

Welcome to my
Newsletter



Christmas 2023



I have lots of favourite things about this time of year - from spending time with my family, to seeing our local area all dressed up in lights and Christmas decorations.

But one of my real pleasures is finally getting the chance to stop and think about the year that's just been.

I remember sitting down to write my Christmas newsletter last year, with snow on the ground and a turbulent twelve months behind us, wondering what 2023 had in store.

Thankfully, it's been different.

We've been able to knuckle down and get on with delivering our promises. We've halved inflation, we've hit our target to get 20,000 more police officers on our streets, and we've met our pledge to hire 50,000 more nurses in the NHS, as well as so much else.

But there's still lots more to do, including in our health system which I have been tackling over the last year as a Health Minister - in fact, I spent even more time testing it than I bargained for getting treatment for my broken ankle!

We started preparing for winter earlier than ever before, and in recent weeks we've had some really positive updates - with waiting lists starting to fall and ambulance response times down from last year.

At the same time, we're changing the way our health system works to make it faster, fairer, and simpler. That means shifting the focus away from hospital and emergency care and into the community, where we can help people live healthy and independent lives for longer.

One of the things we know makes life so much better for patients and care home residents is having loved ones come to visit.

Especially at Christmas, love can be as powerful as any drug we can administer -- and that's why we're changing the law to make visiting a fundamental standard of care in care homes, hospitals and hospices.



Helen Whately @Helen_Whately · Dec 5

It was a pleasure to go to [@NortonHouseCH](#) and talk to residents about the importance of spending time with loved ones.

Visiting isn't just a nice-to-have – it's a cornerstone of good care and wellbeing.

That's why we're changing the law to recognise how much visiting matters.



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I've also spent the last year working really hard for our local area - from supporting people with the cost of living, to cracking down on rural crime, to working to get Faversham's swing bridge repaired.

We've had some really positive updates since my autumn newsletter.

I have campaigned for upgrades to Brenley Corner and Blue Bell Hill ever since I became an MP, and last month we finally got the [green light we were looking for from ministers](#).

There was more good news too when we found out local tip closure plans have been put on hold - a huge thank you to over 3,000 people who signed my petition.

I also wrote to Maidstone Borough Council about the proposed Heathlands and Lidsing garden villages, setting out my view that we need improvements to local roads and infrastructure before new homes are built, as well as my concerns about the wider impact on our local environment.

In the last couple of months I've also been bringing people together to work on my 5 local priorities for Faversham and Mid Kent.

I'm working with GPs, pharmacies and dentists to increase the number of appointments available locally.

I'm working with police and local councillors to get response times down across the constituency.

I'm working with schools, colleges and employers to get investment and opportunities for local pupils.

I'm working with councils, community groups and charities to protect and restore our local environment.

And I'm working with ministers, councils and businesses to help grow our local economy.

Thank you to everyone I've worked with this year to make things better locally - it never ceases to amaze me what we can achieved when we work together.

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and new year.



Earlier this month I visited businesses across the constituency to mark Small Business Saturday

News in Brief

Since my Autumn newsletter I have:

-  Received over **3,700** casework emails
-  Helped my constituents with over **2,000** new cases
-  Got commitments from the Prime Minister on Brenley Corner and Blue Bell Hill
-  Helped get local tip closures put on hold
-  Raised concerns about Heathlands and Lidsing garden villages with Maidstone Borough Council
-  Launched our local Nature Recovery Plan
-  Fought for broadband blackspots like Wichling and Throwley
-  Helped Maidstone Amateur Boxing club find a new home
-  Worked to get assurances about Cleve Hill Solar safety
-  Held my regular constituent surgeries to discuss difficult housing, benefits, and business issues, as well as lots else



Green light for Brenley Corner and Blue Bell Hill!

After years of campaigning, we've finally secured a commitment to upgrade these congested junctions.

[Find out more here](#)

Garden village concerns haven't gone away

The latest Heathlands and Lidsing plans don't address my concerns on infrastructure and the environment

[Read my letter to the Council here](#)



Great news in our fight to save local tips

The planned closures have been put on hold for now - thank you



to the 3,000 people who signed my petition

[Read more here](#)

A win for local ticket offices after my campaign

Many older and disabled passengers still rely on ticket offices, and I've been fighting to protect their access.

[Find out more here](#)



Plan to free up GP appointments underway

I've been visiting our local pharmacies to find out if they're ready for January's roll-out of Pharmacy First.

[Find out what they'll be able to do](#)





Helen Whately MP

October 23 · 🌐

As anyone who's been through it recently will know, Faversham underpass is in real need of some TLC.

That's why I'm bringing together a team from [Network Rail](#), [Faversham Town Council](#), [West Faversham Community Centre](#) and others to try and get it sorted. Together we want to make it a space we can finally be proud of.

Keep an eye out for updates in the coming weeks.



👍 41

18 comments 1 share

Lend a hand with our Faversham underpass project!

I'm putting together a team to fix up Faversham's underpass and get a mural celebrating the town's history installed.

If you'd like to contribute to the design, or you're a local artist keen to get involved, we'd love to hear from you.

Please email me at helen.whately.mp@parliament.uk

Keeping up the fight for broadband blackspots

Places like Wichling and Throwley are still waiting for a good connection, and I'm working hard to get them one.

[Read the latest update](#)



A safer crossing for Hollingbourne students

I'm working with Kent County Council and local councillors to get a safer crossing on the A20 for local students



[Find out more](#)

Leading the campaign for swing bridge repairs

Local campaigners and I are still fighting for Faversham's swing bridge - helped by the Transport Department

[Read about our recent meeting](#)



Launching our local nature recovery plan

We're launching nature recovery plans across the UK, and recently I was in Lenham to launch Kent's.

[Read all about the plan here](#)

Maidstone Apprenticeship Fair back again in March

My annual Maidstone Apprenticeship Fair is back on 8 March - hosted with 6 other Kent MPs. Please get in touch with my office if you're thinking about an apprenticeship, or if you're a business looking to take people on.

[Get in touch with my office](#)

Maidstone Apprenticeship Fair
FRIDAY 8 MARCH
9.30AM – 1PM
MAIDSTONE LEISURE CENTRE
MOTE PARK ME 15 7RN

Hosted by

- TRACEY CROUCH MP
- HELEN GRANT MP
- TOM TUGENDHAT MP
- HELEN WHATELY MP
- GREG CLARK MP
- LAURA TROTT MP
- GORDON HENDERSON MP

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CONSTRUCTION • FINANCE
HEALTHCARE • HOSPITALITY
MILITARY • PUBLIC SERVICES
AND MANY MORE

FREE ENTRY



Helen Whately MP

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I dropped in to the wonderful Faversham Cottage Hospital today to catch up with staff and meet some of the patients.

They're doing a brilliant job helping people recuperate. The patients I met couldn't have been more complimentary about the care they were getting.

The staff are dedicated to helping people get back on their feet and ready to go home, getting back as much independence as possible after accidents and illnesses.

It's wonderful to have the hospital on our doorstep and so well supported by the community - especially by The Friends of Faversham Cottage Hospital.



👍❤️ 15

2 comments

If there's anything else I can help you with please email me at helen.whately.mp@parliament.uk

Please pass this email onto anyone you think might be interested and encourage them to sign up to these newsletters on my website, [here](#).



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