

# STEPHEN KINNOCK

MP for Aberavon

April 2020 Newsletter

## HOLDING THE GOVERNMENT TO ACCOUNT

In this time of national crisis it's vitally important that MPs work together and that we have a functioning Parliament to hold ministers to account on their response to the coronavirus. That's why I have supported calls for a Digital Parliament, so that MPs are able to probe and scrutinise government decisions.

So when Members returned after the early Easter recess it was to a very different Parliament with some Members in the Chamber while others took advantage of using Zoom to question the government from

home.

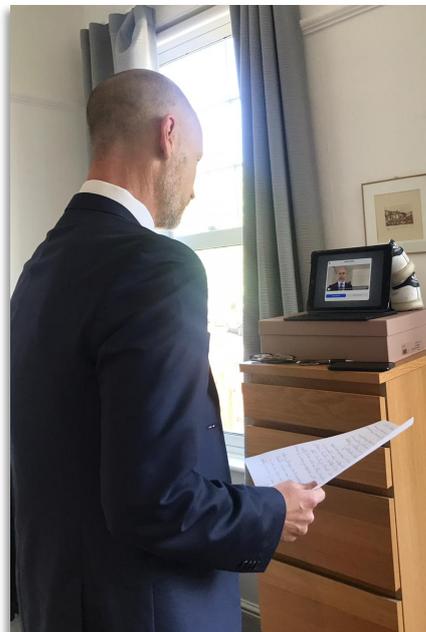
I was one of those Members to take part in Prime Ministers Question via Zoom.

Dominic Raab was standing in for the Prime Minister and I asked him about support for the British steel industry.

I told the Acting Prime Minister that the government must urgently lift the £50m cap on loans to large firms hit by Covid-19.

Tata Steel only has 10% of the government funding that it needs to help with the financial pressures it is facing because of the crisis.

Lifting the loan cap



Questioning the Acting Prime Minister from home in the new virtual Parliament



with give this vital industry a fighting chance to survive this crisis, which is crucial because there will be no post-pandemic economic recovery unless we have a strong and healthy Welsh &

British steel industry. The Acting Prime Minister decided to respond by talking about support for small businesses. It was also Keir's first Prime Ministers Questions as Leader

of the Opposition. He forensically took the Government to task on how slow they have been to bring in the lockdown, slow on testing and slow getting protective equipment.

## NEW LEADER

Congratulations to Keir Starmer on an emphatic victory in the Labour Leadership race. I'm really pleased that members have given Keir such a clear and strong mandate to reunite our movement and to lead us back into government so we can put our values into practice.

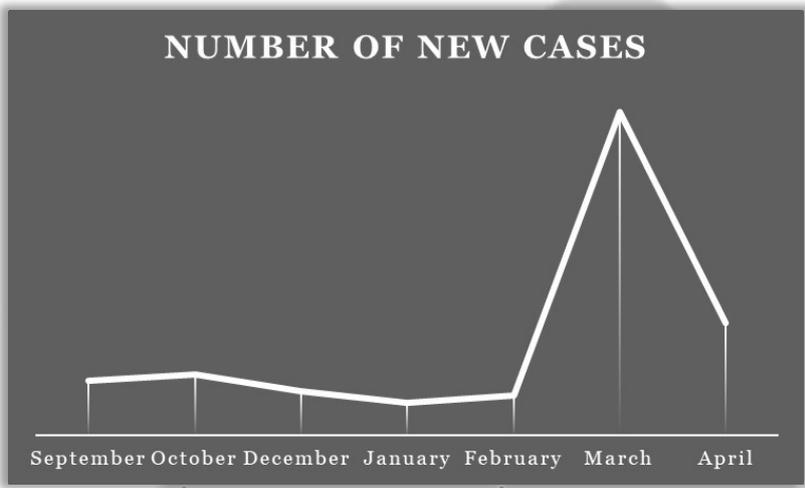
It's time for Labour to re-emerge as a credible opposition and government-in-waiting, to reconnect with our heartlands, and under Keir's leadership we can and will deliver.

## FRONT BENCH APPOINTMENT

I'm also honoured and delighted to have been appointed to Keir's front bench team, as Shadow Minister for Asia & Pacific in the Shadow Foreign and Commonwealth team within which I'll be reporting to Lisa Nandy, our newly appointed Shadow Foreign Secretary. As the Shadow Minister for Asia & Pacific I'll be responsible for developing and communicating Labour's political engagement with countries such as China and India, who play such a vitally important role in global affairs.

I'm very much looking forward to rolling up my sleeves and holding the government to account in this key area for our national interest and national security. And given that both the SARS and Coronavirus pandemics started in China, there is no doubt that some searching questions need to be asked about how to build and strengthen international co-operation to ensure that this never happens again.

# CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE



The Coronavirus crisis has had a massive impact on everyone's lives. Although my office has changed the way it works, we are continuing to help and support residents. In fact, there has been a huge increase in the number of cases we've been dealing with: we've had six months' worth of cases come to us in the three weeks after

the Prime Minister brought in the lockdown measures, 132 of those have been about the coronavirus crisis.

We've helped constituents stranded in countries like Spain, India, Australia, Poland and Argentina to return home. We've helped workers, businesses and the self-employed access the financial support they need. We've supported

workers concerned about safety at work and whether they are key workers. We've assisted vulnerable individual by putting them in touch with our wonderful community volunteers.

We are continuing

to be contacted on a range of issues and are working hard to help everyone.

I and my team are also keeping up the pressure on the government to close

the gaps in the emergency legislation that has been passed and to ensure the funding and equipment gets to where it is needed most.

## BOUNDARY REVIEW

At the moment the whole country is rightly concentrating on overcoming coronavirus, but I'd like to make you aware of an announcement the Government made about the boundary review before Parliament closed for Easter.

The Government bringing forward legislation to set out the new framework for future boundary reviews. The next review is due to start

in 2021 with the various Boundary Commissions making their final recommendations by October 2023.

This time though the Government are dropping their plan to reduce the number of constituencies to 600, the new boundaries will be redrawn based on 650 constituencies. They are though retaining the +/-5% variation in the size of the electorate, which dispropor-

tionally affects Wales, reducing the number of seats in Wales from 40 to around 32.

Future reviews will take place every eight years instead of every five years and will be brought into effect automatically through an Order in Council rather than through a Parliamentary vote. This means that the changes recommended in the next review will almost certainly be

implemented.

Although it is welcome that the arbitrary figure of 600 constituencies has been dropped, the impact on Wales will still be damaging as the loss of nearly a quarter of our seats will mean Wales' voice will be diminished and marginalised in Parliament, severely weakening our democracy.

The expected number of

Welsh seats set to be lost will also have a significant impact on Aberavon because of the relatively low number of registered electors in the constituency, when compared to the seats across the UK. In the last review Aberavon was the fifth smallest constituency in Wales with 48,346 registered electors.

I will of course keep you posted.

## CONSTITUENCY OFFICE

We have made some changes to the way we are working for the time being.

**We are no longer open to the public.**

All advice surgeries and coffee mornings have been suspended until further notice.

If you leave your name and number on the office answer-

phone, we will call you back.

Alternatively please send an email to ste-

phen.kinnock.mp@parliament.uk

Once the Government lifts restrictions we will be re-scheduling surgeries and coffee morning.

Please bear with us over this

time, we will be doing things differently in the interests of protecting constituents and staff.

We also experiencing an increase in the numbers of people contacting us at this time, please bear with us we will get back to you.

### CONTACT

T: 01639 897660

E: [stephen.kinnock.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:stephen.kinnock.mp@parliament.uk)

W: [stephenkinnock.co.uk](http://stephenkinnock.co.uk)

StephenKinnock

@SKinnock

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I send out a regular newsletter, surveys and notifications of events I'm organising.

