



Businesses reopen in Erith and Thamesmead

As you will know, the latest stage of the Covid roadmap began on April 12th, when businesses including non-essential retail and outdoor hospitality were allowed to reopen.

This was very good news for many local businesses as they begin to trade again after months of closure. During the reopening week, I visited a range of businesses across the constituency, including local shops, cafes, and pubs. I offered my support as they get back on their feet and begin to serve our community again.

I also recently [spoke in a debate in Parliament on the hospitality industry](#), where I outlined the struggles many in this sector have faced over the last year. Not only have they been closed for many months, but when they have been allowed to open they have faced a constantly changing set of rules and regulations. Many have not received the financial support they needed from the Government, and many are fearful for their future.

I will continue to speak up for Erith and Thamesmead businesses in Parliament. Too many of them have been let down by the Government over the last year.



Celebrating local women in Parliament on International Women's Day

On the 8th March we marked International Women's Day. I [used the parliamentary debate on IWD](#) to celebrate local women making a difference in our community.

They included Dr Sam Parrett OBE, principal of London and South East Education Group, who has done so much to ensure that young people were supported throughout the pandemic; Sue Stockham, an ovarian cancer survivor, who is using her experience to raise awareness about the signs of ovarian cancer and the importance of getting help quickly during the pandemic; Carmel Britto who is the founding director of LPF Kiddies Club, which offers educational enrichment to young children from African and Caribbean backgrounds; Kate Heaps who is the chief executive of Greenwich and Bexley Community Hospice; and Yeukai Taruvunga who is the founder and director of Active Horizons, a charity that works to support black and ethnic minority young people in Bexley.

I also paid tribute to the countless women who have served on the frontline in our constituency during the pandemic as doctors, nurses, carers, cleaners, and other key workers. I could not name them all, but we must not forget the sacrifices they have made and the burden that has fallen on them.

You can watch my speech [here](#).

Speaking up on local issues

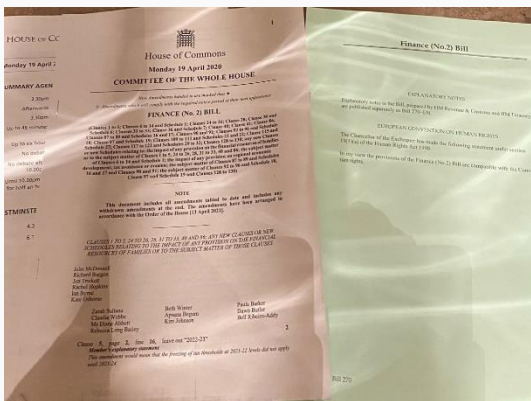
In recent weeks I have also spoken in a range of debates to raise issues relevant to Erith and Thamesmead.

I [spoke in a debate on the impact of the pandemic on people with a disability](#). I took this opportunity to raise concerns on behalf of constituents and local organisations - including Inclusion London and the Greenwich Association of Disabled People - including access to food during the pandemic, support for children with disabilities, and access to transport. You can watch my speech [here](#).

I also took part in a [debate on Black maternal healthcare](#). Shockingly, black women are four times more likely to die during pregnancy or up to six weeks postpartum, women of mixed heritage are three times more likely to die, and Asian women are twice as likely to die.

Each loss of life is a tragedy, and that disparity is unacceptable. It needs to be understood and it needs to change. I am proud to support the Five X More campaign to push the Government and NHS to take urgent action in this area. You can watch my speech [here](#).

Finally, I spoke in a [debate on online abuse of women elected representatives](#). I am determined that all women who take part in public life should not be subject to appalling abuse online. In the debate, I spoke about some of my own experiences as well as praising organisations, such as Glitch and the Jo Cox Foundation, working to end abuse of women online. You can watch my speech [here](#).



Scrutinising the Government on the Finance Bill

As part of my role as Shadow Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, I have been scrutinising the Government's Finance Bill.

The Finance Bill is an annual piece of legislation which gives effect to the Budget. I believe that the Government has the wrong priorities in this Bill. It is hitting families in their pockets while cutting social security and handing our key workers – including our NHS heroes – a real-terms pay cut.

In debates in the chamber and in committee, I have spoken on a number of important areas which affect people in Erith and Thamesmead and across the country. These include the [stamp duty holiday](#), [the introduction of freeports](#), and [the new plastic packaging tax](#).

I will continue to hold the Government to account for their economic policies and their impact on the finances of people in Erith and Thamesmead.

Helping local people with their problems

My office and I continue to help constituents with a wide range of problems including housing, social security, immigration, and many others.

The pandemic has vastly increased the level of casework I receive but I continue to be available to help everyone who needs it.

As ever, if I can be of assistance to you or your family, please do not hesitate to get in touch.