



Mole Valley Conservative Association's Newsletter

Issue 59; May 2012

Welcoming Note

Welcome to the May issue of the Mole Valley Conservative Association's Newsletter from the House of Commons.

To unsubscribe to this newsletter, please contact us through the website 'Contact us' page with a subject line of 'unsubscribe'.

We hope you enjoy reading the May issue.

News from the House of Commons

Ballot Success



As you will be aware from my previous newsletters, I was fortunate enough to see my last Private Members' Bill make it all the way to becoming an Act. It should come into force at the beginning of July.

I entered the Private Members' Bills Ballot again for the Parliamentary session 2012-13 and have been successful in receiving a place at Number 8 on the list.

Unsurprisingly, since the list was published on Thursday 17th May for all to see, I have had a constant stream of telephone calls, emails and letters from lobbyists, companies and constituents all asking me to take up their causes. Many of them are worthy of consideration.

However, I have already decided on the Bill that I will take forward. It will deal with the use of mobile phones in prisons and it will aim to enable the Secretary of State to authorise prison governors to use technology to block mobile phone signals within prisons, and to obtain data about the phones that are being used in the prison.

Another route taken by MPs to implement a small Bill is to introduce a Ten Minute Rule Bill. This could be used to good effect if I decided to introduce further child protection legislation. An area needing tighter legislation that has been highlighted to me by a very senior policeman is the publication, distribution or sale of obscene matter including written word of a paedophilic nature. Clearly the written content would have to be deeply unpleasant, rather than akin to the novel Lolita. However, I do believe this is an area that has been largely ignored and needs addressing.

Paul Beresford

Member of Parliament for Mole Valley

Feature Article



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Same-sex Marriage



Sir Paul has received several letters and emails from concerned constituents regarding the possibility of there being a change in the law to allow same sex marriages. The majority have been against the proposal.

It seems surprising that the question of allowing civil partnerships to be called and classified as marriage was raised. Sir Paul has found absolutely no call for this change. Many constituents feel that we have too many other important issues to consider, such as sorting out the country's economic situation.

The Government is rightly consulting widely on this issue before making any changes to the current position and I would encourage you to make your views known.

The Prime Minister has made it absolutely clear that there is no question of Churches or any other religious institution being forced to host ceremonies for same sex couples. The proposals in the consultation only relate to "civil marriage". Many have been concerned that churches are not compelled in law by, for example, the European Court of Human Rights, to conduct same-sex marriages.

MPs will be carefully looking at the Government's response to the consultation and will be pleased that this issue of conscience is subject to a free vote. Sir Paul will review the outcome of the consultation closely but at present intends to vote against the measure if it comes before Parliament.



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News in brief

VAT Changes to Listed Buildings



As you may know, repairs and maintenance to all buildings, including listed buildings, have always been liable for VAT and the Budget announcement does not affect this. However, alterations to listed buildings are mainly zero rated and complications arise in determining the category of work. The confusion between alterations and repairs or maintenance has resulted in a high volume of taxpayer queries and frequent error.

Sir Paul has received letters from concerned constituents who live in listed houses and from clergy who need to do work to their churches.

The Government made a clear commitment that listed places of worship would not be adversely affected by the Budget proposal and Ministers actively engaged with church authorities to explore the best way forward.

The Chancellor has announced an increase in funding for the Listed Places of Worship Scheme (LPWGS) by a further £30 million a year, bringing the total resources of the scheme to £42 million, guaranteed every year for the duration of this Parliament.

In addition, the Treasury has agreed a number of improvements to the LPWGS scheme. Churches and cathedrals will be able to claim back an equivalent sum of money to the VAT on all repairs on a monthly basis. When the transition period to the new VAT regime is completed in October, churches will be able to claim back a similar sum on all alterations.

HMRC launched a consultation on these changes to ensure there are no unintended consequences or unidentified impacts and to address concerns about transitional arrangements. The consultation closed on the 18th May and the response will be published soon.

More details can be found at www.hmrc.gov.uk and searching for 'VAT: Addressing borderline anomalies'.