



News from **Westminster** Nov-Dec, 2023

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Report from Sharon Hodgson MP



Sharon pictured here with her 2023 Christmas card competition winner Joshua, from Rickleton Primary.

Nissan announcement

I am delighted that Nissan announced that three new all-electric vehicles will be built in Washington each with its own nearby gigafactory producing the batteries. After the last few years, we know more than ever how important it is to build up UK domestic manufacturing capacity. The resulting £3 billion investment into our automotive sector is great news for Sunderland's employees and for the wider supply chain. The Tories are out of step with businesses like Nissan, who have committed to the 2030 electrification target and are driving forward the transition to electrification proving it can be done. Nissan has shown a clear commitment to Sunderland, the North East and to the UK's automotive sector.

Kings Speech and Autumn Statement

At the King's speech debate on the 9th of November, I discussed issues surrounding Ticket Abuse, the Electric Car industry, and School Food. The King's speech failed to address these pertinent issues, and this Government's inaction has been shameful. Furthermore, this year's

autumn statement was equally uninspiring. Rachel Reeves was right to stop the Tories from over celebrating their 2% national insurance cuts, by holding them accountable for their decision to increase national insurance just a year ago. Taxes for working people are too high, and this budget continues to see lower income households disproportionately affected.

Justice Question and Justice Secretary Meeting

On the 23rd of November, I attended a meeting at the Ministry of Justice with the Secretary of State for Justice, Lord Chancellor Alex Chalk to discuss the sentencing of the man responsible for the tragic death of my young constituent, Gregg McGuire. I was joined in this meeting by Gregg's mother, Alison, his stepfather, Daniel, and Sergeant Lowery the lead officer on the case.

I am deeply appreciative of the Lord Chancellor taking the time to listen to Gregg's tragic case and the empathy and support he showed to the family. I am encouraged by his commitment to hear for himself the initial prosecution statement and the sentencing remarks made by the presiding Judge.

We need to reform sentencing guidelines for careless driving. It is shocking that drivers responsible for causing the death of a young cyclist, like Gregg, can be handed such lenient sentences. We cannot afford for our laws and their enforcement to send the signal that careless driving will be tolerated.

Digital Market Competition and Consumers Bill

Speaking at the report stage of the Digital Market Competition and Consumers Bill, I explained how the Bill was a missed opportunity for the Government to grant the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) the extra powers they requested to tackle ticket touts. Furthermore, I endorsed Opposition amendments on drip pricing which is especially problematic in the primary and secondary-ticketing market. It is time for the Government to get serious about online ticket touting, and the widespread fraud that comes with it, by empowering regulatory bodies such as the CMA to tackle these sites.

Washington Youth Council visit to Parliament



It was brilliant to welcome representatives from the Washington Youth Council to Parliament to receive the CTSI "Young Influencer" of the year award for their project on loan sharks. I met with them ahead of their award ceremony to discuss the Council's projects, and to give them a tour of Parliament. I have no doubt that I will be seeing members of the Washington Youth Council on the House of Commons benches one day.

Parliament Week & National School Meals week activity



LACA's National School Meals week ran alongside UK Parliament Week this year, which meant for a very busy Friday of school visits. At St Joseph's it was a pleasure to meet the school council to discuss how they advocate for their classmates, and to join the catering staff (pictured) as they delivered high quality, nutritious school lunches, which I was very happy to be able to sample, joining pupils for lunch. At George Washington Primary (also pictured), I was privileged to host an assembly to discuss how our parliamentary democracy works. School visits are very important to me – nothing gives me more hope for the future than meeting so many brilliant young people.

Remembrance Sunday



On Remembrance Sunday, I had the privilege of laying a wreath at the remembrance service in Washington Village on behalf of Parliament. I also wrote for the Sunderland Echo highlighting Labour's call to honour the Armed Forces Covenant and enshrine in law protections for our veterans, whose services have been cut repeatedly under consecutive

Arts, Craft and Design APPG meeting

Conservative governments. Changes must be made to protect our Service Community.

We held an eye-opening Art, Craft and Design (ACD) APPG session, hearing from teachers and ACD education campaigners including the NEU. The session highlighted the challenges facing educators and their students including being unable to access resources or coursework that were stuck in RAAC affected classrooms. We discussed current wins, such as the Government's reintroduction of the Initial Teacher Education Bursary and explored how to take the campaign further, to ensure that ACD in education is provided the recognition and support it deserves.

Go North East dispute

After weeks of negotiations between Go North East and Unite, I am happy to report that workers have been balloted and accepted a new pay offer. This means services will resume as early as Sat 2nd Dec. Thank you to all those involved in ending this dispute and achieving a better deal for workers. I know this has been tough for many of my constituents and has exposed critical flaws in our local transport network; namely no local Metro stations and only one bus company dominating, both of which I will continue to pursue.

MP's Christmas card competition for schools, 2023



This year I received dozens of entries to my annual Christmas card competition, and I am grateful for the support of the judges: (L-R): Clare Dodds, Learning Co-ordinator, Hylton Castle; Art Consultant Susan Coles (NSEAD); Kim McGuinness,

Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner; Sharon Hodgson MP; Cllr Steve Foster, Castle Ward; Cllr Alison Chisnall, Castle Ward, deciding the winners. The entries ranged from ages 3 to 11, and the winner this year was Joshua (pictured front page) from Rickleton Primary School. The lovely work these children produced is testament to the ongoing value of the arts.

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