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Report from Sharon Hodgson MP



Meeting with Elias Zananiri in Ramallah.

LFI Israel Delegation

My visit to Israel was as part of a parliamentary delegation, organised by Labour Friends of Israel (LFI). We met with a wide range of political representatives including: Elias Zananiri (pictured above), Vice Chairman of the PLO Committee for Interaction with the Israeli Society in Ramallah; and Merav Michaeli the leader of Labour's sister party, HaAvoda; as well as officials from the Israeli Department of Foreign Affairs. This has provided us with real insight into the election results in Israel, the functioning of the current Israeli Government, the political barriers that are preventing efforts to achieve a two-state solution from moving forward and the challenges facing Palestinians and their political representatives.

Importantly, it has also given us a comprehensive understanding of the role the international community can play, to better improve the humanitarian and political situation. It was also incredibly informative to hear the UK's Ambassador in Israel's reflections and to attend the Izhak Rabin Memorial.

It was also an invaluable experience to meet with Zimam, a grassroots youth movement in Ramallah and visit the Al-

Amari refugee camp to hear about Palestinian life and perspectives on the conflict. We also visited a Tech2Peace coexistence project and the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation.

Whilst on our trip, we also participated in culturally significant visits. These included going to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial Centre, to pay our respects to the six million Jewish people murdered in the Holocaust, attending holy sights in Jerusalem that are significant for Jews, Muslims and Christians around the world and visiting a Kibbutz, a communal form of living.

All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs)

Recently, I have Chaired several excellent APPG meetings: During the Dyslexia and Specific Learning Difficulties' panel event on 'Reforming Assessment in Secondary Education' we discussed the limitations on standardised assessment and how alternative methods of assessment, such as 'learner profiles', can paint a more accurate picture of a student's strengths and weaknesses. The event was a fantastic opportunity to think boldly about alternatives to assessment that could transform educational outcomes.

There was also the Ticket Abuse APPG, in which we discussed how the illicit secondary ticket market has grown and is increasingly relying on illegal software. Furthermore, we were present for the launch of FanFair Alliance's three-point plan. While these meetings have repeatedly fallen upon deaf ears in the Government, the Shadow benches have begun to recognise how popular and very much needed these policies are.

Finally, I chaired an important meeting of the Ovarian Cancer APPG with many of our stakeholders at the cutting edge of scientific and community research. September was also Gynaecological Cancer Awareness month and I've been sharing a petition online to include more Women's health checks during Cervical Screening appointments. Sadly, it is still the case that too few women are aware that smear tests only register one out of the five gynaecological cancers.

Rutherglen and West Hamilton By-Election



It has been an amazing campaign in Rutherglen and Hamilton West and, Labour has been rewarded with a stunning victory and our newest MP Michael Shanks! I am excited to see where this new talent takes us and look forward to personally congratulating him. This campaign was filled with passionate activists who all worked hard to secure this victory. I personally door knocked in Rutherglen alongside MSPs, party members and MPs from across the UK, determined to win back our Scottish heartlands. As we count down the year to a general election and add to our number, Labour is already looking like a government-in-waiting as Mid Bedfordshire and Tamworth, deep inside the blue wall, also come up for grabs in the next few weeks.

Filming on the Leamside Line, Washington



I was pleased to have been invited to take part in filming for the Leamside Line campaign. Myself and other supporters, including Toby Hughes of Nexus and Transport NE, and John McCabe of the NE Chamber of Commerce had the pleasure of donning bright orange PPE to film a promotional video on the tracks themselves. This video will be a key part of a media push, organised by *56 Degrees North*, to publicise our mission to reopen the Leamside line and Washington Metro Loop.

This light railway extension is an investment that will be foundational for developing the North East's economy and connectivity for residents and businesses alike. The significance of this campaign is even more important, following the Government's disgraceful u-turn on its commitment to re-open the Leamside line made in the Prime Minister's announcement this Wednesday and reversed less than 24 hours later. I have written to the Prime Minister to demand answers.

Birtley and Lamesley Litter Pick / Community Hub visit



I recently joined Liz Twist, MP for Blaydon at a litter pick in Birtley High Street and the surrounding area, organised by Keeping Birtley Tidy and Northumbrian Water. I was pleased to also be joined by Councillors from Birtley & Lamesley who are joining our constituency very shortly. After the litter pick, we visited The Birtley Hub which offers support to residents in Gateshead including providing food parcels, computer use, printing and Wi-Fi.

We then moved to Wrekenton Community Methodist Church to meet volunteers and enjoy the Two Soups café they hold every Thursday. The homemade soup was wonderful and regular attendees spoke very highly of the community spirit the Two Soups Café has generated. Thank you to Liz and the local councillors for being supportive whilst we transition to the new constituencies. I will be attending further events in the constituency over the coming months.

Labour Conference, Liverpool 2023

I am looking forward to our Labour Party Conference this weekend. Whilst there I plan to focus my efforts on advocating for Universal Free School Meal expansion through my engagements speaking at fringes hosted by the National Education Union and the Daily Mirror, the School Food Review, and Ella's Kitchen. Alongside these, I'm excited to be meeting with party members, our amazing Prospective Parliamentary Candidates and fantastic activists and campaigners.

There is no better time than now to encourage your family and friends to join the Labour Party.

Join here, by using this link below:

<https://labour.org.uk/members/why-join-labour>

Thank You Washington and Sunderland West CLP – and welcome to Washington and Gateshead South CLP.



For our last CLP meeting before we change over to our new Constituency of 'Washington and Gateshead South', I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to everyone who has made Washington and Sunderland West the place I have been so proud to represent for the last 13 years.

During my time as MP here we've certainly had more than our fair share of boundary changes, which saw the Washington and Sunderland West CLP created in 2006 – which then became the parliamentary seat at the general election of 2010. In that boundary review, not unlike this one, we saw some major changes to constituency organisation across the North East, and as such, for the last 13 years I have had the pleasure of representing the wards of Castle, Redhill, St Anne's, Washington Central, Washington East, Washington North, Washington South, and Washington West.

Working in these wards, I have had the tremendous privilege of our CLP's support across three successful election campaigns since 2010, on top of the fantastic support that I received before 2005 from the members of the Washington West and Washington South wards (from our time as Gateshead East and Washington West). Together we have fought, and won, five general elections together, and for that I am truly grateful.

I hope that this boundary review will bring together the coalfield communities of our region, linking us together with our shared heritage and histories. It is important that Westminster is shaped by this – to ensure our

industries and identities are not left behind. Over the years our CLP has successfully campaigned on a number of important issues, such as toppling plans for a 'Monster Incinerator' in Washington, and fighting the CCG plans to close all of our Urgent Care Centres, saving the Bunny Hill Centre from closure. By winning campaigns such as these we have been able to protect the beauty and health of our communities and celebrate Washington and Sunderland West for the wonderful place it is. Ultimately, it has been your effort that has kept Labour strong in our region, fighting for the betterment of our local services and our community members. Thanks to you we soared above local Tory opposition in St Anne's with a fantastic Labour gain at this year's Local Election for our wonderful Councillor Catherine Hunter, who continues to do St Annes' proud. We are also proud as a CLP to hand St Anne's ward over to Houghton and Sunderland South CLP in a very healthy condition, with two great Labour Councillors, which hopefully will soon become three next May.

I also want to thank all those who have stood for officer roles. Volunteering your time and engaging with local members is how grassroots politics grows. I thank you as well, for standing strong against the last 13 years of Conservative austerity and economic chaos, through the years of the pandemic, and for staying committed to our cause even when the political system seemed lost, and our power weakened.

While boundary reviews can be disruptive, I am confident that members in Birtley and Lamesley will find a warm welcome in our newly-formed CLP, and I am looking forward to this next chapter of our movement as we hopefully head back into government.

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