

ANNA SOUBRY MP

Member of Parliament for Broxtowe

NEWSLETTER



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Hello again,

This is a mixed bag of news, views and dates for your diary. If you have been following the news you will know I have been particularly busy in the last few weeks, as my Private Member's Bill is set to be debated in Parliament on Friday (see below).

The future of our forests and woodlands

I would like to start by thanking everyone who has emailed me to express their concerns about the future of our forests and woodlands. Parliament is set to debate the matter tomorrow (Wednesday) after the opposition tabled a motion condemning the Government's plans for the future of our publicly owned forests. In fact, only 18% of our Forests are owned by the Government via the Forestry Commission, which both fells and sells wood and regulates our woodland areas.

Residents of Toton know the important role of the Forestry Commission which issued a re-stocking notice to the owners of land at Toton Sidings after they decimated many thousands of trees on the site. I have spoken with Caroline Spelman, the Secretary of State, about this part of the Forestry Commission's work and she assures me it will continue.

I have to say I think it's a little rich of the opposition to criticise the Government's plans given the last Government sold 25,000 acres of forest and woodland.

However, I have been struck by the number of emails I have received and the genuine concerns of many people on the issue; I can assure you I will raise all the concerns with Ministers and leave them in no doubt about the strength of feeling in Broxtowe.

The proposals regarding the woodlands are at a consultation stage and the consultation document can be found on the Defra website

<http://ww2.defra.gov.uk/news/2011/01/27/englands-forests/>. I would urge people please to take part in the consultation.

Wednesday's debate is not a final decision but a call for a re think which I think is premature at this stage as the consultation has only just begun, so I am not inclined to support the motion.

What I think is important to remember is that Heritage Forests, like Sherwood Forest (which is currently owned and run by a charitable trust), the Forest of Dean and New Forest will not be sold to the private sector. The Government plans would mean voluntary, charitable and private sectors would have a greater role in the management and ownership of forests and woodlands currently owned by the Forestry Commission. Rights of way and public footpaths would continue to be protected and as most woods and forests form part of the green belt they will continue to be protected from development. I will post more on the subject on my

web site www.anna4broxtowe.com

Arrested people are entitled to their privacy – Private Members Bill.

My Private Member's Bill receives its Second Reading on Friday (February 4th). You may remember I was drawn in sixth place last May and chose my subject at the time - as it happens recent events have made it highly topical.

Towards the end of last year the media reported the arrest of a former teacher in Bristol following the murder of Joanna Yeates; I believe there was a disgraceful media "feeding frenzy" that divulged details of his private life which destroyed his reputation.

In the past, when I worked as a journalist, the reporting of this man's personal life, the slurs and innuendos would not have been published and neither would his name and his address. Unfortunately, the media will not self regulate and so I propose it should be a criminal offence to publish the name or address of an arrested person until such time as he or she is charged. But, my Bill would allow the police, the arrested person or the press to apply to a Judge for leave to print the name and address if it was in the interests of justice or the public interest.

There's been a healthy interest from the media with reports in most of the national papers and the Nottingham Evening Post. I was also live on the BBC Radio 4 Today programme and did a recorded interview with Radio Nottingham.

I am pleased that The Independent newspaper is backing my bill and I have had emails and phone calls of support including journalists throughout the media. For more details about my Bill please check out my web site www.anna4broxtowe.com and Parliaments web site <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmbills/009/11009.i-i.html>

Stapleford Walk In Centre

On January 13th, I went to the first meeting as part of the consultation about the future of the Walk In Centre which is highly valued by people in Stapleford and other parts of Broxtowe . I have written to the PCT about a number of matters that are causing considerable frustration to campaigners, notably our desire to obtain a full breakdown of the £860,000 a year the PCT pays for the service. On a more positive note it seems local GP's are now making a concerted effort to improve the service they offer to people in the event of the walk-in centre closing. However, I remain opposed to the closure of the walk-in centre.

As residents of Stapleford will know the Care Centre, or LIFT building, was built a few years ago at a cost of £11.4 million and was intended to house various organisations and services. Unfortunately the building is one third empty and to compound matters, the building was constructed as a result of a PFI agreement which will run for at least another twenty years at considerable cost to the tax payer - full or empty. In relation to the future of the Care Centre building we need a radical approach to make full use of it, to include not just the borough and county council but the police, local businesses, charity and voluntary organisations. I have discussed the future of the Centre with the PCT and others; my aim now is to bring everyone together and make the building work for the benefit of the people who have to pay for it!

Anthony Giles

Thank you to everyone who helped bring Anthony back from Thailand. Anthony has now been discharged from the QMC and is back home in Stapleford.

Rumpletums Community Café, Kimberley

I am more than happy to give a plug for a really excellent idea that is getting off the ground. The idea came from parents at the Foxwood Foundation School and Technology College in Bramcote which is a special school for children aged from 3 to 19 who have moderate to

severe learning difficulties and, in some cases, additional physical disabilities. The difficulty is that there is shortage of post 19 training opportunities so, in the words of Jeff Buck who is working hard on the project, "we decided to set up a not-for-profit community café project to offer supported training and employment opportunities for those young people who wanted them." Rumbletums is the result and they have started the project at The Hub in Kimberley on the corner of Victoria and Newdigate Street. Notts County and Broxtowe Borough Councils have offered help and support and other organisations are interested. If you want any more info or feel you could help in some way please let me know and I will put you in touch with Jeff and the team.

Chinese New Year Celebrations – Beeston, Saturday February 5th

The celebrations begin in Beeston Square from 10am on Saturday February 5th and continue throughout the day ending at Bartons from 1pm until 4pm where there will be all manner of events including performances, artwork and stalls. Beeston is rightly proud of its Chinese community and I am looking forward to visiting the Chinese School having met the head Dr Yi Wang. I will be attending the start of the celebrations before my advice surgery in Nuthall on Saturday.

Chetwynd Barracks Development / Chilwell Meadows

The work on making good the roads and pavements is (finally) underway and I am hopeful the tarmac will soon be laid. I have had a few complaints and requests from residents in relation to aspects of the work and am liaising with the lead builder to try and resolve them.

Advice Surgery details.

If you would like to attend one of my advice surgeries then please contact me by email (anna.soubry.mp@parliament.uk) or by ringing Rebecca at the constituency office (0115 9436507)

Feb 5 Nuthall

Feb 12 Stapleford

Feb 26 Kimberley - this will be a drop in surgery. More details nearer the time.

March 4 Toton

March 19 Beeston

Meetings

Many thanks to everyone I've met up with in the last few weeks, notably my sincere thanks to all the soldiers, service personnel and families I met on my visit to **Chetwynd Barracks**. Chetwynd is right to be proud of its support and training for TA and Reservists going out to serve with 49 Brigade and the rest of our troops in Afghanistan.

I met with staff at **Boots** and inevitably talked about the need to improve the A453 and the work place parking levy – I continue to campaign for the former and against the latter!

In the next few weeks I am meeting with traders on **Beeston/Chilwell High Road** in particular to talk about compensation as a result of the planned tram works. I have met with a representative of Beeston's **BID** who have my support in their efforts to make the town a great place to shop, work and live.

Cossall and Trowell Open Cast Mining

I am delighted that Kimberley Town Council has agreed to make money available to fight UK Coal's plans for open cast mining at Cossall/Trowell and hope other parish councils will follow suit. I'm arranging another meeting with elected representatives from parish, town, Borough and County Councils in the next few weeks. As soon as we have fixed a date for a public meeting I will let you know.

Cuts in public expenditure and our Library service

Notts County Council have announced a stepping back from the proposed cuts in Library

opening hours and I would like to think that my representations on the subject have had some bearing on the decision. Toton Library was set to have its hours reduced to just over eight a week and that has now been doubled.

I try to make my email newsletters non partisan but I think there is a need to remind us all of a few facts. In the run up to last year's General Election all three political parties agreed the deficit had to be reduced as a matter of priority and that public spending would accordingly have to be cut. Labour would have made cuts of 20% and would have included the NHS, Education, the police and defence in their cuts programme.

You may remember Alistair Darling's predictions that Labour would make cuts greater than "Thatcher" and that we faced severe economic times on a scale not seen in 70 years. The deficit is Labour's legacy and was caused not just by a worldwide economic crisis but significantly, by massive overspending by the then Government fuelled by debt. That's why our deficit is the largest of any of the countries in the G20.

The Coalition Government has been forced to make cuts in public expenditure, however spending on the NHS will rise, spending on schools has been ring fenced and defence has been cut by 8% over four years.

Nationally and locally Labour are suffering from a huge dose of amnesia! Bizarrely, in Broxtowe Labour activists give publicity and support to organisations opposed to **all** cuts in public expenditure.

Nottinghamshire has 61 Libraries compared to Derbyshire and Leicestershire which have 42 each. Notts is **not** closing any Libraries and whilst I remain concerned about the proposed cuts in opening hours at Toton, Inham Nook and Stapleford - Beeston is set to lose five hours a week leaving a total of over 50 hours.

Prisoner voting rights

There is widespread opposition to prisoners being given the vote. The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR, which is nothing to do with the European Union or the Human Rights Act) made a ruling five years ago that the longstanding principle was illegal. The last Government put the issue not so much on the back burner as off the hob. In the meantime solicitors signed up clients in custody to pursue compensation from the Government for being denied the vote. Any such actions could cost us many millions of pounds so the Coalition Government has decided to sort out the matter once and for all.

There's been talk of allowing prisoners sentenced to less than four years the vote but denying it to ones serving over four years. There appears to be no logic to determining four years as the "cut off" as the previous distinction between prisoners who received under or over four years was abolished some time ago.

With considerable reluctance I accept we are bound by the judgment – though I believe it is wrong that the ECHR can, in effect, determine the matter and not Parliament. I am currently working with colleagues to find a solution to the problem and at the moment very much favour a proposal from fellow barrister Robert Buckland MP that anyone sentenced to a custodial sentence in the Crown Court would lose their right to vote. I would greatly appreciate your views on the issue – and your ideas as to how this tricky matter might be solved.

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

Thank you again to everyone who has emailed me on this subject. The scheme cost over half a billion pounds a year and was available to 16-18 year olds in households with incomes up to 30,800 a year. The last Government commissioned a survey of youngsters

who received EMA and discovered that 9 out of 10 of those young people would have gone into further education with or without EMA. So there were real concerns that EMA was an expensive scheme that wasn't targeting young people from the poorest of households. The Coalition will abolish the scheme and replace it with a scheme that makes sure those youngsters who face genuine barriers to participation in education get the financial support they need. Please email if you would like to know why I support the Government's policy on EMA and please tell me your views on the subject. I would particularly like to hear from youngsters and their families who currently receive EMA.

The future of the NHS

Yesterday saw the second reading of the health and Social Care Bill, which I supported. It was an interesting debate and especially as the majority of MP's who spoke with a background of working in the NHS were from the Government benches. I do believe the NHS needs reform and that transferring the power and responsibility for decisions about NHS services into the hands of doctors and nurses at the frontline will deliver considerably improvements and reduce costly bureaucracy. It means that in Broxtowe the well established North West Notts GP consortium will manage and control the money and decisions to deliver the very best care and treatment their patients need and want throughout Broxtowe. Please let me know if you would like more details as to why I support the reform of the NHS.

If you have an issue of concern, a point of view, or I can help in any way then please contact me.

As ever,
Anna

Contact Anna either at the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
or at Barton House, 61 High Road, Chilwell NG9 4AJ
0207 219 7211 or 0115 9436507
anna.soubry.mp@parliament.uk

www.anna4broxtowe.com
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