

Nick HERBERT

A strong voice for Arundel & South Downs



Dear Resident

I am writing to update you on a number of the key issues on which I have been working on your behalf.

I am fortunate to have served as MP for the fantastic rural constituency of Arundel & South Downs, which covers 250 square miles, a far larger area than the Isle of Wight.

We are all very proud of the villages and small market towns in which we live, and I am determined to do what I can to look after their interests.

Over the past ten years I have worked at Westminster from Monday to Thursday each week, and from Friday to Sunday I have worked in the constituency, based in Arundel where I live.

I hope that you will find this report a useful source of information about local issues, as well as what I have done to represent you in Parliament.

I pledge to work hard for everyone in the constituency, to stand up for local people, and to be a strong voice at Westminster for your concerns.

Yours sincerely

Nick Herbert

THE RT HON NICK HERBERT

PROTECTING OUR VILLAGES AND MARKET TOWNS

Probably the biggest local issue in my constituency is planning. We need more affordable housing, and I worry that young people cannot get their feet onto the housing ladder. But we also need to protect the beautiful West Sussex countryside, and ensure that new development is sustainable. Our villages have already grown significantly, and there is pressure on local infrastructure.

The Localism Act abolished housing targets, instead requiring our councils to introduce local plans to meet housing need. It also introduced neighbourhood planning, which puts communities in control of where housing should go and enables our villages to protect green spaces from development. I am a strong supporter of neighbourhood planning, and am pleased that Arundel, Kirdford, Angmering and Hurstpierpoint were amongst the first of these plans in the country to be passed through local referendums.

These plans are the way forward to produce affordable housing to meet local need. I have strongly opposed unsustainable major new developments, including the Mayfield new town between Henfield and Sayers Common,

and a new settlement between Barnham and Eastergate. I have spoken out strongly at Westminster about the need to protect the countryside and promote localism, and successfully lobbied Ministers to produce revised planning guidance which prioritises brownfield development, emphasises the importance of landscape protection, and requires infrastructure issues to be addressed before development is allowed.

The South Downs, its villages and small market towns are very special, and I will continue to do everything in my power to protect them.



BACKING LOCAL COMMUNITIES ON FRACKING

The production of shale oil or gas through fracking has the potential to be an important new domestic energy source in the UK. However, protecting our most important landscapes is in the national interest, too. After I raised these concerns I was pleased that the Government agreed to a ban on fracking on sites throughout the South Downs National Park.

I opposed an application by Celtique Energie to drill near Wisborough Green, because it would have meant excessive lorry movements through the village, and I welcomed West Sussex County Council's decision to reject the proposal, and the company's withdrawal of its appeal.

New laws do **not** permit access to the surface of private property or to the land immediately underneath, but only allow lateral drilling which takes place far below the surface, over fifty times below the deepest underground tunnel. New conditions have been set before fracking can take place, including an environmental assessment.

There are existing local oil wells which do not cause public concern



as they are sensibly located. The beautiful countryside of West Sussex must not be carelessly industrialised.

Local people have also raised concerns about plans for large solar farms. The Government has revised guidance to give communities a greater say on the siting of wind turbines and solar farms, and to prioritise solar panels on commercial roof spaces and previously developed land.

FIGHTING FOR IMPROVED TRANSPORT LINKS

Delays on the A27 are harmful to the local economy and to the environment. Coastal towns such as Littlehampton and Bognor suffer from poor transport links, while motorists 'rat-run' not just through the historic town of Arundel but also through the South Downs National Park. Downland villages suffer from heavy traffic as a result. Storrington has a serious air quality problem.

For this reason I helped to form the A27 Action Campaign (www.A27Action.co.uk) which is an alliance of local councils, businesses and MPs working together to get the road improved and upgraded. I was delighted when the Government announced an investment of over £350 million for an Arundel bypass and improvement of the A27 through Worthing. Consultation on these schemes begins this year.

I am pleased to have been appointed President of the West Sussex Rail Users Association and will continue to lobby for rail improvements. New signalling on the Arun Valley railway line, at a cost of £21 million, should improve services, and the £6 billion upgrade which is underway at London Bridge will make a

huge difference by 2018. The recent performance of Southern and Thameslink on the Brighton line especially has not been good enough, and after I raised concerns the Transport Minister demanded improvements to the service.

I believe that we need airport expansion and that Heathrow is the best option for this. I am concerned that proposals for a second runway at Gatwick, meaning more than two and a half times as many passengers as now, would put even greater pressure on local infrastructure and housing.



WINNING BETTER BROADBAND IN WEST SUSSEX

Too many of our Downland villages have poor or even non-existent broadband. Until recently, two of the four 'not-spots' in the whole of England were in West Sussex. Yet a good broadband connection is anything but a luxury. It is vital to support the rural economy as well as for leisure.

So three years ago I organised a summit, with the help of West Sussex County Council, to promote better broadband access in West Sussex. It was addressed by the then Culture Secretary and senior representatives from organisations such as BT.

After this the Government announced a national superfast broadband programme and granted over £6 million to the County Council, which then matched the sum from its own resources, to develop a plan for West Sussex, 'Better Connected'.

We're already seeing progress. Superfast fibre broadband has been introduced in Storrington, Steyning, Hassocks and Henfield, and is now coming to Hurstpierpoint, Graffham, Petworth, Pulborough, West Chiltington and Arundel.



The national target is to give 95 per cent of households access to superfast by Spring 2017.

In the House of Commons I called for remaining rural areas to be given superfast to close the "digital divide". The Government has announced plans for this and I will hold a second summit later this year to ensure that West Sussex is fully connected.

SUPPORTING LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICES

Soon after I was first elected in 2005 there was a battle to retain Accident and Emergency services in our local hospitals, which I am pleased to say that we won. I continue to keep a close watch over local healthcare services which are so important to all of us.

We have excellent local GPs who now take the lead in developing local health services. Over the years it has been good to see new medical centres, for instance in Pulborough and Steyning which I opened. I am now supporting bids for new centres, including in Storrington.

In some of our villages there has been pressure on local school places and I encouraged St Lawrence School in Hurstpierpoint to expand to accommodate the demand. I believe academies have been an important education reform, and it has been good to see this status turning around performance at Midhurst Rother College. A new Free School has set up locally, while our secondary schools have seen improving results.

I enjoy visiting local schools and I backed Steyning Grammar School's bid for funding for new buildings, which I am delighted was successful. I have supported a number of applications from local communities to improve their facilities and village halls.

After hearing from local parents with autistic children about the difficulties they face I convened a special 'summit' to discuss autism provision in Sussex, and I take a continuing interest in ensuring that parents and children receive the help they need.

Despite the need to make savings the Government has protected spending on the NHS and schools, and the Conservatives are committed to increase spending on the NHS and schools throughout the next Parliament. I will also continue to argue for a fairer national funding formula for West Sussex as our services currently lose out compared to other areas.



WORKING LOCALLY AND AT WESTMINSTER

I take a strong interest in public services. Before I became an MP I ran an independent think tank, Reform, and I was Minister for Policing & Criminal Justice in the Coalition Government for two and a half years.

I am passionate about the countryside and rural communities. I helped to set up the Countryside Movement, which became the Countryside Alliance, and was Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. I have been heavily focused on planning issues and the threat to the countryside from excessive development.

I was Chief Executive of Business for Sterling and launched the successful 'no' campaign against joining the euro, and I know that Britain's relationship with Europe is an issue of great concern. I believe that we need to renegotiate our membership of the EU, and I voted for an in-out referendum, which the Conservatives are pledged to hold by 2017.

I am very involved in the fight against tuberculosis, which still claims the lives of 1.5 million people globally every year. I work with TB charities here and in developing countries to campaign for action to tackle this terrible disease, and I am Co-Chairman of the All-Party

Parliamentary Group on Global TB.

Last year I set up a new project, GovernUp, to promote the far reaching reforms needed in Whitehall and beyond to make government more effective.

I try to support local groups and charities in my constituency as much as I can. I am Patron of St Barnabas House, Vice President of the West Sussex Community Minibus Association and Patron of the Mary How Trust for Cancer Prevention.





Conservatives

CONTACT NICK HERBERT

Do please contact me if you have any issue - whether local or national - which you would like to raise, and I will try to help. In the last Parliament I responded to some 20,000 e-mails from constituents.

I also held 'surgeries' in the towns and villages around my constituency, and I am always delighted to meet constituents who have an issue to discuss or a problem that needs solving.

I travel all around the constituency to meet individuals, businesses and local organisations. If you would like me to visit you, or support or attend an event, please let me know.

You can contact me by e-mail at nick@nickherbert.com

Or telephone me on 01903 816880.

FOLLOW ME

Here are some of the ways you can find out more about my work:

See my website: www.nickherbert.com

Like me on Facebook: www.Facebook.com/NickHerbertMP

Follow me on twitter: [@nickherbertmp](https://twitter.com/nickherbertmp)



Read my blog: www.nickherbert.net

Nick Herbert's Facebook and Twitter names were established while he was an MP. As Parliament has been dissolved there are no MPs until after the Election on 7 May 2015.

Promoted by Gary Markwell on behalf of Arundel & South Downs Conservative Association and Nick Herbert, all of 38 High Street, Steyning, BN44 3YE.
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