



REPORTING BACK

2022

GEORGE FREEMAN MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR MID NORFOLK



Being an active local constituency MP means working to help find solutions to some of the biggest local problems we face here in Mid Norfolk.

I think it also means being accountable to YOU - the people I am here to represent and serve. As I have pledged on each of the four election nights on which I've been honoured to be elected, I will always do my best to represent EVERYONE in Mid Norfolk - not just the people who voted for me.

Wherever you are, I hope you are able to enjoy some good cheer this Christmas.



George



MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN MID NORFOLK

As a committed constituency MP, I have always relished the chance to try and make a difference locally, as well as to represent our area in Westminster and in Government. Mid Norfolk faces many challenges which I continue to work on trying to solve in collaboration with local community groups, civic leaders and councillors by applying pressure and holding to account Government officials and public agencies. Making a difference locally continues to be my number one priority as your MP.

Here is an update on much of the work I have been doing on your behalf over the past year.



TACKLING THE COST OF LIVING

Rising fuel and energy prices, as well as the cost of living, are real concerns for so many here in Mid Norfolk. From my work with constituents, businesses and local councillors, as well as our public services, charities and community groups, I am acutely aware of the pressures people face on a daily basis.

That's why I continue to actively speak up for Mid Norfolk in my discussions with Ministers and officials, urging the Chancellor to continue with his plan of targeted support for the most vulnerable households, services and businesses. The Government can't solve every problem but we can target help to the most vulnerable.

Rest assured, I am committed to doing all I can to help my constituents during these difficult times. To stay up to date with all of my work on such issues, please follow updates on my website [here](#)



HELPING OUR NHS REDUCE APPOINTMENT WAIT TIMES

As a former Health Minister and someone with a close understanding of the incredible role our NHS plays each and every day, I am very aware of how difficult the last two and a half years have been - especially for those working on the frontline.

That's why I welcomed the packages of support announced by the Government (an additional £3.3bn on top of what was already promised) to help overcome the Covid backlog and in turn reduce hospital and GP surgery appointment wait times. People need to be able to access our NHS when they need it - not wait weeks, or even months, for treatment.

I continue to meet with the heads of our local GP surgeries too in order to learn more about the challenges they are facing. To learn more, click [here](#)



SPEAKING UP FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mental health provision has long been an issue very close to my heart. I have seen first-hand in my own family and friends how mental health issues can destroy lives.

That's why I have always taken a close interest in our local mental health provision, and why I welcomed the chance to be involved again in the Minister's latest meeting with Norfolk and Suffolk MPs about the current (and most recent) crisis at the NSFT.

I have myself spoken directly with the NSFT leadership this year, as well as patients and families. We need to see improvements quickly. We cannot have more undelivered promises. To learn more about my work on this, please click [here](#)



SPEAKING UP FOR THE UNSUNG HEROES IN OUR LOCAL CARE SECTOR



The pandemic was an incredibly challenging time for our social care sector - especially those living and working at our almost fifty local care homes. Thanks to the sacrifice and hard work of so many, Norfolk's carers did a brilliant job in curbing the spread of Covid.



As restrictions have eased, I have been able to visit more of our care homes in person this year and experience the real challenges of delivering care for our most vulnerable in our rural county.

I am committed to doing all I can to speak up on behalf of this crucial sector and look forward to visiting more local homes next year. To find out more about my work, please click [here](#)

SUPPORTING SEN SCHOOLS AND MAINSTREAM SEND PROVISION

How we take care of our most vulnerable fellow citizens is a measure of who we are as a society. EVERYONE has the right to a good start in life and education.

I have always been a vocal supporter of SEND education here in Mid Norfolk – helping to get the campaign for the relocation of **Chapel Road School** in Attleborough to a new state-of-the-art facility in Old Buckenham over the line and regularly visiting them (I look forward to visiting again early next year!), as well as lobbying for increased SEND funding for our rural schools.

For the past couple of years, I have been working with Jane Hayman and her wonderful team at **Fred Nicholson School** as they look to find a proper, long term solution for their fast declining school buildings. I remain firmly committed to supporting them with that work in 2023. To learn more, please click [here](#)



TACKLING DOMESTIC ABUSE AND VIOLENCE

Two women every week are killed by a current or former partner. 1 in every 3 women will experience domestic abuse in their life. Norfolk saw a 40% increase in domestic violence in the pandemic.

These are truly shocking statistics than really do need addressing urgently.

That's why I have continued my work in the local Taskforce I set up with the Lord Lieutenant, High Sheriff, Police and Crime Commissioner and local campaign groups and charities like the **Daisy Programme** at Watton. Together, we have invited the key ministers to Norfolk to see the work being done on the frontline - and to hear from victims and their families.

To see more on this work, please visit my website [here](#)



BACKING LOCAL BUSINESS

Having had a fifteen year career running my own small business before coming to Parliament, and now being in my third stint as a Business Minister, I passionately believe in the potential of Norfolk's rural economy to play a key role in helping to rebalance the UK economy and creating prosperity and opportunities across our area - breathing fresh life into our towns and villages, keeping them thriving and vibrant.

That's why I continue to be so active in supporting our local business community, especially in these tough times - whether that be through my local **Business Spotlight**, my regular business visits, my social media and annual **Small Business Saturday** promotions, or projects and campaigns like the **Norfolk Enterprise Festival**. I regularly work with Breckland, South Norfolk and the LEP as they support local SMEs.

To stay up to date with many of my efforts on this, please visit [here](#)

SUPPORTING OUR TOWN CENTRES

Our High Streets and Market Places are the beating hearts of our local towns. That's why I continue to do all I can to support them, especially during this difficult energy and cost of living crisis.

This year, I've continued my work with councillors and residents groups on Town Plans for Dereham, Watton, Attleborough and Wymondham. I have supported Breckland Council's '**Future Breckland**' initiative which aims to deliver improvements to our Market Towns - joining their 'Board' of private and public sector leaders to offer advice as the council team drive forward this work. (See more [here](#) and [here](#))

Having, over the years, supported Wymondham Town Council as it has sought to breathe new life into its Friday Market, I continue to work with South Norfolk Council as they deliver investment into Wymondham's Town Centre too. (See more [here](#))



NORFOLK'S INNOVATION ECONOMY

The Eastern region is fast becoming the home of the most innovative companies in Europe, especially within the fields of food, medicine, energy, technology and engineering. I firmly believe our area is on the cusp of a once-in-a-generation chance to drive a new cycle of exciting small business growth, investment, prosperity and jobs through these key high growth sectors.

That's why I do all I can to promote our local Innovation Economy, shining a light on the pioneering innovation in our area, too often overlooked. It's why I am also actively engaging with the local DWP, the LEP, our local councils and our local schools so that we can do more to help our local youngsters, and those that wish to retrain, access the new jobs and opportunities already coming to our area.

As more and more companies "spin out" from hubs like the **Norwich Research Park** and the **Hethel Engineering Centre**, we'll see them set up in our local communities, fuelling local shops, pubs and services. To learn more about my work to ensure Mid Norfolk leads the way, please click [here](#)



Department
for Work &
Pensions



**KICKSTART
SCHEME**

LEVELLING UP SKILLS AND OPPORTUNITIES

With our region becoming a centre of some of the most exciting, skilled jobs in UK and Europe, I am determined to do all I can to help local Mid Norfolk people gain access to those incredible opportunities.

That's why I continue to work so closely with the local DWP/Breckland Jobcentre and our local councils, as well as our Mid Norfolk schools and regional colleges, as they look to do all they can to that end. Together we have discussed what more we can all do together to improve the 'offer' to our youngsters in that key 16-24 year old category, as well as better support those other people that wish to retrain - with schemes like 'Kickstart' already providing support, and the 'Future Breckland Board' exploring what more can be done to boost the local skills pool. I am also looking to hold a Jobs Fair in the Watton area early in 2023. (To stay up to date with much of my work on this, please check my website for updates [here](#))

DELIVERING BETTER BROADBAND AND MOBILE SIGNAL

Reliable, superfast/full fibre internet and mobile signal are now essential to 21st century life, and that's why one of my central missions throughout my time as our MP has been to campaign for proper digital connectivity across Mid Norfolk.

Much great work has happened over the last decade - with c.95% in Norfolk now able to get quality broadband service and innovative schemes improving our mobile coverage in the most rural areas. But there are still large parts of our area which still have poor broadband and mobile coverage - and I am determined to change that.

This year, I have continued to apply pressure on Ministers, BT/Openreach and other key local stakeholders, while also working to bring alternative broadband providers like Upp into our area. To learn more about my work, please click [here](#)



REFORMING THE PLANNING SYSTEM



Building enough houses to make sure everyone in our area has the chance for a home of their own, while also making sure we protect our rural landscape and heritage, is often a difficult balance.

That's why, since becoming MP for Mid Norfolk back in 2010, I have worked with local community groups and councillors to promote through my non-profit project **The Norfolk Way** a more local and organic model of development based on more vibrant villages and small businesses. I will always speak out to make sure we protect our landscape and heritage - whether that be to continue protecting the Lizard or the Tiffey Valley in Wymondham, or to oppose an inappropriate and unsustainable development in Watton or Dereham, where there is a danger of large-scale overdevelopment,



The planning system should allow for a long-term plan led by local communities. We need to stop aggressive house dumping and insist on proper community planning with infrastructure, green space & infrastructure & facilities. To read about my campaign in depth, click [here](#)



BACKING OUR LOCAL PUBS AND SHOPS

Pubs and shops are so often at the centre of community life and real bastions of our rural heritage, playing a key part in keeping our villages and towns vibrant. If we don't use them, we'll lose them! (Especially in these tough times now).

That's why I have again kept up with my work to support our local shops and pubs.

I am delighted to report that the **'Save Our Swan'** campaign that I've supported finally saw **The White Swan in Gressenhall** reopened as a Community Asset, and I had the pleasure of attending the **Plunkett Foundation's** event in Westminster to highlight the important work being done (particularly in Mid Norfolk) to support community shops and pubs. I have actively promoted and done work with a number such establishments in our area too, including nominating **Paul Sandford** of **Dereham's Railway Tavern** as my **Community Pub Hero**. (See more [here](#))

I will continue to do all I can to promote and support these wonderful local assets.



UPGRADING OUR EAST-WEST RAIL LINKS

To develop our local economy, we also need upgraded rail links (with our local stations as hubs) that can be accessed by everyone.

That's why I push on with my campaign to have the **Norwich-Cambridge line** upgraded to 100mph and half-hourly services, and for improvements at **Ely North** and **Trowse Bridge** to enable us to finally link into the **East-West Rail** project I led when a Transport Minister.

Our stations at **Wymondham** and **Attleborough** can play a key role as better connected transport hubs for tourism and local travel, as well as 5G community and business meeting places, that serve as proper gateways to their respective town centres and amenities, including to all those disabled passengers in Wymondham who cannot cross the line at the moment. That's why I continue to campaign to deliver **Platform 2 access improvements at Wymondham Station**, and am working with both South Norfolk Council and Breckland Council, alongside partners, to explore what we can do to transform these local rail stations as part of their wider local Plans. To learn more, please click [here](#) and [here](#)



IMPROVING OUR ROADS

For too long, successive governments on all sides of the House have failed to properly invest in road infrastructure in the East.

That's why I was delighted to work with fellow eastern MPs to get a government commitment to full dualling of the A11 when first elected, and why I was over the moon to bring the then PM to Hockering in 2014 to secure a £300 million commitment to dual the North Tuddenham-Easton stretch of the A47.

I continue to actively lobby National Highways to try and ensure there is no further slippage in construction of these A47 improvements. We must go further however, and that's why I support the A47 Alliance's campaign to secure full A47 dualling - from Lowestoft in the East, all the way to the A1 in the West. I also provide support to the local anti-rat running Taskforce that I helped set up and which is working with NCC on a package of mitigation measures. To find out more, click [here](#) and [here](#)



BACKING MID NORFOLK FARMERS

Farming is such an important part of Norfolk life and, coming from a farming background, I do all I can to support this vital local industry.

This past year has been very tough for many of our farmers, food processors and associated sectors - with the Bird Flu crisis, labour shortages and rising supply prices piling enormous pressures upon them.

That's why I have been so vocal on these issues - meeting and speaking with local farmers, as well as food processors like **Cranswick Foods**, and making representations on behalf of the sector to ministers and officials in Government.

Having set up the **UK's Agri-Tech Strategy** (an exciting sector in which our region is leading the way in which farmers can produce more with less), I continue to promote this vital field - most recently at the **Norfolk Farming Conference**. I also spoke about food prices and consumer demand at the **Rural Policy Group's 'The Value of Food'** event. To learn more on my work, click [here](#)



ENHANCING OUR RURAL LANDSCAPES AND HABITATS

One of the reasons Norfolk is such a popular place to live, work and visit is the fact that it is home to some of the most beautiful landscapes and precious habitats.

That's why, as someone deeply passionate about the environment and our local countryside, I always look to support great projects and initiatives aimed at boosting local biodiversity, growing habitats and enhancing our environmental offer.

Our area is pioneering in so much environmental best practice like the **Wending Beck Exemplar Project** (see more [here](#)) - a project led by local landowners that ticks all of those key boxes. It really is an example of 21st century farming that works for the environment.

I continue to support a number of on-farm and in-land wetlands that, in addition to boosting the environment, also serve to strengthen our local flood resilience (see more [here](#)) - as well as promoted to likes of the **Breckland Farmers Wildlife Network** and other key groups.



TACKLING FLOODING IN MID NORFOLK

Flooding has long been a concern for many in our part of Norfolk and, having set up the **Mid Norfolk Flood Partnership** following the awful winter of 2020/21, I continue to actively work with local stakeholders, and in Parliament, to try and ensure our part of the world gets the support and resources it needs.

In addition to speaking up for concerned and affected constituents, I (with Lord Dannatt - Chair of the **Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance**) met with the Flooding Minister, and spoke with DLUHC ministers, to discuss reforms that would mitigate a considerable amount of potential future flooding, and call for greater support for rural areas. I continued to work with local partners, including Anglian Water, as they take steps to strengthen local flood resilience in our region too - and attended the **Sustainable Flood and Drought Management APPG**.

The NSFA, which implemented many of the MNFP's initial recommendations, has done much great work as well - and I welcome that they are now helping further tranches of communities as promised. See more on my flooding work [here](#)



SUPPORTING COMMUNITY GROUPS AND SPORTS CLUBS

Mid Norfolk is rightly known for the sense of community that binds us all together. A big part of that local spirit is our many wonderful community groups and sports clubs - doing vital work in our local towns and villages.

That's why, throughout my time as the local MP, I have done my utmost to support them - trying to visit at least one or two each constituency day to shine a light on the great work they are doing, as well as find out what I can do to help their efforts.

This year, I have visited dozens of such groups and sports clubs - including **the Lighthouse Centre in Attleborough; Woodside Snooker Centre, Dereham Town FC, and the aboutDereham Partnership** in Dereham; and the **Wymondham Churches Network**. To find out more on all my visits, please click [here](#)

SPEAKING UP FOR OUR GREAT LOCAL CHARITIES

A key part of being a local MP is to speak up for important causes - not just in Norfolk, but also those nationally and internationally.

That's why I continue to actively support the work of **Break** in East Anglia (see more [here](#)) as they provide support for young people transitioning out of care.

It's why I also support **Brain Tumour Research UK** as they campaign for greater research funding and provide vital support to sufferers. Having lost a close childhood friend to the disease, I know how awful it truly is. (See more [here](#)) I have been very vocal in my support for **Motor Neurone Disease** campaigners. (See more [here](#)).

Having had to overcome a stammer as a child, I also back '**Action for Stammering Children**'. (See my campaign page [here](#))

Rest assured, I will continue on with this vital work.



SUPPORTING OUR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Our children are the future of our great country and county, and that's why I regularly visit Mid Norfolk schools to speak to staff, parents and most importantly pupils.

This year, I have had the pleasure to visit **Attleborough Academy, Litcham School, Hockering Primary School, North Elmham Primary School, Brisley Primary School and Fred Nicholson School**, amongst others.

I am acutely aware of the particular challenges faced by local schools like ours and so I continue to speak up on their behalf for greater funding and resources, especially regarding SEND provision.

To learn more about my visits this year, please visit my website [here](#)



WORKING CLOSELY WITH LOCAL DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Here in Mid Norfolk, we are lucky to have an abundance of dedicated local County, District, Town and Parish councillors who care passionately about their local area and do so much good work to help so many.

That's why I greatly value the conversations I have with them each and every week, and the chance to work with them on a plethora of local campaigns, projects and pieces of casework.

Together, we have held Community and Supermarket Surgeries (across all of our major market towns), attended visits, walked the local High Streets, amongst so much more.

To find out more about my work with our local councillor teams, please click [here](#)



BEING ACCESSIBLE TO YOU!

Being an active local Constituency MP in Mid Norfolk means working to help find solutions to some of our biggest local problems, helping 000's of constituents get the help they need, supporting great local causes and voicing the concerns of our area in Parliament and Government.

That also means being accessible. To YOU.

Which is why I have a regular programme of Community and Supermarket Surgeries that I move around the constituency - and why I hold regular telephone surgeries with constituents that have the most sensitive and complex cases too.

If YOU would like to come and meet me in the coming months, please do contact my office who will be able to tell you when my next surgery in your area will be - via george.freeman.mp@parliament.uk



SPEAKING UP FOR MID NORFOLK IN WESTMINSTER

As an MP and now in my third spell as a Minister at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (in my role as Minister for Science, Research and Innovation), my work in Westminster during the week is all shaped by my determination to make a difference locally.

That's why I focus on issues of importance to us here in Mid Norfolk.



CAMPAIGNING FOR BETTER NHS DENTAL SERVICES

Dental health is a crucial part of NHS services and it is vital that EVERYONE can access the support they need.

That's why I have been paying so much attention to the very serious challenges currently facing the sector. Although clearly a national issue, there is most certainly a significant problem here in Norfolk and so, in addition to raising the cases of affected individuals with the local NHS, I have been in regular contact with DHSC Ministers and officials to highlight the short, medium and long term reforms figures at all levels of our local sector say would deliver the quick boosts we need, while also paving the way for the longer term solutions that would ensure this situation never happens again. I have also joined calls in the House for a new **NHS Dental School** to be set up in Norwich. To learn more about my work on this, please click [here](#)



MINIMISING CABLE AND SUBSTATION EYESORES ACROSS OUR LANDSCAPE

Norfolk, and the East, are on the brink of becoming the 'Saudi Arabia' of Offshore Wind production. The Southern North Sea is putting our region at the forefront of the UK's 'Green Revolution' and bringing thousands of new jobs and opportunities.

I continue to actively work with parliamentary colleagues and local communities to drive forward the campaign for an Offshore Transmission Network – to avoid the needless environmental damage to our precious rural and coastal landscapes, along with the major disruption that businesses, tourists and communities encounter when each wind farm cables inland to Wembley Stadium-sized Substations.

To learn more about my work, please click [here](#)



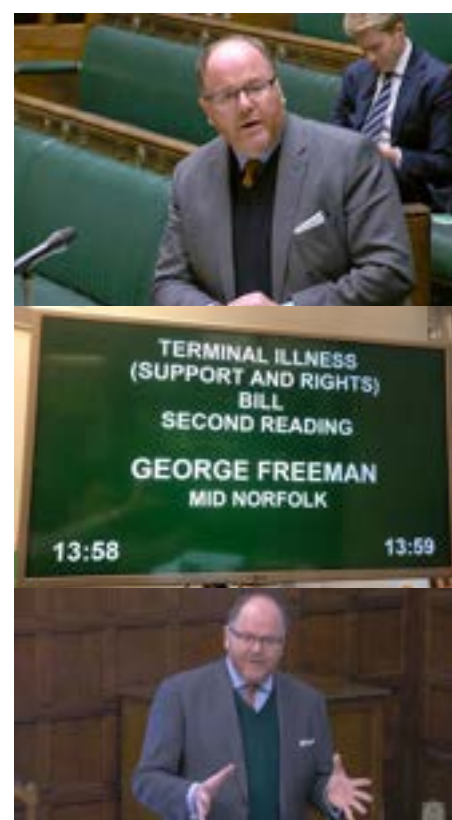
HIGHLIGHTING THE NEED FOR BETTER INFRASTRUCTURE TO UNLOCK THE NORFOLK INNOVATION ECONOMY

Having been reappointed as Minister for Science, Research and Innovation, I am committed to continuing my mission to deliver the UK's 'Science Superpower' and 'Innovation Nation' agendas - in which our region has a leading role to play.

I'm pleased to report some important progress:

- I recently secured a commitment in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement that he would protect the UK's R+D spending promises made last year, as well as commitments to implement the Taskforce for Innovation, Growth and Regulatory Reform (TIGRR) recommendations that I helped draft and to refocus the Government's Investment Zone proposals into establishing and enhancing regional R+D clusters like the NRP and A11 Tech Corridor.
- I have announced £480m of new support to protect and support the UK's Science and Research sector from the ongoing EU block on our entry into Horizon and other research programmes,
- I signed a UK-Swiss R+D agreement, visited Japan to announce our new £119m International Science Partnership Fund and explored closer ties with our counterparts in Chile in an effort to strengthen our international collaboration and lead our bold **Global Britain Science Superpower mission** to better harness UK science for global good.
- I announced 24 projects that will share our new £12m Regulators' Pioneer Fund to remove red tape across key sectors like health and the environment.
- I secured a £17bn five year space programme deal with the European Space Agency to support the UK's high growth space tech sector.

This is all good news for Norfolk's world class R+D sector and Innovation Economy - and it's just the beginning. I look forward to achieving much more in 2023, and to watching our region thrive as a result. To learn more, please click [here](#)



SPEAKING UP IN THE HOUSE ON THE ISSUES THAT MATTER

- Britain's industrial future and the key role of innovation in both public and private sector
- The importance of food security
- Fair market compensation for small businesses, self-employed and musicians and creatives
- Fracking
- Rural pubs and High Streets
- Affordable Rural Housing
- Longstanding problems with the Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust
- Better diagnostics and community healthcare
- Better local integration of Social Care and NHS services, including mental health and dental care

I look forward to continuing this vital work in 2023.

To find out more about this work, please visit my website [here](#)

SPEAKING UP FOR SMALL BUSINESS, RURAL AREAS AND VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS

The cost of living and energy price crisis is having enormous impacts on many of our households and businesses in our area.

That's why, in addition to that already described in this report, I am actively working with ministerial colleagues at BEIS, and other departments, to ensure the voice of rural areas like our own is being heard at the highest levels of Government.

The Government can't solve every problem but I am determined that it can target help to those that need it most - and I continue to urge the Chancellor and Treasury officials to press on with the plan of targeted support as we move towards the spring and the Government's reviews of the support packages already in place.



SMALL BUSINESS
SATURDAY
3RD DECEMBER

THIS YEAR'S MID NORFOLK PRIMARY SCHOOL'S CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION WINNERS

Each year I invite all of the primary school children in Mid Norfolk, including those at Chapel Green and Fred Nicholson SEND schools, to submit Christmas Card Designs.

The wonderful array of pictures sent is always a joy.

Thanks and congratulations go to this year's winner - Olivia Harris, aged 4, from Brisley Primary School.

Congratulations go to two 'Highly Commended' entries too - Isla Elvin, aged 6, and Ethan La Grange, aged 8 - both from Wicklewood Primary School.



HIGHLY COMMENDED

**Isla Elvin
Age 6**

Wiklewood Primary School



WINNER

**Olivia Harris
Age 4**

Brisley Primary School



HIGHLY COMMENDED

**Ethan La Grange
Age 8**

Wiklewood Primary School

BEING ACCESSIBLE AND ACCOUNTABLE

I remain committed to trying to make my work accessible with my **#Digital Democracy programme**, so people who are busy and want to stay in touch easily online can do so at the press of a button.

I believe its very important for MP's to be seen and accessible locally, I do this through a number of ways: my social media channels, my website, through email, and through calls to my office here in Norfolk and also in Westminster.

Toward the end of the week when I return from Westminster, I also visit as many towns and villages as I can, and a range of outreach programmes such as my **Supermarket Surgeries** and **Politics in the Pub** events.



With **5 towns & 114 villages** across a constituency with a 90 mile boundary, it's impossible to visit every village, pub or community centre regularly.

That's why, each Friday and Saturday, I pack in as many visits as I can, and move my surgery around to make it easy for people to meet me. It's why I also work hard on digital outreach - through my Website, Facebook, Instagram, Linked-In and regular targeted Bulletins to key interest groups.

Each week we receive 1000+ pieces of correspondence from constituents, which Ruth, Shellie and I sort, prioritise and respond to. (Due to the high volumes I receive, I do not reply to the most hostile and abusive pieces of correspondence. Instead, with my team, I prioritise constituents who most need their MPs help or have genuine policy concerns).

This year I have:

- Helped **c6000 individual constituents** with new Casework
- Dealt with another **c3000 existing/open casework cases**
- Progressed approx **25 important local projects/campaigns**

As a rural area, we are home to much silent suffering of people isolated and lonely. But we are also a famously strong local community. Let's all do all we can to keep an eye out to help our vulnerable neighbours this Christmas.

Thank you to all those of you who do so much as volunteers, carers & hidden heroes behind the scenes. With best wishes for what I hope will be a Happy Christmas!

George

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