

# MARK FLETCHER MP NEWSLETTER



## Mid-May Newsletter



Dear {{ contact.FIRSTNAME }},

I hope you are well and enjoyed the Easter break!

It has been a few weeks since my last newsletter and I have a lot to update you on from my work in both Westminster and Bolsover.

After my last update in mid-April, I had a meeting with the Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive of the University of Derby, Kathryn Mitchell, met with team members from McDonalds, held a constituency surgery in South Normanton to discuss a wide range of issues with local residents, and had the privilege of being the guest speaker at the Bolsover Civic Society AGM.

In the last week of April, I went on a working visit to Strasbourg as part of the UK delegation to the Council of Europe where I had the honour of working with Ukrainian colleagues, and others across Europe, to encourage nations to go further in reducing dependency on Russian oil and gas imports. We need to put maximum pressure on Russia to end the aggression and demonstrate that Europe is united in its support of Ukraine.

After returning from France, I visited Whitwell Primary School to meet with pupils and the headteacher Mrs Duncan. I then attended a meeting with the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain (Derby Branch) alongside fellow Derbyshire MPs.

Last Friday, I had the pleasure of a Q&A with the students at Bolsover Junior School before a meeting with the Bolsover Against Fracking group, where I reaffirmed my opposition to the practice. After lunch, I visited a great business in Barlborough called Exclusive Secure Care Services who provide essential services to vulnerable and challenging people and finished the day with a radio interview with Martin from Elastic FM, who are based in Clowne.

The constituency is benefitting from a share of the £2.6 billion of levelling up funding, which has been awarded to communities across the country through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund ('UKSPF').

The UKSPF enables local communities to invest in local priorities from regenerating high streets to tackling economic decline, and will help reverse geographical inequalities - with areas in greater need receiving more support, but every place receiving funding. The funding is part of the Government's mission to level up the UK, by ensuring that where an individual is born does not determine the success and opportunities afforded to them.

I hope you find this edition of my e-newsletter interesting and look forward to updating you again in the coming weeks!

Best wishes,



**South Normanton Surgery**



**Supporting Ukrainian refugees**



**Meeting workers at McDonalds, South Normanton**



**Exclusive Secure Care Services, Barlborough**



### **Shared Prosperity Fund**

I very much welcome the news that as part of the Government's £2.6 billion Shared Prosperity Fund, £1,963,993 has been awarded to Bolsover District Council and £2,568,204 to North East Derbyshire District Council, which has six wards in the Bolsover constituency.

This money will be given to locally elected authorities and local leaders who best know what their communities need - helping to slash bureaucracy and support communities in seizing new opportunities.

Derbyshire County Council has also been allocated £3,762,842 to fund Multiply - a new UK-wide programme to equip hundreds of thousands of adults with functional numeracy skills to improve their employment prospects. This could mean free tutoring, digital training and flexible courses to help adults with low-level maths skills get back into work, as well as measures to get more young people into high-skilled jobs.

This investment will help deliver on the Government's mission to level up the United Kingdom - regenerating communities, tackling economic decline, and reversing geographical inequalities to ensure that everyone can fulfil their potential.

I am incredibly proud of Bolsover and know that our best days lie ahead. I am

determined to work with the Government to ensure that everyone from our area is able to reach their full potential.

That is why I welcome the investment of £4.5 million for the two district councils which serve my constituency. This investment will help local residents to fulfil their potential, while reducing regional inequalities that have been left untouched for too long.



### **Meeting with the Secretary of State for Education**

Following my question at PMQ's regarding access to post-16 education in Bolsover, I met with the Secretary of State for Education, Nadhim Zahawi MP to outline transportation issues, such as costs and prolonged travel times, faced by children across our constituency and to discuss my campaign for a sixth form in Bolsover.

Since being elected I have been working hard to ensure every child in the Bolsover constituency is given every opportunity to reach their full potential and I will continue to work with local and national stakeholders to help improve the life chances of young people in the constituency.



### **Whitwell Primary School**

I had a great visit to Whitwell Primary School in the beautiful sunshine. The children were very polite and working really hard learning about computer programming, human geography, science experiments and there were all sorts of exciting things going on.

It was brilliant to hear the school's passion for their Forest School, which they have been running for 14 years, and the positive impact it's had on the children over that time.

Thank you to Mrs Duncan for showing me around, and to all the amazingly keen and hardworking teaching staff for being so welcoming. I look forward to returning and getting involved in some of their activities.



### **Bolsover Junior School**

On Friday I was kindly welcomed at Bolsover Church of England Junior School to talk about being a Member of Parliament and how Government works. I hope the children found it interesting - there were certainly a wide variety of questions asked.

Education is my passion and I absolutely love this part of my work, but I do find speaking in front of 300 school children far more terrifying than speaking in front of 650 MPs in the House of Commons! Bolsover Juniors is a fabulous school, and the children were excellent.

I am looking forward to visiting again soon.



## University of Derby

I had the absolute pleasure of meeting with Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive of the University of Derby, Kathryn Mitchell, about educational priorities across the region including Derbyshire being recognised as an Education Investment Area (EIA). We discussed how we can make the most of this to level up education across the Bolsover constituency. I left very encouraged that Bolsover is firmly on the radar, and I look forward to further meetings.

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## Council of Europe

It was a real honour to work with Ukrainian colleagues, and others across Europe, in Strasbourg to encourage nations to go further in reducing dependency on Russian oil and gas imports. The visit was important to ensure maximum pressure on Russia to end the aggression and demonstrate that Europe is united in its support of Ukraine.

The UK continues to support the people of Ukraine with the generous Homes for Ukraine Scheme (which is already up and running in Bolsover), fresh sanctions on Russian goods worth £1.7bn, and leading the way on the supply of offensive weapons to the Ukrainian Army. We will continue to do all we can to ensure the failure of Putin's war.

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## Meeting the Bolsover Against Fracking Group

Since being elected in 2019 I have opposed to the practice of fracking in the UK and I am a vice-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Fracking, where alongside Lee Rowley MP (North East Derbyshire) we campaigned for a complete ban on fracking. I do support further diversification of our energy markets, but I do not believe Bolsover and the UK would benefit from restarting this practice.

It is also worth stating clearly that the UK has no gas supply issues - with less than 5% of our gas coming from Russia. And even if we lifted the fracking moratorium tomorrow, it would take up to a decade to extract sufficient volumes - and it would come at a high cost for communities and our precious countryside.

Furthermore, no amount of shale gas from hundreds of wells dotted across rural England would be enough to lower the European price any time soon.

As you may be aware, the Government has announced its new energy strategy, which is a long-term plan to increase UK energy independence - with the aim of 95% of our electricity to be low carbon by 2030. The strategy is primarily focussed on becoming a world-leader in offshore wind, rebuilding the British nuclear power sector to cover 25% of demand by 2050, boosting low carbon hydrogen, and delivering homegrown oil and gas in the North Sea to help with the transition to renewable and low carbon energy. This shift to renewable energy will help to reduce energy bills for us all, with solar and wind energy now the cheapest form of energy production in the UK.

Ultimately, the UK must not abandon domestic production of offshore oil and gas at the expense of our pursuit of net-zero, however, if we are truly to become energy self-sufficient, we need to diversify our energy mix whether that be nuclear, wind, solar, or hydrogen. Renewable energy - as seen with our commitment to offshore wind which has significantly reduced our dependence on gas - is part of the solution, not the problem, to our energy security.

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