

Regular readers will know I try to make my parish newsletters informative rather than political, but given that Parliament has been dominated by Brexit in recent months, it would be remiss of me not to mention it. I hope editors don't mind!

Since the referendum in June 2016, I have encouraged constituents to contact me with their views and you have not let me down! I have received thousands of letters and emails, you have come to my surgeries and in response to the incredible volume of correspondence, I have held four major public meetings.

However you voted, I am sure we can all agree that Parliament has an important role to play in managing the process of leaving the EU. To reflect this, last December, I voted for Parliament to have a "meaningful vote" on the terms of withdrawal. You will have seen recently in the press that this vote has been delayed and will now be held in January 2019. In December *this* year, I voted again to ensure Parliament will have a role in determining next steps if the Prime Minister's "deal" is rejected by Parliament in January.

I hope you believe as I do, that Parliamentary sovereignty and the role of individual MPs really matters. You have my word, that every time I vote, I exercise my duties with the utmost seriousness, unequivocally putting my country and South Cambridgeshire before anything else. By listening to each other, we will successfully navigate these choppy waters together.

My website has a dedicated Brexit page - <https://www.heidisouthcambs.co.uk/brexit> and is updated regularly so please do check there for new information.



Bridging the gap between home and Westminster, over the last month I have been helping local schools celebrate Parliament Week. This is an annual event designed to engage people across the UK with Parliament, exploring what it means to them and empowering them to get involved.

I visited Icknield Primary School in Sawston (pictured with the Headteacher Mrs Stockdale), where their elections were in full swing and I was pleased to welcome Comberton Village College to Westminster.

It's always so refreshing and energising to see lively, young minds thinking about how they can get involved to shape the world we live in.

Last month I was asked to speak at an event in Cambridge as part of the 50:50 Parliament #AskHerToStand campaign. This campaign is designed to increase the number of women elected to Parliament and to encourage women to stand for office.

At each election, 650 MPs are elected but since 1918, only 491 of them have been women.

As you may know, it was only in 2011 that I decided to become politically involved - and within just a few years, I went from thinking about making a difference to becoming an MP. There are still too few female MPs, so if you're even vaguely thinking about it, come and talk to me!! You've got to be in it, to win it!



The shambolic introduction of the new train timetable earlier this year caused misery for so many constituents and I have continued to battle for improvements to the service and compensation.

Details of the steps that I have taken are set out on the dedicated page on my website - <https://www.heidisouthcambs.co.uk/gtr>.

GTR and Great Northern are now embarking on the next phase of the improvements which were supposed to occur in May. Their new timetable, which will deliver more than 200 additional services across their network, began on the 9th December and details of the new timetable are available here - <https://www.railplan2020.com/timetables>

I have met with the Rail Minister to let him know the strength of feeling of my constituents about the 3.1% fare increase coming into effect in January. I have been championing a 'fare freeze' on behalf of constituents so was disappointed and angry to hear the rail industry had chosen to implement a fare increase whilst reliability was still recovering from the disastrous summer of delays and cancellations.

In slightly better news, I was pleased to see the Department for Transport confirm that GTR, the train operator behind Great Northern will not be allowed to retain any profits for the rest of this financial year and will have its profits capped for the remainder of its franchise, which is due to expire in September 2021. GTR has also been asked to contribute £15m towards improvements for passengers, on top of the £15m already contributed towards compensation for passengers since the disruption.

GTR and Great Northern know that I will continue to monitor their progress very keenly as they deliver this new timetable – it is long overdue but they now need to deliver the improved services which they promised earlier in the year.

If there is anything you would like to talk to me about, my next "by appointment" surgery is on Friday 11th January between 3 and 5pm at my office in Hardwick. If you would like an appointment, please do call my office. My next "drop in" surgery where no appointment is necessary will be between 10.30 and 12.30 on Saturday 9th February in Bourn – full details will be posted on my website soon: <https://www.heidisouthcambs.co.uk/residents-drop-surgeries>.

In the meantime, if you would like to contact me, please email heidi.allen.mp@parliament.uk or call my office on 01223 830037.

And finally, from me and all my team, Paula, Nicola, Paul and Luke - Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!