

Subject: News Bulletin from Aidan Burley MP #11

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Issue 11 – Thursday 24th March 2011

Since the last edition, Aidan has:

- Accompanied Minister for Disabled People Maria Miller MP to local charity **Newlife Foundation for Disabled Children**, where he formally opened "Leanne's Lift".
- Asked a question on reducing the **national deficit** to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the House of Commons.
- Welcomed the announcement of the members of Independent Panel of Experts tasked with making recommendations on the **future of England's forests**.
- **Raised £140 for Comic Relief** by taking part in a sponsored skate at Silver Blades Ice Rink in Cannock.
- Spoke in a debate in the House of Commons on **fuel prices**.
- Welcomed pupils from **Kingsmead School** to Parliament as part of a project they were doing for Oxfam. During the visit he signed their petition and showed them round Parliament.
- Visited the **Toyota factory** in Derbyshire – where many Rugeley residents work – where he saw the new Auris hybrid car which is being built in the UK.
- Attended the **Cannock Branch Association** Annual General Meeting.
- Been quoted in the **Mail on Sunday** and **The Sun** newspapers attacking the payment of £4,000 in travel allowances to the head of the Audit Commission, despite him only having a one minute walk to work.
- Questioned the Home Secretary in the House of Commons

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- Questioned the Home Secretary in the House of Commons on the topic of **student visas**.
- Visited an **Extra Care housing scheme in Hednesford** after it scooped a major prize at the prestigious National Housing for Older People Awards. School Court won the Gold Award in the 'Best UK Housing with care Scheme' category.
- Criticised the head of the Association of Chief Police Officers, Sir Hugh Orde, in the **Mail on Sunday** for telling frontline officers they must 'share the pain' of job cuts at the same time as his own salary rose by more than £27,000.

This week also saw the first Cannock District School Council Network Meeting at the MP's Help Zone in Cannock – which saw local high school pupils hear about local democracy as well as discuss other educational issues.

Website of the Week:

www.newlifecharity.co.uk

The website of the Newlife Foundation for Disabled Children - a leading Cannock-based charity.

Local MP escorts Minister to Newlife



Leanne's mum Eileen Brindley, Maria Miller MP and Aidan Burley MP cut the ribbon – formally opening “Leanne's Lift” at Newlife's Opportunity Centre.

Local MP, Aidan Burley, accompanied Maria Miller, the Minister for Disabled People, on her recent visit to Newlife Foundation for Disabled Children - the Cannock-based leading charity - and heard how the charity was improving the lives of children and families across the UK and accepted suggestions for government to action to achieve improvements.

Aidan helped to open 'Leanne's Lift' at Newlife's Opportunity Centre. The lift was named after a former volunteer (Leanne Brindley) who sadly passed away in December last year. The lift will open up work, training and volunteering opportunities to disabled and elderly volunteers, who could not previously have easily accessed the centre.

As the charity celebrates its 20th birthday this year, CEO, Mrs Sheila Brown OBE, said: "Local people will know about our clothes trading company and the latest homeware store set up last year but may not know that the income generated means we can offer Nurse services and equipment grants as well as investing in medical research and lobbying for change to improve the lives of disabled children."

"We are reliant on fundraising more than ever with many local statutory services failing to meet disabled children's equipment needs and demand on Newlife is increasing in the current economic crisis."

Sheila concluded: "Parents and children are not asking for a Rolls Royce system of provision, but an understanding of their needs and for a reasonable response to the broken system of provision and flawed legislation which has haunted the lives of disabled and terminally ill children for years. We are delighted that the Minister has come to the Midlands, seen the work of the charity and heard our message of the changes that are urgently needed and which are very do-able even in difficult economic times. We are grateful to our MP, Aidan Burley, for taking up the case of the children across the UK that Newlife serves."

Aidan Burley responded: "I urge people to help Newlife by volunteering and donating where they can. The charity currently needs to raise £85,000 to fund life-changing equipment for 42 disabled children throughout the Midlands."

Anyone who can help should call Newlife on (freephone) 0800 988 4640 where they can suggest fundraising ideas or offer volunteering help. For more information visit www.newlifecharity.co.uk and email info@newlifecharity.co.uk.

Aidan Burley MP does something funny for money at Silver Blades Ice Rink, Cannock!



**Aidan Burley MP on the ice at Silver Blades Ice Rink
– raising money for Comic Relief.**

On Friday 18th March Silver Blades Ice Rink hosted a special event to raise money as part of Red Nose Day 2011. Their Red Nose Day Skate session was open to the public between 4pm and 5.30pm,

with £2 of the special entry price of £4.50 going to Comic Relief.

The event was supported by Cannock's local MP Aidan Burley. Aidan took part in a sponsored skate assisted by Silver Blades' head skating coach, Tash Fennell-Owen. Along with skaters from Cannock International Skating Club, Aidan & Tash did an impressive routine on the ice, accompanied by the song "Grease Lightning"! In the process, Aidan raised £140 for Comic Relief.

Aidan also helped out with the prize draw, selecting the lucky winners, prizes included a Skate UK Course, a month's free skating pass, a 1 week free skating pass, a family ticket plus some VIP tickets.

Everyone got into the spirit of the day including Silver Blades staff who came to work in their pyjamas! There was a fantastic response from members of the public who participated in all the fun and games on the ice.



Aidan welcomes Budget to fuel growth

Cannock Chase MP Aidan Burley has welcomed the Chancellor's Budget, which pledged to "put fuel into the tank of the British economy".

George Osborne set out his ambitions for Britain: that this country should have the most competitive tax system in the G20; be the best place in Europe to start, finance and grow a business; become a more balanced economy, and have a more educated and flexible workforce.

The key measures announced in the Budget were:

- An extra 1% cut in corporation tax from April 2011, taking corporation tax from 28% to 26%
- Setting up 21 new Enterprise Zones with up to 100% business rate discount, new superfast broadband and the potential to use enhanced capital allowances for zones with a strong focus on manufacturing
- £2bn pounds extra for the Green Investment Bank, giving it £3bn of capital and enabling it to start operation in 2012
- 50,000 additional apprenticeships, bringing the total funded by this Government to 250,000 over the next four years
- A doubling of the University Technical Colleges programme to create at least 24 new colleges
- A new £250m shared equity scheme, First Buy, that in England will help 10,000 first time buyers get on the housing ladder for the first time
- Simplification of the tax system by consulting on options for integrating the operation of income tax and national insurance contributions and plans to scrap 43 tax reliefs
- Support for innovation and manufacturing with an additional £100m this year for new science facilities.

The Chancellor said, "We want the words: 'Made in Britain', 'Created in Britain', 'Designed in Britain', 'Invented in Britain', to drive our nation forward. A Britain carried aloft by the march of the makers. That is how we will create jobs and support families. We have put fuel into the tank of the British economy."

Photo news: Toyota hybrid



Aidan supporting British manufacturing at the Toyota factory in Derbyshire – where many Rugeley residents work – where he saw the new Auris hybrid car which is being built in the UK.

MP welcomes announcement of independent panel members to look at future of forests

Aidan has welcomed the announcement of the members of Independent Panel of Experts tasked with making recommendations on the future of England's forests.

The panel makeup and terms of reference were officially announced by the government in a statement last week.

The panel which is to be chaired by the Right Reverend James Jones, Bishop of Liverpool, brings together a wide range of interests and expertise covering the environmental, social and economic aspects of forestry. They will advise government on a new approach to forestry policy in England, including looking at how woodland cover can be increased and the options for enhancing public benefits from all woodlands and forests. The panel will make its recommendations to the Secretary of State in the autumn.

Aidan is already leading a Staffordshire-wide campaign to grant Cannock Chase 'Heritage' status and hopes that the review panel set up will consider this designation as part of its review into the future of England's forests.

Aidan has wasted no time in making written representations to the panel chair James Jones asking him to visit Cannock Chase as part of his enquiry to take evidence from local people.

The panel chair and its members will be looking at the complete picture of forestry in England and will have the freedom to decide how best to gather evidence to make its recommendations. Although the panel members are not representing their organisations in an official capacity, they bring with them a wealth of experience and expertise in a range of areas that are important to consider in the future direction of forestry policy.

Commenting Aidan said: *"I welcome this announcement of the Independent Panel to look at the future of our forests. It was clear from the very large number of letters and emails I received on this topic that the people of Cannock Chase care deeply about their forest and how it should be protected in the future. I share with them their concerns and hope that the panel will take a particular interest in Cannock Chase forest and my campaign for 'Heritage' status. I have already formally written to the Right Reverend James Jones asking him to visit Cannock Chase and take representations from local people as part of his evidence gathering."*

Aidan pays a visit to award winning housing scheme



Aidan Burley MP with staff and volunteers of an Extra Care housing scheme in Hednesford after it scoped a major prize at the prestigious National Housing for Older People Awards.

Aidan paid a visit to an Extra Care housing scheme in Hednesford after it scoped a major prize at the prestigious National Housing for Older People Awards. School Court won the Gold Award in the 'Best UK Housing with care Scheme' category.

The scheme which is managed by the ExtraCare Charitable Trust, gives older people a safe and secure future in a network of inspirational communities. The Charity is founded on the principle that age, health or financial means shouldn't be a barrier to achieving quality of life. The trust enables people to enjoy active and independent lifestyles in their later years.

Aidan attended the celebration evening which was held to recognise this national award as well as other achievements and contributions made by staff, volunteers, residents and their families who make up the School Court Community. After presenting certificates to the staff and volunteers he delivered a short speech paying tribute to scheme and its important work. Aidan was also treated to some fabulous

dancing by the elderly residents to songs from the Rat Pack era.

Commenting after his visit Aidan said: *"It was pleasure to visit School Court and pass on my personal congratulations for their well deserved award. I would like to pay a special tribute to the great work of all the staff and volunteers who help run the scheme.*

"This pioneering new concept, developed by ExtraCare, certainly represents the future of older people's services. It enables older people to live in a safe environment whilst still having an active lifestyle. I particularly enjoyed the show performed by the residents which included some impressive dance numbers!"

Aidan in Parliament: Fuel prices debate

Wednesday 16th March 2011



To watch Aidan's comments in the debate click on the image above. Aidan's intervention begins at 13:45.55.

Aidan Burley (Cannock Chase, Conservative): The last Government might not have increased VAT, but they certainly increased fuel duty. When Labour came to power in '97, duty on unleaded petrol was 36p a litre; when the last Government left office in 2010, it had risen to 57.9p a litre. Does my hon. Friend think that Labour Members should take some responsibility for increasing fuel duty by more than 20%?

Justine Greening (Economic Secretary, HM Treasury; Putney, Conservative): Of course they should, but as so often they never do, unfortunately.

Aidan in Parliament: Aidan questions Chancellor over deficit reduction plans

Tuesday 22nd March 2011



To watch Aidan's question to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, click on the image above. Aidan's question begins at 15:28.52.

Aidan Burley (Cannock Chase, Conservative): Is the Minister aware that according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, if we only halve the deficit rather than close it completely over the lifetime of this Parliament, we will spend an extra £10 billion on interest? Does he think that that is money that would be better spent on schools and hospitals in this country rather than foreign investment bankers?

George Osborne (Chancellor of the Exchequer, HM Treasury; Tatton, Conservative): I certainly do. This country is spending £120 million a day on debt interest, which is now one of the largest items of Government spending. These are taxes we raise from people and money we borrow to pay debt interest. The truth about Labour's plan is that it would mean billions of pounds more in debt interest—something that will become clear later in the Parliament.

Aidan in Parliament: Student visa debate

Tuesday 22nd March 2011



To watch Aidan's question to the Home Secretary, click on the image above. Aidan's question begins at 16:30.43.

Aidan Burley (Cannock Chase, Conservative): Last and hopefully not least, I am sure that I am not the only Member of the House who is astonished by how widespread the abuse of the student visa system has become. May I ask the Home Secretary whether our policy to reduce net migration from hundreds of thousands to tens of thousands is supported by the shadow Home Secretary?

Theresa May (Home Secretary; Maidenhead, Conservative): That is a very good question, and perhaps the shadow Home Secretary would like to answer it at some stage.

Aidan in the papers: MP sees how community fund cash helps

John Corser, Express & Star
Thursday 17th March 2011

A Midland MP joined staff, volunteers and some of the people who use a family centre to celebrate it receiving a £1,000 award.

Express & Star

Last year NatWest launched its Community Fund to support charities and good causes in areas served by their branches. This meant that nationally, 380 individual funds of £5,000 were created.

For the Cannock Community Fund a panel of volunteers selected three worthy causes - the Newport Cottage Care Centre, the Carers Association Southern Staffordshire and the West Chadsmoor Family Centre. The three charities were put to the public vote and after a month the fund was divided between the charities.

The Newport Cottage Care Centre received the top award of £3,000, with the Carers Association Southern Staffordshire and the West Chadsmoor Family Centre each being given £1,000.

NatWest senior bank manager Brendan O'Reilly and MP Aidan Burley were invited to the centre in Princess Street to see how the money was being used for the benefit of the local community.

Among its activities the centre offers a planned set of play activities for parents and their children, a parents' group and crèche.

It also runs a school holiday club for working parents during the school holidays and an outreach session.

Mr O'Reilly said: "I was delighted to accept the invitation from the team at the family centre and to see how the £1,000 award was making a real difference to the community."

Mr Burley said: "It was a pleasure to join Brendan at the West Chadsmoor Family Centre to witness first-hand how this very valuable money is being spent. It is great to see NatWest supporting local charities and projects."

Aidan in the papers: Week in Westminster

Aidan Burley MP, Chase Post
Monday 21st March 2011

One of the things you quickly realise when you enter Parliament is the fact that you have to make decisions which will not realise their true benefit or potential until well after you leave Politics.



One such decision is the introduction of High Speed Rail, which in its fully completed form (London to Scotland) will not be completed until nearly 2050. The first phase, London to Birmingham, is due for completion in 2022.

Much of the talk so far has been on the cost of the project, estimated to around £32 Billion. High-speed rail certainly comes with a high-speed price tag - but I think with it will come big benefits and opportunities for us here in Staffordshire and across the West Midlands, estimated at over £46 Billion nationwide.

The West Midlands Chamber of Commerce Survey on High Speed Rail in 2009 identified that 55% of businesses use the train to travel to meetings in London. The proposed new link now under consultation will bring central London to within just 49 minutes of central Birmingham, 80 minutes of Leeds and 73 minutes of Manchester.

It will allow the economy of the West Midlands to benefit much more directly from the economic engine of London, tackling the north-south divide more effectively than half a century of regional policy ever did.

Like the arrival of the motorways in the latter half of the last century helped to boost our regional economy, I am in no doubt that high speed rail will do the same this century.

Yet whilst I might be lucky enough to be one of the first travellers on the London to Birmingham leg, I will be in my 70s before I can go all the way to Scotland, in under 3/12 hours. Those benefits will have to be enjoyed by my children – and grandchildren.

Aidan in the papers: £27,000 pay rise for police chief who told officers to 'share the pain' of cuts

Martin Delgado, Mail on Sunday
Sunday 13th March 2011

A police chief who told frontline officers they must 'share the pain' of job cuts has seen the salary for his post rise by more than £27,000.



Sir Hugh Orde, President of the Association of Chief Police Officers, received a pay-and-pension package of more than £210,000 last year – 14 per cent more than that given to his predecessor in 2009.

The increase will infuriate frontline officers, some of whom are likely to suffer salary cuts of at least £3,000.

Cannock Chase Tory MP Aidan Burley said: 'We have just lost our dedicated town centre beat officer in Cannock because of the cuts and the ACPO president's pay rise would pay for his post.'

'I doubt Sir Hugh would like to work Saturday nights dispersing drunks and breaking up fights, so I suggest he forgoes this bloated and insulting pay rise at a time of national austerity.'

Sir Hugh told ACPO's conference last summer that police must 'share the pain' of public-sector cuts, adding that 'hard choices' must be made.

He said: 'The harsh reality is that, depending on the severity of the cuts ahead, it would be misleading in the extreme if we were to suggest that the size of the service is sustainable.'

ACPO trades as a private company and is funded with £10 million a year from the taxpayer.

Ventures it runs include selling information from the Police National Computer for up to £70 a time, even though ACPO pays 60p to obtain the data.

ACPO has also been criticised for spending millions meant for counter-terrorism work on luxury London flats for senior officers.

Sir Hugh, who used to lead the Police Service of Northern Ireland, became ACPO President last September, taking over from former Sussex Chief Constable Sir Ken Jones.

His duties include meeting politicians, advising the Government on anti-crime policy and representing the interests of senior officers.

ACPO's accounts show the rate for the president's job in the year ending March 2009 was £153,810 in salary and £29,988 in pension contributions, making a total of £183,798.

Accounts for the year ending March 2010 put Sir Hugh's salary at £176,074 and payments for his pension at £34,910, bringing his total remuneration to £210,984.

That represents a year-on-year increase of £27,186. Sir Hugh also receives a police and Civil Service pension built up over a 35-year police career. His salary in his old job as Ulster police chief was £183,954.

The Police Federation has vowed to fight 'cataclysmic' cuts proposed in a review by former Rail Regulator Tom Winsor.

In his Government-commissioned report, Mr Winsor also called for the suspension of a scheme which has enabled most Chief Constables to collect five-figure bonuses of 15 per cent on top of their salaries.

An ACPO spokesman said: 'Sir Hugh represents the professional views of senior officers across the police service and draws a salary commensurate with that role.'

The status of the position and the influence it carries require an officer with the appropriate leadership and experience.'

Aidan in the papers: £4k for one-minute walk to office

Neil Millard, The Sun
Monday 14th March 2011

A quango boss responsible for ensuring that public cash is not wasted receives a £4,070 a year travel allowance - while staying at a hotel ONE MINUTE'S walk from his office.



Audit Commission chief executive Eugene Sullivan strolls just 164 yards from the four-star Mint Hotel to Millbank Tower in Central London.

He makes the trip just THREE DAYS a week. Taxpayers also pick up the annual £18,000 hotel bill.

Mr Sullivan, who is paid £180,000 a year, is entitled to have a leased car but chooses to take the travel allowance instead.

It comes on top of £5,000 a year allowed for train fares, taxis and car mileage. His total income package exceeds £250,000.

Last night there were calls for Mr Sullivan, 52, who has a £500,000 family home in Ilkley, West Yorkshire, to pay back the travel allowance.

Local Government Minister Bob Neill said the commission had "lost its way".

Tory MP Aidan Burley added: "Every week it seems the Audit Commission finds a fresh way of wasting taxpayers' cash.

"Mr Sullivan needs to do the right thing and immediately pay back his walking allowance."

Aidan in the papers: Ed Balls slammed for playing Japan card in Tory attack

Joe Murphy, Craig Woodhouse and Nicholas Cecil,
Evening Standard
Monday 14th March 2011

Ed Balls was accused of "gross insensitivity" today for allegedly using the Japanese earthquake to score political points.



Tories accused him of bad taste for remarks that suggested George Osborne would use the tragedy as an excuse to downgrade his economic growth forecasts in next week's Budget.

"It won't be good enough if George Osborne stands up next week in the Budget and says the reason he has to downgrade his growth forecast is the cold winter, or the Irish bailout or because of the spike in world oil prices or the aftermath of the Japanese earthquake," he said.

The comment was part of Mr Balls's scripted opening remarks at a press conference in Westminster alongside Labour leader Ed Miliband to propose Budget measures.

Mark Pritchard, the vice chairman of the British-Japanese all party parliamentary group, said it was astonishing for a senior MP to exploit the Japanese tragedy when people and homes were still being swept away.

"Gross insensitivity - it reveals once again the shadow chancellor falling over himself to be adversarial and party political even when it impinges on the great tragedy that the Japanese people are currently suffering," he said.

"He should apologise to the Japanese people. It is completely outrageous and Ed Miliband should call on the shadow chancellor to withdraw his remarks out of respect for the Japanese emperor and people."

Tory MP Aidan Burley said: "It seems very distasteful to be pre-empting a comment George has not made and almost certainly won't make.

"It must be a new low for a shadow Chancellor to think the Chancellor would blame an 8.8 earthquake in Japan as in some way responsible for a decade of Labour mismanagement of the economy."

Salisbury MP John Glen said: "It's sad and unseemly that Labour's shadow chancellor, Ed Balls, has used a global tragedy in an attempt to make a political point."

Backbencher Matt Hancock added: "It's beneath contempt for Ed Balls to try to politicise the tragedy in Japan while the rescue efforts are still ongoing to find survivors. It shows how desperate Labour have become that they don't have anything positive to say."

Labour said Mr Balls had said nothing wrong and called the Tory attacks "desperate".

Labour MP Kerry McCarthy MP said: "It's pretty desperate of the Conservatives to deliberately distort in this way what was a serious point about how Chancellors should act cautiously so they are not knocked off course by events out of their control.

"As Ed pointed out, unforeseen events like what's happening in the Middle East and the Japanese earthquake will have an impact on economies around the world. But by pursuing a reckless economic plan in Britain George Osborne has given our economy no flexibility for when things like this happen.

"The reason George Osborne looks set to downgrade his growth forecast is because his cuts which go too far and too fast are hitting business and consumer confidence and costing thousands of jobs in the public and private sector."

5 ways to contact Aidan Burley MP:

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In person: [Click here for details of how to book an appointment at Aidan Burley MP's regular help and advice surgeries.](#)

www.aidanburleymp.org

More news from Aidan Burley MP, coming soon...

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