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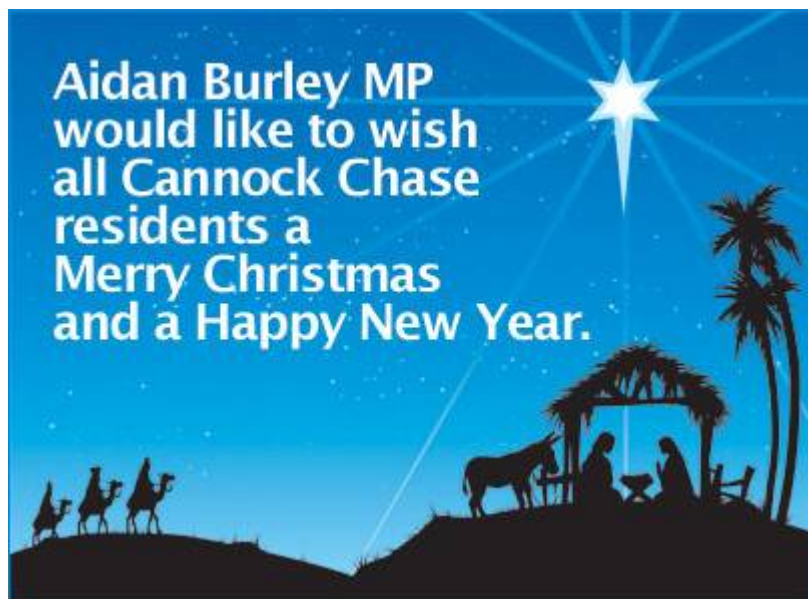
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Since the last edition, Aidan has:

- Given out awards for the winners of his first annual **Christmas card competition**. This year's winners were **West Hill Primary School** pupil Rhys Westley and **Bridgetown Primary School** student Harry Birch (see below).
- Joined **Cannock Lions** at **St Luke's Church Hall** for their Christmas lunch for the **Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association** (SSAFA). Aidan served the turkey!
- Spoke in the House of Commons on the subject of **policing** twice, firstly on the subject of police funding and later during the second reading of the Police Reform and Social responsibility Bill.
- Visited **Norton Aluminum** in Norton Canes and seen at first hand the smelting process with local workers.
- Attended Cannock's first ever **Safety Zone**, organized by the MP Help Zone Manager, Claire Wixon, in Cannock Town Centre.
- Conducted a **help and advice surgery** for local residents at the **MP Help Zone** in Cannock.

Website of the Week:
www.thebic.co.uk

Staffordshire & Black Country Business Innovation Centre (BIC) is a not for profit company, limited by guarantee and established by a board of public and private organisations in 1995 with the mission to turn "Innovative Ideas into Business Opportunities". We are part of a Europe wide network of 200 Business Innovation Centres quality assured by EBN (European Business Innovation Centre Network) in Brussels on behalf of the EU.

MP awards prizes for Christmas card competition



Aidan Burley MP with Rhys Westley from West Hill Primary School, one of the winners of his Christmas card competition.

Aidan visited West Hill Primary School on Friday 10th December 2010 to award the prizes for his first annual Christmas card competition.

Following the launch of the Christmas card competition in October, Aidan received hundreds of entries from children across the Chase each hoping to have their design selected to appear on Aidan's official Christmas card. The competition, which had a Cannock Chase theme, proved so popular that two different designs are now being used on the cards.

The two winning entries were made by West Hill Primary School student Rhys Westley for his depiction of Santa at Birches Valley's

'Go Ape' and Bridgetown Primary School student Harry Birch for his design entitled 'Merry Christmas from Cannock Chase'. Both pupils were given framed copies of their card with a certificate and stationery from the House of Commons.

Mr Burley's Christmas cards have this year been kindly sponsored by local employment firm Pertemps and Excelerate print. Pertemps have worked alongside the MP Help Zone since the election in helping and supporting the long term unemployed back into work.

Jonathan Skelly, the centre manager for the Cannock office of Pertemps People Development Group said he was delighted to support the printing of this year's constituency Christmas card: *"Being invited by Aidan to help recognise the efforts of young Rhys and all the other pupils at West Hill School was a most enjoyable experience. There is an abundance of local talent in Cannock and the image chosen by Aidan effectively illustrates the point that participation and effort is always appreciated."*

A delighted Aidan added: *"I am overwhelmed by the reaction to my Christmas card competition. The standard was very high indeed and it was a very tough choice selecting the winning entries. I would like to thank all the teachers and students who took part in the competition; I was thrilled by the sheer number of entries received. I am also very grateful to Excelerate print and Pertemps for sponsoring my cards this year and making this competition possible. I have seen firsthand the great work Pertemps do in offering help and support for unemployed people in Cannock Chase and I look forward to continuing to work hand-in-hand with them over the next few years."*

MP joins Cannock Lions and SSAFA for Christmas lunch



Aidan Burley MP carves the turkey at the Cannock Lions Christmas lunch for the for the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA).

Aidan spent last Monday morning alongside the Cannock Lions who had organised a Christmas lunch for the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen

and Families Association (SSAFA).

The lunch, at St Luke's Church Hall in Cannock, began with Christmas carols sung by pupils from St Luke's School. This was followed by an appearance from Father Christmas himself. After saying a few words, Aidan had the job of carving the Turkey for the lunch.

The Cannock Lions are a new addition to the International network of volunteers who dedicate their spare time to helping vulnerable people, groups and individuals in the area through local community projects.

SSAFA Forces Help support those who serve in our Armed Forces and those who used to serve - even if it was only for a single day. They also care for the families of both.

Commenting after the Lunch Aidan said: *"Carving the turkey and serving roast potatoes to these servicemen and women was a real honour and a wonderful way to start the week. The Lions club did a superb job in arranging the Christmas Lunch with all the trimmings and full tribute must be paid to Pam and her hard working team of ladies in the kitchen. I was delighted to be able to contribute in a small way by providing the turkey myself. Volunteers putting on events like this make you realise what the big society really means in practice- a warming dinner for war heroes in St Luke's church on an otherwise cold Monday morning."*

Cannock Lions representative Beverly Stanyer added: *"It was a lovely event and it was very humbling to see these ex-servicemen and women getting into the Christmas spirit. It was a pleasure to thank them for all they have done."*

MP welcomes government plans to improve school discipline

Cannock Chase MP Aidan Burley has welcomed the Government's plans to improve discipline in schools as new analysis of government figures reveals how unacceptable behaviour became in Britain's schools over the last thirteen years.

Under Labour, 12 children in Staffordshire were excluded every school day for abuse and assault, both physical and verbal, against their teachers and fellow pupils. Across the country as a whole, almost 1,000 children were excluded every day for abuse and assault.

The Government is planning to introduce a series of tough new measures to improve discipline in schools in Staffordshire including: removing the power of appeals panels to send pupils back to schools where they have been permanently excluded by the head teacher and abolishing the requirement on teachers to give 24 hours' notice for detention.

Commenting Aidan said: *"I am very pleased the Government is introducing these tough but fair new measures to improve school discipline. There are disturbing levels of abuse and assault in our*

schools and I do not feel enough was done about it by the previous Government.

“Teachers should not have to deal with this kind of unacceptable behaviour so frequently. With the Government’s new measures, we can really get to grips with the problem and improve behaviour in schools for everyone’s benefit.”

Aidan in Parliament: Police Funding

Wednesday 8th December 2010



[Click on the image above to watch Aidan’s speech on Police Funding.](#)

Mr Aidan Burley (Cannock Chase) (Con): It is a pleasure to contribute to this constructive and well-mannered debate. Members on both sides of the House have expressed their genuine concerns in a fairly non-political way.

There has been much speculation today and in the past few weeks about the possible effects of the cuts. It is pure speculation because we still do not know what the individual settlements will be. It is disappointing to Members on the Government side that the Opposition still have not had the good grace to tell us where they would make their cuts. I thought that the answer given by the right hon. Member for Leicester East (Keith Vaz) when he was pushed on this issue was very interesting. Essentially, he said that he would go back to the Treasury to ask for more money, so perhaps the Opposition do not accept there should be any cuts whatever in policing. It would be interesting if that point were addressed in the winding-up speech.

I want to address an issue at the core of this debate—the effect that the reduction in funding will have on police numbers. I know that that is a totemic issue for the Opposition, and it is easy to understand why, because the Labour Government, in their 13 years in office,

were very successful at one thing: persuading this country that only by pouring more money in can we get better results out. That is why the debate about policing has always focused on the number of police rather than what they do all day. [Interruption.] We have a record number-140,000-as someone shouts from a sedentary position, but seemingly, simply because we have record police numbers and PCSOs, Labour Members think we have record effective policing. That is simply not an equation that works.

Labour Members do not care whether police officers are on patrol, filling in forms or responding to jobs. They seem incapable of acknowledging that having more and more police officers doing more and more administrative and bureaucratic tasks does not mean better policing. Sadly for the Opposition, the debate has moved on. They need not take my word for it; they can take that of someone who knows more about policing and fighting crime than all of us in the Chamber put together-Bill Bratton, who was chief of police of the Los Angeles police department, of New York city and of Boston. He is famous across the world for putting the broken windows theory into practice. He introduced the CompStat system of tracking crimes, which is still in use today and massively reduced crime in New York city, where he devolved decision making to precinct level and got rid of a backlog of 50,000 unserved warrants. When he was chief of police in Los Angeles, crime within that city dropped for six consecutive years. In 2007, the LA police commission reappointed Bratton to a second five-year term, which was the first time it had made such a reappointment in almost 20 years.

It is fair to say that that guy knows what he is on about, and here is what he said to the Home Affairs Committee on 30 November. The Chair, the right hon. Member for Leicester East, said:

"There is a debate at the moment, obviously because of the current economic climate that will result in the numbers of police officers in a local area being reduced. Do you think there is any correlation between the numbers of officers in a particular area and the level of crime?"

Bill Bratton replied:

"As a police chief for many, many years, I would always like to have more police, but the reality is it is not just numbers but, more importantly, what you do with them. More is fine, but if they're just standing around or if they're not focused on issues of concern to the public, then those numbers are not... going to achieve what you would hope to achieve, which is improve public safety and reduce crime."

Steve McCabe: It is only fair to say that Bill Bratton went on to caution the Select Committee against drawing too many conclusions from the American experience, because policing is organised very differently in the United States.

Mr Burley: I shall give another quote from what Bill Bratton said to us:

"So, I had 38,000 police officers in New York City. In Los Angeles I had 9,000. Los Angeles: 500 square miles, worst gang problem in America, 4 million residents. New York: 38,000 police officers, 300 square miles, 8 million residents, a drug crime problem. To have the equivalent of what I had

in New York City in Los Angeles, I would need 18,000 police officers, I only had 9,000 but, over a seven-year period, every year crime went down in Los Angeles... the public perception of police and their effectiveness improved",

which reinforced

"the adage: it's not so much the numbers but how you use them, how you inspire them, how you direct them and what their priorities are."

If it is not a matter of numbers, it is about what the police do all day, and the fact is that in this country the police spend a huge amount of time filling in forms. On 15 March 2007, I went out on the beat in Paddington with the Met, one of the more advanced forces in this country. This is what Met police have to fill in for a single domestic violence incident: a124D paper booklet in the victim's house; an evidence and actions booklet, which is the same as an old pocketbook, but with structured questions; a custody record, in the station if someone is arrested, with the same details as are in the EAB, which they give to the custody sergeant to rekey into his computer system; a CRISS report, which is an electronic crime report filled in by the officer at the station and that is used for Home Office statistics; a MERLIN report, which involves a national computer system with details of vulnerable children from domestic violence backgrounds-the same details as in the first two forms; a CRIMINT report, which is a Met police-wide intelligence system; and the case papers-that is, the MG forms, which are Word documents that get sent to the Crown Prosecution Service for court. It is not uncommon in the Met and other police forces for officers to be off for the rest of the shift following one domestic violence incident arrest. That is what they are spending their time doing-this mad bureaucracy and paperwork. It is not about the number of police officers; it is about what they do all day on their shifts.

As we have heard recently, Home Office figures have revealed that officers now spend more time on paperwork than on patrol-just 14% of their time on patrol compared with 20% on paperwork. That is why I am delighted that this coalition, like Bill Bratton, is dealing with the reality of the cuts by focusing not on police numbers, but on what the police do all day. Only by clearing away this bureaucracy and these inefficient, wasteful practices will we get the police service that this country deserves.

Aidan in Parliament: Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill

Monday 13th December 2010



[Click on the image above to watch Aidan's speech on the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill.](#)

Mr Aidan Burley (Cannock Chase) (Con): Thus far in today's debate, we have heard some interesting comments about a wide-ranging Bill that covers increasing licensing powers, banning legal highs and ending the disgraceful occupation and vandalism of Parliament Square—a situation that it is hard to conceive would have been allowed to develop had people decided they wanted to set up a campsite on any other pavement or public square in the United Kingdom.

Michael Ellis: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way so early in his remarks. Is he concerned, as I am, that the provisions to deal with the Parliament Square encampment will not receive Royal Assent until the end of July, which means that the royal wedding in April could still be subjected to the awful sight of this encampment in Parliament square?

Mr Burley: I share the concerns of my hon. Friend, who makes a good point about the timing of this legislation and the effect or otherwise it will have on the royal wedding. We all heard the Prime Minister say that he hoped the encampment would be gone by April, so I look forward to seeing how this progresses. I understand that my hon. Friend has some ideas of his own, and he will no doubt inform the House of them at a later date.

I would like to focus my remarks on the provisions around police and crime commissioners, the direct election of whom will, I believe, mark one of the most significant and positive changes to policing in our country. The Jack Daniel's adverts currently on the tube billboards read: "No one built a monument to a committee"—and if they were intended to refer to police authority committees, it is not hard to imagine why. They are possibly the least effective, least visible bureaucracies in the public sector that I can think of—visible to just 7% of the UK public. I believe that the bold changes in the Bill will finally end governance by committee and instead enable transparent and accountable policing in this country.

Opposition Members—not that there are many of them left in their places—have advanced a few arguments against police and crime commissioners today, and I would like to address, in order, the three

main criticisms that have come out of the debate. First, the Opposition have argued that commissioners will cost more than police authorities; secondly, they have alleged that PCCs will interfere with the operational independence of chief constables; and, finally, they have said PCCs will do nothing to bring the police closer to the communities they serve. Indeed, the shadow Home Secretary has said that this Bill

"goes against a 150 year tradition of keeping politics out of policing."

The Opposition are mistaken on every single one of those counts, and I welcome the opportunity to explain why.

Let me first turn my attention to the issue of cost. Implementation costs, which are the price of shifting from police authorities to police and crime commissioners, are expected to be £5 million. The forecast cost of holding elections every four years is £50 million, but the running costs of the police and crime commissioners and their panels are predicted to be the same as for the current police authorities. Opposition Members would do well to remember that when Labour was in power, increased spending of any kind was slavishly hailed as a sign of automatic improvement in public services. They would be well advised to think carefully before voting against this investment, which, contrary to most of the Labour Government's spending, will promote democracy, accountability and thrift.

I cannot recall many Labour Members arguing against the price of democracy when introducing elections for regional assemblies or indeed when it came to Lord Prescott's proposals for regional government, which fortunately never made it through to the ballot box-although if they had, I am sure there would have been a price attached to them.

Where police authorities are invisible, police and crime commissioners will be high profile; where police authorities fly below the radar of public scrutiny, PCCs will be held accountable; and where police authorities are divided, wasteful, bureaucratic and inefficient, PCCs will be firm of purpose and leaner in expense. The reality is that police authorities are a costly collection of committees that are simply no longer fit for purpose. They cost £65 million and taxpayers fund all the generous expenses and allowances that individual members claim. In the light of the rising costs, we simply cannot ignore the value of bodies that fail to hold police properly to account and are invisible to the people they claim to represent.

Government Members need to counter the "scaremongering" myth pedalled by some that election costs for these commissioners will come out of already stretched local authority budgets. This is unfounded and inaccurate: they will be funded by the Home Office budget and, as I said earlier, it is not the intention that PCCs should cost more than existing police authorities. In fact, it is quite the opposite: the intention is to give much better value for money.

Let me move on to the issue of independence. I agree with the Opposition's stance on maintaining the importance of operational independence. For this reason, I was pleased to hear my right hon. Friend the Minister for Policing and Criminal Justice emphasise in September the need to maintain the operational independence of policing. He said that

"someone has to hold the police to account. In my view that should be an elected politician. We cannot have the police answering to no one. Therefore what we are discussing is simply the nature of that accountability; but politicians will be involved in one way or another."- [Official Report, 14 September 2010; Vol. 515, c. 241WH.]

I believe that, far from interfering with operational independence and duty to act without restraint, I believe that this Bill will serve to improve it. Chief constables will have greater professional freedom to take operational decisions without fear or favour to meet the priorities set for them by their local community through their commissioner.

The Opposition's charge of politicisation is, I am afraid, based on a fundamental misconception. The governance of policing is rightly, and by its nature, political. Deciding where to deploy limited resources is a political decision. Deciding whether to put officers in cars or on the beat is a political choice. Deciding whether they patrol in pairs or singly, on the same side of the street or the opposite side, is a political decision. As I mentioned earlier-I would have reiterated it later if the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull East (Karl Turner) had accepted my intervention-when Tony Blair summoned all 43 chief constables to Downing street for a summit on knife crime to put political pressure on them to do something about the explosion of that crime, that was political interference, to use the words of Labour Members, with the police. It was entirely legitimate, however, because Tony Blair as a politician democratically representing the people of this country wanted to put pressure on our police to do something about a problem. It is precisely the same principle in the Bill.

Mr Offord: Although my hon. Friend is right to mention the influence of the former Prime Minister Tony Blair in the context of the street crime initiative, I think that members of the shadow Cabinet are concerned about the fact that he intervened in other circumstances where we know he exerted influence. I am thinking of, for instance, the Serious Fraud Office and the investigation into British Aerospace. Will my hon. Friend confirm that Government Members will not accept such actions either?

Mr Burley: I agree. Operational independence is about, for example, decisions to arrest people. No one is suggesting that we should give police and crime commissioners the power that Winston Churchill had in the Essex street siege to order police officers to arrest people, but I think it democratically legitimate for a police and crime commissioner to be elected on a mandate of, for instance, putting more police on the streets where they are visible and accountable, because that is what the public want. Over the past 10 years-indeed, throughout the 1980s and 1990s-there has been a move to put police officers in cars and say to their chief constables and senior officers, "This is my democratic mandate. We want more police on the streets. Tell me how you will achieve it." That does not strike me as interfering with operational independence.

Let me now say something about transparency and accountability, both of which have been criticised by Opposition Members under whose Government any hint of either was lost in the mire of sofa government. Despite costs of between £52 million and £78 million a year, there is scant awareness, and therefore scant accountability,

in relation to the authorities themselves, let alone their expenditure. Public input is exceedingly low. A significant proportion of police authorities received a meagre average of three letters or e-mails per week between 2007 and 2010.

When asked by the Home Affairs Committee how one individual could improve police accountability, Kit Malthouse, London's effective police and crime commissioner, replied:

"It allows there to be a kind of funnel for public concern. For instance, when I was appointed to this job in May 2008, and given the job title Deputy Mayor for Policing, the post bag at City Hall on community safety went from 20 or 30 letters a week up to 200 or 300. The letters just came and came."

According to Louise Casey's 2008 crime and communities review, only 7% of the public are even aware that police authorities exist. According to MORI, however, 68% of people agree that a single person should be elected by local people to hold the police to account on behalf of the community.

For too long the fight against crime has been caught up in red tape, which has created a gulf between law enforcement agencies and the communities that they serve. The shadow Home Secretary himself said in Cannock that the work of police authorities

"isn't always as visible as it could be. Around police landscape, around accountability, there is more to do".

If he opposes the Government's police reforms, may I ask what he proposes to do about that? Surely he cannot attack our plan without having a plan himself.

Establishing commissioners will only serve to improve the alarming statistics that I have mentioned, and to raise the profile of the police force as a whole. It will enable us to turn our backs on a corrosive legacy that has done nothing to prevent the British public from being misinformed about, and unaware of, how to influence directly the strategy of policing in their areas. It is impossible to conceive that after just one term of police and crime commissioners, only 11% of police officers will still be visible and available, only 7% of the public will know how to contact their police and crime panels, and there will still be record dissatisfaction with the police despite the existence of a record number of them.

Locally elected police commissioners will be transformative. They will ensure that the police concentrate on the crimes that most affect local people's quality of life. The existing top-down, target-ridden culture will be replaced by something altogether preferable: accountability to the public. The Home Affairs Committee's report concludes with the words:

"Police and Crime Commissioners will be judged on whether they succeed in bringing the police closer to the public they serve."

It is clear that the proposals for police and crime commissioners and their supporting panels will go a huge way towards achieving that aim.

Aidan in the papers: Week in Westminster Column

The text of Aidan's Week in Westminster column for the Chase Post on 9th December 2010...

London being London was never going to be as cold as Cannock Chase last week, but let me tell you – the Palace of Westminster is no place to be when the temperature gets below zero. The Victorians who re-built Parliament were clearly a hardy bunch of men. However I am sure that if there had been women in the Victorian parliaments, they never would have allowed some of the discomforts that have grown up over the years.

The Palace of Westminster is a quilted blanket of buildings, corridors and architectural styles. The oldest part of it dates to the 13th Century, when it was still a Royal Palace. Westminster Hall was built 900 years ago, and was for centuries the centre of the great institutions of state in England. It has seen the transition from autocratic monarchy to the rule of law and representative government, and eventually to parliamentary democracy. But it still has no central heating.

The most modern building is the new MPs office block, Portcullis House, opened by Betty Boothroyd in 1998. My office is in the building next door, Norman Shaw, which was built as an Opera House and served for years as the old Scotland Yard building. It is well provisioned and heated, as you might expect for a former police station. However the only downside is that every time the division bell rings I have to make a brisk walk in the open in order to get from my office to the Chamber, via the ancient and freezing Westminster Hall.

Such eccentricities and quirks are all part of the charm of the place, or Palace. Getting used them has been a major part of the challenge of being a new MP. All in all, we have come a long way since the Victorians - now over 20% of the MPs are women, and still rising. No wonder things are looking up!

MP Help Zone Christmas and New Year Opening

Aidan Burley's MP Help Zone will close on Wednesday 22nd December at 4pm. It will reopen on Tuesday 4th January 2011 at 10am.

From 10th January 2011 the new MP Help Zone opening hours will be: Monday to Friday 10am until 4pm

Please find some helpful numbers for emergencies below:

- Cannock Chase Hospital (Brunswick Road, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 5XY) 01543 572757

- Council Housing Repairs (power, lights, etc) 9am – 5pm 01543 456 816
- For emergencies only outside normal office hours, during weekends or bank holidays 01543 456816.
- Fire Direct (Unit 3 Ash Park, Cannock, Staffordshire, WS11 7XA) 01543 466355
- Cannock Police Station (Wolverhampton Road, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 1AW) For non-emergency calls and general enquiries 0300 123 4455
- Rugeley Police Station, Anson Street, Rugeley, Staffordshire WS15 2BQ 0300 123 4455
- In an emergency, where your life is in danger or a crime is in progress, call 999.
- Cannock Chase Council (PO Box 28, Beecroft Road, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 1BG) 01543 462621
- Women's Aid 0870 270 0123.
- Benefit Enquiry Lines 0800882200

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By post: 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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