

From your MP – David Johnston, July 2020

The most exciting news since my last update is Grove station being put on a list of rail projects to be assessed for Government funding, part of the Beeching Reversal Fund commitment made in the Conservative manifesto. It does not mean that we will be successful this time round as there are 50 other projects on the list, but I have been plugging away with ministers since I was elected and will keep doing so until we are successful!

I have enjoyed being able to visit local shops, pubs and other businesses in Faringdon, Wallingford, Didcot, Wantage and elsewhere across the constituency as they reopen. Of course, some businesses didn't close and were grateful to the local community for the support they showed during lockdown – some have told me that products they never sold in normal times suddenly flew off the shelves!

In preparing to speak in the Business and Planning Bill – which lets pubs, bars and restaurants seat and serve us outside more easily – I discovered we have 85 pubs across the constituency, making Wantage and Didcot joint 7th out of 650 constituencies for the highest number of pubs. We have a huge range and they are at the heart of our towns and villages – do please support them and our shops and other businesses whenever you can.

In parliament it has been a busy time as we head towards recess. I was put on my first bill committee, in which you scrutinise legislation line by line, for the Trade Bill. The Trade Bill is designed to create continuity agreements for us with the countries we have been trading with through the EU, from South Africa to South Korea and it will also create a new Trade Remedies Authority to recommend action if UK producers are subjected to unfair practices. I was pleased to be a co-sponsor of the Local Electricity Bill, a 10-minute rule bill that would allow local communities to sell the electricity they generate themselves, as at the moment the costs are prohibitive.

After the recent unauthorised traveller encampments we had at Great Western Park and in the Ladygrove area, I raised the issues of anti-social behaviour that constituents experienced in both the House of Commons and with the Home Secretary, Priti Patel. I'm assured that measures that will enable these to be dealt with more quickly will be coming forward soon.

During recess, I will be trying to visit as many businesses, charities, individuals and other places of interest as I can, beginning with those that I was not able to visit due to lockdown. If you have a suggestion of somewhere you'd like to see me visit, do let me know via david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk