 **John McDonnell MP**

**Member of Parliament for Hayes & Harlington**

Dear Friend,

**Parliamentary Newsletter May 2022**

In addition to my regular newsletter, which I email to local party members and community groups, I am circulating just a brief update as the Parliamentary session has ended and there will be a new Queen’s Speech with the reopening of Parliament on Tuesday 10th May.

**Local Council Elections**

In addition, this week we have the important local council elections on Thursday 5th May.

I hope that as many of you will be able assist our local campaign on polling day on Thursday. Our local candidates have mounted a tremendous local campaign and any help you can give on Thursday would be marvellous.

I would be grateful if you would complete this google form, indicating your availability, as this would really help with organising on the day: [https://forms.gle/sChobLqrkz66HPJW9](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/13x2CMw3pCqqwWPycwtfRh?domain=forms.gle)

**Events in Parliament**

**PM and MPs’ Behaviour**

You will have seen the media reports of the behaviour of Boris Johnson and some MPs in the Commons.

I have written elsewhere that I can understand why so many commentators are describing this current Parliament as possibly the worst in living history.

This is a Parliament that has brought shame on our country over the last two years.

Never before have we had a Prime Minister in office who has been convicted of a criminal offence. More disgracefully, never before have we had a Prime Minister or, indeed I believe, any government minister, who having been convicted of a crime, has not resigned their office.

Never before have we had a Prime Minister or any minister, who has been proven to lie to Parliament and not been forced to stand down.

And surely, we must have reached an all-time low in the history of Parliamentary standards when a Conservative MP is caught watching pornography in the Chamber.

My view is that we can’t go on like this and we have to clean up our politics and do it urgently.

**Covid**

You will have seen that the Supreme Court ruled that the Government sent elderly people, untested and possibly infected with Covid, back into residential care with the result thousands died unnecessarily.

You should also be aware that in our area during this period the local residential homes were struggling to obtain the PPE protective masks and gear. I liaised with the local residential homes and was daily chasing ministers and civil servants to secure a supply of masks and protective equipment to protect staff and residents of the local care homes.

My staff team and I were dealing with families distressed because they were unable to visit their sick relatives because of the lockdown.

**Ukraine**

Two issues have dominated the political scene over the last month: the war in Ukraine and the cost of living crisis being faced by so many.

Of course, we have all been appalled at the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the brutality of the assault. I have spoken at a number of meetings and demonstrations opposing the war, condemning this Russian war crime and calling for peace.

The sight of refugees flowing over the borders has been heartrending and so like many others I was dismayed at the Government’s delay in rendering assistance to these families. Like countries across Europe, we should have allowed emergency entry with minimal bureaucracy and provided the support these largely women and children needed.

**Nationality and Borders Bill**

I was equally concerned at the Government pressing ahead with its Nationality and Borders Bill, which criminalises anyone coming to this country seeking asylum who has not gained entry through an existing Government approved route. The problem with this condition is that the Government has so restricted the approved access routes that refugees desperately fleeing from recent war zones like Syria and Afghanistan stand little chance of finding safety through these routes.

In the debate on this Bill, I appealed to the Home Secretary to allow those who have sought asylum here to at least be allowed to work whilst their asylum application is being processed. John Randall, the former Conservative MP for Uxbridge, Lord Randall, supported a similar proposal in the House of Lords. This would mean that the person seeking refuge is no longer be expected to live on the £5 a day allowance they receive but also would help provide the labour, often well qualified and skilled, that our economy needs at the moment. This proposal was supported by many charities, churches and religious groups but refused by the Home Secretary.

I also expressed my total opposition to the Homes Secretary taking the powers in this Bill to remove a person’s citizenship without notifying them. This sets a dangerous precedent for the future, especially in the hands of a government that created the hostile environment and is now planning to send asylum seekers to Rwanda.

**Cost of Living Crisis**

Turning to the cost of living crisis, I was crushingly disappointed by the chancellor’s response in the his Spring Statement, which was in effect a mini budget.

In the debate on this in the Commons I asked him to think again about the support people needed in facing such a high rate of inflation and such steep rises in energy costs.

For pensioners and peoples forced to rely on social security benefits, like the disabled, Rishi Sunak, the Chancellor, has only agreed that pensions and benefits will rise by 3.1%, the rate of inflation back in September last year. Yet we know now that the Bank of England and the Government’s own independent Office of Budget Responsibility are predicting inflation to be between 7 and 10%.

In the discussion of the mini budget I urged the Chancellor to think again and bring forward measures to inflation proof pensions, benefits and wages. I especially asked him to provide additional support next winter by doubling the Winter Fuel Allowance as I fear that many will be freezing in their own homes by November because of the expected doubling of gas and electricity costs.

**Elections Bill and Police and Crime Bill**

In this session the government has passed the Elections Bill that enables for the first time any government in this country to interfere in the running of the independent Elections Commission, the body responsible for securing free and fair elections. In addition, this legislation introduces identification cards for voting.

Alongside this legislation the Conservatives have forced through the Police and Crime Bill which undermines the right to protest, a right established over centuries in this country.

**Summary Selection of Local Activities**

I have undertaken my usual intensive round of local activities, ensuring that I am responding to my constituents and working closely with local community groups.

This has included attending and presenting awards at the enjoyable celebration of Vaisakhi at the Beck Theatre hosted by the wonderful Hayes Welfare Association.

In addition, during the month of Ramadan I visited the local Mosques and on the day of Eid I addressed each session of the prayer gathering from 6 am until late that morning, having addressed an estimated over 4000 local people.

I have continued to work with local trade unions on local employment issues, including addressing workplace issues at Heathrow airport in this recent period and speaking at Unison meetings in their pay campaign.

I joined RMT members in their campaign on London Underground and against the appalling treatment of the members by P&O.

I participated in an event promoting local employment support for people out of work.

On a more light hearted note, as a supporter of the local Hayes and Yeading football club, I joined other supporters at the play off final this month but regrettably despite having a tremendous season we were narrowly beaten. Disappointed but here is always next season to look forward to.

**Finally**

Finally, because we are now half way through this Parliament, we will need to prepare for the possibility of a general election at any time. I will be hoping to stand one more time as the local Parliamentary Candidate and you will soon receive notice of the reselection process. Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss this with me.

This also means that once the council elections are over we will be planning the detail of the local general election campaign. The CLP officers will let you know how you can get involved in this important campaign to secure a Labour government.

Thank you as always for all your help and support.

 Best wishes,

John

McDonnell MP