



Tessa's February Update

Hello everyone,

Parliament was pretty lively last month! Thank you if you've written or spoken to me to share your views, concerns and ask questions. I take the issues you raise to Westminster, and press Ministers to make changes where they're needed.

Whilst the Government has partially reversed its disastrous Budget announcement on Business Rates rises for pubs and other hospitality venues, more support for the wider tourist industry is needed, so I will continue to raise this.



It was fab to meet up with Martin and Eleanor Thatcher at the National Association of Cider Makers' event in Parliament. Martin is the NACM's Chair and he spoke passionately about the importance of cider-making and its contribution to the environment and the economy. Cider-makers need details of changes to labelling and recycling regulations so they can plan and prepare for the future, and I'll do what I can to press Ministers to explain exactly what's wanted and by when.

Having received messages from local Childminders, I've pressed the Treasury to reinstate the 10% wear and tear tax allowance for this group of workers. Their homes are put through their paces with children's potty training, learning to eat with a knife and fork, drinking from an open cup and indoor play. It's important

that this allowance is reinstated or an alternative put in place for those who offer home-based childcare.

I've continued my work on the Public Office (Accountability) Bill (known as the 'Hillsborough Law'). Yet again, the Government has rejected Amendment 23, which would require a High Court Judge to decide - in closed session - what safeguards should be in place and how much security and intelligence information can be passed on to an Inquiry, Inquest, Investigation or Independent Panel. This happens now, so it's not difficult. The Hillsborough families, amongst others, have been fighting for this for 35 years. Experience tells them the law must insist everyone in public office tells the truth. No ifs, no buts.

I'm honoured to have been elected Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Flooding and Flooded Communities. I've explained to the Flooding Minister that if all the waterways in our county were put end to end, they would stretch from Somerset to Singapore, some 8,000 miles or 11,000 km. Working cross-party with MPs from other parts of the country experiencing flooding as the result of extreme weather is helpful when considering what measures should be taken to protect the occupants of planned and new buildings from future flooding.

As ever, if you have any concerns or anything you'd like to talk to me about, please write, call or come and see me.

No appointment is necessary – it's first come, first served. If you can't come to meet me, I'll come to see you.

Thank you.

Tessa

