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MP for Aberavon

May 2020 Newsletter

THERE CAN BE NO POST-PANDEMIC ECONOMIC RECOVERY WITHOUT A STRONG & HEALTHY STEEL SECTOR

There will be no post-pandemic economic recovery unless we have a strong and health Welsh and British steel industry, that's why I've been keeping the Government's feet to the fire about supporting the British steel industry. I wrote to the Chancellor urging him to back British steel, which is the backbone of our entire manufacturing sector, it underpins everything from automotive to life-saving NHS equipment. The economic shutdown has seen demand for steel drop by up to 80% and left Tata in an extremely challenging cash-flow position. The Government's Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme is subject to an arbitrary cap of £50million, which falls far short of the scale of support that Tata Steel

requires. What I've been calling for is for the Government to follow best practice in competitor countries like France and Germany, where steel companies are getting access to the support they need based on their turnover. This would be a loan, not a grant. Tata Steel would be legally obliged to repay the money, so in the long run there will be no cost to the UK taxpayer.

I also co-signed a letter with MPs from the Steel All-Party Parliamentary Group also calling on the Government to give the British steel sector the financial support it needs to prevent the situation becoming irreversible. Steel is not only the backbone of our

manufacturing sector, it's also the beating heart of Port Talbot. The works employs 4,000 and many more jobs in the supply chain rely on the works. If Tata Steel were to fall victim to the crisis then the consequences would be severe.

THIS MONTH IN PARLIAMENT

SOCIAL CARE WORKERS

Social care workers, just like all key workers, have been carrying out exceptional work that's why I was delighted to sign a letter calling on the Government to make an exception and ensure that the £500 payment to social care staff is not subject to tax or benefit deductions. Welsh social care staff deserve to have their 'thank you' payment from the Welsh Government in full.

CORONAVIRUS IMPACT ON WELSH ECONOMY

It's deeply worrying that Port Talbot is in the top 100 towns identified as being most economically at risk from the COVID-19 pandemic, and that Wales is likely to be the worst affected region in the United Kingdom.

We need a post-pandemic recovery which boosts the whole UK economy. I was therefore pleased to co-sign an important letter to the UK Government on protecting the Welsh economy following the Covid-19 pandemic.

SUPPORT FOR CHARITIES

Many charities and community organisations in Aberavon, and across the country, have been doing tremendous work on the frontline to support the most vulnerable in our communities during the coronavirus crisis. But the UK Government needs to give them the help and support they need to get through this crisis.

That's why I'm supporting calls for the UK Government to provide help for vital charities during the corona-

virus outbreak.

I've also written to the Chancellor about allowing more flexibility in the furlough scheme for charity employees. Currently if charities furlough their staff then those staff are not allowed to volunteer with that charity, as result vital skills, training and expertise are being lost at time when it is needed most.

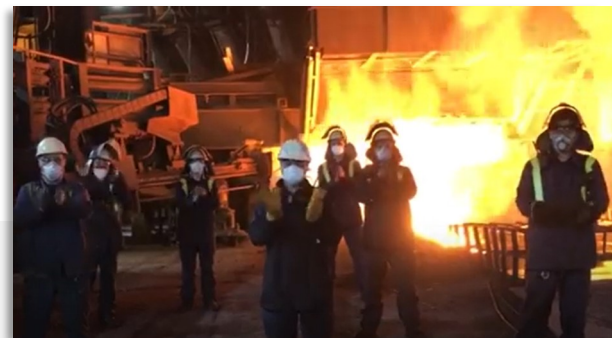
SHADOW MINISTER FOR ASIA & PACIFIC

In my new front-bench role I've led conversations about how the UK must take steps to reset our relationship with China in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. We cannot allow this type of tragedy to happen again. Global challenges need international cooperation and the UK

government must show leadership in the national interest. I have also written to the government about concerning reports China have carried out a low-yield underground nuclear test, and raised concerns with the Chinese Embassy about police clashing with democracy campaigners in Hong Kong. Finally, I have asked UK ministers to help protect the vulnerable Rohingya people during this crisis.

TRUMP'S MIDDLE EAST PLAN

I have spoken out publicly against Donald Trump's plan for Israel-Palestine which would annex the West Bank and betray the Palestinian people.



Port Talbot Steelworkers clap for key workers

AMAZING ABERAVON RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

As Covid-19 continues to impact our communities I would like to say a big 'thank you' to all the **KEY WORKERS** who are helping to keep us safe and to keep the country running.

I've always known that there is a legendary community spirit in Aberavon, and yet again you've risen to this challenge and there have been some truly amazing things happening in our community. I'd like to share some of those examples here.

Volunteers have come forward in their droves to help with shopping, collecting medicine, dog walking, posting letters, running errands or simply having a regular friendly chat: Over 500 have volunteered through the Council's **SAFE AND WELL** scheme; **BAGLAN STREET CHAMPIONS** supporting people in Baglan; **BRITON FERRY COVID-19 SUPPORT** have been coordinating street champions in Briton Ferry; **COVID-CWM** are the army of volunteers helping residents in Cwmafan; **CYMER AFAN LIBRARY** have reopened as a as a Community Help Hub to coordinate support for the community; and **RADAR** have been helping residents living in Aberavon. Well done and thank you to you all, your community spirit is what Aberavon is all about.

Community groups have been putting their skills to use to help: **AGE CYMRU WEST GLAMORGAN** have been cooking and delivering warm meals to people in the area; **BETHEL COMMUNITY CHURCH** have been delivering food and clothes parcels; **BUSY BEES SEWING GROUP** have been working tremendously hard to make

over 8,000 scrubs bags, 550 plus Alice bands and 1,300 Covid forehead bands. Others have joined the groups including **HEMS AND HOBBIES GROUP**, **CWMAFAN BOWLS CLUB** and **WI LADIES**; **FRIENDS OF MARGAM PARK** have been making drawstring bags for NHS workers; and **FOODBANKS** across the area have done tremendous work to continue to provide this vital service at such a difficult time. Thank you and great work everyone, more great examples of our legendary community spirit.

Schools, colleges, universities and sports groups have also been finding ways to help: Players from **ABERAVON RFC**, working with **AGE CONNECTS NPT**, have been volunteering to run errands for people in the community; while **AFAN UNITED** have been busy keeping fit and raising money for Swansea Bay NHS; the staff at **DWR Y FELIN COMPREHENSIVE** have been busy 3D printing thousands of protective masks; **NEATH PORT TALBOT COLLEGE** have turned their Llandarcy Academy of Sport into a 340-bed field hospital for Swansea Bay University Health Board; Students and staff at **SWANSEA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING** have been using their base on the Bay Campus to mass 3D printing protective masks for the NHS; and the staff at **YSGOL BAE BAGLAN** have been donating visors to doctors and nurses. Thank you and well done everyone.

Business have risen to the challenge too, utilising their skills, donating equipment or reconfiguring their production lines to help fight the virus: **ANDREW SCOTT LTD** trans-

formed the Llandarcy Academy of Sport into a fully equipped field hospital with 340 beds; **BRITISH OXYGEN COMPANY (BOC)** have been keeping hospitals supplied with the oxygen needed to help patients fight the virus; **FIRST CORPORATE CLOTHING** have utilised the skills of their workforce and turned their production over to making scrubs for frontline medical staff working to fight COVID-19. They've also donated fabric to the Busy Bees Sewing Group to help them with their efforts; The staff at **MINISTRY OF FURNITURE** have used their skillsets, utilised their versatility and repurposed their machinery and facilities to make disposable face shields for frontline healthcare workers; **ROTOTHERM GROUP** have reconfigured their facility on the Kenfig Industrial Estate and have been producing 100,000 face shields a week; **CANDO LAUNDRY** have started a new business venture, **SAFE FACE MASK**, making non-medical face masks for the public to use, reducing the pressure on NHS supplies; and **TATA STEEL** have donated vital personal protective equipment, like masks, gloves, aprons and shoe covers, to those on the frontline treating patients with coronavirus. Great stuff and thank you to all involved.

There are so many organisations doing great work across our community that it's impossible to list everyone here. Please do get in touch if you know of an organisation that you think should get a mention, and I'll be sure to thank them in my June newsletter!

CONSTITUENCY OFFICE HERE TO HELP

Although the office is no longer open to the public we are still continuing to help and support residents. Since the lockdown began the number of cases we've dealt with has tripled and two-thirds of that is linked to coronavirus.

Please bear with us as we work through this increased number of cases.

If you leave your name and number on

the office answerphone, we will call you back.

Alternatively please send an email to stephen.kinnock.mp@parliament.uk

NEWS FLASH: Virtual Advice Surgeries

Over the past few weeks we've suspended our drop-in surgeries and advice surgeries in the community but we are now trialling an **online advice surgery with a caseworker**.

The first one will be on Wednesday 27 May between 2pm and 4pm.

You can book an appointment online at:

<https://bit.ly/2ySiyh9>