

Alan Campbell MP

Community News February 2022



Good afternoon

Welcome to the latest edition of my Community News. I hope you are keeping well and staying safe.

In this newsletter you will find information on some of the recent meetings and events I have attended online and in person as well as details of the work of local and national organisations I am supportive of.

As ever, I have included some links to various organisations that may be of help to people. Please be assured that all links have been tested and are safe to click through to. I do hope you find it informative and useful.

If you need to get in touch please call 0191 2571927 or email

campbellal@parliament.uk

You can also find useful information on my website at

www.alancampbellmp.co.uk or on Facebook at;

https://www.facebook.com/AlanCampbellForTynemouth/?eid=ARCt_uybFykBHP9Ze74JblWM5zGUiDhFgl8FizrUZK7Zmr1vijiCM68TFI_cGhOnsm_TvNnVuiYMhiLm

I continue to write my fortnightly column for the News Guardian, you can access these [here](#)

Best wishes

Alan Campbell MP

Tynemouth

Holocaust Memorial Day



Holocaust Memorial Day is an important opportunity for to reflect on the darkest times of European history. I signed the Holocaust Educational Trust's Book of Commitment in the House of Commons and committed to remember those who were murdered during the Holocaust and in genocides since. I was also pleased to see that North Tyneside Council lit St Mary's Lighthouse to join the national 'Light the darkness' moment on the day.

Meeting with pupils at Southlands



I have joined a number of local schools recently as they find out online more about how Parliament works. I recently spoke to students from Southlands

school about how Parliament works and about my work as an MP. I agreed to take up some issues on their behalf with Ministers and will report back to them.

Clinical Commissioning Group Meeting



I had my regular catch up with North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group and the Elected Mayor Norma Redfearn. We discussed the impact of the Health and Care Bill which will introduce another unwelcome organisational change to the NHS. We also discussed mental health provision particularly children's mental health.

Police Meeting



I went along to Police HQ at Middle Engine Lane to meet the new North of Tyne Area Commander of Northumbria Police Mark Hall following a virtual catch up meeting with Chief Constable Winton Keenan. We discussed policing across my constituency and the challenge of planned changes to the police funding formula. In this year's funding settlement any extra resource is welcome but a greater proportion is being asked each year from local households as the proportion of the central Government grant shrinks. Even if the Governments plan for extra officers happens Northumbria will still have lost 500 officer posts over the last 12 years.

Storm Arwen and Malik



Storm Arwen and Storm Malik caused devastating damage across North Tyneside. Many homes, businesses, and public places were severely damaged with many forced to move out of their homes in the run up to Christmas. I want to thank everyone across our community including Council staff for their ongoing efforts to repair the damage.

However, I am concerned at the lack of response from Government on this matter and I am joining with the Mayor of North Tyneside Norma Redfearn in asking the Government to commit to a dedicated package of support to help local residents and businesses in the recovery.

Every report is being assessed and dealt with in priority order. If you've waited to report an issue because it didn't seem too much of a priority, or you've only just noticed it, then please use the following reporting tools.

Power

<https://northernpowergrid.com/power-cuts/report-a-power-cut...>

Trees

<https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/503/report-tree-issue...>

Council Housing Repairs

<https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/1308/repairs...>

Highways issues

<https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/337/report-problems-roads-pavements-and-traffic...>

Other emergency contacts if needed

<https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/423/emergency-contact-numbers>

Meeting with TUC – Keyworker Pay



I met with Liz Blackshaw the new TUC Northern Regional Secretary ahead of the annual Heart Unions week (14th to 20th February).

The Prime Minister has stated that a key aim of his government is to steer the UK towards a high wage, high skilled and high productivity economy. Yet many key workers across the public and private sector continue to face real terms cuts to wages, poverty pay and a growing cost of living crisis.

Visit to the Islamic Cultural Centre



It was good to drop into the Whitley Bay Islamic Cultural Centre to meet Misbah Hannan and other community leaders to discuss the work of the centre in the community and the concerns over the impact of the Nationality and Borders Bill. There is a fear that the Bill gives the Home Secretary unprecedented power to remove anyone's nationality without having to give a reason which is unsettling to people who have come to our country, worked hard and made a huge contribution to our communities as well as their sons and daughters who were born here and similarly contribute. It is wrong for

any Government to hold this threat over any community and I will be taking up those concerns with Ministers.

Refugee Action in Tynemouth



I also met recently with a group of residents who have also been working to raise awareness of concerns about the Government's Nationality and Borders Bill. The group have organised vigils on King Edward Bay and recently presented me with a Valentine's Card to show their support for asylum seekers. I have also pledged to raise these concerns with Ministers. We need a fair asylum system which honours our international commitments but which also works for the wider community.

Whitley Bay Pantomime



I thoroughly enjoyed the Whitley Bay Pantomime Society's performance of Cinderella which I saw at Whitley Bay Playhouse last month. Well done to Whitley Bay Pantomime Society for putting on such a good show.

Woodlawn Boxing Day Pudding Fun Run



It was disappointing but understandable that the Woodlawn Boxing Day Pudding Fun Run was cancelled this year due to covid concerns.

I'm pleased therefore that, with the help of North Shields Polytechnic Athletics Club the run will now go ahead on Sunday 20th February.

Save Our Buses campaign



Due to government cuts to local transport already struggling due to the huge fall in revenue through Covid and now facing the withdrawal of Government

support. A number of bus services across the constituency and North Tyneside are at risk.

Current routes at risk are:

11, 19, 41/41A, 42/42A, 44, 45, 333, 359, K1/K2 and W3

Evening cancellations: 1/1A (Go North East), 52, 53, 55, 57/57A, 311 and X8

As a result of North Tyneside Council increasing their funding to Nexus by £750,000 a number of the routes may be saved. I understand a number of tenders have gone out for operators to run some of the cancelled services however with many routes not currently commercially viable this is not a given.

I am hugely concerned about this impact of this on local our local community. Despite claims about levelling up, the Government spend £877.76 per head in London on transport compared to compared to £314.11 in the North of England.

I have written to the Government to ask that they implement a Bus Recovery Grant like they have done for Transport for London as a matter of urgency before vital services are lost.

You can sign the petition at:

<https://saventbuses.co.uk/>

Tyne Tunnel Changes



I know that a number of local residents remain concerned about the changes to charging at the Tyne Tunnel.

I recently met with Tyne Tunnel 2 to discuss the issues that have arisen. There are a number of improvements in the pipeline.

I raised concerns about early users of the system who were genuinely unaware of the changes and asked that that be reflected in TT2 response. There have also clearly been problems with the App including when people

register for prepayment. We discussed the question of signage which is really important and I agreed to take up the issue with the Department for Transport which is delaying signing changes off.

I also raised concern about the way complaints are dealt with.

We also discussed extending the payment window and the cost of fines. The cost of fines is set by law with TT2 required to recap the whole cost of the compliance procedure. Put simply if it does not fall on those who do not comply then it falls on those who do. The payment window model is based on similar systems elsewhere. I know that some have been arguing for a longer payment period but that would mean less compliance and in one model being suggested of 5 days could add 50p to every car journey. TT2 agreed to take away these and other suggestions and see what more can be done. I have agreed to meet with them again in the near future to see what progress has been made.

Metro Closure



There will be an extensive Metro closure for 5 days from Monday, February 21 to Friday, February 25 where no trains will run between Tynemouth and St James stations, while engineers carry out a major set of modernisation works to prepare for the arrival of the Metro's new £362m fleet.

I have been briefed by Nexus on the closure and have been assured that the works are vital to secure the future of Metro

Energy Prices and cost of living



Many local residents have contacted me recently concerned about rising energy prices and cost of living worries.

On Tuesday (1 February 2022), the House of Commons debated a windfall tax on oil and gas producers. I support calls on the Government to suspend VAT on fuel and introduce a windfall tax on the profits of North Sea oil and gas producers to help fund a package of support for families and businesses.

The Government prefers a plan which would “loan” households £200 off their bill to be paid back in £40 instalments over the next five years.

I am extremely concerned that the Chancellor’s announcement will still leave families in Britain – including some of the poorest – paying hundreds of pounds more for their energy from April when the energy price cap is lifted. I will continue to do all I can to urge the Government to take a different, fairer and more effective approach.

In my last Community News I outlined some of the help and support available.

World Cancer Day



I was proud to support World Cancer Day earlier this month.

I would like to thank Macmillan for all they do in our community. The Macmillan Support Line is available for everyone living with cancer and is open 7 days a week, 8am-8pm, on 0808 808 00 00.

Supporting research and improving cancer diagnosis and treatment must be a key priority for the Government. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact across society, and not least on cancer pathways, with delayed diagnoses, tests and treatment. It is right that Ministers prioritise cancer care in our recovery and I am urging the Government to invest properly to bring down waiting lists, tackle the backlog of unmet clinical need and improve cancer care. I am concerned that post pandemic waiting lists now stand at 6.1 million cases. But the reality is that the figure was 4.4 million at the start of Covid showing that before the pandemic underinvestment in the NHS during the previous decade had seen waiting lists virtually double. In 2010 there were 2.6 million people waiting for treatment

Samaritan's Brew Monday



The 3rd Monday in January is sometimes referred to as the most difficult day of the year or Blue Monday.

I am a supporter of the Samaritan's campaign which aims to "stop this myth about Monday being 'blue' and instead start a conversation over a brew."

I would also like to thank the volunteers at Samaritan's for all they do.

Cervical Cancer Prevention Week



Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust are raising awareness about how women can reduce their risk of cervical cancer. Over 3,200 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer every year in the UK, yet it is one of the only cancers that can be prevented and one day become a disease of the past.

Cervical screening (smear tests) are the best protection against the disease, followed by the HPV vaccine offered in schools. Yet cervical screening uptake is at a 21-year low in England. It is at just 71.4%, meaning that more than one in four women are not booking a potentially life-saving test.

Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust has published new research which has found young women who delay or don't go for cervical screening feel scared (71%), vulnerable (75%) and embarrassed (81%) at the thought of going. A worrying two thirds (67%) say they would not feel in control at the prospect of a test

<https://www.jostrust.org.uk/node/1076499>

Children's Mental Health Week



7 – 13 February 2022 is Children’s Mental Health Week.

As part of their youth OutRight campaign, UNICEF UK has been teaching schoolchildren about mental health and encouraging them to create and share Mental Health Declarations, outlining the support, policies, and resources children feel they need to ensure good mental health and wellbeing.

I know that many people share my concerns that funding cuts have seen worrying decrease in provision for young people’s mental health services. I have written to the Government to raise my concerns about this and urged the Government to act.

National Apprenticeship Week



National Apprenticeships Week recognises the enormous contribution made by apprentices and their employers in Tynemouth, giving people the chance to earn as they learn and delivering the skills our country needs to prosper. However, under the Conservatives these training opportunities have been disappearing especially for young people.

I am calling on the Government to adopt Labour's wage subsidy policy to boost opportunities for young people to secure our economy post pandemic.

Portillo Visit



Good to see Michael Portillo in Tynemouth as part of his Great Railway Journeys series. Here he is at Tynemouth Metro Station showing it's fantastic restoration, partly funded by millions of pounds from the SeaChange Fund introduced by the last Labour Government to kickstart the regeneration of seaside and coastal towns,

Help and Support

Last month I sent out an edition of my community news, collating useful sources of advice for the winter.

If you missed it, you can access it at <https://www.alancampbellmp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/107/2021/11/Community-News-Winter-Special.pdf>

And finally....

A huge congratulations to North Shield's Sam Fender on winning a Brit Award. I met Sam when filming the documentary about Lindisfarne's "Geordie Genius" Alan Hull - he really is a great ambassador for our area.



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