



Stephen Kinnock MP November 2016 Newsletter



A Strong Voice For Aberavon

News from the Commons



Future of the steel industry

My colleagues Anna Turley MP and Tom Blenkinsop MP secured a Westminster Hall debate on the future of the steel industry.

With little more information on the Government's 'Joint Venture', which was first announced in July when Tata was looking to sell, the uncertainty following Brexit and the value of the pound, I called on the Government to act now. For the industry to thrive the Government needs to: create a level playing field on cost and trade; connect up supply and demand; build enforceable procurement rules; and forge a new model of partnership for growth and progression. <http://bit.ly/2e5SCD4>



Brexit and EU funding for Wales

I secured a debate calling on the Government to commit to maintaining the same level of funding Wales currently receives after leaving the European Union. The EU has contributed an enormous amount of investment in Wales, which has made an enormous difference.

The Government must recognise that if Wales does not continue to receive funding for crucial programmes, communities will be devastated for generations, with everything that that means for people's lives. The Government must reassure the people of Wales quickly that they will ensure the floor is not ripped out from underneath them.

<http://bit.ly/2eYMqw1>



Newcomer Labour MP of the Year Award

I am very humbled to have received the Patchwork Foundation Newcomer of the Year Award. I was delighted to have Helle with me when I received the award.

I want to simply say that representing the people of Aberavon is a true privilege. It's a constituency of good, hard-working, talented, tough and funny people and I am honoured to speak for them in Parliament.

<http://bit.ly/2flSg7J>



Prime Minister and Brexit

The Prime Minister came to the House to make a statement on Europe and I was able to ask the following question:

The President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, recently issued a statement in which he said that there will be no soft Brexit; there is either a hard Brexit or no Brexit at all. Given that the Prime Minister was just in Brussels, did she pick up on that hardening political mood music, which makes it absolutely clear that the idea of the unfettered access to the single market that we so desperately need is rapidly becoming a pipe dream? <http://bit.ly/2fzm064>



Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon

I asked Jesse Norman a question on the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon and urged his government to approve the scheme, a vital project to ensure the future of our steel industry:

The future of the British steel industry depends on the approval of vital, cutting edge projects such as the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon. Will the Secretary of State please now call time on these two years of prevarication and commit to a timely and positive decision and ensure that this is included in the Autumn Statement on the 23rd November?

<http://bit.ly/2eSht9J>

News from the Commons



Boundary Changes Are An Act Of Constitutional Vandalism That Will Disenfranchise & Fracture Communities

Labour MP Pat Glass' Parliamentary Constituencies (Amendment) Bill, which seeks to reverse the reduction in the number of MPs, was overwhelmingly supported in the House. Under the current legislation the number of MPs would be cut from 650 to 600 with Wales losing 11 of its 40 MP. I spoke in the debate on what those changes would mean for Aberavon. You can read my speech at <http://bit.ly/2fo7ucl> and the press release I issued at <http://bit.ly/2eO53DY>

Balfour Declaration Centenary

During the Westminster Hall debate on the centenary of the Balfour Declaration I made the following intervention:

The hon. Lady is making an insightful speech but, on the point about trade, does she believe that there should be trade with the illegal settlements or with businesses that are located in the illegal settlements? I ask that particularly because the European Union has recently banned trade with businesses in the Crimea, which, as we know, is an illegally annexed land.

<http://bit.ly/2fMy61>



Autumn Statement

The Chancellor's Autumn Statement was a damning indictment of the Tory's six years of **austerity**: a complete failure. Growth down, wage growth and business investment down. Deficit and debt targets missed.

The Government's long term economic plan is in tatters. They have dropped their commitment to a **budget surplus** in 2019/20 and by 2017/18 debt as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product will hit a record high of 90.2%, the highest its been in 40 years There will be more taxes, more debt and more borrowing. Its time the Government abandoned austerity.

For Wales there was nothing tangible in what the Chancellor announced, Wales was an afterthought. While the **£400million** over five years to spend on infrastructure is welcome, it was as a result of the Barnett Formula, and therefore nothing more than we are entitled to. It also equates to a real terms cut.

The Chancellor made no significant announcement on energy or business rates which was a blow for the **steel** sector who were looking to the Autumn Statement for a decisive response to support the beleaguered industry.

There were glaring omissions from the Chancellor, nothing about the **Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon**, a much needed infrastructure project. He made a recommitment to the Swansea Bay City deal, but we already knew this. Then there was the **electrification** of the Great Western route: delayed yet again.

Before the Autumn Statement Labour had called on the Government to abandon plans to cut the level of support for new claimants in the Work Related Activity Group of **Employment and Support Allowance** by around £30 a week from April 2017. It cannot be right that the Government is stripping £1,500 a year from sick and disabled people, especially when they are already struggling, pushing them into poverty. There was no announcement from the Chancellor to scrap these plans.

The **equalisation of the state pension age** has had a devastating impact on many women in Aberavon who were born in the 1950s, some of whom are now facing real hardship as a result. Labour also called for Pension Tax Credit to be extended to those who were due to retire before the chaotic pension age increase of the Conservative-led government. This would alleviate the worst of the impacts for the most vulnerable women, and restore some of the dignity many feel they have been robbed of. The Chancellor failed to announce any transitional arrangements for these women.

The Chancellor did announce an increase in the **National Living Wage**, from £7.20 to £7.50 from next April. But this is lower than what was projected eight months ago, costing the average worker on NLW £200 a year, and lower than the living wage. The Government have chosen Corporate tax cuts over pay rises for workers. That's why Labour is committed to introducing a statutory REAL living wage.

This was the Chancellor's first major announcement since the **Brexit** vote and included a forecast from the Office of Budget Responsibility that a Brexit could leave a £59bn black hole in the public finances. What we have seen from the Government since the referendum is their handling of Brexit, coupled with this Autumn Statement, threatens the future prosperity of the country.

News from the Commons

Yemen Vote

I abstained on the vote on Labour's motion in the debate on Yemen on October 26th, along with more than 100 of my Labour colleagues, because the motion, as written by the Labour frontbench, was not balanced and, if passed, would have made the humanitarian crisis in Yemen worse.

It called for Britain to suspend all support for the Saudi-led coalition's campaign to help the internationally-recognised and legitimately-elected Government of Yemen defend itself against the Iranian backed and heavily armed Houthi extremist violence.

The international coalition action in support of the Yemeni Government is specifically mandated by a unanimous United Nations Security Council resolution 2216. So, to withdraw all support for it would have undermined the UN and the efforts of the UN Special Envoy at a critical time, with the Security Council due to discuss the issue again on Monday.

It would also have undermined the influence Britain has through training Saudi forces in internationally-recognised safer targeting practices to ensure unambiguous compliance with humanitarian law and avoid civilian casualties.

Finally, it would have undermined the legitimate Yemeni Government in its fight against the Iranian-backed Houthi extremists, which would only lead to greater famine and destruction.

Several Labour colleagues pleaded with our front bench to redraft their motion into a form we could have all supported, but to no avail. The senior Labour MP, Keith Vaz, who was born in Yemen and is Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Yemen, tabled a very sensible amendment, which our front bench would have been wise to support, but they didn't, and it was not called for debate. If it had been, I would have happily supported it. <http://bit.ly/2fToonp>



VOTE LEAVE CAMPAIGNERS PROMISED AN EXTRA £350 MILLION A WEEK FOR THE NHS ...



"TAKE THE £350 MILLION A WEEK AND SPEND IT ON OUR PRIORITIES, SUCH AS THE NHS"

BORIS JOHNSON MP

... NOW THEY MUST SHOW US THE MONEY! **VOTE LEAVE WATCH**

Dr Liam Fox MP—EU Scrutiny Committee

Dr Liam Fox MP appeared in front of the EU Scrutiny Committee and I questioned him on the difficulties the UK could face when securing a trade deal with EU:

In terms of the time and complexity around the CETA deal, do you not think that that will reflect on our ability to secure a free trade deal and, given the difficulties that have been experienced now, don't you think the same would be applied to the UK, in spades? <http://bit.ly/2flqxIC>

Show Us The Money

During the EU Referendum we were told countless times that £350million a week could be used in the NHS if we voted to leave the EU. Together with my Labour colleagues I have signed a petition calling on the Chancellor to make good on that pledge when he delivers his Autumn statement. You can sign the petition at: <http://bit.ly/2enuQRS>

David Jones MP—EU Scrutiny Committee

David Jones MP, the Minister of State for Europe on Brexit Negotiations, Market Economy Status for China and the Ports Sector.

You can read my full exchange at <http://bit.ly/2fgtw4i>

Article 50 Statement

During the Government statement on Article 50, I asked David Davis MP a question:

Does the Secretary of State agree that nobody is above the law, not even his own government?

<http://bit.ly/2ej9CWz>



News from Aberavon



Google Digital Garage

I was delighted to welcome one of the world's most innovative companies, Google Digital Garage, to Port Talbot to help local people and businesses to make the most of the opportunities that the digital age presents us.

I am proud to have played a part in securing the event at Aberavon, which is one of Google's first pop-up Digital Garages in Wales.

The people of Aberavon are incredibly creative and resourceful, now we have to harness that creativity, and turn it into economic opportunity for all. <http://bit.ly/2fcaWQ>



Hilary Benn

It was great to welcome Hilary Benn, Chair of the Brexit Committee, to Aberavon to speak to Labour party members and friends.



Junction 41

I was delighted that the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, Ken Skates, has listened to them and the people of Aberavon, in taking his decision to keep Junction 41 open.

Since my election one of my priorities has been to insure the smooth flow of traffic through Port Talbot and to halt any further closure of Junction 41. I am pleased that the Welsh Government has taken this step forward and I look forward to growing the economic prosperity of the town.

<http://bit.ly/2f10GEi>



Boundary Commission

I attended the Boundary Commission's public hearing in Cardiff and presented a counter-proposal to prevent Port Talbot from being split in two. It is completely unacceptable to split the town of Port Talbot. My presentation to the Commission was based on three requests:

- do not allow mathematics to defeat democracy;
- do not allow an arbitrary line on a map to ride rough shod over our culture and heritage;
- do not permit a 'numbers game' to undermine our shared sense of identity, which lies at the heart of what it means to be a united community.'

This counter proposal better reflects the strong historical and cultural links in the area, whilst still meeting the Boundary Commission's criteria of electorate numbers and providing a better fit for the Commission's aim to keep communities whole. I hope the Commission reconsiders its position and selects the counter-proposal. <http://bit.ly/2eLaDWa>



Government's New Approach To Assessing Claims For Tax Credits Is Causing Chaos, Confusion & Heart-Break

My office has been inundated with people who have been caught up in the Concentrix fiasco. They have been left feeling frustrated, angered and humiliated by the system. After I raised their cases in the House of Commons I wrote an article for the Evening Post. You can read the article at <http://bit.ly/2fjQY0C>

News from Aberavon



Dic Penderyn

The Ministry of Justice has responded to the petition I presented calling for a posthumous pardon for Dic Penderyn saying that they will not grant a pardon and that the appeals process must be followed.

This is a disappointing response from the Ministry of Justice. Dic Penderyn was the victim of a grave miscarriage of justice. At the time of his conviction there was no right of appeal and he went to the gallows insisting his innocence.

We will not let this rest, we will not let this injustice continue, we will carry on with this fight until we have secured a posthumous pardon for Dic Penderyn. <http://bit.ly/2fgcVdC>



NSA Afan Community Employability Centre

Was great to see the new NSA Afan Community Employability Centre in Water Street. Many thanks to Gemma Cole and the team for showing me around.

The centre is based in the former Fire Station on Water Street which was converted into its new use using Vibrant and Viable Places funding.

NSA are offering a range of training programmes at the centre to help local residents become more desirable to potential employers. Facilities include an ICT suite and a meeting room that can be booked by the community.



Stand Up To Cancer

I visited the volunteers at the local Cancer Research shop on Station Road. As part of the 'Stand up to Cancer' campaign they were doing fundraising activities both in their store and in Tesco supermarket.

It was great to see the hard work the volunteers were putting in to raise money for this worthwhile cause.



Ysgol Bae Baglan

I visited Ysgol Bae Baglan for the opening of their new school theatre. The theatre has been named '**The Michael Sheen Theatre**' to celebrate Michael's contribution to acting and drama since leaving Glan Afan school in Port Talbot.

On the evening we witnessed excellent performances from high profile stars and school pupils who performed an extract from 'Lord of the Flies' and their up-coming musical 'Les Miserables'.

<http://bit.ly/2fBDUVG>



Remembrance Sunday

I was proud to lay my wreaths at the Taibach and Briton Ferry cenotaphs. There was great turn-out from the public to pay their respects to our service men and women.

News from Aberavon



Richard Burton 10k

Really enjoyed running the Richard Burton 10k. It was a fantastic day for the community. I did it in 50:00, almost a min faster than last year. That can't be right?!



Local MP & AM Hail Baglan Library

Together with David Rees AM, Cllr Carol Clement-Williams and Cllr Peter Richards I showed my support for Baglan Library. I recently held a coffee morning in the library with Carol and Peter and saw for myself that it is a thriving community facility, used by groups of all ages.

It is a real hub of the community offering a range of services to the local residents from book lending and computer access to kids clubs and a meeting place. <http://bit.ly/2ex6835>

Political Digest



Triggering Article 50

After the High Court ruling that Government must get MPs' approval to trigger Article 50 I did interviews on BBC News, Daily Politics and GMB.

Parliament exists in order to examine and scrutinise proposals that come from Government, to vote on those proposals, to give Government a democratic mandate, to take its position forward.

What I want to see is a sane and balanced Brexit that takes all the opportunities that come but also ensures that we think about workers' rights, our economy, jobs, growth: nobody voted to make this country poorer. <http://bbc.in/2f9vCIX>

A Parliamentary Vote On Article 50— Now That's Taking Back Control

Following the round of interviews I did, I wrote an article for Prospect on why this decision is important to uphold democracy.

A parliamentary vote is not only politically necessary it is also constitutionally and legally necessary if we are to ensure that the will of the people is enacted. The essence of the ruling was that Parliament is sovereign. That is not a radical idea, rather, it is one of the fundamental principles of our uncodified constitution: we are a parliamentary democracy. <http://bit.ly/2frDDAL>



Steel March Brussels



On the day that the European Commission voted on Market Economy Status for China I joined workers from the Port Talbot steelworks who were demonstrating in Brussels.

Political Digest



The People Have Spoken Threats To Block Article 50 Are Just Toxic

In *LabourList* I wrote a message to those calling for the rejection of article 50 unless the government offers a referendum on the exit deal: please practice what you would have preached. We are democrats. The people have spoken, and they've said we are leaving the European Union.

That's why we must be engaged, fighting for a balanced Brexit – a Brexit in the national interest.

On Brexit we should be holding the government to account, not to ransom. <http://bit.ly/2eZOxMm>

Daily Politics—Brexit and the Pound

I was on Daily Politics with Jo Coburn discussing Brexit and the Pound with Gerard Lyons from Policy Exchange. You can watch the episode on <http://bbc.in/2fglpRs>



It Is An Absolute Disgrace If TATA Are Rushing To Close The BSPS To Avoid Their Obligations

It is an absolute disgrace if these reports [that Tata are rushing to close the BSPS to avoid a £60m payment that is due] are true. Tata have not only legal, but also moral and social responsibilities to the members of the BSPS and the workforce across the UK.

To seek to escape those responsibilities and avoid their obligations, by exploiting a technicality, is not only a slap in the face to the workers and pensioners who have sought to work with the company to find a resolution, but it should trouble us all. <http://bit.ly/2fyskXy>



Any Questions?

I was a panellist on BBC Radio 4 Any Questions along with Neil Hamilton AM, Antoinette Sandbach MP, and Liz Saville-Roberts MP. The topics discussed were Aberfan and the legacy today - should authority always be challenged? The proposal for potential asylum seekers to be age tested, Rise in populism in politics - is it a help or a danger to democracy? Welsh Language and culture - how to safeguard it?

<http://bbc.in/2fg7w5z>



Sunday Supplement

I was interviewed on BBC Radio Wales Sunday Supplement programme on the Chancellor's Autumn Statement. I pressed the point that Wales should not be left worse off after Brexit; that austerity doesn't work and it is costing in terms of our social fabric; that the Chancellor had an opportunity to rebalance the economy; and that I would like to see commitments to the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon and the Swansea Bay Internet coast.

You can hear the interview at <http://bbc.in/2guAdRf> or read it at: <http://bit.ly/2gag3LG>



Political Digest



The Crowd

I took part in a debate on 'Refreshing The Business Contract With Society' hosted by The Crowd. There I made the point that a key driver behind the Leave vote was inequality. There is a massive difference between 'the economy' and 'my economy'. My economy hasn't improved... with U.K. wages having stagnated since 2007, the longest period since the industrial revolution.



Blue New Deal

I spoke at a Blue New Deal event where they launched an ambitious action plan to give local communities, employees and businesses control over their futures.

For far too long coastal communities, like my Aberavon constituency, have been forgotten communities. The social contract with Whitehall has not been upheld, and that's why we need a Blue New Deal.

Something has gone wrong in Britain because we seem to have lost our belief in the sea as a source of prosperity. But there could be no better example than the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon of how the sea and its immense power are, if we chose to make them so, sources of prosperity, growth and opportunity for us all.



Building A More Inclusive Politics

I joined a panel hosted by LSE on white working class politics in an age of immigration and inequality. The Brexit result and the US Presidential election showed there is a large section of society who feels left behind, this group was targeted to deliver the Leave vote here and win the presidency for Donald Trump.

We have been guilty of playing the game of identity politics rather than say we stand up for everybody including the white working class.

You can watch my contribution at <http://bit.ly/2gcwh3m>



Brexit, Turkey & The EU

The Centre for Turkey Studies hosted a discussion in Parliament on the UK's decision to leave the EU and Britain's position on Turkey joining the EU.

I spoke on the importance of European values of Liberty, Democracy and Respect for Human Rights to Turkish EU accession, given as an increasingly authoritarian streak by the Turkish Government. many Turkish officials and journalists are being arrested as part of the purges, and that these abuses of human rights and European values should disqualify Turkey from being an EU candidate country.

<http://bit.ly/2f2F38c>



Hard Brexit

Along with 90 other MPs and MEP I signed a letter published in the Guardian on why the UK should not push for a hard Brexit. The referendum result was a cry from many communities that they wanted to share in future economic gains, not to remain left behind. A hard Brexit is the worst of all worlds and does nothing to honour their aspirations.

You can read the letter at <http://bit.ly/2f3ixM9>

Political Digest



My friend Jo Cox was assassinated, but her legacy will be to unite communities

Now the trial of Jo Cox's murderer is over we must remember the relentlessly positive Yorkshire lass for what she stood for as an MP, rather than for what happened to her.

Together, we must build a better politics: a politics of hope not fear, of respect not hate, of unity not division and of love not hate. That is how Jo lived her life, how she served the people of Batley and Spen, and how she stood up for dispossessed communities all over the world.

Jo was an amazing person and I am proud to have called her my friend. You can read my tribute to Jo in the Guardian here:

<http://bit.ly/2gDEMZq>

PLP Brexit Departmental Committee

I have been elected the vice-chair of the Parliamentary Labour Party Brexit Departmental Committee. The Chair of the Committee is Emma Reynolds.

House Heroes—Jo Cox

For the 40th anniversary of *The House* magazine they asked a group of MPs to write about the Parliamentarians that they most admired over the last four decades. I wrote about my good friend Jo Cox:

I first met Jo Cox in Brussels. She was my mum's researcher at the European parliament, and we became firm friends.

Twenty years later, we were both taking up our seats on the green benches. Like all newcomers, we were looking forward hugely to entering parliament – there is no greater honour or privilege. But there was also a real sense of trepidation – it can be a pretty intimidating place at times. <http://bit.ly/2gn2Z2g>

Friday Advice Surgeries 2017

13 January	Sandfields	Sandfields Library Morrison Road, Sandfields, SA12 6TG	16.30-17.30
7 April	Briton Ferry	Briton Ferry Library Neath Road, Briton Ferry, SA11 2QN	16.00-17.00
23 June	Margam & Taibach	Taibach Community Library Commercial Road, Taibach, SA13 1LN	15.30-16.30

Saturday Coffee Mornings 2017

25 February	Bryn & Cwmavon	Bryn Community Centre Maesteg Rd, Bryn, SA13 2RY	10.00-12.00
18 March	Glyncorrwg, Gwynfi & Cymmer	Noddfa Community Centre Dunraven Street, Glyncorrwg, SA13 3AD	10.00-12.00
13 May	Skewen	Memorial Hall Skewen Park, Skewen, SA10 6DP	10.00-12.00

More dates and venues for advice surgeries and coffee mornings will be confirmed shortly.

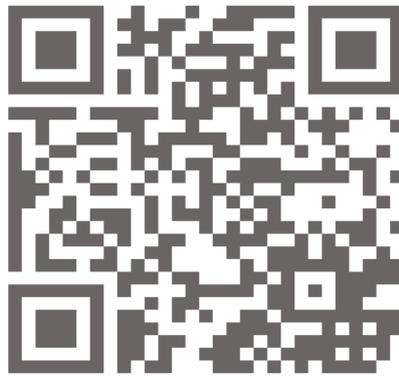
Keep In Touch

As your MP, I'd like to stay in touch
and hear your views.

You can visit my website to sign up to my mailing list.

www.stephenkinnock.co.uk

I send out a **monthly newsletter** and may also contact
you to **ask for your opinion** on issues that may be
important to you.



Contact Stephen

My office is open Monday-Thursday between
10am and 1pm for a drop-in advice surgery with
a caseworker.

Outside of these times you can call to make an
appointment.

A: Unit 7, Water Street Business Centre,
Water Street, Port Talbot, SA12 6LF

T: 01639 897660

E: stephen.kinnock.mp@parliament.uk

W: www.stephenkinnock.co.uk

 StephenKinnock

 @SKinnock

 stephen_kinnock