



**David
Baines MP**
Member of Parliament for
St Helens North

**Newsletter
June 2025**

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

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our MP

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Dear Residents,

Welcome to my June 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.

Arise Sir Billy Boston!

After 130 years, rugby league has finally received the recognition it deserves with its first knighthood. That this honour goes to Billy Boston makes it all the more fitting—a trailblazer who has spent his entire life breaking barriers and refusing to accept the status quo. As Chair of the Rugby Football League APPG, we have worked closely with the RFL, the Speaker Lindsay Hoyle and the Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy [on getting Billy Boston the recognition he deserves](#).

Boston's story is one of triumph over adversity that extends far beyond the rugby pitch. Throughout his illustrious career, he faced down racial and class prejudice with dignity and determination, becoming not just a sporting icon but a symbol of what can be achieved when talent meets unwavering resolve. Rugby league has always been the game of the people, played in the heartlands of industrial Britain like my constituency St Helens North by those who knew the value of hard work and community spirit. That ethos deserves recognition at the highest levels.

At the most recent Rugby League APPG meeting we heard from Lisa Nandy about why the fight doesn't end here. Rugby league boasts numerous worthy candidates who deserve similar recognition for their contributions to sport and society. This knighthood must be the beginning, not the end, of proper acknowledgment for a game that has given so much to British culture.

I had the [pleasure of speaking with BBC Merseyside](#) about why it's taken so long and what it means for our game and Sir Billy. You can also read two articles that I wrote for [the League Express](#) and [for Total Politics](#). Congratulations Sir Billy and his family!



Fighting for Change on Dyslexia

Making sure no child is left behind should be the number one guiding principle of any decent education system. This fundamental belief lies at the heart of what education should represent – an inclusive, supportive environment where every child, regardless of their learning differences, has the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential.

Sadly, right now, too many children with additional needs such as dyslexia are being put through a system which is Victorian. It's archaic. It just doesn't work. Our current educational framework, built on outdated methodologies and one-size-fits-all approaches, continues to fail some of our most vulnerable learners. Children with dyslexia, who possess unique strengths and perspectives, are too often made to feel inadequate by systems that refuse to adapt to their needs.

However, thankfully there are a lot of people determined to change things. Across the country, educators, campaigners, parents, and young people themselves are pushing for reform. They're demanding better training for teachers, improved diagnostic tools, and teaching methods that celebrate rather than stigmatise learning differences.

One powerful example of this advocacy in action can be seen in [Jamie Oliver's compelling new documentary: 'Jamie's Dyslexia Revolution'](#). This isn't just television – it's a call to action. Oliver uses his platform to shine a light on the experiences of children and families navigating an education system that too often works against them rather than with them.

I had the [honour of meeting some of the stars of the show at the premiere alongside my colleagues the Dyslexia APPG Chair Juliet Campbell MP and Sureena Brackenridge MP.](#)

Meeting these brave young people and their families was both humbling and energising, and I know the importance of this fight from personal experience too.

I'll always fight to make sure no child is left behind.



Parliamentary Update

The Spending Review was announced at the start of June. We all know the state of the country left by the Tories and I think most people accept it won't all be fixed overnight, but we all want to see progress and change. Well, these spending plans are a huge call of ambition from a government that I believe is serious about fixing the foundations of our country to deliver real, lasting change for everybody, no matter their background.

[People in St Helens North are set to benefit from huge boosts in funding for housing, transport, and our NHS.](#)

We have also announced a [further £450m of investment to deliver faster, better services for patients](#). This package is all about shifting healthcare from hospital to community, ensuring patients are treated in the best place for them, and tackling NHS waiting lists that have remained too high for too long.

I was also pleased to see that the [government has announced it will increase the threshold to qualify for the Winter Fuel Allowance](#). I signed a motion in parliament last September calling for the threshold to be increased and so I am delighted to see these changes. It's what should have happened in the first place.

It was great to meet with [representatives from Usdaw Union in Parliament](#) including shopworkers and General Secretary Paddy Lillis to discuss how, together with this Labour government, we are working hand-in-hand to stand up for shopworkers. Our new Crime and Policing Bill – opposed by Reform and the Tories – introduces more protections for shopworkers and for our whole community against antisocial behaviour, something I know we're all concerned about.

We need to make more things in Britain, back British businesses and industry. That's why I welcome the launch of Labour's [new Industrial Strategy, a 10-year plan](#) to increase business investment, cut energy costs, boost homegrown skills and grow the industries of the future in every part of the country.

Like lots of parents and carers recently I've loved watching my children take part in their school sports day, and thanks [to the Youth Sport Trust who I met in Westminster there are free resources, activity packs and challenges available](#) for schools, families and organisations to do even more.

The [Hillsborough Law is badly needed](#). Labour has committed to delivering it, and I've supported a call from across Parliament urging government to get it right.

I also had the pleasure of welcoming my colleague Martin Bond to parliament in his capacity as General Secretary of the Hospital Doctors' Union to discuss whistleblowing in the NHS, and also students from my old college Carmel College – if your school or college would like to visit parliament, get in touch for more information!



Grooming Gang Update

Baroness Casey's independent National Audit on Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation has been published, with the government accepting all 12 recommendations in full. These include establishing a new national criminal operation to prosecute more perpetrators and launching a comprehensive national inquiry into grooming gangs.

The nearly 200-page report contains a damning 17-page timeline documenting institutional failures across multiple services from 2009-2025, despite repeated warnings from previous reports about group-based child sexual exploitation, victim vulnerabilities, and concerns about inadequate data on perpetrator ethnicity.

While there should be cross-party consensus that abuse must be prosecuted regardless of location or perpetrator, the issue has been clouded by political misinformation. Reform and Conservative politicians have spread false claims about Labour MPs' voting records, misrepresenting votes on parliamentary amendments that would have actually delayed child protection measures rather than supporting inquiries. [You can read a longer statement from me here.](#)

Assisted Dying Update

The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill passed Third Reading in the House of Commons and will now proceed to the Lords. Since the process began, I have received hundreds of messages from local people and healthcare workers, including many personal stories from those directly affected by end-of-life issues.

After carefully considering all evidence and arguments on both sides, I voted against the Bill at Second Reading due to concerns that it is flawed and poses too great a risk of vulnerable people being coerced. These concerns have only grown as the Bill progressed, with many organizations representing disabled and vulnerable people expressing opposition, along with the majority of healthcare workers who contacted me.

A key issue raised across the debate is the inadequate state of current palliative care. Until this is properly addressed, I don't believe assisted dying represents a true choice for patients. Fixing palliative care must be a government priority.

While I voted against the Bill today and remain concerned about its implications for vulnerable patients and the NHS, if it becomes law I am committed to working with colleagues and organizations on both sides to secure the best possible outcome for patients. I will continue monitoring its progress through the Lords and appreciate everyone who has contacted me on this important issue. For a longer statement and [all my statements on this issue you can visit my website.](#)

Rugby League APPG Update

It was another busy month for the Rugby League APPG. In addition to our campaign around Billy Boston, we were delighted to host a meeting with Wales Rugby League Performance Director Clive Griffiths and Chair James Davies, to discuss funding for the game in Wales. We were joined by Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport Lisa Nandy and Minister for Sport Stephanie Peacock MP. Rugby League in Wales currently suffers from a severe disparity in funding when compared to other sports, and as an APPG we'll be campaigning for fair funding. We want to make sure that the next Billy Boston growing up in Wales isn't missed, and that they have every opportunity.

As Chair of the APPG, I had the honour today of taking part in [the sport's annual tribute to the fallen at the Cenotaph](#). It was fitting that it was on the 81st anniversary of D-Day, which made the event even more poignant. We particularly remembered Warrington hooker Private Bill Forrest, who was killed in action in Normandy aged 30 on 21st June 1944, in the wake of the D-Day landings on 6th June. He served in the first battalion of the South Lancashire Regiment. No other major sport holds an event like ours today, and we should be very proud that we do. On the Finals Day itself, I pass on my congratulations to Rainford High on their stunning victory and commiserations to St Helens Women, as well as congratulations to Wigan.

I had the privilege of helping to [kick off Movember's exhibition in the Houses of Parliament](#), highlighting the critical mental health challenges facing men across our communities as we launch Men's Mental Health Week. I've seen firsthand how grassroots sport can break down barriers and open vital conversations about mental wellbeing - especially in working-class communities like ours here in St Helens North.

This exhibition is part of Men's Health Week 2025, with Movember having raised over £945 million globally for men's health projects. This matters now more than ever - the government is developing England's first men's health strategy, and we need YOUR voice. I'm calling on all rugby league clubs and supporters to contribute to the 12-week call for [evidence by completing this short survey](#) here.



In St Helens North

Like everyone else I was shocked by the [events in Haresfinch](#) when a huge amount of dangerous explosives, firearms and weapons were found in a home after the death of a resident. Hundreds of residents had to be evacuated, and I would like to thank the police, military and council staff who worked as quickly as possible to clear the house and keep people safe, and all those including Chain Lane Community Centre, Haresfinch Rugby Club, the local Labour councillors and local businesses who pulled together to get people through it.

[Armed Forces Day at Victoria Park in Windle was a brilliant day to be a part of.](#) I would like to thank all the local veterans who have helped to organise today's wonderful event and to all those community groups and amazing people who are taking part. It was great to catch up with local Labour councillors, Andy Reid MBE from the Standing Tall Foundation and Diane and all the volunteers from the fantastic Friends of Victoria Park group.

As part of Armed Forces Week I also had the honour of attending a special service at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire to pay tribute to the Royal Air Force Police and in particular Corporal Ashley Coates from St Helens who served in the RAFP and sadly died in 2023. Local veterans from St Helens paraded and I was honoured to lay a wreath alongside our local Armed Forces Champion Councillor Lynn Clarke. It was a special privilege to meet Ash's family. [Thank you to them, to our local veterans and to Cllr Clarke for the invitation to attend and take part](#)

For 250 years St Helens has led the way in glass manufacturing, research and innovation - and in June we lit the furnace at Glass Futures so we can continue leading the way in the 21st century. It was [a fantastic moment to witness and something we should all be proud of!](#)

This year is the [50th anniversary of Blackbrook Royals JRFLC](#) and I've picked up my commemorative shirt. I played for the club when I was a kid and have lots of good memories. Thanks to everyone there who is helping it continue to thrive and support so many young people in Blackbrook and the wider area.

Finally I am pleased to say that Labour has announced that from this winter [280,000 more families across the North West will receive £150 off their energy bills](#) - providing much needed relief to households on low income and pensioners in St Helens North.



Fair Funding Consultation

I was first elected as a ward councillor for Windle in 2013, became leader of the council in 2019, and left the council last year when I was elected as our MP. In all that time, year after year, our council had to make budget cuts because of falling central government funding.



At the same time, we had no choice but to increase council tax every year in order to try and stem some of the bleeding being inflicted by the Tories. If we didn't, it would have meant even more cuts to essential services. No increase in council tax in St Helens would ever be enough to replace the government funding lost, and so we still had to make cuts.

Other councils went bust and needed government intervention. We never did because we took difficult decisions, had strong leadership and worked together. Councillors, council staff and partner organisations did St Helens proud. And we got a lot done despite the cuts.

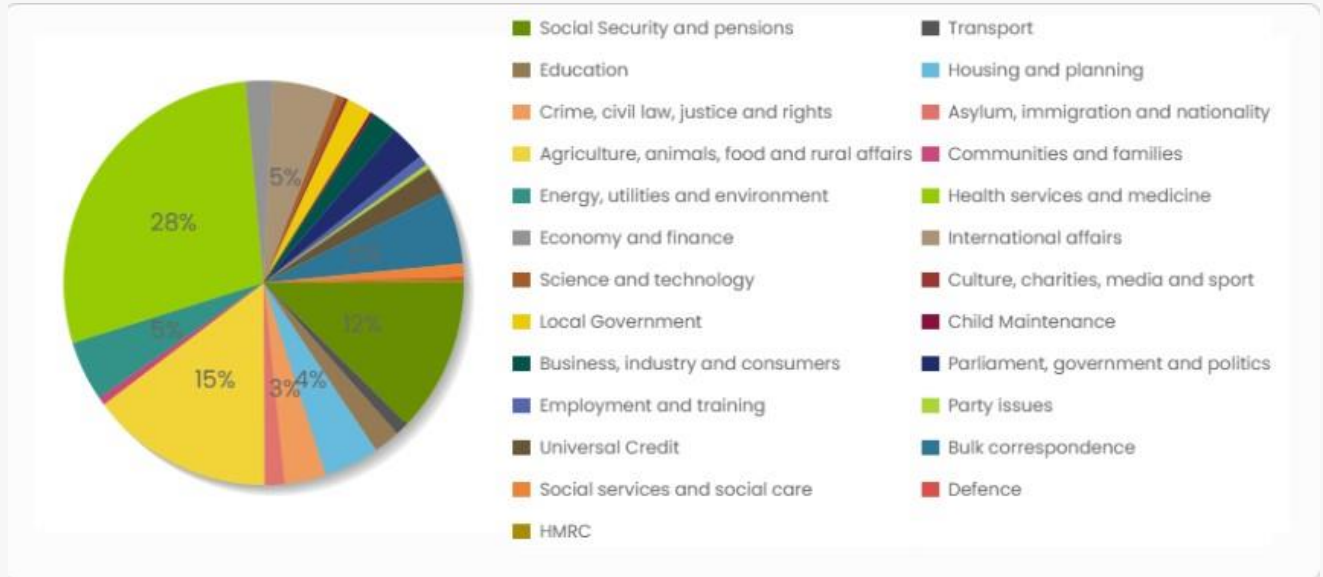
We took Children's Services from Inadequate to Good and Outstanding. We agreed the Local Plan. We agreed and delivered funding and plans for the major regeneration of St Helens and Earlestown town centres. We delivered Glass Futures, the nationally significant regeneration of Parkside including a new Link Road, rebuilt schools including Ashurst Primary and invested in others, heavily invested in sport and leisure facilities where we could, got more of our parks Green Flag status, and made sure our most vulnerable were protected with quality adult social care and holiday activities and food for more children.

When I was council leader I led our local campaign for fair funding and now as a Labour MP I'm working to deliver it from Westminster. Austerity was a political choice. Labour has already begun work earlier this year to create a fairer, more equal funding formula with the Recovery Grant which will allocate funding based on fairness and need, with £600m invested in the most deprived areas. It is now taking another step forward with the launch of a consultation on plans to introduce a [fairer funding system based on need](#), with changes to be implemented in 2026-27 as part of the first multi-year Settlement in a decade.

By changing the funding system to ensure councils like St Helens get their fair share of funding for the delivery of vital local services, we are turning the page on 14 years of austerity and neglect – delivering real benefits for people in St Helens North and the wider Borough.

This is the difference a Labour government makes. Don't forget what we fought for and how important it is we defend it.

Helping people in St Helens North since the election



Since the election in July, me and my team have dealt with 3628 individual cases and sent over 4500 emails to residents to support them with a range of issues. The biggest proportion of these was around Health and Medicine which took up 28% of all cases alongside social security and pensions, international affairs and housing and planning. We have also dealt with important individual cases, a sample of which is below:

Helping the Vulnerable

We supported a constituent who had declining mobility and liaised with Housing Options on their behalf. It resulted in the constituent being moved to a more suitable property that was better adapted to their needs and their family.

Local Flooding Issues

We liaised with St Helens Council over the flooding in Carr Mill, and ensured funding was awarded to upgrade the water management infrastructure at that location.

Mental Health Support

An urgent appointment was facilitated for a constituent's son who has a neurodevelopment disorder which exacerbates a psychiatric illness if not medicated.

Special Educational Needs

We helped arrange a SEND assessment for a child whose educational needs weren't being met, ensuring they get the support they deserve in school.

Please don't hesitate to contact me via david.baines.mp@parliament.uk if you think me and my team can be of assistance on an issue.

Review of Parental Leave

Labour has announced a major review of Parental Leave to give working families better support and help more children get the best possible start in life. I know from personal experience and from speaking to dads in St Helens North and organisations like the brilliant Dad Matters St. Helens and The Dad Shift that two weeks isn't enough. I asked the Minister about [this opportunity to reform paternity leave](#).

As ever I encourage you to get in touch if you need my support or if you have a question, and please do tell me your priorities too. Remember you can follow what I am doing as your Member of Parliament [via the dedicated news page on my website](#) and on social media – search David Baines MP on Facebook, Instagram, Threads and Bluesky.

Best wishes,

David



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One year on

A year ago, I stood before the people of St Helens North asking for their trust. Having grown up in Haydock and lived in the area all my life, I knew exactly what challenges our community faced after fourteen years of Conservative neglect and while it has not always been plain sailing, we have begun to lay the foundations...

Children and Education

As a former teacher, a dad, and someone who has worked for over 20 years in every job to give children the best start in life, I am really pleased with some of the steps we've taken in the first year.

When [I made my maiden speech in Parliament](#), I spoke about the potential I saw in our constituency and that there was "no greater tool for social mobility or personal fulfilment than education". I firmly believe that. Among other things I'm fighting for greater awareness and investment in diagnosis and support for children with dyslexia. I want to make sure no child is left behind.

My first ever [question in the Chamber asked about children with SEND](#), and in my first [PMQ I asked about child poverty](#). These issues are so important to me. I've thoroughly enjoyed visiting lots of local schools and colleges, and I've been honoured to welcome some to parliament too.

So far, Labour has removed the VAT exemption for private schools and used that money to roll out [free breakfast clubs](#) with three schools in St Helens North selected to be among the first 750 nationally, and Carr Mill Primary was singled out in Parliament by the Secretary of State as the model that others should aspire to.

This was part of the [Children and Wellbeing Bill](#) which will help families with the cost of school uniforms and bring about changes to make sure that every classroom in every school has a qualified teacher at the front of it.

Labour has confirmed the [expansion of free school meals from September 2026 to all families on Universal Credit](#), with an extra 5120 children in St Helens North becoming eligible for a free, nutritious school meal and the [£1.1 million St Helens is receiving through family hubs and the Start for Life programme](#) which represents our commitment to supporting families from the very beginning.



Older people

Older generations will massively benefit from the investment and reforms we're making to the NHS and community health services. But I know that people are still worried about making ends meet. I'm pleased that over [18,000 pensioners in St Helens North received a pay boost of up to £470 this April, thanks to our 4.1% increase in the state pension,](#) but I know we got some things wrong too. The winter fuel allowance decision last July was a mistake. I think most people agree it should be means tested, but the threshold was too low. [I said so in September,](#) and I'm relieved the government have recently announced it will be changed. I was also disappointed that the WASPI women will be denied compensation, but I am supporting efforts to keep this on the agenda and will continue to do so.

There is good news for the hundreds of ex-miners in our community. For too long, the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme scandal was left ignored. I'd regularly meet former miners about this historic injustice. That's why ending it became personal for me. Thanks to our Labour government more than [500 ex-miners in our constituency now receive an average of £29 extra each week.](#) It's money they've earned, and dignity they deserve – and I'm fighting with colleagues in parliament to get the same justice for those in the British Coal Staff Superannuation Scheme.

Workers

[More than 5,000 working people in St Helens North received a pay rise through our increase in the National Living Wage,](#) including a record-breaking 16.3% boost for 18–20-year-olds. [I'm fighting for better parental leave – especially an improvement in our current poor paternity leave entitlements](#) – and Labour's Employment Rights Bill represents the most significant enhancement to workers' rights in over four decades, ending exploitative zero-hour contracts, strengthening protections against unfair dismissal and much more. I am also extremely proud to be a patron of the Workers' Memorial Charity, and was honoured to be asked to speak at their event on International Workers' Memorial Day this year.

Housing

Housing security affects everything—from children's education to mental health to economic stability. That's why our [Renters Rights Bill](#) matters so much. Up to 6,000 households across St Helens North will be protected from having to fork out thousands of pounds in rent upfront, while the abolition of Section 21 'no fault evictions' will end the threat of arbitrary evictions. We're also tackling homelessness head-on, with £1.2 million in funding for St Helens to combat rough sleeping, and we've announced 'Homes for Heroes' – a programme to ensure all UK Armed Forces Veterans as well as domestic abuse survivors and care leavers in the St Helens North have a roof over their head.



Healthcare

We ended the junior doctor strikes that were causing so much disruption, we've recruited 1,000 more GPs nationally, and launched the biggest NHS consultation in history – with the resulting 10 year plan being launched this week. We secured [funding for improvement works at Patterdale Lodge Surgery](#) in Earlestown to help increase appointments and improve services for patients. From expanding dental appointments to using AI to detect breast cancer earlier, we're not just patching up the system, we're transforming it.

I have raised our local health priorities directly with the Health Secretary Wes Streeting and we're making progress. We promised an extra 2 million appointments but we've delivered over 4 million. Waiting lists are coming down too.

Crime and Policing

The flagship [Crime and Policing Bill](#) represents the biggest package of measures on crime and policing for decades with 50 new laws to strengthen prevention and punishment. [With 97 more officers on the ground this year and a significant £6.6 million funding boost specifically for Merseyside](#), this will strengthen our neighbourhood policing and create a more visible police presence where it's needed most.

I've been out with police in Blackbrook to raise local issues of antisocial behaviour, and under Labour's plans every neighbourhood will get a named, contactable officer.

Local Investment

As well as the funding for some of the first free breakfast clubs in the country and money to improve Patterdale Lodge Surgery in Earlestown, we secured [£108,000 in funding to enhance flood defences on West End Road in Blackbrook](#) and the government gave confirmation that [Newton-le-Willows will receive up to £20 million as part of Labour's Plan for Neighbourhoods](#). I was also proud to see work begin on a new police station in Newton-le-Willows. This is alongside the [£1.6 billion that has been secured for transport in the Liverpool City Region](#) which will help to deliver publicly-owned buses and also the plans for a new rail station at Carr Mill.

Defence and security

Labour is launching the [biggest crackdown on illegal immigration in years through our Borders Bill](#). I know we need to do more, and I will continue to push the government on this. We are introducing an Armed Forces Commissioner to better support our service personnel, and we've given our Forces the biggest pay rise in 20 years. We have also led the way in support for Ukraine and are committed to investing more in our nation's defence, with domestic employers, workers and supply chains reaping the benefits.

For our security at home, [we've introduced our Crime and Policing Bill](#) with 50 new measures including the introduction of Respect Orders for antisocial behaviour, a new offence of assaulting retail workers, and scrapped the 'shoplifter's charter' for thefts under £200.



A fairer economy and investment in infrastructure

Getting over the chaos, high inflation and high interest rates of recent years is vital if we're going to get the growth we want, and that's why Labour has been so focused on economic stability as much as possible.

We've [increased the employment allowance](#) from £5,000 to £10,500 meaning hundreds of thousands of small businesses don't pay National Insurance for their employees, introduced a 40% business rates relief for retail, hospitality and leisure, a 1.7% reduction in draught duty to support local pubs, and maintained the fuel duty freeze too. Through our Waters Bill, we've changed the law to ban bonuses for water company bosses who pollute our waterways. We're literally cleaning up the Tories' mess.

We've [launched GB Energy to invest in renewable, clean green energy projects](#) which can be publicly-owned, and on transport we're bringing the railways back into public ownership. I've also raised in parliament directly with ministers the urgent need for investment at Garswood and Earlestown stations to make their accessible to all.

Support, community events and more

I've held monthly face to face advice surgeries across St Helens North, been out door knocking to speak to people face to face regularly, held pop-up events alongside other advice agencies and community organisations, and my office has helped over 3600 local people since last July, and we've sent over 4500 emails and letters helping people and responding to questions and comments.

I helped the [Junction pub in Rainford to finally get planning permission for their marquee](#) and was honoured to cut the ribbon alongside my friend Andy Reid MBE.

As Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Rugby League I was delighted to be able to play a part in securing the sport's first knighthood, [for the incredible Billy Boston](#).

I've visited numerous local businesses and charities, lots of our fantastic local schools, and attended dozens of wonderful community events. This is my home, so it is a special privilege to attend things here as our MP. The Remembrance events in Newton-le-Willows, Haydock, Billinge, and King's Moss were a particular honour.

I would like to thank everyone who has contacted me in the past year and everyone I've met. I'm here to work for you and our local area so please do continue to reach out. It's been a packed year and I'm looking forward to more in the year to come!

David

