



# News from **Westminster** Apr/May 2022

No. 150



## Report from Sharon Hodgson MP



*Sharon attends the 40th anniversary of the Falklands War, at the North East Land, Sea and Air Museums, Sunday 1st May, 2022.*

### Local Elections

**Thursday 5th May was a fantastic polling day for Labour in Sunderland. Our strong field of candidates, our record in control of the council and our dedicated campaigning made us a force to be reckoned with. I am incredibly proud of our Washington and Sunderland West red stronghold.**

While pundits will play with the statistics and what any and all changes mean, we know the story on the ground since 2018 and what the uphill battle against dirty politics and desperate opposition has looked like. Instead of retreating and accepting the same defeats as years gone by, our Sunderland Labour team has been relentless in their campaigning efforts. Across this campaign our candidates and members have organised, door-knocked and importantly, have come together to help each other in an incredibly effective way. With help from friends in neighbouring counties and from friends from even further afield, our campaign has been a positive one in the face of the opposition's politics which continues to lie in the gutter. A special mention must go to Labour Group Secretary Paul Stewart and Labour North, whose efforts to organise the Sunderland Labour campaign proved incredibly worthwhile.

In the context of a cost-of-living crisis, with a Tory Government that doesn't have a plan, it is more important than ever that we have delivered a Labour hold to ensure we can put the priorities of families across Sunderland first. While the national picture will have had an effect on our results, ultimately, it is a tale of personal successes and local strength – our hard-working local members and our impressive candidates truly made the difference.

This is not just a 'Labour Hold' - this feels like we have truly turned the tide. With vote shares up across the board, we are now ready to take forward our fantastic 2022-2026 Local Manifesto to make Sunderland, Washington and the Coalfields the best place to grow up in, and the best place to grow old in.

Outside of Sunderland, Labour has delivered important victories in Cumberland, Southampton, Wandsworth, Westminster and Barnet at the time of writing. We are proud of the positive campaign we have run, based on a practical plan to tackle the cost-of-living crisis and the crime blighting our communities – because we believe Britain deserves better.

### Our new and returning Washington and Sunderland West councillors are:

**Allison Chisnall**, Castle Ward (1308 votes - 64%);  
**Paul Stewart**, Redhill Ward (1065 votes - 50.2%);  
**Susan Watson**, St Anne's Ward (1061 votes - 48.8%);  
**Linda Williams**, Washington Central Ward (1683 votes - 59.4%);  
**Logan Guy**, Washington East Ward, (1682 votes - 53.4%);  
**Jill Fletcher**, Washington North Ward (1349 votes - 61.3%);  
**Graeme Miller**, Washington South Ward (1454 votes - 47.4%);  
**Dorothy Trueman**, Washington West Ward (1641 votes - 58.6%).

**This would translate into a 55.4% Labour vote share across the constituency, compared to the 42% I got in 2019.**

**So a great result for our Constituency Labour Party.**

### Online Harms Bill speech

At the end of April I took part in a debate on the Online Safety Bill, a piece of legislation regulating social media websites and search engines. In my speech, I talked about a major loophole which means that people are not properly protected from online fraud.

I told the House just one story from many about an elderly couple, who had bought two tickets to see their favourite artist for their 70th Anniversary. But when they arrived at the venue to celebrate, they were told that they had been sold fake tickets.

If the Online Safety Bill does not address the loopholes that allow fraudulent tickets to be sold, there will be plenty more people like this couple who are completely taken advantage of. I hope that my concerns are listened to as the Bill progresses through Parliament, and I will continue to make my voice heard to protect people from online fraud.

### Health Question



On the 19th April, I took part in Topical Health Questions where I questioned the Health Secretary about his 10-year cancer plan. As the Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Ovarian Cancer I wanted to make sure that future services are designed with the patient at their core, especially for those living with cancer. As a result of my question, Macmillan managed to secure a meeting with the Minister to discuss their concerns and I will continue to give a voice to experts like Macmillan and make sure that they have access to decision makers.

### Energy Price Cap debate

With the energy price cap increasing and hurting many people with an average rise of about £700, the cost-of-living crisis is hitting with full force. To make matters worse, constituents who live in flats or developments with communal heating systems, such as we have in Albany, Oxclose and Fatfield, are classified by Ofgem as holding commercial heating contracts rather than residential.

It means these residential properties are not protected by the energy price cap and so face an even steeper increase in their energy bills. I took part in a Westminster Hall debate where I pressed the Government to include communal heating systems in the energy price cap and bring down energy prices for local people during this cost-of-living crisis.

### Westminster behaviour scandals

As Partygate and the cost of living dominated the news, a growing scandal of behaviour in the Houses of Parliament flew somewhat under the radar. I am sad to report that a number of Parliamentarians now face allegations, representing a decline in standards in public life. Conservative MP Neil Parrish stood down from Parliament after reports emerged of him watching pornography in the chamber. Elsewhere, the Tory MP Imran Ahmad Khan resigned following his conviction for sexually assaulting a fifteen-year-old boy.

This is above party politics and I am clear on the matter. Bullying, impropriety, criminal activity and misbehaviour have no place in Parliament or in any sphere of employment. I feel grateful, each day, for the opportunity to serve the country and the people of Washington and Sunderland West as an MP. That colleagues take this privilege for granted is beyond shameful. I will press to see reform to the systems where necessary.

### Ticket Abuse meeting

April was a very busy month for the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Ticket Abuse as we held our second formal meeting of the year. We were lucky enough to host a guest from Ireland, Bill Cox. Bill is a very senior civil servant who drafted the Irish Sale of Tickets Bill (which was based on my 2011 Private Member's Bill of the same name), which banned the resale of tickets in Ireland and did so much to protect fans from being ripped off by ticket touts. During the meeting, we had a fantastic turnout from parliamentarians across the board and we discussed the ways that we can advocate for similar legislation to be enacted in the UK.

### APPG on Faroe Islands



This month, following requests from constituents, I attended the All-Party Parliamentary group on the Faroe islands, where we met with the Faroese Prime Minister in advance of the Flag Day celebrations. On behalf of a constituent I raised the issue of the recent Dolphin slaughter.

**Sharon Hodgson, Washington & Sunderland West Constituency**

**Units 1 & 1A, Vermont House, Concord, Washington,**

**Tyne & Wear NE37 2SQ**

**Tel. (0191) 417 2000**

**W: [www.sharonhodgson.org](http://www.sharonhodgson.org)**

**E: [hodgsons@parliament.uk](mailto:hodgsons@parliament.uk)**

**Twitter: <https://twitter.com/SharonHodgsonMP>**