

# Alan Whitehead MP

*Autumn newsletter to constituents in Southampton Test*

Southampton Test Constituency: Bevois (part of), Coxford, Freemantle, Millbrook, Portswood and Swaythling, Redbridge and Shirley.



*Celebrating the announcement of the election result on the morning of the 6th May*

## Thank you Southampton

**As this is the first regular newsletter to be produced since the May General Election, I would like to thank the electorate of Southampton Test for returning me once more as your MP.**

I will do my best over the next five years once again to repay the trust you have placed in me. Election campaigns are exhausting events for all involved, but they concentrate into a few weeks an opportunity to visit every corner of the constituency and talk to people about what concerns them about their street, their community and their country.

Whether or not you voted for me in the election, I am of course anxious to represent the concerns and interests of all constituents, and you can find details on the back of this newsletter about how to contact me should you need to do so.

## Sporting success

**Earlier this year Culture, Media & Sports Minister, Tessa Jowell and I were treated to a guided tour of Redbridge Community School. The secondary school has 'Specialist Sports College' status with some of the best facilities in the region.**

Both Redbridge Community School and Tessa Jowell have had a lot to celebrate recently. Redbridge received an 'outstanding' Ofsted Report in June whilst Tessa Jowell's tireless work helped bring the Olympics to London.

I have no doubt that some of today's pupils from Southampton schools will one day contribute to Olympic success in 2012.



*Alan Whitehead with Culture, Media & Sports Minister (and now Olympics Minister) Tessa Jowell on a visit to Redbridge Community School earlier this year.*

Out and about this year...

## Promoting our Port

I don't think anyone in Southampton underestimates the importance of our port to our city and nationally as one of the two leading ports for the imports and exports of cargo. I have been active in bringing together a group to represent port interests like rail access, vehicle loading facilities and regulations concerning port operations.

I was pleased to see the final launch of the group take place at the Port seminar held in the city in June.



*Speaking at the Southampton Port seminar in June*

One of the possible new regulations that will affect the working of the port is a new European Union Directive on access to port services. This could change the way the port is organised, and security of employment within it. I have made representations to the Government and spoken in a debate in the House of Commons asking that the Directive be rejected or at least substantially revised.

## City Safety

Following a survey I carried out on crime and anti-social behaviour, I spent an evening accompanying our community wardens on their patrol work around the city. The Southampton scheme - which is Government funded and operates in partnership with the police - is nationally recognised for providing good practice.

The visit gave me the opportunity to learn more about the City Safety Team and put the points raised from the survey to those directly involved with tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.

## Who cares for the carers?



*Raising the profile of young carers at the 6th Young Carers Festival*

**This summer I have been paying particular attention to the unsung but vital work thousands of Southampton people undertake in caring for people in their homes – be they husbands or wives, children or parents. Recently I attended a meeting of the Lordshill Carers Group to find out for myself more about their concerns and problems.**

One particular group of carers, though, deserves particular admiration and respect – those young carers who assist sick or disabled parents, often sacrificing their own social lives and sometimes school studies in order to do so. They often have enormous responsibilities that belie the images some people have of what young people can and cannot do.

This summer I attended and spoke at the National Young Carers' Festival at the YMCA Centre, Fairthorne Manor, and followed this up by speaking to the Young Carers Project based at Southampton Voluntary Services. One aim I want to achieve is the establishment of a dedicated teacher responsible for liaising with young carers in each city school.



*(Left) At an induction day for new workers of the Young Carers Project run by Southampton Voluntary Services.*

## In Parliament

The new Parliament has appointed new Select Committees and I have been placed on two: the Constitutional Select committee, which examines the work of the Government in legal constitutional and electoral matters; and the Commons Standards and Privileges committee which hears complaints about the conduct of MPs in respect of the rules of the House.

I have spoken in several debates in the House over the last few months, including those on local council taxation and electoral registration in the main Chamber. I have asked oral questions on the implementation of the Clean Neighbourhoods Act, the Waste Electrical Equipment Directive, and on the recent decision of BAT to cease cigarette production in Southampton. I have also put in a number of written questions on construction timber in landfill, the provisions of the Clean Neighbourhoods Act and resources for Electoral Registration Officers.

In addition to holding a number of meetings with Ministers about the provisions in my Private Members Bill (see below), I have met with Local Government Minister, David Miliband, to discuss proposals on the review of Council Tax, and have set up meetings on the provision of retraining and re-employment assistance for workers losing their jobs as a result of the BAT announcement.

## Your Bill sir!

Most of the time legislation in Parliament is designed by the Government - the recent Queen's speech in the new Parliament announced over thirty Bills that the Government would introduce to Parliament this session. However, now and again MPs get the chance to design their own legislation through the Private Members Bill Ballot - and this summer I was fortunate to get the chance to do so by coming ninth in the ballot for this session.

My **'Management of Energy in Buildings Bill'** seeks to amend planning regulations to ease permission for the installation of micro-generation devices (like solar panels and mini wind turbines) on houses, and to amend building regulations to require all newly built houses to generate a minimum proportion of the energy the house is likely to consume.

Commenting on my Bill, Tony Juniper, Director of Friends of the Earth (FoE) said it **"would make real progress towards cutting greenhouse gas emissions, something we have to do this year, and every year from now on"**.

## Small or atomic?

Should we build a new generation of nuclear power stations to replace our ageing power stations, or should we put our faith for the future in renewable energy? I have asked questions in Parliament on the subject, and have also written a pamphlet 'Small or atomic?' on the choice we have ahead of us.

- **To read my pamphlet 'Small or atomic?' visit [www.alan-whitehead.org.uk](http://www.alan-whitehead.org.uk)**

## Current campaigns

### Freedom from Fear



I recently met with Shopworkers' Union Usdaw and a number of teenagers to support the Union's 'freedom from fear' campaign - pushing for protection from harassment for shop staff and for a national proof of age scheme for young people buying cigarettes and liquor in shops.

### Houses in Multiple Occupancy

Last year's Housing Act introduced new standards and a licensing scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). The new law seeks to raise physical and management levels of HMOs and for the first time widens the definition to include student houses.

I have written to a number of residents in areas where there are high levels of HMOs to find out what licensing measures they would like.

### Civil Service Sports Ground



The former playing ground in Freemantle has now been sold to Bovis Homes. Whilst plans by the new owners have yet to materialise, major development on the site is clearly a possibility.

Current planning permission only allows for very limited development and I will continue to support residents in pressing for as much of the land as possible to be used for leisure and recreation.

# Surgeries and contacting me

I continue to hold 4 surgeries a month across the constituency where people can see me individually. I'm always happy to talk to constituents about any concerns they have on local and national issues. If you would like my help on an individual issue, here are some notes on what I can and can't do.



## What I can help with

As your MP I can investigate problems you may be experiencing with either central or local government or with public agencies. I am only able to take up issues for people who either live or work in the Southampton Test constituency. Some issues, like local planning decisions are best addressed to your local city councillors.

## How to get my help

If you wish to get in touch please contact my office using the details at the bottom of this page. My staff can help talk you through the next steps, and if appropriate, book an appointment at one of my surgeries. Both my staff and I will do our best to respond to your concerns promptly.

## Some useful contacts

Here are some useful numbers of organisations who may also be able to assist you.

Southampton Citizen's Advice Bureau	8022 1406
Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)	8079 8498
Southampton City Council - Housing Advice Service	8083 2254
Southampton Advice & Representation Centre (SARC)	8043 1435
Southampton City Council - Actionline	0800 519 1919

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