

Tulip Siddiq MP – CLP Update, Summer 2023

It's certainly been a busy time in politics over the last couple months, with three by-elections on one day, and another one coming up in Scotland. In the meantime, however, parliament is now in recess, which means that I can spend more time supporting constituents with the issues that they are facing and pushing Government Ministers to tackle issues like the cost-of-living crisis which are affecting so many across the country. It is clear that the cost-of-living crisis has caused unimaginable hardship and difficulty for so many people in Hampstead and Kilburn, as I made clear on my appearance on ITV's *Peston* and in other media interviews recently. I am continuing to do all I can to support people in the area who are struggling with making ends meet.

I have been continuing the fight to ensure that lessons are learned from the Government's failures around the imprisonment of my constituent Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe in Iran. It is vital that the UK is more prepared for situations like this and that Ministers do all they can to ensure that nobody goes through what Nazanin did again. Richard Ratcliffe, Nazanin's husband, and I recently wrote a joint response to the Foreign Office's decision not to take on recommendations from the Foreign Affairs Committee, designed to improve the Government's handling of state hostage taking by countries like Iran. The Committee has produced some very important work in relation to this, and it is very disappointing that, despite everything that Nazanin went through, the Government still do not seem to be taking this issue as seriously as is required. This is yet another example of the Conservatives governing with their head in the sand – and the impact is significant. My comments on this were covered in the Evening Standard, the Guardian, and the Independent.

As well as the activities you can read about below, I have also been able to attend several summer events in Hampstead and Kilburn which local residents so kindly invited me along to. I've attended street parties like ones at Broomsleigh Street, Dornfell Street, Glastonbury Street, and Ravenshaw Street. I had a truly wonderful time seeing people in the local community relaxing in their streets and gardens, and enjoying the food and music. It was also great to visit the Jester Festival in Fortune Green and the Hampstead Big Fair, which were both fantastic. Thank you so much to all involved.

Last but not least, I would also like to say a massive congratulations to the Lionesses on reaching the final of the Women's World Cup. I have to say it was especially heartening to show their victories to my young daughter who recently joined her school football team! Our amazing team played so well, united our country and I know will have inspired a generation of young women and girls.

Pushing for action on the cost-of-living crisis

As Shadow City Minister, I am deeply concerned about the most recent figures which show that inflation in Britain remains higher than other major economies. I joined LBC and Times Radio after the figures were published to explain what this means for families struggling to cope with rising household bills and prices at the shops. I published analysis showing that as a result of 13 years of economic mismanagement, families are £350 GBP worse off each month compared to last year, which was covered along with my comments by The Independent, Evening Standard, and Sky.

While the headline inflation figure decreased from 7.9% in June to 6.8% in July, unemployment rose to 4.2% and core inflation – which excludes factors like the energy price cap coming down – remained the same as before. This worryingly high rate of core inflation means that the cost of simple things like mobile phone bills, buying clothes, having a haircut, or even getting stationery for children going back to school is continuing to rise by a huge amount.

The Conservative Government has led us through a decade of low growth, low pay, and high taxes, and it is families who are paying the price for the cost-of-living crisis. They are still refusing to

properly tackle this crisis, and it is eating away at people's money. I have been working with my Labour colleagues to develop plans to build a stronger, more secure economy with measures to boost growth, increase wages, and bring down household bills to make families better off.

Ministerial meeting on step free access at Queens Park station

I recently met with Huw Merriman MP, a Transport Minister, to discuss step-free access at Queens Park tube station. For many people in my constituency, Queens Park station is a vital means of getting around and step-free access is important if we are going to make the area accessible for all. This campaign was started over 10 years ago by Queens Park Area Residents Association (QPARA), and, after much campaigning by them and others, we got a commitment from the Government to provide the funding to install accessible lifts in the current round of station improvements.

Unfortunately, Karen Buck - the MP for Westminster North which borders Queens Park station - and I recently received a letter from the Transport Minister informing us that this offer of funding had been withdrawn. We therefore requested an urgent meeting with him to ask for an explanation for this U-turn, to demand that the project is delivered as was promised years ago, and to push for them to provide a copy of the report into the project's feasibility they used to justify their decision.

We were joined at this meeting by Queens Park Councillor Neil Nerva and Janis Denselow from QPARA. The Minister unfortunately did not give us a reasonable explanation for this unacceptable backtrack, and I am deeply concerned that this is not being made a priority and will be kicked further into the long grass, depriving local residents of necessary improvements to our local infrastructure. We will continue to put pressure on the Government to stick to their promise to deliver step free access in Queens Park, and those involved in the campaign will be meeting soon to plan next steps.



Meeting local business leaders at Camden Anchors

I joined fellow Camden MP, Keir Starmer, and the Leader of Camden Council, Georgia Gould, to discuss how we can help to create a more prosperous and inclusive economy in the Camden area.

I had conversations with some true trailblazers working in the area and spoke to them about the ways in which people in Camden can make the most of the vibrant and dynamic businesses, institutions, and charities that call Camden home. Guests included Sir Roly Keating, the Director of the British Library, Dr Sam Barrell, the Deputy Chief Executive of the Francis Crick Institute, and Dr Michael Spence, the President and Provost of UCL. It was a useful discussion and great to be able to speak to the leaders of local organisations about how we can continue to improve our area.



Giving a keynote speech at The City UK Annual Conference

I was at TheCityUK's Annual Conference this year, where I gave a speech as Shadow City Minister to set out my ambition for the City, including my mission to unlock billions in City investment to go towards the expansion of clean energy in this country. It was really useful to learn from the other speakers at the event, including those in panel discussions on the financial sector's role in driving economic growth, and ensuring a stable and resilient economy in a world of tech innovation.

I was delighted to announce a new financial services policy for Labour in an interview with the Financial Times recently, which will drive my mission to funnel money from the City into powering the transition to a green economy. This will be accomplished through the introduction of 'Green Covered Bonds', which will be a way of allowing banks and insurers to invest safely in green infrastructure and will also come at no cost to the taxpayer.

It is time for this country to get moving on the green transition, and I believe that these bonds would empower financial services to put billions into the infrastructure we need to get to net zero, while creating good jobs in industries ranging from wind to hydrogen.



Responding to the Chancellor's Mansion House Speech

In Parliament, I responded to the Mansion House speech, in which the Chancellor gives an update on the state of the UK economy. I felt it important to remind the Chancellor that we need to unlock

capital currently held in pension funds and encourage investment in high-growth, innovative companies in the UK. In the US, approximately 70% of venture capital comes from pension funds, while in the UK, this figure is below 20%. This isn't good enough and I've been pushing Ministers to institute pension reforms to support economic growth.

As I said in my speech, through active partnership with the City and a modern industrial strategy, we can grow the economy and help Britain become the best place to start and grow a business.



Success at the NHS Parliamentary Awards for Hampstead and Kilburn

I was delighted that my two nominations for the NHS Parliamentary Awards were shortlisted for an award invited to attend the ceremony in Westminster. *Better health on your doorstep* - a partnership between Brent Council, Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust, and Wittington Health - was shortlisted in the Health Equalities category for their collaborative work to tackle health inequality by bringing important advice about healthy eating and dental health to people's homes.

It was also brilliant news that my other nominee Dr Devina Maru, from the Royal Free Hospital, won the NHS Rising Star Award. Dr Maru is truly an everyday hero who works so hard improving accessibility for patients with hearing loss. Massive congratulations to both!



Inviting young constituents to learn about my work

I had the joy of hosting a number of constituents interested in politics for an array of activities, including a Q and A with a BBC Political Correspondent, a tour of Camden Council and Parliament, hearing about the work of local councillors and Assembly Members, watching debates in the House of Commons and Lords, and visiting local businesses!

It was brilliant to meet these young people who impressed me with the standard of their questions, and their engagement with the sessions. Thank you to all those who came along and I am sure I will be seeing more from all of you in the future! I will be running a similar programme for constituents who want work experience next summer, so do let me know if you are interested.



Celebrating another year of Parliament's Debating Group

While I spend a lot of my time contributing to debates in the House of Commons, it's nice to be able to listen to a debate unfold from the position of chair now and then! As President of the Debating Group, which organises fascinating discussions around political issues, I had such a fantastic time chairing this debate on AI and its impact on the world of marketing and public relations.

It was a joy listening to such interesting speeches from those speaking and I learnt a great deal. I am also grateful to the Debating Group for inviting me to speak at their annual reception, which was a great way of being able to pay tribute to all the work that the group do.

Writing for the Ham & High about vulnerable asylum-seeking children

I wrote an article for the Ham & High recently about the safety of lone asylum-seeking children and the dangers facing these extremely vulnerable young people while they are being housed in Home Office run-hotels.

Despite me raising the issue of hundreds of these children going missing from government accommodation directly with the Prime Minister at PMQs, months later the Government revealed that over 150 of these children were still missing. I found it utterly heart-breaking that some of the most vulnerable children in the country were unaccounted for months after and potentially exposed

to danger a long time after me raising it in Parliament. This Government are failing young people who desperately needs support.

As I say in the article, Hampstead and Kilburn has a proud tradition of welcoming those who are escaping awful hardship from around the world with open arms. I know that people in our area would want far more care and kindness given to vulnerable children going through these systems, often on their own.

Visiting the Lighten the Load Campaign

It was a real pleasure to attend a reception in Parliament, organised by Maltesers and Comic Relief, to support the Lighten the Load campaign. The campaign mission is to empower women, encourage a greater understanding of what can be done to support working mothers, and how best to offer this to them.

As a working mum myself, I know that the stresses and strains of combining a young family with a busy job can be difficult at times. There is only so much time in the day and new research shows 73% of working mums have to sacrifice elements of their job they previously enjoyed, in order to balance their work and home lives. It's often a tricky topic to talk about, and it's so important that campaigns like this open up the conversation, and work with mothers and workplaces to ensure that the best possible work environment is cultivated.

