

# HUW MERRIMAN MP NEWSLETTER

Dear Resident,

Welcome to my latest newsletter.

Parliament is now in its summer recess so I'm spending my time working in the constituency as well as travelling across the railways in England and Wales to visit new projects and promote rail for tourism and decarbonisation. I will also be meeting the staff and volunteers who keep our existing railway running, build new lines and manufacture at home and abroad.

I hope this latest update is of interest. Please do get in touch if I can be of any assistance.

Best wishes,

Huw



## Little Common School visit Parliament and Downing Street

I took the opportunity to thank Mrs Linda Appleby for her 13 years of headship at Little Common School when I welcomed her and members of the School Council to Parliament in July.

To make the visit even more interesting, I arranged an extra special visit to Downing Street for the primary school group.

As representatives for their classmates, the School Council has important responsibilities and do a wonderful job. I'm glad that they were able to see where MPs carry out their work representing their constituents.

Read more [here](#)



## Improving Passenger Experiences at Train Stations

Proposals have been unveiled to better support passengers at stations by moving staff out from behind traditional ticket office windows and onto station concourses.

This is designed to make staff more visible and accessible to passengers. Importantly, no currently staffed stations will be unstaffed as a result of this change.

Southern has set out how the proposed changes will affect Bexhill, Cooden Beach, and Pevensey & Westham stations. Consultation on their proposals runs until 1 September. For further information and to take part in the consultation, [click here](#).



### Northeye Update

I recognise that it has been a long time since we had an update on Northeye. I am expecting an announcement from Government as to the future model. I have been working hard to ensure it addresses the key objection brought to me by residents in the area.

I am having to be patient with the update and I am aware that this is difficult for those impacted. I will bring news as soon as I am able.

Southeastern's consultation will take place in phases. The first phase will be on 40 tickets offices in their metro area around London. Proposals for all other stations – including Stonegate, Etchingham, Robertsbridge, Battle, and Crowhurst – will be consulted on in one of the further stages, likely in the autumn. For further information, please click [here](#).

To read more about why these changes are being proposed, please visit my website [here](#).



### English Wine Week 2023

I was delighted to mark this year's English Wine Week with a trip to the wonderful Sarah's Cellar on Battle High Street.

East Sussex has some fantastic vineyards making some of the best English wines and that is particularly true here in our constituency.

Last year, Sussex Wine was added to the list of products given geographically protected status. This makes it similar to Stilton cheese and Cornish pasties. On Sussex Day last month I, along with fellow Sussex MPs, launched the Sussex Wine Tourism Growth Plan that sets out how we can secure Sussex's place as the UK's leading wine destination with a global reputation.

You can read more about English Wine Week [here](#).



### South East Water Resilience Plans

Like many of you, I am concerned about the resilience of our local water companies. Since Storm Eunice in March 2022, I have been pressing SE Water, water regulators, and the Sussex Resilience Forum to ensure that residents are better supported not only during major water loss incidents, but all year round.

After being made aware of the temporary use ban, I wrote again to Ofwat to ask what actions they are taking to ensure SE Water are improving the resilience of water supplies and improving their infrastructure to ensure that hosepipe bans are not necessary when reservoir's are full. The ban has finally been lifted this week but I am calling on the company

and industry regulator for evidence of local infrastructure improvements.

You can view my latest letter to Ofwat as well as the other work I have undertaken on this matter on my website [here](#).



### **Discussing new Shared Delivery Plan with NHS Sussex**

At the beginning of July, I chaired and hosted a meeting for Sussex MP colleagues and NHS Sussex to discuss the New Shared Delivery Plan for the area. It was good to hear more about the plan and the benefits it will bring for the local population.

You can read more about the plan [here](#).



### **Great Big Green Week at St Mary's Church, Ticehurst**

During Great Big Green Week in June, I was kindly invited by St Mary's Eco Church Group to a lively talk about transport decarbonisation and the future of energy with members of the local community. This was the third year I have spoken on green transport and energy in Ticehurst.

You can read more about the event



### **Visit to King Offa Primary School**

I was invited to King Offa Primary School by Year 1 pupil, Theo, who wanted me to see the work the school is doing to help protect the environment and prevent littering. I was encouraged and impressed to hear how much pupils understood about the importance of the environment.

You can read more about my visit [here](#)



### **Observer Article - Illegal Migration Bill**

In my most recent Observer article, I focused on the Illegal Migration Bill and the implications that this legislation will have. You can read my article in full [here](#).



### **Roundtable on Improving Local Southern Rail Services**

and Great Big Green Week on my website [here](#).



### £1 million Community Defibrillator Fund

The Department of Health and Social Care is inviting interested organisations to register interest for its £1 million Community Automated External Defibrillators (AED) Fund, aimed at increasing the number of AEDs in public places where they are most needed and help save lives.

The funding is part of the Government's drive to equip the health system with the right technology to improve public access to care when they need it.

Organisations can submit an expression of interest [here](#).

I recently attended a roundtable event in Cooden Beach with the CEO of Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), Patrick Verwer, Rother District Council Leader, Cllr Doug Oliver, and other local stakeholders regarding local Southern Rail services.

We discussed the recent changes to Southern's timetable, which came into effect in May which improve the service and connections between Brighton, Eastbourne and Hastings. We also considered how we, as stakeholders, can better work together to support the wider economic prosperity of our region.

You can read more about the meeting on my website [here](#).



### Ribena Blackcurrant Pre-Harvest Reception

I was delighted to catch up with local blackcurrant growers Michael Reeves and Peter Reeves at a Ribena reception in Parliament and to sign the Ribena pledge to continue to support British Blackcurrant growers.



### New Hospitals Drop-In

It was great to speak with Lord Markham about the New Hospital Programme and discuss how the



### Observer Article - Inflation and the Plight of Refugees

In my Observer article at the end of June, I wrote about why we need to tackle inflation as a priority, and about those who have fled the war

new universal 'Hospital 2.0' layout will help improve care for patients and working conditions for staff.

I'm looking forward to the work beginning at our local hospitals.

in Ukraine and sought sanctuary in our local area. You can read my article [here](#).



### Ukrainian Celebration of Creativity and Resilience during Refugee Week

At the end of June, the Bexhill Ukrainian Hub hosted an open event during Refugee Week – a Ukrainian celebration of creativity and resilience at the De La Warr Pavilion.

Our Ukrainian guests have suffered immense personal loss but their resolve and courage is inspirational.

Thank you to the De La Warr, the Refugee Buddy Project and Rother Voluntary Action for their work in organising and hosting this event during Refugee Week.



£70m awarded to 44 projects reaching 12,000 more young people

YOUTH INVESTMENT FUND

### Funding Boost for Heathfield Youth Centre

I have been working with local residents to get better provision for young people living in and around Heathfield.

I welcomed last Friday's announcement that Heathfield Youth Centre is to benefit from more than £5 million of investment secured by East Sussex County Council from the Government's Youth Investment Fund.

You find out more about this welcome investment [here](#).



### APPG for South East Parliamentary Reception

It was great to speak at the South East Councils Parliamentary Reception, hosted by my neighbouring MP Sally-Ann Hart,



### Pevensey Old Mint House

I enjoyed a fascinating visit to the Old Mint House in Pevensey village. This iconic Grade II listed Tudor building, dating from c/1530, was taken over by local charity – Friends of the Mint House in 2021.

Their aim is to open the house as an historical visitor experience. To find out more about the house's history, open days and volunteer opportunities, including

to discuss rail connectivity across the region.

a youth volunteering programme, do visit their [website](#).



### [Pevensey Explorer Summer Service](#)

It was an absolute pleasure to join my friend and neighbour, Caroline Ansell MP and Pevensey Parish Council to board the Pevensey Explorer Summer Special Bus Service.

This bus service offers a great day out on a heritage vehicle taking in the beautiful villages of Pevensey, Westham, Pevensey Bay and Stone Cross and the town of Eastbourne. Thanks to Pevensey Parish Council for their work on this project.

Read more about it [here](#)



### [Work Experience](#)

Every year, I am pleased to host a number of students on work experience placements with my office. If possible, we arrange for them to spend some time in both the Westminster and constituency offices.

Sarah Fermer, who is an A-level student at Heathfield Community, College has written a lovely account of her work experience week with me and my team which you can read [here](#)

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