

IAN BYRNE MP

WORKING FOR WEST DERBY
STANDING ON MY RECORD

Promoted by Maureen Delahunty
c/o 545 West Derby Road, L13 8AA

Ian Byrne MP Report: 22nd December 2023 - 23rd January 2024

I hope you and your loved ones are safe and well. Please see below a little of what I have been doing in Parliament and the constituency this month.

Ian Byrne
Member of Parliament for Liverpool West Derby



Post Office Horizon scandal - another shockingly dishonest scandal

I enjoyed a proud moment in Parliament earlier this month when I had an opportunity to sit down and talk with inspirational Horizon scandal campaigner Jo Hamilton. We talked about her experiences and how a Hillsborough Law would make a real difference when fighting for truth and justice.

It is now clear that evidence of the widespread problems with the Horizon IT system were withheld from disclosure at the numerous prosecutions brought by the Post Office against the sub-postmasters.

Hillsborough campaigners have for many years been calling for a Hillsborough Law that would introduce a 'duty of candour' that would compel public officials to tell the truth at public inquiries and inquests as well as establishing an offence of recklessly or intentionally misleading the public, media, or court proceedings.

The Post Office scandal shows why a Hillsborough Law is absolutely critical. In broad terms a 'duty of candour' should force managers and their lawyers to think twice before acting dishonestly. At present they can get away with it because such dishonesty would not see the light of day.

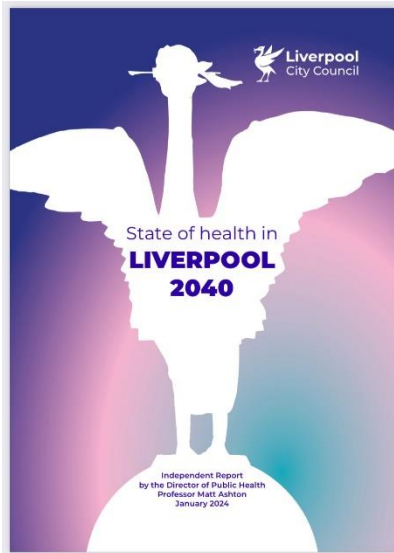
A full Hillsborough Law would also have required Post Office managers and lawyers to identify issues with the pilot scheme at the outset of investigations and not stay silent whilst waiting to see whether it would be discovered. Senior Post Office officials would be forced to think twice because under a full Hillsborough Law they would be committing an offence if they wilfully withheld information. It would also embolden honest staff in public authorities to whistle-blow.

This is why we are campaigning for a full Hillsborough Law, which includes a Statutory Duty of Candour, to compel all public servants to tell the truth in order to protect ordinary members of the public.

Whilst it is shocking that we need a law to ensure that public servants are honest in this country, the simple fact is that we do.

As we have seen with tragedies such as Hillsborough, Contaminated Blood, Nuclear Test Veterans, Grenfell, Manchester Arena Bombing and the Post Office Horizon scandal, Government and public bodies all too often have to be forced and shamed into revealing the truth.

And this will keep on happening unless we make it much harder for those in power to cover up their actions or those of others.



Devastating report on Liverpool's public health inequality

“People living in the most deprived areas of Liverpool currently live an average of 15 years less than those in the most affluent parts and live 18 years longer with poor health”.

That is just one of several shocking findings from a sobering report published by Liverpool’s Director of Public Health Professor Matt Ashton, which paints a grim picture of the horrendous scale of health and homelessness problems in our city and the enormous challenges facing 'Dickensian' Liverpool.

In his landmark report, Professor Ashton spells out some of the shocking health statistics already facing Liverpool and shows how much worse things could get if urgent, comprehensive action is not taken. The devastating report shows that:

- People living in the poorest areas of the city, such as Tuebrook here in our constituency, live an average of 15 years less than people in the most affluent areas and live 18 years longer with poor health.
- Residents in the most deprived areas of the city are also living with major illness (two or more long-term conditions) around 10-15 years earlier than those in the most affluent.
- Infant mortality rate remains above the national average and each year in this city, 26 babies do not reach their first birthday – an horrific statistic, I’m sure you will agree.
- Around 1,900 residents die young (under the age of 75) with 1,100 of these deaths being preventable.

Austerity from this Government has caused untold harm, poverty and deprivation to the health and wellbeing of so many in this constituency and city. We need radical solutions like a Right to Food enshrined in law and massive investment in our communities to repair the damage caused by Government cuts to welfare and local government since 2010. It is unforgiveable and I trust our city to remember this at the General Election.

Learn more about the report and its findings: <https://liverpool.gov.uk/council/public-health-liverpool/state-of-health-in-the-city/>

Download the report in full: <https://liverpool.gov.uk/media/y45lmvwm/health-in-liverpool-2040.pdf>



Parliamentary meeting on worsening situation in Gaza

This month I attended an event in Parliament to hear from Amnesty International, the International Centre of Justice for Palestinians (ICJP) and Palestinian Ambassador to the UK Husam Zomlot on the mounting evidence that Israel is committing war crimes in Gaza. Our

Government's failure to call for an immediate ceasefire enables further violations. 10,000 children have been killed in 100+ days of war in Gaza, with children and parents enduring a living hell. **We must have an immediate ceasefire to end this needless loss of life and allow the safe return of hostages.**

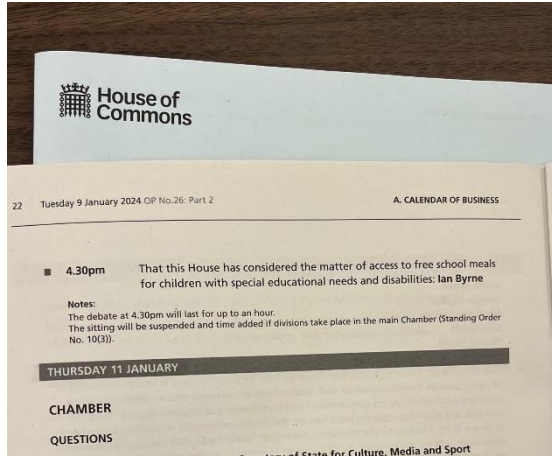
Sir Tony Lloyd MP (1950 – 2024)

This month we sadly lost Sir Tony Lloyd MP. It was a privilege to serve as Tony's PPS and in that brief time I learnt so much from him watching his conduct, decency & political skill. Watching the football with Tony and his Man Utd crew of MPs was a pleasure I won't forget. Tony and his family are in my prayers. YNWA Tony.

In summary: my work in Parliament this month

As your Member of Parliament I represent concerns of constituents in West Derby and hold the Government to account by taking part in Parliamentary votes, debates and questions in the House of Commons, by writing to Ministers and tabling Written Parliamentary Questions, by taking part in House of Commons Select Committees and by attending Parliamentary events and meetings.

Please find a summary below of my Parliamentary work this month. You can also find a summary of my contributions in the House of Commons on [my page on Parliament's website](#).



Debates, Votes & Oral Questions

My Westminster Hall debate on free school meals for children with special educational needs and disabilities

164,000+ children with special educational needs and disabilities are currently denied access to their free school meals. This month I called for and led a debate in Parliament to demand an end to this injustice and to raise the campaign work of my constituent Irene, Contact, the charity for families with disabled children, and campaigner Natalie Hay.

Ahead of the debate I explained why I had called for it: *"Seeing the scale of the problem shocked me to the core. Parents, Contact charity and other campaigners should not have had to fight this hard and for this long... We've seen in regard to the Post Office Scandal how quickly Government can act when the political will is there. So I sincerely hope the Schools Minister will give his assurance that the Government will act swiftly on this issue too."*

You can watch my interview about this on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/r3m1szaAeXo?feature=shared>



Watch my contribution to the debate on YouTube:
https://youtu.be/fovrrh_l8wsk?feature=shared

Watch me talking to Sky News about why I felt it was vital to raise this issue in Parliament:
<https://youtu.be/dFXxsfc0Q?feature=shared>





Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Questions

I called on the Secretary of State, Michael Gove MP, to extend the household support fund beyond March 2024. The household support fund has supported 330,000 households in Liverpool since its introduction. Like many other councils, Liverpool City Council says the fund will need to continue beyond March 2024 to keep residents well supported, to stay in and enter work, and to prevent an escalating crisis.

You can watch my contribution on YouTube: [https://youtu.be/ K4sniulDB8?feature=shared](https://youtu.be/K4sniulDB8?feature=shared)



Debate on Public Sector Pay

I was proud to speak in a Parliamentary debate on behalf of public sector workers in West Derby, including teachers, NHS staff, civil servants and many more. I demanded that the Government deliver the pay justice and improved conditions that public sector workers deserve.

You can watch my contribution on YouTube: https://youtu.be/II05_GNvRSk?feature=shared

Voting against the Government's Rwanda Bill

On 17 January I voted against the Government's immoral Rwanda Bill (*Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill*). I am utterly opposed to the Government's policy of deporting asylum seekers to Rwanda. Refugees didn't create the NHS crisis. Refugees didn't create the housing crisis. Refugees didn't create austerity, the Tories did - and now they want a scapegoat. Plans to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda before their claims have been heard have been condemned by national and international organisations that defend human rights, anti-racist campaigners, religious groups and the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR).

Voting for Labour’s plan to boost NHS dentistry

The lack of access to NHS dental services is having a profound impact on the health and wellbeing of residents in West Derby. On 9 January I **voted for Labour's plan** to boost NHS dentistry with 700,000 more appointments a year and for a targeted dentist recruitment scheme to end dental deserts. The Tories voted it down.

Voting Against the Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill

On 10 January I **voted against the Government’s Bill**. A group of over fifty civil society organisations and trade unions have signed a collective statement calling for an immediate halt to the *Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill*, which they argue will “stifle a wide range of campaigns for justice, erode local democracy, and present a threat to freedom of expression”.

These are just some of the votes I have taken part in. You can find my full voting record on [my page on Parliament’s website](#).

Events:



The right to a Mould Free Home

I see the devastating impact of damp and mould on many constituents. This month I have been supporting Fleur Anderson MP’s Bill to extend Awaab’s Law, which forces social landlords to fix damp and mould within strict time limits, to privately rented homes.



Campaign for end to ‘guilt by association’

I was delighted to support Kim Johnson MP’s Bill this month to end the injustice of ‘joint enterprise’ law. Kim’s Bill would end guilt by association to ensure only those significantly involved in a crime are convicted. This would help to stop many injustices.

✓ I added my name — Diana Johnson MP —

Over **100** MPs & Peers
from **10** political parties

have called on the Government to show the same urgency on infected blood compensation as they now have on the Post Office Horizon scandal.

Justice delayed is justice denied.

Infected blood scandal

This month I joined more than 100 cross-Party MPs & Peers in calling for the same urgency to be shown to those impacted by the infected blood scandal as has finally been shown to those involved in the Post Office Horizon scandal.



Food and Work Network event

It was a privilege to bring this group, created eighteen months ago, to Parliament this month to hear some excellent contributions from across the Right To Food movement on why our campaign must remain at the top of the national political agenda until it is delivered. Special thanks to BFAWU and NEU unions for their contribution.

Parliamentary Written Questions:

Brain tumour research

I tabled Written Questions to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care about current levels of Government funded brain tumour research. Historically just 1% of the national spend on cancer research has been allocated to this devastating disease and I fully support the Brain Tumour Research Charity in their campaign to change this.

Support for young people with cancer

I tabled Written Questions to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care regarding what steps the Government is taking to reduce waiting times for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer in young people. It was a privilege to meet with the Teenage Cancer Trust in Parliament recently and I will continue to call on the Government to provide the funding and resource that is needed to improve diagnosis and treatment for young people with cancer.

New dementia treatments

I tabled Written Questions to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care about new dementia treatments. Alongside investing in new treatments and research, the Government must push up stagnating dementia diagnosis rates and reduce variations in the standard of care. I will

continue to hold the Government to account by calling for the proper scale of intervention and funding needed to support everyone who is affected by dementia.

Screening for liver diseases

I tabled Written Questions to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care about improving NHS screening for liver diseases.

In the past month I have tabled several more Written Questions to the Government that you can find a record of here: <https://members.parliament.uk/member/4831/writtenquestions>

Parliamentary Letters

Child poverty in West Derby

It is horrific that more than 8000 children in our West Derby constituency are living in poverty as a result of this failed Government's political choices. I started this year by writing to the Secretary of State on the 2nd January to demand action to eradicate child poverty here and across the UK.



IAN BYRNE
Member of Parliament for Liverpool West Derby
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Email: ian.byrne.mp@parliament.uk
Tel: 020 7219 3000

The Rt Hon Mel Stride MP
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions
Caxton House
6-12 Tothill Street
London
SW1H 9DA
Sent by email only

2 January 2024

Dear Secretary of State,

RE: Child Poverty in Liverpool West Derby

I would like to draw your attention to [research](#) from The End Child Poverty Coalition at Loughborough University, which details the levels of child poverty in each constituency across the UK.

I feel compelled to write to you to hammer home the sobering statistic that 8233 children – nearly 40% - in my constituency of Liverpool West Derby are living in poverty. This has increased by 6.9 percentage points since the middle of the last decade.

Most strikingly of all, the report found that across the UK the poverty rate for children in families with three or more children was 42%, compared with 23% and 22% among children in families with one or two children, respectively.

There is a clear correlation between the decisions made by government and the lives and development of young people in your constituency and in mine. It is clear that one of the most effective ways to begin to reduce child poverty would be to scrap the two-child limit to benefit payments. This would lift 250,000 children out of poverty, and a further 850,000 children would be in less deep poverty at a cost of just £1.3 billion.

I, along with a number of MPs from across the House of Commons, have signed a Parliamentary Motion (Early Day Motion 1481) that "opposes the continuation of the cruel and unnecessary two child limit for benefits, introduced by the Government in 2017". We call on your Government to scrap "the two child limit and [note] that the current Government has overseen a huge increase in child poverty since 2010, with a majority of children living in poverty in households where at least one adult is in work".

Constituency Office:
545 West Derby Road L138AA
Phone No. 0151 222 2345 Email: ian.byrne.mp@parliament.uk
www.ianbyrne.org



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Member of Parliament for Liverpool West Derby
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Email: ian.byrne.mp@parliament.uk
Tel: 020 7219 3000

As you will know, another way to ensure children avoid poverty in their early years – especially food poverty – is to ensure they receive a nourishing free breakfast and lunch in school. Too many of our young people do not have access to free school meals even though they would clearly benefit. Analysis by the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) shows that children in poverty in England continue to be overlooked by government measures, with over 1 in 3 (800,000) children in poverty not qualifying for free school meals.

There is abundant evidence to suggest that proactive investment in young people isn't a "spending commitment" that must be financed but a net saving down the line. I have called on numerous Ministers since I entered Parliament to introduce universal free school meals for all primary and secondary pupils in England. I believe the benefits are manifold and as with the two-child benefit cap, what appears to be lacking is the political will.

I also agree with the sentiments of the Trade Union Congress that universal free school meals "must be just one part of a strategy for reducing child poverty. **That strategy must tackle issues of insecure work, low pay, and inadequate social security, soaring housing costs, unaffordable and accessible childcare, which leave so many children and families struggling to survive**".

In light of the figures from the End Child Poverty Coalition, what reassurance can you offer me that the government takes seriously the lives of the young people I represent? What steps is the government taking to end child poverty and what consideration has been made to including universal free school meals and ending the two-child benefit cap in such a plan?

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Ian Byrne
Member of Parliament
Liverpool West Derby

Constituency Office:

545 West Derby Road L138AA
Phone No. 0151 222 2345 Email: ian.byrne.mp@parliament.uk
www.ianbyrne.org

The Horizon Post Office Scandal and the need for a Hillsborough Law Now

Following the Government's response to Post Office Horizon scandal, I have written to the Secretary of State for Justice to request a meeting to highlight how the Horizon Post Office scandal exemplifies the urgent need for a Hillsborough Law if the public are to be protected from such scandals.



IAN BYRNE
Member of Parliament for Liverpool West Derby
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Email: ian.byrne.mp@parliament.uk
Tel: 020 7219 3000

To: Alex Chalk KC MP, Secretary of State for Justice
Sent by email only

11 January 2024

RE: Horizon Post Office scandal and Hillsborough Law Now Campaign

Dear Secretary of State,

I write to you today in my capacity as Chair of the Public Accountability All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) which backs the campaign for a full Hillsborough Law, including a statutory Duty of Candour to compel all public servants to tell the truth in order to protect ordinary members of the public.

I am sure you agree how shocking it is that we need a law to ensure that public servants are honest, but the facts show that we do. We have seen in the cases of so many tragedies, including but not limited to, Hillsborough, Contaminated Blood, Nuclear Test Veterans, Grenfell, Manchester Arena Bombing and the Horizon Post Office scandal, that Government and public bodies all too often must be forced and shamed into revealing the truth.

Secretary of State, the Horizon Post Office scandal and cover-up appears to be yet another shockingly dishonest scandal. This issue has been brought to the fore of the public consciousness, as you are well aware, via the recent ITV drama Mr Bates vs The Post Office. The anger and shock felt by the public in response to the appalling treatment of so many sub-Postmasters is palpable and I note that Government has announced an urgent response to this massive miscarriage of justice. These measures are of course to be welcomed and Government's response highlights just how swiftly and decisively Government can act when it chooses to.

With this in mind, it is imperative that if Government is serious about ensuring this kind of appalling scandal can never happen again, that it commits to implementing Hillsborough Law in full as soon as possible. Secretary of State, these scandals will keep on happening unless we make it much harder for those in power to cover up their actions or those of others. With this in mind, what I would specifically like to raise with you, in relation to the Horizon Post Office scandal, is how it perfectly highlights the need for a full Hillsborough Law that includes a Statutory Duty of Candour, which Government has so far refused to implement:

- With a full Hillsborough Law on the statute books, a legal Duty of Candour would have made Post Office officials and their lawyers think twice before acting dishonestly. At present people in public roles can get away with it because such dishonesty would never see the light of day
- A full Hillsborough Law in place would have also required Post Office managers and lawyers to identify the issues with the pilot scheme at the outset of investigations and not stay silent whilst waiting to see whether it would be discovered.
- Senior Post Office officials would be forced to think twice because under a full Hillsborough Law they would be committing an offence if they wilfully withheld information.

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Tel: 020 7219 3000

- A full Hillsborough Law would also embolden honest staff in public authorities to whistle-blow.

I am therefore writing to ask if you will meet with me and legal advisors from the Hillsborough Law Now Campaign as soon as possible to discuss the specific issues raised and to identify how quickly the full provisions of a Hillsborough Law can be implemented so that all members of the public will be forever protected from future injustices such as the Horizon Post Office scandal.

I look forward to your earliest response.

Yours sincerely

Ian Byrne
Member of Parliament for Liverpool West Derby

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www.ianbyrne.org

Committee Work:

I am a Member of two House of Commons Select Committees: *The Levelling Up, Housing and Communities* and *the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee*. As a Committee member, I scrutinise Government policy and hold them to account through a process of evidence sessions and inquiries.

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee:

As part of our Inquiry on Fairness in the Food Supply Chain, we questioned witnesses from the food industry, including trade union representatives. We heard powerful testimony from Sarah Woolley, General Secretary of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union, who described the conditions faced by workers in the food industry. She said: *“Our sector is blighted by endemic low pay, zero-hours contracts, short term and temporary agency work and obviously, as has been touched on, the exploitation of migrant workers. It is deemed as a low-skilled sector, but I wonder how many colleagues in the room today could identify a faulty machine just by the sound of it. I*

wonder how many could stand and make 60 sandwiches an hour like our members do in certain places”.

I will continue to campaign alongside the trade unions for the improved pay and conditions that food industry workers in West Derby, and across the country, deserve.

Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (LUHC) Committee:

At the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee inquiry on Fire Safety I outlined to the Housing Minister how Parliament should be on the side of those residents who feel powerless against the power of corporations whose decisions can have a devastating impact on their lives.

You can watch my contribution on YouTube:

https://youtu.be/GA76G_X9xJ8?feature=shared



Early Day Motions (EDMs):

Pension restitution for women born in the 1950s

I was proud to sign a Parliamentary Motion calling for pensions justice for the millions of women born in the 1950s.

Pension restitution for women born in the 1950s

EDM 243: tabled on 08 January 2024

Tabled in the 2023-24 session.

This motion has been signed by 57 Members. It has not yet had any amendments submitted.

Motion text

That this House welcomes the positive interventions from so many hon. Members from across the House on behalf of women born in the 1950s who have suffered pensions loss through the targeting of their pension rights; pays tribute to constituents and campaigners in their ongoing fight for justice; recalls that women born in the 1950s were subject to discriminatory laws; and encourages the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to join mediation, noting there are no impediments to doing so.

I have signed several EDMs over the past month. You can find full details of these on Parliament's website using the following link, and I thank constituents who have been in touch to ask me to sign them: <https://members.parliament.uk/member/4831/earlydaymotions>

In the constituency



Visiting Dixons Broadgreen Academy

Huge thanks to Dixons Broadgreen Academy for the opportunity to take part in a fascinating Q&A about our work with their fantastic students and to discuss the importance of working class participation in politics.



Meeting the team at Dovecot MAC

It was great to meet the team from Alt Valley Community Trust and see amazing resources at Dovecot MAC, a fantastic sporting and cultural resource in West Derby! I look forward to working with the team on more opportunities for our community.



Securing the future of Gellings Riding School

I attended a packed meeting at Gellings Riding School with West Derby constituents and local councillors to discuss a community strategy to secure the future of this much loved and used facility. This is a vital community resource for everyone in West Derby and the entire Liverpool city region.

Campaigns update

The Real Truth Legacy Project

This month we held a very positive and productive meeting on The Real Truth Legacy Project with the team at LFC Foundation, who we are working with to ensure that our education programme about 'the real truth' of Hillsborough and its aftermath continues to be rolled out locally. At the same time we continue to work towards this being included in the national curriculum. **#JFT97**



RIGHT TO FOOD

RIGHT TO FOOD RALLY & HUNGER MARCH

Saturday 27th January

Assemble 12.30pm outside NatWest in Pontypridd
Rally starts at YMa in Taff St at 1pm

Speakers include:
Neville Southall MBE, Welsh football legend
Cleide Correia, Merthyr Cynon Foodbank
Amanda Haydon Hall, Pontypridd Foodbank
Jason Richards, RCT Trades Council
Beth Winter, Cynon Valley MP

Music—Big Hearts International Cultural Ensemble
A Community Dinner—Free food for attendees

We will be collecting for local food banks on the day, so please **bring a tin** if you are able.

www.righttofood.wales

Right To Food Campaign - Hunger March in Wales

Back in 1927, miners and other trade unionists marched from The Valleys to London, fighting against Government cuts and lack of aid, in the first hunger march. Today we are once again experiencing widespread food insecurity and poverty. The Right To Food campaign in Wales is holding a Hunger March on 27th January in Pontypridd. **#HungerIsAPoliticalChoice**

Support

Food Parcels

Any constituent struggling for food can email my office with full details, DOB and how many are in the household for a voucher code.

Food Pantry

The Fans Supporting Foodbanks mobile food pantry every Friday 10-12pm in the Millennium Centre St Mary's is £3.50 for a shop with fresh fruit and veg.

Free Food Fridays

Every Friday we collect and redistribute food that would go to waste for Free Food Fridays. Food is also shared throughout the week at Croxteth Community Garden as part of Grow West Derby. Please check the Facebook page for updates.

Access to Justice

All constituents have access to free advice and representation if needed via Vauxhall Law Centre. More information about our collaborative work can be found on the following link: <https://www.vauxhalllawcentre.org.uk/ian-byrne-m-p-advice-service>

Ask me anything

This is just some of what I have been up to locally and in Parliament. For ongoing updates, you can follow me on **Facebook** and on **Twitter** or to get involved in local projects visit my website and sign up at www.ianbyrne.org Email me on: ianbyrne@labour@gmail.com.

In Solidarity,

Ian Byrne MP

West Derby, Liverpool