



Hello everyone

It has been another action-packed month in the constituency and in Westminster. I've outlined some highlights for you below.

I am delighted to announce that I will be starting two regular 'Meet Helen' drop-in sessions to give greater access for local people to come and talk to me. Be it about a personal matter, or perhaps a local, national or international subject, we can chat informally, and if the issue is confidential there are facilities to have a private meeting too.

The Asda Living store on St Peter Street, ME16 0SR is one of the two venues and the first session takes place on **Friday 30th May between 10-11.30am**. This is a great central Maidstone location with plenty of parking.



Waitrose

The second location is at the Waitrose store in Allington's Mid Kent shopping centre, Allington Park, Maidstone, ME16 0PX and my first session there will be on Friday 6th June from 11am - 12pm.

My normal surgeries by appointment will continue at my new office premises at Kent House, Romney Place, ME15 6LH, in central Maidstone. Go to my website at www.helengrant.org for details of future 'meet Helen' events and surgeries.

Hope to see you in and around the constituency.

Very best wishes

Helen

Flood Meeting with the Secretary of State

I met with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Owen Paterson, this week to press the case for capital investment in proposed flood defence schemes to protect our area and to raise constituents concerns as necessary.



The Secretary of State recognised that we were taking all the right steps and I am hopeful a positive way forward can be found. I will be convening another round table meeting of key stakeholders to plan the way ahead and will keep you updated on any developments.

Queen's Baton Relay to pass through Maidstone

As a scintillating summer of sport draws ever closer, the Queen's Baton landed on British Isles on May 11 ahead of the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.



I'm proud to say that the Garden of England will step into the spotlight on June 5 as Kent hosts its own leg of the Relay.

Dame Kelly Holmes has kindly agreed to take part in the first event of the day at Tonbridge Castle. The Baton will also be visiting several schools in Kent, before an event at County Hall in Maidstone.

Cranbrook Union Mill

The Saturday before last I popped down to Vestry Hall in Cranbrook to unveil a plaque commemorating John Russell in the bicentenary year of Cranbrook's famous windmill.

It's a tribute to him, Kent County Council and all the volunteers that it still stands tall in all its splendour today.

Attractions like the Union Mill are so important for Kent's thriving tourist industry. As the local MP and Minister for Tourism it's fantastic to be able to recognise and celebrate this jewel of Kent - still in full working order after 200 years!



Booming Manufacturing

Early in May I visited Burtons Manufacturers to launch their new state-of-the-art laser cutting machine. Burtons is just one example of a growing number of expert manufacturers across Maidstone and The Weald.

Nationally, growth in manufacturing output is at its fastest for 15 years, with Kent a key contributor. It's great to see local businesses doing well.



First World War Centenary

I attended a fantastic **Football and Peace day event** at the Gallagher stadium a few weeks ago organised by the National Children's Football Alliance to remember the Christmas truce of 1914.

Pupils from schools across Kent were joined by students from Germany to partake in friendly games of football and cricket. Football and Peace day perfectly embodies our focus for the centenary on remembrance, education and youth. It was great to see younger generations recognising the sacrifice made by so many men and women in the Great War.



Marden Health Fair

I was delighted to attend **Marden Health Fair** recently. I think it's vital to promote the benefits of exercise and a healthy lifestyle and initiatives like the Health Fair are a fantastic way to get people active and involved.

I was put through my paces on Wellbeing People's Smoothie Bike; as you cycle the blender whizzes around creating a healthy drink as a reward for your efforts!



Football, Football, Football!

It's certainly been a football-filled few weeks!

I had a brilliant day at Maidstone United for the **Mini World Cup** last week, presenting the replica World Cup trophy to Roseacre Junior School representing Greece.

All 32 sides deserve praise for their sterling effort in the near Brazil-like conditions at the Gallagher Stadium!



I also dropped in to Shepherd Neame in Kent – Britain's oldest brewers – to launch their special edition '4-4-2' beer celebrating this year's World Cup tournament.

Let's hope we can use it to toast England glory in a few weeks time in Rio.

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I have
to
mention



the FA Cup final too, where I was a privileged guest of the FA in my capacity as Minister for Sport.

As a Hull University graduate it was great to see Hull City make the final and push Arsenal all the way in a thrilling encounter before Arsenal's extra-time winner. Definitely won't forget that one!

Westminster Update

A number of constituents have raised concerns about gambling and the clustering of betting shops on our high streets. As the Minister responsible for the UK's gambling industry, I think we need to address this and the **Government is acting**.

Bookies looking to open new shops will have to submit a planning application and councils will be able to refuse applications and stop new betting shops opening. These changes give local communities, like in Maidstone, a voice in deciding whether they want another shop opening and they support a broader package of common sense measures to improve player protection.

