



Ben Bradley MP's weekly update

Another packed week to report back on!

There was quite a bit going on in Westminster this week...

In the Commons I asked the Chief Secretary to the Treasury to look at long-term, sustainable, practices for the funding of local authorities, I gave him the 17 ideas that I'd come up with, and I'm pleased to see that the government might consider some of those.

I delivered another statement on the migration crisis this week, particularly due to a situation that developed over the last weekend in Mansfield that really emphasises the broken system we have.

This last week or so, many of my residents will have received a letter also, outlining what the government plans to do about the migration crisis which I hope can answer the many questions I've had from concerned constituents.

I was really lucky to get a slot in Westminster Hall this week for a debate especially close to my heart, and that's on getting more male teachers into our schools. There's loads to say on this so the full debate is linked below.

It was also Parliament Week this week, so a great opportunity for everybody to learn more about the goings-on in Westminster, I wrote this week about toxic messages and emails many elected representatives receive and how that puts off people from entering the world of public service, and the good that they might do.

Loads more as usual, including loads out and about in Mansfield. In case you've missed it, my column is at the end. I've been vlogging some of it. Click below to have a look:

[Wondering what I get up to on a busy Wednesday? Click here!](#)

Ways to keep in touch

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Remembrance Sunday

On Sunday, I laid a wreath on behalf of the people of Mansfield, at the War Memorial at the Civic Centre, before following the military parade and wonderful bagpipers down to St Peter's for a Service of Remembrance.

Hugely grateful to local people who always turn out in force to remember our fallen, and to all of those from our Armed Forces, Cadets, Emergency Services and others who took part in the parade. As ever, Mansfield, well done

Sadly I'm never able to be at every Remembrance event, though I try to move around each year, because our District does such a fantastic job of respecting this day and everything that it means with parades and services all around Mansfield happening at the same time.

After the civic parade in town though, I did want to just pop up to Warsop, to recognise the AMAZING work that the Warsop Poppy Gang put in to this time of year and celebrating our heroes. This beautiful display is replicated all throughout the Parish and along the A60, and it really is incredible to see. A HUGE thank you to everyone involved. It gets bigger and more amazing every year

[Read here about what I got up to on Remembrance Day](#)



A large crowd of veterans in uniform is shown from behind, looking towards the left. An American flag is visible in the background. The scene is set outdoors.

Fill in the
SURVEY FOR
VETERANS

Complete the first-ever government survey for veterans and their families.

Help shape the future of veteran services.

Conservatives | Supporting our veterans

Help shape the future of veteran services

In 2019 we pledged our support for our veterans, and set up a new Office for Veterans Affairs.

Now, we're launching the first-ever government survey for veterans and their families, to hear directly from our ex-service men and women.

[Take the survey here](#)



Sustainable, long term, solutions for councils

This week I raised the issue of support for local services with the Chancellor.

It's really important that our councils are supported to make our services sustainable, through working to reduce demand and help people live independently, reducing the amount of expensive residential care we need and helping people to live healthier lives. In Notts we're going great guns at trying to do this, and move our funding out in to communities and local services to help people where they live.

That takes time to deliver, and can't possibly happen if we're forced to make major cuts to budgets for next year. Cutting the very services that help people day to day, and help keep people managing without needing more expensive care, are vital. Getting rid of them would only make the long term issues worse and services less sustainable.

I asked the Chief Secretary to consider this ahead of financial announcements on Thursday, and have also left him notes detailing 17 ideas about how Councils could be supported to be more sustainable and avoid budgets cuts, without needing tonnes of extra money.

I hope Government take this on board. The Autumn Statement this week was actually quite helpful, and should be quite positive in terms of Council budgets so, so far so good!

[Watch my speech here](#)

[I spoke to TalkTV about this here](#)

**international
MEN'S DAY_{UK}**

#InternationalMensDay
UKMensDay.org.uk

Saturday 19th November is International Mens Day.

Did you know?...

In 2021 nearly 5,000 men lost their lives to suicide in the UK alone.

Boys continue to be permanently excluded from education 3 times more than girls.

Men currently make up 95% of the UK prison population.

Currently, 85% of rough sleepers are men.

In 2019/20, 1 in 3 victims of domestic abuse were men.

Source: ukmensday.org.uk/key-facts/



International Men's Day

This Saturday is International Men's Day. In the video below, I outline why it's so important. It's a great chance to focus on issues facing men and boys, and also to pay tribute to men out there who are just doing their best.

I've also previously spoken about the importance of International Men's Day in the Commons and sponsored a debate to raise some really key issues. You can watch my speech from a few years ago below.

[Watch here](#)

New statistics show that the poorest children have been hardest hit by Covid lockdowns and school closures

Read about it here in the
Chad

Throughout Covid I argued that closing schools would have a long term detrimental impact on our children's learning, and on their life chances. It's not rocket science to work out that the poorest children would be impacted the hardest, for a wide variety of reasons:

- How much harder to home school your kids when you're having to work 24/7 to make ends meet?
- How much harder to help your kids with their GCSEs if you never managed to pass them yourselves?
- How much harder to isolate at home for those kids whose home lives are chaotic, perhaps marred by abuse or neglect?
- How much harder for kids to cope, when they were already fragile to start with?

These outcomes shouldn't be news to us now! That's precisely why I voted against closing schools, and against later lockdowns, as it became clear that this long term impact would be huge!

I've always made the case that we have our priorities wrong, and we should be **supporting** kids to achieve a career and a level that they want, not **imposing** a middle class sense of 'success' that means getting a degree. We should be helping our kids to be **resilient, independent** and **thoughtful**, able and learn things off their own back.

Meanwhile, teachers leave the profession on a daily basis - **bogged down** in paperwork and an oppressive curriculum that gives them next to no **freedom** or **ownership** of what and how they teach. It's difficult to be inspiring when you have to teach to the textbook!

Empowering teachers and giving them ownership of how they deliver to the children that they know best, might help more people to find the job **rewarding**.

We all want to feel that we have some say, some power, ownership and **creative freedom** in our work place.



We have a HUGE amount of work to do to recover, for those children

and for our education system as a whole. Even before Covid, I've always argued that the system prioritises the wrong things: churning out kids with bits of paper proving they can pass a test, who have been limited rather than nourished by an old fashioned curriculum, instead of helping them to leave as confident, resilient people with a love for learning and the creativity and drive to be able to turn their hand to anything they choose.

I never win this battle in Parliament. Down here the focus always seems to be on 'academic rigour', rather than tackling the social barriers that prevent so many young people from learning. It's the wrong focus. Fundamentally, you can have all the 'rigour' in the world but if kids are going to school from chaotic homes, as victims or witnesses of abuse, from workless families, with no trusted adults in their lives, with poor role models in their personal lives, then they won't do well at school. You can have the most robust 'knowledge rich' curriculum possible, but if kids are prioritising just getting through the day and being ok, rather than engaging with learning, it won't matter.

I'm constantly told that if kids don't get chance to learn Shakespeare then they're missing out - we're 'dumbing things down'. In reality though, despite learning LOTS of Shakespeare, almost 1 in 3 young people in Mansfield leave school with no qualifications at all. Meanwhile, we don't teach people to cook for themselves, to manage a budget or debt, to understand how our country manages itself and its public services... the list goes on.

Our system continues to force these kids in to a box that they are unable to fit, for reasons often outside of their control. It tells them to keep retaking the tests rather than asking why they haven't managed it, what could be done to help them, or whether there's something else they'd like to do with their lives. We hold kids back and make them resit exams on Pythagoras and poetry, when they are often very capable and would rather go in to work. Perhaps they just want to coach football, or work in care, or go in to dad's business? Not unless they can sort out their Algebra and fomulae!

We have built a system, over many decades, that tells people they have failed if they don't get to university, and we continue to do so despite having far too many graduates in the system and a massive shortage of staff in non-graduate roles. We continue to perpetuate a system that has skewed priorities and disadvantages certain communities.

Perhaps now - in the wake of Covid and all the disruption is has caused - is a good time to have a major rethink? Something I'll keep banging on about.
What do you think?


[Join the discussion on Facebook](#)

JUST ANNOUNCED
JUST ANNOUNCED

FOREIGN AID

FROZEN

Funding prioritised **to help people with the cost of living** and **fund our NHS and schools**

 **Conservatives**

Foreign Aid frozen

Confirmation in Thursday's Autumn Statement that recent reductions in Foreign Aid will be maintained, and frozen at that lower level, in order to prioritise that money to support British Citizens with the cost of living.



Letter to residents on immigration...

Last week I wrote to hundreds of constituents who have contacted me with their concerns about immigration.

Despite what some people say, illegal immigration and the channel crossings are absolutely key issues for people in Mansfield, I see it everyday in the amount of emails my office gets on this!

I am continuing to push government to make sure that we not only remove those without a right to be here, but stop the crossings at source as well. Suella has made this her number one priority and I fully support her in the mission to end these crossings.

We obviously want to see outcomes - an end to illegal crossings altogether! - and we're not there yet, but some of this sounds like a positive step, particularly having removal centres on the French side to deter illegal crossings. It is only one step, but let's get this implemented ASAP.

The job isn't done until the boats stop coming, and there's a tonne of work for Government to do to make that happen. I won't stop raising this with Ministers until the problem is 100% solved.

[Watch more on this via Facebook](#)

[Read my column on this here](#)



Statement on migrant hotel in Mansfield


In the chamber this week, during a statement on Migration, I called on Government to get a grip on their management of procuring migrant hotels.

Aside from the big picture and the priority of stopping the boats, which is vital, when local homeless people are being displaced from temporary accommodation in order to use the hotel for migrants, a line has been firmly crossed.

This must end. It's big, it's complicated and difficult, of course it is. But it's also absolutely non-negotiable. No more!

[Watch my speech here](#)

[Read more here](#)



IMPORTANCE OF MALE ROLE MODELS IN TEACHING

"In the East Midlands 30% of schools do not have a male teacher. In some of the most disadvantaged communities, that male teacher might be the only decent role model a young man has, especially if they don't have a positive environment at home."

Ben Bradley MP

Westminster Hall debate on securing more places for male teachers in schools

Really pleased to have been able to raise the importance of increasing the number of male primary school teachers during my Westminster Hall debate on Wednesday.

It is vital that we ensure young children have positive, male role models in school. Only 14.1% of primary and nursery teachers are male. Significantly less than 1 in 5! This needs to change. It's particularly important for the increasing number of children who might not have dad in their life, might have negative relationships at home through abuse or violence, or even just for children to learn about gender, to learn about positive relationships and interactions between men and women.

Tonnes of challenges facing schools, of course. Many very pressing ones. But this is important too, to our wider society, social norms and developing our young people.

[Watch my speech in full here](#)



UK Parliament week!

This week was UK Parliament Week!

It's a great chance to spread the word about what Parliament is,

what it does and how you can get involved. I'm planning on putting on some coach trips down to Westminster in the new year so, drop me an email if you're interested in a trip down and a tour.

You can get involved in Parliament Week by visiting this link, which has tons of resources:

[Click here](#)



Apparently I get the highest proportion of abuse on Twitter of any UK MP!?

I can usually overlook people who are just swears and angry because it doesn't mean a lot, but the comments I find the most upsetting are where people have made a really strong judgement about your character and what you are like having never met you, based on some Twitter things they have read that are often wrong.

I got in to politics in particular to help and support disadvantaged young people. That's my reason for being here; I'd wanted to be a teacher actually, before this. It's what I spend a huge amount of my time doing, so when Twitter decides that I'm a nasty, uncaring person who doesn't care about vulnerable kids, doesn't care about helping people, that actually hurts quite a lot. I'm quite literally a Corporate Parent for 1,000 of Nottinghamshire's most vulnerable children. To say I don't care is based only on hateful social media rhetoric, not on reality. That, I find really difficult.

The worst though, is I often have people say to me 'I wouldn't want to do your job because of all that stuff'. Being a Member of Parliament is a huge privilege and should be something that people want to do and aspire to. We will end up in a place where the best people, those who could really make a difference, simply don't want

to do it. Where people decide it's not worth the hassle, and in order to be a politician you either have to be so thick skinned you don't care what people think, or so boring and 'whiter than white' that you have nothing to criticise - and neither of those things would be good for a healthy democracy.

I don't think we are going to get out of this social environment where people are mean to each other from the privacy of their keyboard, and I'm not someone who wants to criminalise mean words. The Police have better things to do. But where it does cross the line and what's really, really important is where we have colleagues - David Amess, Jo Cox - who have been killed off the back of that sort of hateful conversation, where it can grow and grow into something violent, we need to make sure people are kept safe.

[Read the story here](#)



I'm also 'one to watch' apparently

Really kind of the good folks at the Local Government Chronicle to pick me out among a handful of colleagues as 'one to watch', from among 20,000 local Councillors across the UK. Always nice to be recognised as a positive force, of course.

I've been working to bring national and local policy in to line, to ensure that our area is among the biggest beneficiaries of national plans. Whether that's getting us first in line for new powers and funding through devolution, securing the £20bn STEP fusion project, advancing our Freeport and other job creation plans, securing extra transport funding through negotiation on the Integrated Rail Plan, or even just using the knowledge of directly delivering our local services to put a convincing case to Government about things like social care...

Some of that work is beginning to bear fruit and Mansfield, Nottinghamshire and the East Mids are beginning to get more attention and support as a result.

[Read more here](#)



Devolution public consultation begins this week

On Thursday last week, I was at Vision West Notts where I've been with stakeholders from education and business, and with other local politicians from all parties, speaking to MansfieldandAshfield2020 Business Club and the local business community about what a devolution deal for the East Midlands means to Mansfield.

It was great to have a really constructive debate with other local leaders about the benefits of devolution and for businesses to understand the different angles at which this deal will benefit both themselves and local people at the same time.

The consultation on local priorities for this launched this week and we need to hear from you the kind of things you want us to achieve with extra local powers and funding for skills, transport and bringing new investment and jobs to the area.

[Read about this event here](#)



New Mansfield places for SEND

children

We're investing to create additional places for children with SEND, supporting our young people and ensuring they're in the right, supportive environment to suit their needs. This is a £600,000 investment in young people with additional needs, that we're really pleased to be implementing at Nottinghamshire County Council.

[Read more here](#)



Supporting Learning Disabled people

Pleased to be able to co-chair a meeting with Unanima, Theatre Mansfield District Council, Inspire Learning and other partners to talk about support for people with learning disabilities, and how we can improve our cultural offer across Mansfield to make things more accessible for those who might currently be missing out.

Really grateful for Tracey and Brad at Unanima really driving this, and for the work and engagement of loads of partners in trying to offer better pathways in to the arts in an inclusive way.

Unanima recently received £232,000 in Arts Council funding from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to support their amazing work.

[Learn more about them here](#)



Pleased to support #PowerUpYourPitch

Calling local grassroots football clubs:

Does your pitch need a power up?

Funding is available to help improve the quality of your grass pitches with a Premier League, FA & Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's Football Foundation grant.

[Find out more here](#)



Inspire libraries tour

On Friday I was with Peter Gaw, CEO of Inspire Learning, at Mansfield Library this morning, talking about our libraries and cultural services. The refurb here is fab, new cafe too, and loads going on for local residents to engage with!

We went on a bit of a tour around some other different libraries to have a look at the arts and cultural services as a whole across Nottinghamshire.

[See more here](#)



Speaking at the University of Nottingham

Brilliant to end the week by speaking at the University of Nottingham to Politics students about everything from my own political journey, to Brexit and the Red Wall, from local services to national policy issues.

Always enjoy these conversations!



Traditional shop fronts to be reinstated in Mansfield town centre

More investment in the restoration and improvement of our town centre... Find out more below!

[Read more here](#)

This week's column ↓

Click to read...

[Remembering those who laid their lives down for our freedom](#)



That's all for this week!

Thanks for reading and I hope you have a great weekend.

Ben

Follow me on social media



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