



# Nick Herbert MP's Westminster Report

Member of Parliament for Arundel & South Downs

Winter 2006



Dear Resident

I am very pleased to send you this report to keep you informed about the work that I have been doing in my first 18 months as your constituency MP.

I take the strong view that, irrespective of party allegiance, my job is to represent local people to the best of my ability, and support the community whenever I can. Arundel & South Downs is a very large constituency – over 30 miles wide, and twice the size of the Isle of Wight. It can take an hour to drive from one side to the other. But I try to visit as many local organisations and events as possible.

I am extremely concerned about the threat to our local hospitals. NHS cutbacks forcing the closure or downgrading of West Sussex hospitals will be totally unacceptable. I am strongly opposed to the trend of services being further removed from local communities and decisions being taken by unaccountable officials.

I am privileged to represent one of the most beautiful constituencies in England, and I am determined to help keep it that way. Development is probably the single biggest concern raised with me by local people. I cannot interfere with individual planning applications, which are matters for local councils. But I have fought strongly against unsustainable house building targets being proposed by the Government and the Regional Assembly. There is already a serious infrastructure deficit in West Sussex, with inadequate roads and shortages of water the most obvious examples. I do not see how large scale development can be accommodated without first addressing this problem.

Together with this report, I am launching a new website – **www.nickherbert.com** – which will, I hope, provide helpful local information and links, and also the opportunity to feed back your views.

Constituents who have specific problems can also arrange to visit me in one of my regular Friday surgeries which I am now holding around the constituency, and I will try to help.

I hope to meet many more of you during the coming months, and that you will get in touch if there is any matter, either local or national, which is concerning you.

Yours sincerely  
*Nick Herbert*

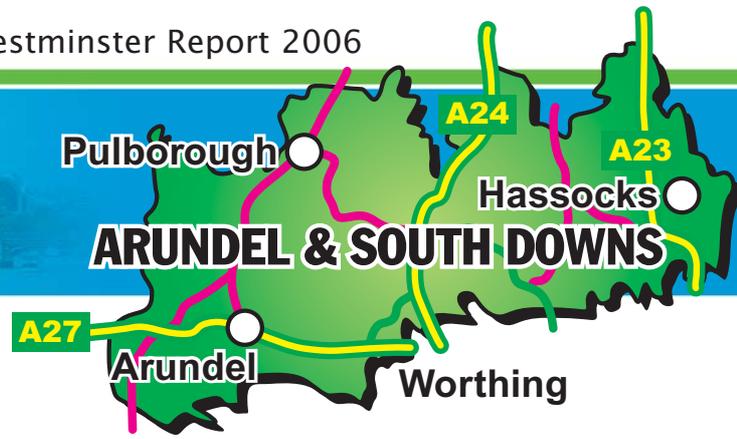
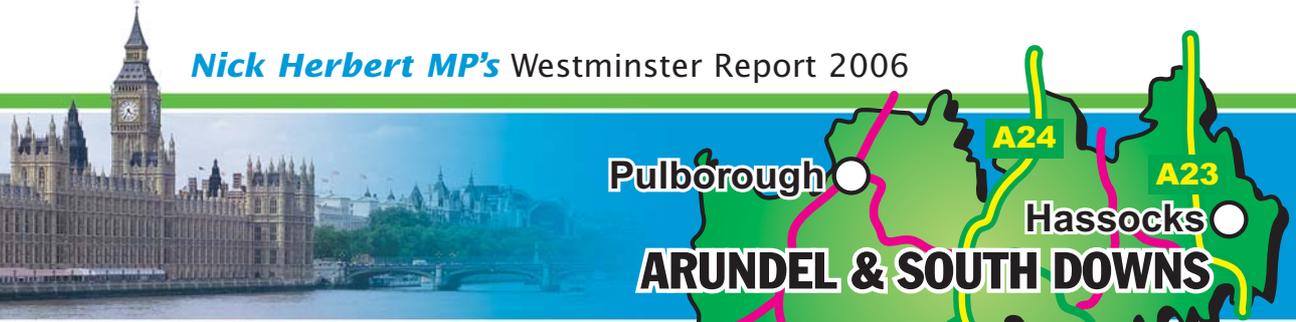
**Nick Herbert MP**  
Member of Parliament for Arundel & South Downs

*Working hard for you*



**Nick launches new website**

Log onto **www.nickherbert.com** to find out all the latest news about issues in your area and to sign up for regular bulletins



## Water companies must invest in supply

**Nick Herbert has pressed the Government and water companies over current water shortages, asking what plans they have to ensure supply in the future.**

Nick has raised the issue in Parliament, calling a special debate on the situation in West Sussex and asking the Prime Minister about it at Question Time.

Hosepipe bans are already in force in West Sussex and one company, Southern Water, has successfully applied for a drought order, which could mean new restrictions in the future.

A new House of Lords report has warned that action will have to be taken to ensure enough water to

supply new houses planned in the South East, and that water leaks are unacceptably high. Southern Water alone loses 92 million litres of water a day through leaks, enough to supply over 200,000 households.

Nick said: "I will be asking further questions about the water companies' investment timetable. The companies appear to plan on the basis that it is acceptable for them to restrict water supply every few years if there is a dry spell. But it isn't. Electricity companies don't plan to cut people off whenever there are exceptionally cold conditions. Water companies make profits and they should invest in ensuring a continuity of supply."

## MP pledges support for local post offices

**Nick has signed a petition pledging his support for West Sussex's rural post offices.**



On a visit to a sub post office in Hurstpierpoint, Nick added his name to the petition stating that the "Post Office network provides a vital service to local communities in both urban and rural areas which are threatened by the Government's withdrawal of services from local post offices."

Nick has highlighted concerns about these developments by questioning the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and by signing a Commons Motion.

Following his visit, Nick said: "Local post offices offer a vital service for those on low and fixed incomes, such as pensioners, who often don't have their own car and find it difficult to get around."

He added: "I hope as many people as possible will add their signatures to this petition to demonstrate the strength of feeling about the importance of local post offices in West Sussex."

## Nick introduces Bill to cut red tape for small businesses

**Nick Herbert has introduced a Parliamentary Bill to protect over 4 million small businesses from regulation.**

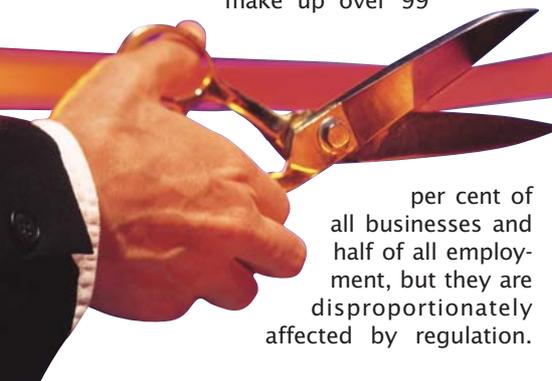
Nick pointed out that small enterprises – those with less than 50 employees – make up over 99

The total cost of regulation has increased by 50 per cent in less than nine years and is now a staggering £150 billion.

Nick's decision to introduce the Bill came after a meeting with West Sussex representatives of the Federation of Small Businesses where the ongoing problem of red tape was discussed.

Calling for a much bolder approach, Nick said: "If we are going to be serious about lifting the regulatory burden, a new settlement is needed". The Bill creates a presumption that businesses with less than ten employees are exempted from any future regulation – benefiting 4 million businesses.

Nick commented: "I'm pleased that the first Bill I've introduced didn't aim to pass new laws, but to sweep others away."



per cent of all businesses and half of all employment, but they are disproportionately affected by regulation.

## Nick demands answers on Ford prison escapes

**Nick Herbert has revealed plans for serious offenders, including sex offenders and arsonists, to be sent to Ford Prison.**

Dubbed "HMP Butlins" by the press, over 100 criminals abscond from Ford each year. In May, when Nick and the local press revealed that foreign prisoners had walked out, 141 inmates were dramatically transferred

to secure conditions the following morning.

Now a leaked memo has revealed that they are being returned, along with other unsuitable prisoners, and the Governor has admitted that there are likely to be further escapes.

The memo also exposed secret plans to build a Category C prison for more serious offenders at Ford, in

direct breach of an agreement with Arun District Council.

Nick said: "When two prisoners escape every week, local people will be horrified to hear that more dangerous offenders may be sent to Ford. The mismanagement of the prison has totally undermined public confidence in the penal system."

# Working hard for Arundel & South Downs

## Nick's News



### Protecting the environment

Nick presents an award to a Wildlife Explorer Group at Pulborough Brooks, one of the RSPB's most popular reserves. "Protecting the environment is a big priority for me", said Nick. "We have a very special asset in the Sussex Downs and surrounding countryside, and we must ensure that it is preserved".



### Supporting local schools

Nick visits Yapton Primary School, and helps pupils to make a "buddy" to demonstrate their concern for less fortunate children in developing countries. Nick said: "I like to visit as many local organisations in the constituency as possible to keep in touch with people's views and concerns."



### Nick makes the news

Nick appears regularly on the national and local TV and radio, speaking about local concerns such as the future of local policing, the NHS, water and development.



### Fire command

Nick receives a briefing at the West Sussex fire headquarters in Chichester. The MP has expressed concern at the move of the County's control room to a new regional centre in Hampshire. "I saw the importance of local knowledge", he said. "I am worried that so many public services are being drawn away from local control to a regional level".



### Shadow Minister

Nick speaking at the Dispatch Box in the Commons in his role as Shadow Minister for Police Reform. Nick was appointed to the Conservative frontbench by David Cameron in December last year.



### International Concern

Nick joins a cross-party delegation of MPs visiting Kenya to witness the problem of AIDS and TB. The visit was funded by an international development charity. Nick said: "Many constituents write to me about global poverty, trade and disease. I take a close interest in these issues, and this trip helped to inform me about the problems on the ground."



## Put Police back on the beat

**As Shadow Minister for Police Reform, Nick Herbert successfully led the fight against merger of local police forces.**

The plans to amalgamate Sussex and Surrey's forces would have cost £27 million, equivalent to 549 fewer police officers in Sussex, pushing up local council tax bills still higher.

Nick has called for police forces to be made more accountable to local communities and for action to tackle bureaucracy. Less than a fifth of a police officer's time is spent on the beat, and it takes three and a half hours to process a single arrest.

Nick said: "People are concerned about antisocial behaviour and they want the reassurance of a more visible uniformed police presence in their communities. I want to see officers released from red tape and put back onto the streets".

Nick has also called for a greater use of wardens in villages to supplement the police and community support officers. "I believe that communities should be given control over funding, so that they can have the uniformed presence that local taxpayers deserve and have paid for."

## NO to imposed house building targets

**Nick Herbert has strongly opposed plans to build over half a million new homes in the South East.**

The South East Regional Assembly (SEERA) has proposed that 58,000 new houses are built in West Sussex over the next 20 years – equivalent to a town the size of Crawley. But this could well be increased to 92,000 houses.

In a meeting with Yvette Cooper, the Planning Minister, Nick argued that the infrastructure in West Sussex cannot support development on this scale. Nick said: "Housing targets should be decided by local councils in consultation with local people. They should decide on the necessary development to meet housing demand, focusing on the need for affordable homes."

To contact Nick call  
**01903 816880**  
www.nickherbert.com



Picture courtesy of the West Sussex Gazette

**HANDS OFF OUR HOSPITALS**  
Sign the petition overleaf...

# Worthing and Southlands Hospitals under threat

**Nick Herbert has joined forces with fellow West Sussex MPs to lead a campaign against the closure or downgrading of the Worthing & Southlands hospitals.**

In a bid to save money, 80 jobs are already being cut at the hospitals and wards have been closed.

Now far more drastic plans are being considered, which could see Worthing losing its Accident and Emergency

services and maternity services altogether, requiring patients to travel as far as Brighton or Portsmouth.

Nick Herbert is strongly backing the local community in opposing these plans. 15,000 people have protested at rallies in Worthing and Shoreham, and over 60,000 have signed a petition in

support of their hospitals.

Nick believes that people need healthcare facilities to be within reach, especially the elderly who find it difficult to travel.

There is still time to protest against these plans. Local health authorities are expected to publish formal plans for consultation in January, with final decisions being taken a few months later. So if you haven't

already, please sign the petition to support your local hospital.

**Support Worthing and Southlands Hospital**

**Sign the petition overleaf...**

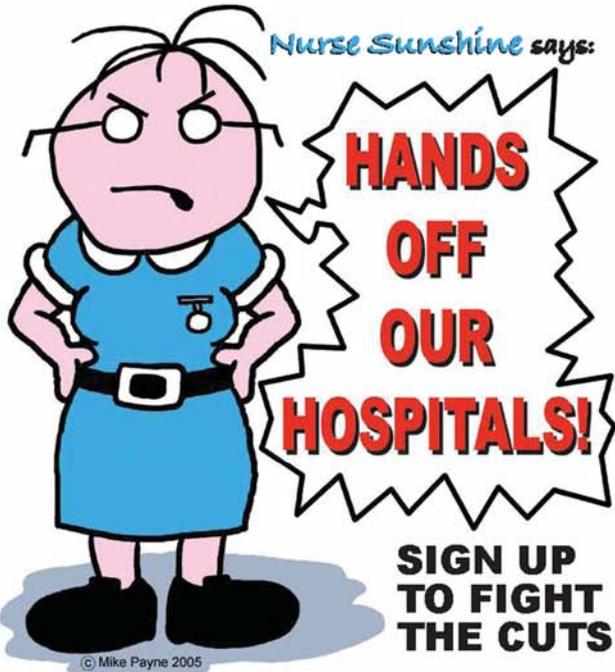
*"The NHS doesn't belong to health officials. It doesn't belong to politicians. It belongs to the people. And the people want to keep their local hospitals."*

**Nick Herbert MP**

**Nick is supporting all of the acute hospitals in West Sussex – St Richard's in Chichester, Worthing & Southlands, and the Princess Royal at Haywards Heath – because they all serve his constituents and they are all under threat. If you would like to be sent a petition form to support one of the other hospitals, please contact Nick's office.**

**Nick Herbert says:**

- ⊕ While the Strategic Health Authority is running a public consultation exercise, its Board papers reveal that it has been studying options for downgrading local hospitals since the beginning of the year.
- ⊕ Local health authorities have gone through repeated and disruptive re-organisations, costing millions of pounds.
- ⊕ Most of the NHS deficits are in the South of England, suggesting that while the NHS now receives three times more cash than a decade ago, the resources have been unevenly distributed.
- ⊕ The A27 has not been upgraded and is frequently congested, yet ambulances would have to travel much longer distances on it to get patients to A&E.
- ⊕ The local population is growing. It makes little sense to downgrade local hospitals at the same time as building 58,000 new houses in West Sussex.



# PETITION

Please sign this petition in support of keeping the full range of Accident & Emergency and other key services at Worthing and Southlands.

To: The South East Coast Strategic Health Authority

**Please don't downgrade our hospitals - we need them.**

## HANDS OFF Worthing and Southlands Hospitals

The South East Coast Strategic Health Authority is in serious debt and has to save money.

This means that they want to cut local health services - leading to the downgrading or closure of Worthing and Southlands and the loss of vital services like A&E and the maternity unit.

As your local MP, I am determined to fight to retain services at Worthing and Southlands.

Please sign the petition and help us oppose the health authority's plans to strip down your hospital.

*Nick Herbert*  
Nick Herbert MP

**PLEASE SEND TO:**  
**KWASH**  
c/o Nick Herbert MP  
House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

or fill in the online petition on the campaign website:

# www.kwash.org.uk

Tell your friends and get them to join the fight.

Signature: .....

Name (please print): .....

Address: (Optional) .....

Postcode: .....

Email: .....

Signature: .....

Name (please print): .....

Address: (Optional) .....

Postcode: .....

Email: .....

Signature: .....

Name (please print): .....

Address: (Optional) .....

Postcode: .....

Email: .....

Signature: .....

Name (please print): .....

Address: (Optional) .....

Postcode: .....

Email: .....

Signature: .....

Name (please print): .....

Address: (Optional) .....

Postcode: .....

Email: .....

Log onto Nick's website [www.nickherbert.com](http://www.nickherbert.com)

## A week in the life of your MP...

Nick Herbert works in London from Monday to Thursday when the House of Commons is sitting, representing constituents' interests and concerns, considering new laws, and asking government ministers questions about current issues.

Usually only a small amount of an MP's day is spent in the Commons chamber. Most of Nick's work is done in his office, in meetings and in Parliamentary Committees.

Nick has received around 3,500 letters and 2,700 e-mails from individual constituents since he was elected last year, as well as thousands more postcards and petition forms relating to local and national campaigns.

The last votes in the Commons are at 10 pm on Mondays and Tuesdays, 7 pm on Wednesdays and 6 pm on Thursdays. The House sometimes sits on Fridays, too.

On Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays Nick is in his constituency, where he holds "surgeries" to help people with their problems, attends functions, visits schools and businesses, and generally tries to meet as many people as possible.

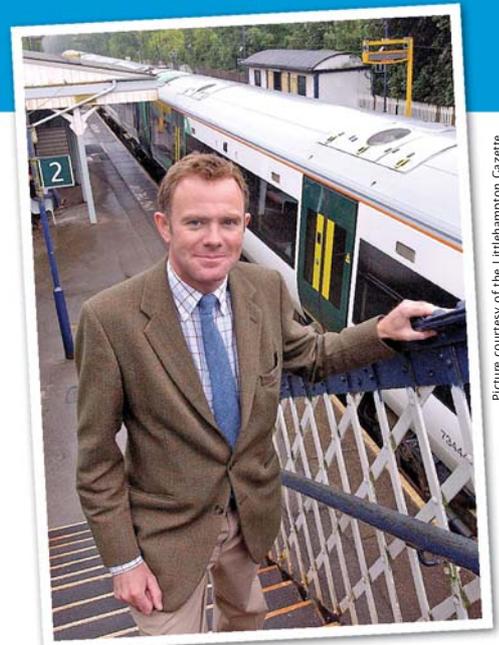
## MP secures action on train horn noise

Many local residents have complained to Nick Herbert about new train horns, which are extremely loud and disturb people's quiet enjoyment in their homes.

Nick has taken up the issue with Network Rail and Southern Railways, and one whistle board on the Arun line has already been removed.

Nick has also met the Rail Minister to discuss the issue. The Minister said that he sympathised with residents' concerns and would ask the rail industry to bring forward solutions. These include reducing the volume of horns and reviewing the need for sounding them so frequently.

Nick said: "I am working with other



Picture courtesy of the Littlehampton Gazette

**TRAIN HORNS** | Nick speaks out

MPs to keep up the pressure, and we are slowly making progress in dealing with this issue. It's unnecessary for horns to be sounded at such volume at footpath crossings which are hardly ever used. The risk of public injury is very low, and signs could provide adequate warning."

## No to London's rubbish

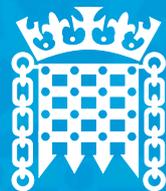
**Nick Herbert has said that the plan by the South East England Regional Assembly to require West Sussex to take 2.6 million tonnes of London's waste is "totally unacceptable".**

The proposals would require West Sussex to increase its capacity for the disposal of non-hazardous waste by almost 50 per cent, forcing the County

to look for new landfill sites such as Rock Common at Washington.

Nick said: "It's simply unsustainable to transport waste and dispose of it in this way. There is so much more that could be done to cut down on unnecessary packaging and increase recycling.

I will be pressing for more sustainable solutions to this problem."



## How to contact Nick Herbert MP

Member of Parliament for Arundel & South Downs

**WRITE TO:**

Nick Herbert MP  
House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

**Telephone:** 01903 816880

**E-mail:** [nick@nickherbert.com](mailto:nick@nickherbert.com)

**Website:** [www.nickherbert.com](http://www.nickherbert.com)

## Surgeries

**Nick holds regular surgeries in his constituency.**

Please call his office to find out details of his next surgery in your area. Alternatively you can see a list of surgeries on his new website.

Printed on paper containing fibre sourced from fully sustainable managed forests.

Produced by Nick Herbert MP, House of Commons, Westminster, London SW1A 0AA and printed by Advent Colour Ltd., Unit 1, Crown Way, Walworth Industrial Estate, Andover, Hants SP10 5LU. This publication has been financed through the allowances available to Members of Parliament. Worthing & Southlands Hospitals Edition.