries Primary**, where my uncle was caretaker for many years.

Finally, congratulations to all the students who completed their **A-Levels** and **GCSEs** this Summer, including Yavneh in Borehamwood who ranked as the best performing non-selective state school in the country for its A-Level results.



Turning to **the NHS**, I know the future of **Potters Bar Community Hospital** is a source of great concern to many residents. I urgently raised this with the local health authority, Herts Valley Clinical Commissioning Group. I was pleased to secure from the CCG's leadership a renewal of their commitment to the Hospital's future. They know it is a fantastic local asset, providing a vital service and they will be increasing the services they run from it in the months ahead.

If our community grows it is vital we have the infrastructure and public services to go with them. For **healthcare in Borehamwood**, this means the development of a modern new health hub facility, to bring together and maximise the resources of all our separate local GPs.

I was pleased to secure an assurance from the CCG that they remain committed to providing the necessary funding for this much needed facility for the town. The next step is now to work with Hertsmere Borough Council, who are responsible for providing a site for the hub. I will continue to press both the CCG and the Council to make sure our town gets the facilities it needs.



Finally, I was very saddened to see appalling **anti-Semitic graffiti** appear in Borehamwood. I was in contact with the Hertfordshire Constabulary and I am reassured by the speed with which it has been removed by the Borough Council. Racism has no place in our society and I am glad the Police are investigating the incident thoroughly.

## DEFENDING THE COUNTRYSIDE

Both Hertsmere and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Councils have now published the list of potential sites that have been offered to them for future housing development.

We must build the houses we need to provide homes for our children and grandchildren, but these must not be at the expense of the landscape that makes the area special and must be matched by the right infrastructure. I am in regular contact with both councils and constantly make this case.

As part of this campaign it was great to visit **Aldenham Reservoir** which I've known and loved since childhood. Many people have contacted me about the proposal for a new nature retreat. It is vitally important that we do not damage the Reservoir's wonderful open spaces, retain access to it and ensure the Sailing Club has a future. Equally, any new planning application should not lead to larger changes further down the line.

I've been on to both Hertsmere Borough Council and Liberty Lake Leisure to raise these concerns and press for clarification of their plans for the future of the Reservoir and the Club.

It was also lovely to visit **Fishers Field Nature Reserve** in **Bushey**. It's one of the village's best kept secrets and I'm grateful to everyone who came for their warm hospitality.



## WESTMINSTER NEWS

I am particularly proud that the Prime Minister has also asked me to represent veterans of our armed forces around the cabinet table. Our veterans have made extraordinary sacrifices for this country and it's only right that we repay their commitment with the right support and care when they leave service.

On a lighter note, I was delighted to meet Melinda Gates to discuss how we can empower women in developing countries.



## OUT AND ABOUT IN HERTSMERE

It was lovely to open this year's **Shenley Fête**. I had a great day out with my family, and it was wonderful to see the whole community coming together.

Equally, it was great fun to open **Bushey Acoustic Festival** again this year, alongside Mayor Rabbi Alan Plancey. It was another brilliant day, organised by Raymond Coffe. There were some excellent performances and I would like to say well done to everyone involved!

For your interest, I've included some pictures of these events and from my other visits this Summer below.



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