



Hello everyone

The last month has been as action packed as ever with lots going on in the constituency; new drop-in surgeries and a multitude of local events and activities - as you will see below.

The weather has helped a cheery mood for sure, despite England's showing in the World Cup and Andy Murray's uncharacteristically early exit from Wimbledon. Let's hope defending champion Chris Froome can make it a double in the Tour de France - which commences with the [Grand Depart](#) in Yorkshire this weekend. Best of luck as well to all of our athletes in the forthcoming Commonwealth Games in Glasgow from 23rd July to 3rd August.

In Westminster I have had the pleasure of welcoming several visitors from Maidstone & The Weald for tours and Prime Minister's Questions. Two young ladies have also spent a few days of work experience with my Parliamentary team (right), learning about the role of an MP and a Minister and how my daily work is managed.



I hope you can enjoy some of the good things July has to offer and I look forward to seeing you around and about in the constituency very soon

Very best wishes

Helen

Strawberry Tea

Fant community hall is the location for an annual fundraising event organised by local resident and unsung hero Moya Smith (in red). Her now legendary Strawberry Tea supports Breast Cancer Care, a charity that carries out vital work offering emotional and practical support to those affected by the disease.

Over 120 people bought tickets to Moya's event and a veritable mountain of strawberries, cream and scones were devoured without guilt (well almost) by all present. Great event and well done to Moya and her team.



Easistore Opening

I joined the Mayor of Maidstone to open [Easistore Self Storage](#) on Hart Street, close to Maidstone West station.

Easistore is not just a simple storage facility. It also provides start-up accommodation for new and fledgling businesses. It's great to see the firm choosing Maidstone as a place to do business – boosting the local economy and creating opportunities in our community.

MD Paul Glenister (left) added extra flavour to the occasion by way of a fabulous hog roast for all who attended!



Pegasus Gymnastics

[Pegasus Gymnastics](#) invited me to check out their fab new facilities at their club in Tovil. The Club provides international level coaching, as well as offering opportunities for children of all ages and abilities, producing some of the UK's best gymnasts with some real medal hopes for Rio 2016.

Courtney Tulloch is one such star, and it was amazing to watch her in action - putting my balancing act on the beam in perspective!



Community Outreach Surgeries

My easy-access local outreach surgeries are proving very popular. No appointment needed, just drop in and chat to your MP is the order of the day.

Regular sessions have been running for several months now at supermarkets across the constituency including Waitrose in Allington, Sainsbury's in Romney Place, Asda Living on St Peter Street and most recently in the reception area at Maidstone Hospital (right).



Future venues include the Co-op on Cranbrook High Street (July 18th 2-3pm) and Tesco Extra in Tovil. Check my website for details of forthcoming surgeries www.helengrant.org, or call 020 7219 7107, or email helen.grant.mp@parliament.uk

Bridge Nursery

One issue that many constituents have been raising lately is the proposed building of new houses in various locations across Maidstone & The Weald.

By way of example I met an Allington resident at my surgery in Waitrose on 6th June and together we visited the Bridge Nursery site on the London Road (right). I felt it important to gain the views of other residents who may be affected by any development of this site.



To that end I have recently circulated a survey to a sample of residents in the area and the responses are coming in thick and fast. I intend to report a summary of the feedback I am receiving in my next update.

Maidstone McDonald's Apprentices

On June 6th I also [presented certificates](#) to 9 talented apprentices at McDonald's in Maidstone town centre. They have just completed a two year course, and four are already in management roles within McDonald's - with others going on to university and college.



As Minister for Tourism I recently launched the new [British Tourism Council](#) to boost skills and the quantity and quality of jobs available. It was fantastic to see the power of apprenticeships in action on home turf!

Maidstone Riverside Run

Summer is a favoured time for outdoor fundraising events for obvious reasons and this year's [Maidstone Riverside Run](#) on Sunday 8th June was the beneficiary of absolutely glorious weather. I joined organiser and Staplehurst resident Caron Holden at the finish line in Maidstone's Millennium Park in Lockmeadow to cheer home almost 150 runners and present the prizes.

Now in its third year, the event was originally created in memory of Caron's mum, Sandra Briffa, who lost her fight with cancer in 2010. All proceeds from the run go to Cancer Research UK.



Palace Wood Primary - Maidstone Hockey Champs!

On another beautifully sunny day I dropped into Palace Wood Primary's Sports Day in Allington. I wanted to congratulate the Year 6 hockey team on winning the [Maidstone Hockey Championships](#) and for representing the borough at the district finals.

Hockey is such an exciting and competitive sport, a sport I loved competing in myself at school - and it's great to see Palace Wood excelling at this level. Huge congratulations to the Year 6 team and coach Tanya Shaw!



Henley Women's Regatta

Increasing women and girls' participation in sport is a key issue for me in Government for a whole host of reasons; health and well-being, confidence building, self-discipline, teamwork, respect, and much more. On June 22nd I visited a truly inspiring event that encapsulated all of those aims and aspirations – [The 27th Annual Henley Women's Regatta](#).



Anyone interested in trying out this sport locally can certainly do so; Maidstone is home to [Maidstone Invicta Rowing Club](#), based just next door to the Gallagher Stadium on the banks of the Medway. Give it a go!

Kent School Games

I had the pleasure of attending the opening ceremony of [Kent's School Games County Festival of Sport](#) and kicking off the proceedings. The games involve 130 schools from across our county - with over 1,200 students competing in 8 different sports.



They're all about engaging young people in competitive sport, giving them a platform to excel and keeping them healthy and active – regardless of ability. It's fantastic that the School Games have now been rolled out nationwide following Kent's lead!

And finally...

It is the time of year for the village fete and I attended two lovely events last weekend at [Staplehurst](#) and [East Farleigh](#). Food stalls, live music and challenges of skill like Splat the Rat were in abundance.

It was also Armed Forces Day and I enjoyed a short chat with Vic Holdaway of the [Royal British Legion](#) on his stand at Staplehurst.



Our Kentish Village Fetes are an integral part of community life. They bring people together in a unique way whilst also raising funds for important local projects and charities. Thanks to everyone who volunteers to make sure these truly wonderful British events take place, and all who turn up on the day in support.

Published by Helen Grant MP (House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA)