

# Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP

## Member of Parliament for Hertsmere End of Parliament Report – November 2019

As this Parliament reaches its conclusion, I wanted to write to you to update you on my work over the previous four years as your Member of Parliament.

As always, a report of this length cannot cover everything so to see more of what I have been working on please do visit my Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or website where I regularly share posts and updates.



### Transport



After my four year long campaign, Oyster was delivered to Potters Bar and Radlett in August. This enables people to travel easily and more flexibly, and I formally opened the system with the Transport Secretary at Radlett Station.

I've also made progress securing upgrades to transport facilities across the constituency. After pressing Thameslink, **Euston and Borehamwood Station** has been completely overhauled, including a much-needed wider entrance and re-furbished concourse. Moreover, a £300m Government investment into Thameslink's infrastructure has delivered improvements along the whole line. **Potters Bar and Radlett** will be receiving money from the £15m Passenger Benefit Fund and I successfully pushed



**Govia Thameslink** to speed the roll-out of new, larger and more modern carriages to improve passenger journeys. At the same time I continue to meet regularly with representatives from **London Northwestern** about improvements to **Bushey Station**, including more toilets, shelters and bike racks.

I know the service on Thameslink and Great Northern has at times been completely unacceptable. I commute and know first-hand the frustration and anger caused by the timetable chaos last year. I worked hard to secure an extensive compensation package for passengers, covering both season ticket holders and PAYG. Combined with Thameslink's £5m fine and the dismissal of the head of Govia Thameslink, I hope this goes someway to hold those responsible for this disruption to account.

**Buses** are important for many residents and after lobbying the County Council and Transport for London the **142** and **298** bus routes have been maintained. After a bus shelter outside Morrisons in Borehamwood was destroyed in a car crash, I successfully lobbied the County Council to make urgent repairs.



### Boosting Local Services



As many of you know, I was educated at an excellent local state school, Parmiter's, just outside Watford. I owe them a debt of gratitude for the education I received and have been determined to improve schools in Hertsmere to give every child the best possible start in life. Over the past few years I have worked with Dame Alice Owen's in Potters Bar, and Hertswood Academy in Borehamwood, to deliver brand new school buildings. I am similarly proud to have helped deliver a new primary school for Borehamwood, Yavneh Primary.



I have pressed Hertfordshire County Council on their plans for **delivering new good school places for Hertsmere**. I have secured assurances that these plans are in place. Initially, if the community grows they will invest in existing schools to increase their capacity, before aiming to construct new secondary and primary schools in the medium term.

I have continually made the case at a national level for extra school funding, and am delighted that the Government have announced a massive £14 billion package of funding for our schools, meaning increases to the budgets of all schools in the constituency.

After much lobbying, including directly with the Health Secretary, we have secured an additional £400 million of new investment for **Watford General Hospital**. This hospital is so important to our community and is used by many residents, including me – my son was born there. This funding will build a new emergency and specialist care facility at the current site, including a new Accident and Emergency department, OBGYN services, paediatrics and interventional radiology.

It forms part of the £33bn a year of extra funding the Government has pledged for the NHS by 2023.



I have also worked to secure the future of **Potters Bar Community Hospital**. After continual campaigning, I have secured guarantees from **Herts Valley Clinical Commissioning Group** and the **Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust** that the Hospital is remaining open and is integral to their future plans for healthcare in Hertsmere.

As our community grows it is vital we have the infrastructure and public services to match. A state-of-the-art health hub in Borehamwood would bring together and maximise the resources of all our separate local GPs. The CCG remain committed to providing the necessary funding for this much needed facility for the town and my next steps will be to work with leaders at Hertsmere Borough Council to provide a site.



I know that many residents continue to have concerns about the impact of crime and particularly burglaries in places like Potters Bar and Bushey. I meet regularly with local police to ensure that they understand these concerns and that we work together as a community to tackle them. As part of this, I am pleased that nationally we have committed to an extra 20,000 police officers to be delivered by 2024.

High streets and town centres are at the heart of the communities in our area so, I have successfully pressed the Government to introduce measures to **cut Business Rates**, and **Beer Duty**, provide additional money for **pothole repairs** and create the **High Street Regeneration Fund** for councils. I was also pleased that the campaign to suspend the road works on **Harper Lane**, spearheaded by Caroline Clapper, was successful - ending the unacceptable traffic problems they were causing.



## Defending the Countryside and our Environment



Hertsmere is a special place to live. We have the best of both worlds because of our proximity to London alongside the beautiful countryside we have on our doorstep. **Protecting green open spaces** therefore remains a top priority for me and I convene regular meetings with the Borough Council to discuss this and raise residents' concerns about new development.

I have been clear with the Council that any development must not be at the expense of the distinct charm and character of our individual towns and villages, and the open space between settlements which prevents ugly urban sprawl must be maintained.



I continue to fight for the future of Aldenham Reservoir, which I have known and loved since childhood, as well as the green spaces at Bushey Country Club.

I still vigorously oppose the construction of an unnecessary and disruptive **rail freight terminal near Radlett**. After years of campaigning with my neighbouring MP, Anne Main, including lobbying St Albans Council, Hertfordshire Council and the Department for Transport, I am hopeful we will finally be able to prevent this local nightmare happening.

Similarly, I successfully lobbied the Borough Council and the Government to introduce **tougher measures against unauthorised traveller camps** setting up in Hertsmere, including stronger trespass laws, bollards and more designated stopping points. This will protect our precious community green spaces like **Ripon Park**.

On a smaller scale, I was delighted that after my intervention with BT, two damaged and neglected traditional red phone boxes in Ridge and South Mimms have been restored to their former glory.

I was also pleased to plant a series of trees on **Woodcock Hill**, a wonderful green space in **Borehamwood**, as part of the **Queen's Commonwealth Canopy** project, a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the Commonwealth. More recently, as a sign of my commitment to tackling climate change, I planted an **Extinction Rebellion** tree on the Hill. Nationally the UK has led the way in cutting carbon emissions by 40 per cent, negotiating a new carbon reduction treaty at Paris and now legislating to be the first major country to commit to zero carbon emissions by 2050.



## Our Community

Last year I was proud to join the Leader of the Council in signing our joint **Rosh Hashanah Pledge**, to stand together at a local and national level against hatred, intolerance and discrimination - not just against the Jewish community, but our Muslim community, our Hindu community and our Christian community, all of whom suffer discrimination. It is important we work together to practice tolerance and integration and make Hertsmere a place where everyone, regardless of their faith, feels safe and happy.

I was delighted that after extensive lobbying and working with the Home Secretary, we have fully **banned Hezbollah** in the United Kingdom. People will no longer will people be able to fly the flags of this anti-Semitic terrorist organisation on the streets of Britain and I will continue to fight anti-Semitism both locally and nationally.



Equally, following the atrocious attacks on mosques in London, I reached out to our Muslim community to express my support and solidarity.

I have also enjoyed my many visits to **Bhaktivedanta Manor**, celebrating **Diwali** and **Janmashtami** as well as being kept up to date about the hard work the Manor does within our community. A highlight was persuading the then Prime Minister, David Cameron, to break the ground for the long awaited Haveli building.

**And over the years, my family and I have joined our Christian communities in Borehamwood, Bushey, Potters Bar and Radlett.** On a festive note as we reach the end of the year, **Christmas** in Hertsmere is a special time, and I very much enjoyed switching on the **Bushey and Potters Bar Christmas Lights** last year. I always take great comfort seeing the community in Hertsmere together at events like Bushey Acoustic Festival and Aldenham Arts Festival, which highlight what a special place Hertsmere is to live.



As your MP I have had the pleasure to visit many **schools, care homes, fire stations, GP surgeries, theatres, shops, pharmacies, post offices, colleges** and so much more.

Part of my work as your MP has been responding to individual pieces of casework, and in the past four years I have responded to around **34,000** cases and concerns. I was delighted that my campaign to stop the deportation of 90-year-old **Potters Bar** resident **Albert Dolbec** was successful and pleased to secure a crackdown on the use of dangerous laser pens with new tougher sentences after **Bushey** boy **Jonathan Marshall** suffered eye-damage from the sale of an illegal laser pen. Liaising with constituents directly on the matters that affect them is so valuable because it helps me to understand the issues that Hertsmere residents really care about.

## Out and About in Hertsmere

Finally, please see below for a small collection of pictures of my work and activity as your MP over the last few years.

