

From your Local MP - David Johnston March 2021

I was delighted that 2,620 people responded to my survey regarding Grove Station within just 2 weeks – thank you if you did. Some 98% of people respondents supported it being reopened! Over 90% said they would prefer it to a new bus service and 89% said they would use their car less if it reopened. We have stiff competition as there are 85 different bids to Government for stations or lines to reopen, but I will keep bashing away until we eventually succeed.

I continue to be frustrated with Royal Mail. Our postmen and women work hard but something is clearly not right as constituents have been complaining to me about mail deliveries for several months and the problem has been reported in the national news too. When I called a meeting with them last year they said they had gone from ‘a letter service delivering parcels to a parcel service delivering letters’ and it does seem to be the parcels they prioritise. Every fortnight I enter the ballot to have a debate in parliament about their service and hope I will be successful soon.

Unauthorised traveller camps were the subject of my speech in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill debate this month. The Bill has wrongly been accused of restricting our right to protest when actually the protest measures target actions we have seen by organised protest groups in the past year such as people gluing themselves to roads and stopping ambulances getting through, or shutting down printing presses because they don’t like the editorial line of the papers involved. It is a wide-ranging bill that increases the sentences or time served for a wide range of violent and sexual offences, but it also clamps down on unauthorised traveller camps which are a regular source of distress in the constituency. At the time of writing, in 20 of the past 34 weeks there has been at least 1 such camp somewhere in the Vale or South Oxfordshire, frequently involving mess, noise, vandalism and other anti-social behaviour. The Bill will allow the police to remove such camps more quickly and impose stiffer penalties.

I had my first appearance on the BBC’s Politics Live on 18<sup>th</sup> March, an interesting if slightly strange experience. Whereas you can see everyone’s face when you watch on television, each of us panellists look into a black screen on our computers as we can’t see anyone! We discussed various topics including the EU’s latest silly comments regarding the supply and safety of the AstraZeneca vaccine, which has again been confirmed as completely safe. Despite the noise, we shouldn’t worry – we’ve now vaccinated over 25 million people, half the adult population, and remain on course to see every adult offered a jab by the end of July.

As ever, if I can help with anything then do email [david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk) .

David Johnston OBE MP | Member of Parliament for Wantage