



Representing Billinge and Seneley Green, Blackbrook, Haydock, Moss Bank,  
Newton-le-Willows, Parr, Rainford and Windle

Dear Residents,

Welcome to my February newsletter which you can now encourage your friends and family to subscribe to [via this sign-up form on my website](#). I hope you find it interesting and please do feel free to contact me anytime using the details on the back page if you need my support.

### **Giving every child the best start in life in St Helens North**

Throughout much of my working life as a teacher and as council leader, during the general election campaign and since becoming our Member of Parliament, I have worked to do all I can to help give every child the best start in life, and to help families with the cost of living too. Labour's roll out of free breakfast clubs at every single Primary School will help to do both.

And I am absolutely delighted to say that [three St Helens North schools are among the first 750 Primary Schools to benefit](#) from the early adopter scheme.

Garswood Primary School, Ashurst Primary School in Blackbrook (which we rebuilt when I was council leader, pictured below), and PACE in Parr have all been chosen. This means they will begin the free clubs from April.

During her statement announcing the first schools to take part, [it was brilliant to hear the Secretary of State for Education champion the work that Carr Mill Primary has already done](#) as a model for the country to follow. I want to congratulate the headteacher Mr Maley, all the school staff, the children and their families for their outstanding efforts and I know that everyone will learn from them.

Shamefully, the Tories and Reform voted against this, and a raft of other measures designed to cut the cost of living for families around childcare and uniform costs.



# Defending our national interest, our allies, and our values

Like everyone else I have been concerned by recent international developments. Events are moving quickly and every day brings more updates. In the past week I have attended briefings with the Foreign Secretary and the Defence Secretary to question them about our diplomatic efforts and our defence, as well as [attending statements in the House from the Prime Minister](#). I am assured that the UK is doing everything we can and should be doing to defend our interests, our allies and our values.



First, let's be clear: President Zelenskyy is a hero. He has defended his country with passion and resolve every single day since the Russian invasion. He has acted with nothing but courage and composure – qualities he demonstrated in abundance during the sickening ambush in the White House.

The behaviour of President Trump and Vice President Vance has shocked me just like it has shocked all of us, but our Prime Minister is absolutely right to say we need to make every effort to work with the US administration. I am proud of the diplomatic efforts the PM is making and his leadership both here and abroad.

The PM has also been crystal clear that Ukraine continues to have our full support. I was delighted to see [President Zelenskyy receive such a warm welcome in London last weekend](#). It was emotional, especially after the appalling way he was treated in Washington. He deserves nothing less but praise and support.

Like everyone else I am concerned about where all this is heading but we must stay strong, ensure we work closely with our European allies, and commit to resisting Putin and tyranny.

To do that, we need to invest in our national defence. That's why the Labour government [is increasing defence investment to 2.5% of GDP by April 2027](#) – with an ambition to reach 3% in the next parliament. It is also vital we invest in our brave service personnel, and so I am pleased to say that this Labour government [is delivering the largest pay rise for them in over 20 years](#). They deserve every penny and more.

Protecting our national security is the first duty of any government and supporting Ukraine to resist the Russian invasion is essential to doing that. Walking away is not an option. Putin has already waged attacks on us in recent years – cyber attacks on our NHS, chemical weapons on the streets of Salisbury. It should deeply trouble us all to hear some in the US and people here like Farage fawning over him, parroting his twisted opinions or blaming Ukraine. Those of us who care about democracy must fight for truth as well as for peace.

Ukraine didn't start this. NATO didn't start this. The UK didn't start this. Putin started this – and for as long as he is hell bent on violence and attack, we must be resolved to defend our national interest, our allies, and the values we hold dear.

**Slava Ukraini.**

# Parliamentary Update

In February I had the pleasure of welcoming pupils and staff from [St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic High School in Blackbrook](#) to Parliament. The school has just received a very positive Ofsted report – congratulations to Mrs Lynch, all her staff, governors, pupils and their families!

In recent weeks I proudly voted for the government's new [Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill](#) at Second Reading. As we all know, criminal smuggling gangs have been putting lives at risk, making millions out of small boat crossings, and undermining our border security. The Bill – which the Tories and Reform voted against – includes new counter terror-style powers to arrest, a new Border Security Command with tougher powers, as well as new biometric data controls and more. [Read more here.](#)

In February the government published a Bill to help create Skills England and we announced plans for more apprenticeships. We also announced [new measures to tackle knife crime](#), and the Water Bill became law which gives us new powers to clean up our waterways and hold polluting bosses to account.

I completed work on the Committee stage of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, and I met with Business Secretary Jonathan Reynolds to make the case for Parkside in Newton-le-Willows to be the new home of a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange.

In the Chamber on the day the new Super League season kicked off, as Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Rugby League Group I paid tribute to Speaker Lindsay Hoyle for his work as President of the Rugby Football League. I also raised the fact that [in 130 years of our great sport not a single representative of the game has received a knighthood or damehood](#), which gained some good [national coverage](#). I am hopeful that we will be able to ensure we get the recognition our great stars deserve.

On the NHS, it was confirmed in February that [Labour has delivered 2 million extra appointments since the election](#), and I am also delighted to see that the government came to an agreement with GPs meaning the industrial dispute is over. The newly agreed contract will modernise general practice by requiring GP surgeries to allow patients to request appointments online throughout working hours from October, freeing up the phones for those who need them most.





# Standing up for working people

I have always been clear that creating new job opportunities and improving workers' rights would be among my top priorities for St Helens North, and I was pleased to cover this important topic in [my recent column for the St Helens Star](#).

In January I proudly supported Labour's Employment Rights Bill, which is the biggest upgrade to workers' rights in decades. And in February, [a new mega-poll from the Trade Union Congress](#) showed overwhelming support for the measures in the Bill. The poll shows that 73% of people in St Helens North back the improvements to sick pay, and 74% support a ban on zero-hour contracts.

Labour is delivering what we said we would, and what most people have wanted for decades - more security in the workplace.

Shamefully, the Tories and Reform have voted against the Bill at every stage so far. Kemi Badenoch and Nigel Farage, one Tory and one uber-Tory, will never be on the side of ordinary working people. Here's [a reminder of what's in the Bill](#), from an end to fire and rehire and zero hours contracts, to improvements to sick pay, bereavement and parental rights for working people.

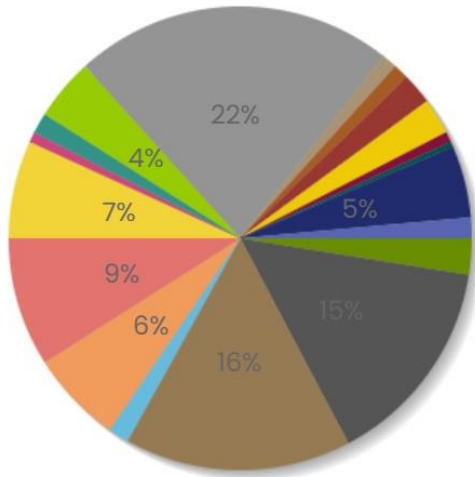
We want to create jobs too. I met [local resident Rebecca Lewis in Parliament](#), and it was great to hear how her apprenticeship had helped her. As mentioned on the previous page, I have also spoken directly with the Secretary of State for Business and Trade to discuss the Parkside development to push the opportunities there, and Labour have also announced new plans to create 10,000 more apprenticeships and cut red tape to help both employers and workers. I met with Minister for Skills Jacqui Smith and Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing Janet Daby to discuss Labour's plans for apprenticeships and skills and

The council also recently held a jobs event at the town hall for the new Home Bargains development in Bold. We secured this investment when I was council leader and faced strong opposition from other parties, but the fact that [the town hall event was packed just shows our ambition was right](#).

I will always stand up for working people in St Helens North and do all I can to secure the jobs and good conditions we need.



# Helping people in St Helens North



**My office have responded to 450 individual cases in February relating to a range of issues including the NHS, immigration, the environment and education.**

We have also helped families access social housing and healthcare, as well as helping residents find supported accommodation. This is an important part of the work that the MP's office does, and I wanted to highlight some of the work we are doing in more detail:

- My team intervened to support a constituent who wrote to us claiming that their Universal Credit had been stopped in error. This left them facing no income for several months. Thankfully, we worked to ensure that the DWP corrected this error, and we prevented major financial problems from occurring.
- Another constituent contacted my team for assistance with an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) so they could get support for their child with special educational needs. After we intervened, the EHCP was completed, and the child is now accessing education in an appropriate setting.
- We supported a constituent with mobility issues and liaised with housing options on their behalf and helped secure a more suitable property.
- I have liaised with St Helens Council on behalf of residents, since December 2024, over the flooding in Carr Mill and St Helens Council have now confirmed that funding has been awarded to upgrade the water management infrastructure and to address future flood events more quickly. We are continuing to speak with both the council and the Environment Agency about work to help at other flood hotspots such as West End Road in Blackbrook.

## In St Helens North

It was an absolute pleasure to visit [Billinge St Aidan's C of E Primary School](#) to meet the staff and pupils. I had the pleasure of being there on NSPCC Number Day and some of the children's outfits were fantastic I was also really pleased to say meet the dinner ladies. My mum was the dinner lady at St James in Haydock back in the 1980s and I know what a hard and important job it is!

I had the incredible honour of [attending Newton le Willows Sea Cadets Royal Naval Parade night](#). It is one of the most important events in the unit's calendar and I was extremely impressed with the teamwork, pride and discipline on display. I was honoured to present Iris and Autumn with their promotions to the rank of Cadet, and to meet Roy Heppenstall BEM who was recognised in the New Year's Honours list.

I recently had the pleasure of visiting the [Derbyshire Hill Family Centre food pantry](#) and met the amazing volunteers who make it happen. The food pantry network is doing outstanding work is open every Tuesday 1-3pm, you can just turn up - no referral or booking is needed.

I have been shocked about the [reported antisocial behaviour which has been happening in Blackbrook](#) recently, which has included buses and shops being targeted with objects by some young people. I have contacted St Helens Police to urge tough action and I am also in touch with Blackbrook Labour councillors to find out exactly what is happening.

I had the pleasure of [visiting Glass Futures](#), the not for profit glass research and innovation centre in St Helens, to see progress on the internal fit out and discuss how we can further support its work in the coming months and years. The highlight was catching up with my old schoolfriend Patrick Noone who is now employed as the Operations Manager of the site. Local people getting good local jobs - that's what it's all about!

I have written to St Helens Council planning department to give [my support for the Junction Inn in Rainford](#) and their plans to move the marquee at the back of the pub, and locally I have also met with Ian Alexander and Eddie Marcroft from Newton anglers to talk about pollution seeping into the Sankey Canal in Earlestown. The anglers do a brilliant job working with SCARS and the council to look after and maintain the canal and its banks and I am determined to help them fix this problem which affects us all.





# Tell me your priorities

I've been out in recent weeks speaking with residents about their local and national priorities in Billinge and Sutton South East – part of which is in the St Helens North constituency and where there is a by-election on 3<sup>rd</sup> April, with the excellent Matt Butterworth standing as the Labour candidate. If you live in the ward please do give him your support.

Please do continue to get in touch with me to tell me about the things that matter to you: let me know your priorities [via this survey](#) or get in touch using the details below. You can also follow what I am doing as your Member of Parliament [via the dedicated news page on my website](#).

In the coming weeks I am looking forward to my next advice surgery in Newton-le-Willows, door knocking to meet more residents face to face, more meetings and plenty of community visits.

Best wishes,

David

DAVID BAINES MP  
Labour Member of Parliament for St Helens North



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