

Adam Holloway MP

Winter 2009 Newsletter



I want to know what you think

Please take a few moments to complete the attached survey and return to the address below:

National Issues

Please indicate the three most important issues to you:

- Education
- Housing
- Pensions
- Crime
- NHS
- Europe
- Immigration
- Other _____

Your Contact Details

Full Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

I want to hear from you

This form is also available online at:
www.adamholloway.co.uk

Adam can be contacted as follows:

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The information provided is for the use of Adam Holloway MP and his office staff only. The data provided will not be passed to a third party or any other organisation

Valuing Good Neighbours



We all have experience of the blessings of good neighbours. We need more neighbourhoods where people know each other by name, look out for each other, are sociable and helpful and readily volunteer their time whenever it's needed. (A childhood memory is of a gate between our back garden and our neighbour's to make such contact routine. Maybe we have mostly moved on from that particular closeness and familiarity but it is good to live now in Higham where neighbourliness is much in evidence.)

Good neighbours and close knit, active and supportive communities have been linked recently with the saleability of homes. It's an interesting reflection on the value of good neighbours which in reality is priceless. And it's much in contrast with the "nosy parkers/keeping up with the Jones" notion that cynics may characterise it as.

Neighbours volunteer their time and help spontaneously and without any of the formalities of belonging to a voluntary organisation or charity. Our Volunteer Centre exists to channel the goodwill and kindness that motivates good neighbours into roles and opportunities that are a huge benefit to people in the wider community. Our direct services depend on committed volunteers. Transport, Befriending and HANDS are lifelines and help to many older and vulnerable people in Gravesend. Our centre would welcome your involvement in these services and your interest in the other many and varied volunteering opportunities on our books.

Contact us on 01474 322729 to find out more. Your call or visit to us in The Arc, 45 Windmill Street could change your life and those you help beyond your imagination.

It's hard to be a good neighbour if you don't speak the language

Je ťažké byť dobrým susedom, ak nechcete hovoriť jazykom (Slovak)

ਇੱਕ ਚੰਗਾ ਗੁੱਸਾ ਵਾਲਾ ਬਹੁੱਤ ਐਸਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਫ਼ਗ਼ਾਨੂੰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ॥ (Punjabi)



In river Thames courtesy of the Port of London Authority

Meopham School sixth form



TONY LARKIN Local Historian

We are in a world of communications but no one is communicating.

When I worked for the old Water Board when I knew my customers. I would have a cup of tea with an old lady, which made her day. The elderly used to see their postman, milkman, utility man, now for many days they may see no one. The 'public services' are now run by industrial magnates and they dictate that 'customer service' means selling the customers extra services or persuading them to switch gas suppliers. There is more loneliness than ever as people live by computers, mobile phones, sales driven utility companies and the time to just look in on your customer has gone. I have come to the conclusion that public services do not exist anymore.



GRAVESEND ROAD PLUGERVILLE, TEXAS

This photograph was sent by James Crabtree a serving US Marine reservist by the sign for Gravesend Road, Texas where he lives. He wrote to me as a former Marine who had served in Iraq and typifies our shared heritage, culture, fighting a global war on terror and memories of our countries' joint effort in World War II, now in Afganstan. His daughter Hannah, aged 2, is also pictured.

TRIBUTE TO RETIRING DARTFORD MP, HOWARD STOATE

My Parliamentary neighbour in Dartford, Dr Howard Stoate, has announced that he is to retire at the next election.

Whilst of course I want to see an MP from my own party representing Dartford, Howard has done an excellent job - much of it untrumpeted.

The Health Select Committee will lose the only person in the House of Commons right up to date at the frontline of the NHS - he works part time as a GP.

My team and I regularly have dealings with him and his office on matters that cross the constituency boundaries. His wife Deborah runs his first class



team. We have only ever found them to be obsessed with the well-being of people in our local area.

But public opinion/media simplification would generally hold that MPs should not have "second jobs" or employ members of their own families. Howard's "second job", and the performance of his wife over the years should give pause for thought.

Readers might consider on the consequences to the country and our communities when committed, experienced and able people like this no longer find political service appealing.

The Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide exists to meet the needs and break the isolation of those bereaved by the suicide of a close relative or friend. Suicide recognises no age, social, ethnic or cultural boundaries - neither do we. Our groups are open to any individual or family.

The support group meets the first Thursday of every month:

Pat Katnoria, Peppercorns, 3 Orchard Street, Dartford, Kent DA1 2DF.
 Phone number for survivors is: 01322 286511
 Email: patkat60@hotmail.co.uk
 Web: www.uk-sobs.org.uk



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Do You Know Your Neighbours?

We've been through a long period where we think in terms of people's rights.

I think it is now time to think in terms of people's responsibilities - to their families, neighbours and wider communities.

One of the main things that has struck me, and the Gravesend Parliamentary team, is how many people do not seem to know their neighbours. Of course, many do - and do wonderful things in their local areas.

But it would be good if all of us made the effort to do all we can to help people in the streets and blocks where we live. There are a lot of lonely people around: it does not take much.

"Love your neighbour" is pretty much the central tenet of every major religion. That is no accident.

Adam

LITTER CLEARING SESSION

Date: Friday, 4th December
 Time: 10.00am
 Meet: King Street, corner of Woolworths, Primark, NatWest, McDonalds, Gravesend

If you have an hour, please come and help me.

Adam Holloway MP

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DO YOU KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOURS?

In a fast moving society where people move for jobs, housing, divorce, work longer hours and retirement there are increasing numbers of people who live alone. One negative aspect of this is people do not always know their immediate neighbours or do not become involved in their local community.

I recently made friends with a lady in her sixties who had few friends and whose only son had moved abroad. To enable her to keep in contact with her son my office arranged for a contact to loan her a personal computer so that she could email her son, who lives in America.

I visited her over the years and when she was diagnosed with cancer a while back. Apart from the health workers and the hospice, she did not have any other visitors. I arranged for her disabled son to come over to see her a few days before she died.

When she died she had little money so I arranged for the removal of her body, and the council took responsibility for clearing her house, the administration of her papers and arranged her funeral Under the 'Section 46 (1) of the Public Health (control of disease) Act 1984' – which in the past was referred to as a "pauper's funeral".



The Reverend Joe King conducting the funeral

I am pleased to say that the excellent Paul Milan of Dartford Borough Council and his team dealt with her effects in a caring way. My office and I coordinated things. The funeral was done through the generosity of my friend Martin Bourne the undertaker in Northfleet. Apart from two neighbours and my office staff, there were no other mourners. Her son joined us on the telephone from America.

My point in telling this story is to point out that there are considerable numbers of lonely people here. In the run up to Christmas we think of our families. It would be good if we also thought of the thousands amongst us who are alone.

For this newsletter I have asked various community leaders to put together their thoughts on neighbourliness and community.



CLLR BRONWEN MCGARRITY
Mayor of Gravesham

I have always believed in making the effort with my neighbours. I live in Milroy Avenue and we have a wonderful community: we take each others' parcels in, look after gardens and properties whilst neighbours are on holiday and we socialise.

We have a wonderful postman who keeps an eye on post building up and the elderly. But it is up to you to make an area neighbourly to ensure that we look after each other.



REV. JOE KING
Do we miss the milkman?

I think we do as they are a valuable contact with the isolated and lonely. Recently at Adam Holloway's request I officiated at a funeral when we expected Adam and his staff to be the only congregation. This is sad but at the very least we marked the passing of a human being. I would hope that we can all (especially in the swine flu season) make sure that we know if there are any isolated individuals near to us and keep an eye open for them so that no one is really alone.

To borrow a phrase this could be another neighbourhood watch!



MIKE SNELLING
Leader of Gravesham Borough Council

I see loneliness as one of the biggest (and growing) social problems in both Gravesham and the Country as a whole.

There are many pundits prepared to give reasons why people no longer talk to or socialise with their neighbours, or spare time for that widow or widower who lives near them - "We all now have demanding careers, or increasingly busy lives" for example-but when I examine my own conscience I know that it is usually a question of "going that extra mile" to give time to someone much less fortunate than myself.

My admiration for the dedicated band of carers and volunteers in Gravesham working hard to combat this (usually wearing several different hats!) is accompanied by a conviction that the lot of sad and lonely residents in our Borough could be made so much better if **everybody** gave a little of their precious time.



PAUL BRANDON
Area Commander of North Kent Police

Much is spoken about the term 'community spirit' and I am often asked what it means to me. Well speaking both as a member of a community and as the Area Commander for North Kent it means the same! It is about supporting, helping and caring for not just the people you know, but perhaps those you do not know as well, and in particular the most vulnerable members of our society.

I joined the service in 1981 and I can recall an example as a young police constable that I think encapsulates all that is good in a supportive community:

I was asked to attend a concern for safety where the neighbour had not seen an elderly resident who lived next door for a couple of days which was unusual. When I arrived at the house the front and back doors were locked and despite my best efforts I was unable to get any response from within the premises. I spoke to the neighbour who said she would usually see the elderly lady (88 years) who lived alone most days but had not seen her and was worried. I decided to break into the premises and located the old lady in her bath, naked and cold having been there for the last two nights!! Typically of the older generation she was upbeat and as I picked her out of the bath and took her to her bedroom she asked if I could make a little pot of tea before I left!!! The neighbour then came over and looked after the lady until her relatives arrived. Clearly had the neighbour not raised the alarm the outcome could have been very different.

With the current recession times are very hard for many people within the community and now more than ever looking out for and helping others carries even greater significance.



PASTOR MIKE FANSTONE
with the Street Pastors
Love your neighbour.....

Is this just good advice, or more than that? If we were seriously concerned about each other's welfare, Gravesham would become the most idyllic place in Britain to live!

It was Jesus (in the Bible) who told his listeners to 'Love your neighbour'. He wanted them to really care for and look out for one another so he told them a story. One day a lone traveller was mugged and left for dead by the roadside. Two supposedly religious people passed by, but didn't want to get involved, so ignored him. It took a foreigner from a minority group to help the man, not just providing first-aid, but taking him where he could receive on-going care — and even paying for it! Imagine what life would be like in this Borough if we acted like that!

This story was Jesus' response to a question he was asked about how we inherit eternal life? Jesus explained that loving God with everything you have and are was vital, together with loving and serving your neighbour. It seems to me that both these things are crucial: treating each other with care and respect, and loving God because of his love for us. After all, the thought of living forever with God in heaven is pretty appealing, isn't it?



DR MUSTAPHA TAHIR
Caring Families and Neighbours;
Nucleus of a Decent Society

The British are world famous for their caring attitude. Their magnanimity always surprises me, whenever an appeal is launched to help people suffering from natural disasters, in any corner of the world.

As a GP, I know I could not have achieved my full potentials but for the magnanimity of this country adopting me 20 years ago, and offering me every opportunity open to its citizens willing to progress in life.

What I find upsetting, as a GP, is the manner so many families and neighbours fail to look after or help one another. A number of times I visit my lonely frail and elderly patients, I could not get a family member or neighbour to cash their prescriptions at a Pharmacy.

We are only lucky in Gravesham that most Pharmacies are willing to collect scripts from the Surgery or Patient's home and deliver the medications. But must it be this way? What has gone wrong with family bonds and good neighbourliness? We must be our neighbours and brothers keepers. This is an old British adage. We must return to basic British values.



DICK SMITH
Postman, former Mayor and Councillor

When I joined Royal Mail it was a public service and community spirited and we could stop and talk to the customers. This was especially important to the elderly as we were their contact with the outside world, but Royal Mail is now a business - time is money. The rapport between the customer and Postie has now gone; in my opinion being a Postie meant I worked alongside social services, caring and looking after the public.



RAJVINDER SINGH GILL
Neighbourliness and the Sikh View

In Siri Guru Granth Sahib a neighbour is described as one who recognises, that communities grow together. It's exemplified by the following: The Sun whose rays shine and provide warmth to my neighbour also provide light and warmth for me. The breeze that gives breath is the same whether it's my neighbour or me. The ground that we walk upon is a shared asset and belongs to both.

Our lives are intertwined and we both prosper or we both fail. The central theme is that our lives are related and we ought to co-operate so that we learn to respect, value and grow together.

At the end of the prayer every Sikh says it loud, "the best for all".