



## KETTERING AT WESTMINSTER



... MAKING SURE THE CONCERNS OF LOCAL PEOPLE ARE HEARD AT THE HEART OF GOVERNMENT

### Kettering MP Backs British Farming



Kettering MP Philip Hollobone was pleased to be able to demonstrate his support for local farmers at a National Farmers' Union event at the House of Commons held on Back British Farming Day.

The event followed a local Conservative Policy Forum discussion held at the Association's offices in April, when the future of farming and the British countryside was the hot topic of debate (picture below).

The Government has very recently published an Agriculture Bill to improve the future for British farming after Brexit.



## Brexit

Philip Hollobone MP writes: The debate about Brexit is now entering a critical end game. Things may well have changed by the time you read this, but the position when Parliament broke up for the September Recess was that HM Government continues to press on with its Chequers Plan. Many of us regard these proposals as placing the UK in the position of technically being out of Europe, but in effect still run by Europe when it comes to trade. Some have called it 'Brexit In Name Only'. As part of the Association mailing you should receive a comprehensive brief from the European Research Group of Conservative MPs, which I support, which outlines far better than I could do where the Chequers Plan falls short. If the Chequers Plan is agreed by the EU (and this is a very big 'if') it still has to get through the Commons in a vote before Christmas and at the moment it is not readily obvious to me how this could be achieved or whether this is actually desirable. Leaving the EU on 29 March next year without a deal may be bumpy in the short term, but we would save our £39 billion divorce payment and we would be entirely free to conclude trade deals with other major economies around the world.

## Northamptonshire County Council

Philip Hollobone MP writes: The Government Commissioners sent in to oversee the running of the council in April have now sent their first official assessment of the council to HM Government. This may well be published in October. I expect the report to conclude that the financial mismanagement at the council is worse than the independent Inspector found, with problems going back some ten years, instead of the six previously identified. NCC is likely to be the first ever council in the country to have failed to balance its books last year when the final figures are announced. Children Services have been particularly badly run with far more children in care than need be and the cost of looking after them far higher than anywhere else. There has been incompetent political leadership from the senior members of the NCC cabinet, senior officers have been giving poor advice and failed to manage the service properly and the scrutiny and audit function was ineffectual. It is a very sorry tale indeed. Out of the ashes however should rise two brand new unitary authorities, with our area falling under a new council which may be called North Northamptonshire. This will be responsible for all local council provision and will replace both NCC as well as all the district and borough councils in the north of the county.

# IN THE HOUSE *Standing Up and Speaking Out for Kettering*

**Just a flavour of the issues Kettering MP Philip Hollobone raised in the Commons in the last two months**

Since the General Election in June 2017 I have spoken 283 times in the House of Commons, voted in 97.4% of votes and kept my expenses low. I have continued to do all I can to raise issues of concern to local people and to ensure that the Borough of Kettering is mentioned frequently in the House.

## **Scallop War**

**13 September: Philip Hollobone MP, Kettering** As I understand it, it is crystal clear that the law and moral right are on the side of the British fishermen in this case. If the fishing is taking place outside French territorial waters, why can the Royal Navy not accompany our ships back into those fishing grounds? If we have fishery protection vessels and Type 23 frigates permanently positioned in the channel, surely the Royal Navy should be at sea with our fishermen to protect their livelihoods.



**George Eustice MP, Fisheries Minister** I understand the point that my hon. Friend is making, but these waters are outside French territorial waters but within the French exclusive economic zone. It is absolutely the responsibility of the French authorities to police and enforce fishing activity in their waters, just it is for our authorities to police fishing activity in our own exclusive economic zone.

## **Police Pay**

**12 September: Philip Hollobone MP, Kettering** Our police forces have never had to work harder. They are working more efficiently than ever in tackling crime, not least in Northamptonshire, where individual police officers do a fantastic job, but they need to be paid properly. It is wrong not to accept the recommendations of the independent pay review body, which should be honoured in full. Conservative Governments always used to prioritise police pay. Please can we get back to doing that?

**Rt. Hon. Nick Hurd MP, Police Minister** I completely understand my hon. Friend's point. I also fully appreciate the frustration and, in places, anger that police officers feel at the decision. As a representative of the Government—this was a collective decision—I can say that we are still in a difficult position in relation to the public finances, and the Treasury and others have a difficult job to do in terms of balancing fairness and affordability, which is what underlies this decision.

## **Intimidation in Public Life**

**12 September: Philip Hollobone MP, Kettering** Earlier this year, all the Conservative councillors on Desborough Town Council resigned in protest at the abuse, harassment and intimidation suffered by the Conservative female chair of the council. Will my right hon. Friend ensure that, when he reviews standards of conduct in public life, that they apply not just to elections but to serving councillors during their term of office?

**Rt. Hon. Brandon Lewis MP, Party Chairman** My hon. Friend highlights a worrying problem that we are seeing across public life: people are seeing this kind of abuse. It was raised at last week's Prime Minister's questions. We all have a duty to stand up against this. The criminal bar on this is in place all year around. We are looking at the election as a separate issue in the consultation, but he is right: we all have a duty to call this out to ensure that people can have proper debate and fulfil their public duty with confidence that it will be respected.



## **Northamptonshire Libraries**

**6 September: Philip Hollobone MP, Kettering** Northamptonshire faces the closure of 21 libraries, including well-supported libraries in Desborough and Rothwell. Will the Minister send in the Department's libraries taskforce to give the county council the best advice on how those libraries might be saved, perhaps through the creation of a libraries trust?

**Michael Ellis MP, Libraries Minister** As my hon. Friend knows, the matter is currently subject to judicial review. In respect of Northamptonshire, it would potentially be a conflict of interest for me to have responsibility for that situation, so the matter has been passed to the Secretary of State. However, I note, as my hon. Friend will know, that the council recently decided to pause its proposed library changes to give further consideration to its proposals for the service, and I am glad about that.

## **Visits to the Houses of Parliament** *Anyone can keep a track of what Philip is trying*

*to do at Westminster on behalf of local residents via the independent website [www.theyworkforyou.com](http://www.theyworkforyou.com). As always, if any member feels that Philip may be able to help with a particular issue, please do let Philip know via 01536 414715 or 020 7219 8373 or [philip.hollobone.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:philip.hollobone.mp@parliament.uk) or at House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. Philip is also very happy to arrange visits to Westminster for those who haven't been before or for those who would like to come again, either for a tour or to watch Prime Minister's Questions.*