



Tessa's April 26 Update

Hello everyone,



Another busy month! I attended the annual Legal Service which marked the appointment of the new High Sheriff of Somerset, Peter Dixon. Somerset's beautiful ceremonial sword and scabbard are kept safely by High Sheriffs during their terms of office.

I ran 29 surgeries last month – 13 at my regular monthly venues and 'extras' in 16 rural cafés, pubs – including community hubs, a garden centre café, a beer shed and two village pub nights. Thank you if you came to speak to me. I value listening to your views and concerns, which inform my work as your MP in Westminster.

Locally, I was proud to join Amnesty International's local representatives to mark International Women's Day. They campaign relentlessly for access to legal and welfare support for the many female prisoners held in terrible conditions across the globe.

I enjoyed a fascinating visit to Lyonsleaf, a local all-female business team producing organic skincare products. Their founder Vicky and Ops Manager Cathy were two of several local female entrepreneurs and business leaders who joined me at my first 'Women in Business Brunch', where my colleague

Sarah Gibson, MP for Chippenham, spoke with insight, passion and experience about running a business.

It was a pleasure to welcome Tim Farron, MP and Lib Dem Spokesperson for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to my 'patch'. We spent a day visiting inspiring people and projects, including the South West Dairy Development Centre at Beard Hill, and Tim spoke to a local audience, answering a multitude of questions from farmers and others. If you'd like to know about future events, please contact me.



In Westminster, I met the 'real' Ash Smith and Peter Hammond of 'Dirty Business' fame, discussing the newly-released sewage spill data for 2025 and what can and should be done to clean up our rivers, streams and rhynes. I also attended a joint NFU/WWF/RSPCA meeting advocating fair trade - high standards for food imports and I've met the Energy Minister to highlight the problems for rural households dependent on increasingly expensive oil for their heating and hot water.

In Parliament I have spoken on a number of matters, raising the following:

- * the importance of returning to 0.7% spending on overseas aid as both humanitarian and national security measures
- * securing guarantees that foreign national prisoners complete their UK Court ordered prison terms when they're transferred to their 'home' country
- * rigorous monitoring by the Home Office of the contract for tagging offenders released early or on licence
- * whether drug company incentives should be investigated as these may influence which drugs are prescribed
- * reforming the regulation of Funeral Directors
- * holding Government to account for top level briefings given to Peter Mandelson before his vetting was completed
- * pressing the Government on the need for pumps to be ready prior to

flooding, not after it happens

- * outlining the need for strong measures and clear accountability for safeguarding in small religious organisations and cults

- * ensuring planning regulations protect the accessibility of hospital helipads for air ambulance use

If you have a concern or question, please contact me or come to a ‘surgery’. No appointment is necessary – they are all first come, first served. If you can’t come to meet me, I’ll come to see you.

Thank you.

Tessa

