

Subject: News Bulletin from Aidan Burley MP #14

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From: Aidan Burley MP

To: news@aidanburleymp.org



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Issue 14 – Wednesday 4th May 2011

1st Year Anniversary Special Edition!



Aidan was elected MP for Cannock Chase a year ago today. Since then he has served on the Home Affairs Select Committee, spoken in 28 debates and voted in 98.68% of votes (recognised as “well above average amongst MPs” by the independent website, www.theyworkforyou.com). He has tabled 62 Parliamentary Questions, responded to thousands of letters and emails, and been made a Parliamentary Private Secretary (PPS) to Philip Hammond, Secretary of State for Transport. His regular MP's email

newsletter is now received by over 1,000 local people.

Since the last edition, Aidan has:

- Showed his support for the **3rd Battalion of the Mercian regiment (the Staffords)** which is currently in active service in Afghanistan.
- Attended a briefing by Welfare Minister, The Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP on **Work Capability Assessments**. Every Incapacity Benefit (IB) claimant is about to be re-tested by this government, to check they are physically incapable of work. In recent trials, over 30% of claimants were judged fit for work, suggesting that over a third of current claimants are defrauding the system.

- Been **campaigning** on behalf of local Conservative Council candidates across the Cannock Chase constituency.
- Urged Cannock Chase residents to vote **No to AV** in tomorrow's referendum on how we elect MPs.
- Been quoted in the **Daily Mail** attacking plans to force every **dog owner to have a £35 microchip** put in their animal.
- Judged a **wedding-themed competition at Mill Farm pub**. Entries were by local children, in two age categories – under 7s and 8-12 years. They had to design, paint, decorate and model a paper crown, and Aidan picked out the best in each category.
- Conducted a **help and advice surgery** at the MP Help Zone in **Cannock**. If you would like an appointment at one of Aidan's future surgeries please call 01543 502 447 or email aidan.burley.mp@parliament.uk.

Website of the Week:

www.partyinaboxcannock.co.uk

The website of 'Party In A Box' - a Cannock business specialising in decorating weddings and parties and providing balloon gifts locally. Established 9 years ago it is now one of the leading balloon decoration companies in the Midlands.

Aidan shows support for local regiment



Aidan today joined MPs from across Staffordshire to show his support for the 3rd Battalion of the Mercian regiment (the Staffords) which is currently in active service in Afghanistan.

The House of Commons team including (from left to right) Andrew Griffiths MP (Burton & Uttoxeter), Gavin Williamson MP, (South Staffordshire), Jeremy Lefroy MP (Stafford), Karen Bradley MP (Staffordshire Moorlands), Bill Cash MP (Stone), Christopher Pincher MP (Tamworth) and Aidan showed off "Staffords" mugs and T-shirts bearing the legend "I support 3 Mercian" beneath Big Ben at Westminster last week.

The "Staffords" were merged with two other regiments, the Cheshire regiment and the Worcestershire & Sherwood Foresters regiment in 2007 to form the new Mercian regiment.

Commenting Aidan said: *"I was delighted to have the opportunity to proudly show my support for our famous local regiment currently serving in Afghanistan. We should do everything we can to support 3 Mercian and I wish them all a safe return from duty. I encourage local people to support 3 Mercian by purchasing the "Staffords" mugs and t-shirts."*

For more information or to order your Staffords mugs or T-shirts email Paul Mason on tshirts@3mercian.co.uk or call 01827 283 027. You can also write to 63 Brookend, Fazeley, Tamworth, B78 3RS.

Photo news:

Aidan Judges wedding-themed competition for local children



Aidan with local children who competed in the wedding-themed competition at Mill Farm pub. Entries were by children in two age categories – under 7s and 8-12 years. They had to design, paint, decorate and model, a paper crown, and Aidan picked out the best in each category.

Burley welcomes PM's promise to control immigration

Aidan has welcomed the Prime Minister's recent speech on immigration. David Cameron recognised the huge contribution made by immigrants to Britain while setting out Government's comprehensive and effective plans to cut immigration. The Prime Minister promised to control immigration and to bring net migration down to the sustainable levels we saw in the 1980s and 1990s.

Under Labour immigration was out of control. While they were in power, 2.2 million net migrants arrived – that's twice the population of Birmingham and 24 times the population of Cannock Chase.

This Government is committed to controlling immigration by reducing

net migration down from the hundreds of thousands to the tens of thousands a year. To achieve this we are taking action across the board:

- We have capped economic migration from outside of the EU.
- We have reformed the largest route, the student visa system, and clamped down on widespread abuses.
- We will soon take action to break the link between temporary routes and permanent settlement, and to address the family visa route.
- We will set up a Border Policing Command to control our borders.
- We are clamping down on illegal immigrants already in the country.

Commenting Aidan said: *"I'm pleased with the Prime Minister's no ifs no buts promise to the British people to control immigration."*

"Immigration under Labour was out of control with net migration reaching unsustainable levels. Immigration consistently cropped up as a major concern on the doorsteps here in Cannock Chase during the election last year, therefore I strongly welcome this Government's aim to reduce net migration down to the levels of the 1990s – the tens of thousands rather than the hundreds of thousands. Labour has admitted that they swept immigration under the carpet when they were in Government – so it's a real shame they refuse to support the Government's sensible proposals in this area."

UK economy grows in first quarter

New figures released show the economy grew by 0.5% in the first three months of this year.

Other recent figures show:

- Employment up 143,000 in 3 months to February
- 400,000 more private sector jobs than a year ago
- Borrowing beginning to come down: £15 billion less in 2010-11 vs 2009-10
- Manufacturing up almost 5% over past year; the trade deficit fell by almost 40% in February, with exports up and imports down.

Commenting, Aidan said: *"This is great news for Britain and Cannock, particularly as manufacturing is growing so strongly. There are still choppy waters ahead in dealing with the financial mess left by the last government, but these new figures show we are moving in the right direction."*

Why vote No to AV TOMORROW

AV is costly

The change to AV will cost up to an additional £250 million. Local councils would have to waste money on costly electronic vote counting machines and expensive voter education campaigns. With ordinary families facing tough times can we really afford to spend a quarter of a billion pounds of taxpayers' money bringing in a new voting system? Schools and hospitals, or the Alternative Vote – that's the choice in this referendum.



AV is complex and unfair

The winner should be the candidate that comes first, but under AV the candidate who comes second or third can actually be elected. That's why it is used by just three countries in the world – Fiji, Australia and Papua New Guinea. Voters should decide who the best candidate is, not the voting system. We can't afford to let the politicians off the hook by introducing a loser's charter.

AV is a politician's fix

AV leads to more hung parliaments, backroom deals and broken promises like the Lib Dem tuition fees U-turn. Instead of the voters choosing the government, politicians would hold power. Under AV, the only vote that really counts is Nick Clegg's. We can't afford to let the politicians decide who runs our country.

Vote NO to AV TOMORROW

NOtoAV is a campaign that has support from right across the country. Members of the public, trade unionists and members of several political parties are part of a campaign that has a common goal. Whilst we have many different views on what system of elections is best for Britain, we all believe that the Alternative Vote (AV) system will only damage Britain's democracy.

Aidan in the papers:

Every new pet dog must have a £35 microchip: Plan to control dangerous animals by putting all eight million pets on massive database

James Millbank

Tuesday 24th April 2011

Every new pet dog will be microchipped under sweeping Government regulations to combat dangerous animals.

The logo for 'Mail' is written in a large, bold, black, serif font.

Each puppy born and dog sold will have an electronic chip implanted under the skin. Details will then be placed on a national database accessible by police and the RSPCA.

A confidential Whitehall document obtained by The Mail on Sunday says: 'The compulsory microchipping of dogs on change of ownership would affect anyone breeding dogs for sale or gifting to another person or persons.'

This would apply to anyone breeding dogs, whether they are a breeder or a private person whose bitch has a litter, whether planned or not.'

But the proposals last night prompted criticism from MPs and animal experts. They claim that the moves will unfairly penalise the law-abiding owners of Britain's eight million dogs and will do nothing to tackle the problems posed by dangerous breeds such as pitbulls and Japanese tosas.

Until now, Ministers have been reluctant to introduce compulsory microchipping or licensing amid fears of a backlash from dog owners. The Dogs Trust estimates that around 800,000 puppies are born each year.

The ownership of dog licenses was abolished in the United Kingdom in 1988. It was mandatory to have one as a dog owner up until this time and cost only 371/2p. But it was phased out because it was widely ignored and regarded as ineffective.

Liberal Democrat MP John Thurso said of the plans: 'It's compulsion and I don't like it. People who have dangerous dogs that are against the law will take no notice of this.

'This will result in a disproportionate burden on the law-abiding who keep dogs and especially those who need dogs for their work such as farmers who keep kennels. They will be stuck with another expense and piece of legislation to obey.'

The document, drawn up by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), says the chips would initially be imprinted with the details of the dog breeder and would be 'updated by other persons transferring ownership of their pet with the contact details of the new owner when ownership is transferred'.

Defra officials have sent a memo to other Government departments asking a series of detailed questions such as: 'How acceptable do you think it would be to require anyone microchipping a dog to request proof of identity/address of the owner of the dog?'

Another question asks: 'What would it cost a breeder to microchip each dog? And assuming the cost would be passed on to the purchaser, would this price increase cause any difficulties?'

The cost of microchipping each animal is around £35. The procedure is usually carried out by a vet and involves a small chip about the size of a grain of rice being implanted between the shoulder blades, under the skin of the dog, using a needle and special syringe.

Once in place, the microchip can be detected using a hand-held device. RSPCA officers already use the scanners to trace dogs that have been voluntarily microchipped. However, police forces will have to order thousands of the devices at a time when many are facing big budget cuts.

There has been a series of deaths after savage attacks by dangerous breeds. In 2009 John Paul Massey, four, died after he was mauled by his uncle's illegal pitbull terrier.

Last December, Barbara Williams was killed after she was mauled to death at her home in Wallington, Surrey, by a giant Belgian mastiff.

Figures show a dramatic increase in the number of dangerous dogs. In London last year 1,512 banned dogs were held by the Metropolitan Police – up from just 27 in 2005.

Aidan Burley, Conservative MP for Cannock Chase, said: 'What army of bureaucrats will enforce the monitoring of a microchip in every new pet dog? This is just another layer of costly bureaucracy and it will hit those on lowest incomes the hardest.'

Robin Page, farmer and former presenter of One Man And His Dog, said: 'This is absurd. There is no point in it. For those who work with dogs such as low-paid shepherds and hill farmers, it's another expense. But it will hit anyone who wants to have a pet – this from a Government that was going to reduce red tape. It's all the same; more rules and regulations.'

At present microchipping is only compulsory for owners who wish to take their dogs on holiday or for those moving overseas. Ten years ago Britain abolished the compulsory six months in quarantine for dogs arriving from abroad.

However, all dogs must be vaccinated against rabies and have a blood test to prove the vaccine has worked. Vets then sign certificates, quoting the dog's chip number.

A Defra spokesperson said: 'Dangerous dogs and how to tackle the problem of dog attacks are very serious issues and we're working with the police and welfare groups on the best possible measures for dealing with them. We will be announcing what we will do to tackle them soon.'

Police forces currently find it difficult to trace owners of violent dogs and bring their owners to justice because many have no collars or distinguishing markings.

However, microchipping has also encountered problems such as the chip moving around inside the animal's body. Some have been reported to be unreadable by some scanners.

Other claims are that they can cause health problems among some small dogs, but these allegations are rejected by the veterinary profession. The proportion of owners who are voluntarily microchipping their dogs has risen sharply in recent years.

The RSPCA has been keen for all dogs to be microchipped. This would link them to an owner and make it an offence to fail to inform the authorities of a change of address or phone number. It is unclear whether it will be a criminal offence to own an unchipped dog or whether this will result in a fine.

A spokesman for the RSPCA said last night: 'We are 100 per cent in favour of compulsory microchipping of dogs as part of the responsible pet ownership message. However, we believe it needs to form part of a much more comprehensive dog licensing scheme if it is to have a significant and positive impact.'

'The Government needs to be clear on what specific problem it is hoping to solve by introducing compulsory microchipping because anti-social dog owners are still unlikely to comply and dog attacks on other animals and people will still happen regardless.'

'The RSPCA would rather proactive measures are introduced that look to prevent attacks, rather than react to them once they have already happened.'

'We would also question who would be responsible for policing the introduction of compulsory microchipping of dogs, and importantly where the resources would come from to fund this. Any legislation is worthless unless it can be effectively enforced.'

Aidan in the papers: Vote change supported by just one Black Country MP

Express & Star
Saturday 30th April 2011

Just one Black Country
MP — Labour's Tom
Watson — is still

Express & Star

supporting the Alternative Vote in the referendum that will be held on Thursday.

The member for West Bromwich East is the one regional MP who wants people to rank candidates in order of preference and sweep away the current "first past the post" system.

All Conservative MPs in the region are against it and nationally the Labour party is split with leader Ed Miliband in favour, but many MPs not.

Under AV a winner is only declared once he or she has at least 50 per cent of the votes. The majority is gained by eliminating the candidate with the least votes and re-allocating those ballots to the voters' second choices.

Mr Watson said: "Other MPs are genuinely convinced that the status quo is fairer and I respect their positions.

"I'm supporting AV because I see it as a key progressive step that makes MPs a little more accountable to their constituents."

In the Black Country all other Labour MPs have signed a letter urging people not to back AV in the referendum, which was demanded by Liberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg in return for supporting David Cameron in the coalition Government.

Wolverhampton Liberal Democrat councillor Robin Lawrence, who finished third in the election for the MP for Wolverhampton South West last year, said: "The proposed new system will make MPs work harder and it will be much easier to vote out an MP who performs poorly.

"If people want their MPs to work hard and be more accountable to them, they need to turn out in large numbers on May 5."

Chris Kelly, Conservative MP for Dudley South, and Ian Austin, Labour MP for Dudley North, are both calling for their constituents to vote no.

Labour MPs Adrian Bailey of West Bromwich West, Pat McFadden of Wolverhampton South East, Emma Reynolds of Wolverhampton North East, John Spellar of Warley, David Winnick of Walsall and Valerie Vaz of Walsall South are all voting no.

Conservatives Paul Uppal of Wolverhampton South West, Richard Shepherd of Aldridge and Brownhills, Aidan Burley of Cannock Chase, Jeremy Lefroy of Stafford, Michael Fabricant of Lichfield, Margot James of Stourbridge and James Morris from Halesowen and Rowley Regis, are all against AV as well.

5 ways to contact Aidan Burley MP:

By Phone: 01543 502 447

By email: aidan.burley.mp@parliament.uk

By post: Aidan Burley MP
6 High Green Court,
Newhall Street
Cannock, WS11 1GR

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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Aidan Burley MP – Putting Cannock Chase First!