

Constituency REPORT

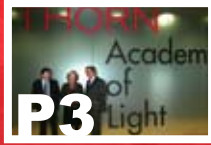
November 2009 - An update from **Helen Goodman MP** to constituents



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WORKING HARD FOR ALL IN BISHOP AUCKLAND



Photo: Copyright © Newsquest North East

challenging economic climate for decades. But there are still many positives to take from the last year.

Our school children have recorded their best ever results, new affordable housing is opening, crime is down, there is additional funding for local youth projects, NetPark and Thorns Lighting have opened new high-quality facilities, and planning permission has been granted for a £45 million development at Tindale Crescent.

In this newsletter I outline the work I have done over the last year, and if you have any issue you would like to discuss with me, please use the contact details on the back.

2009 has been a difficult year for our constituency.

The recession did not start here, but it has hit us hard: and while there are signs of recovery, I know that people are still worried about their jobs, their home, their pensions and their businesses.

After years of high employment and investment we are now in the most



Helen Goodman

Helen Goodman MP
Member of Parliament for Bishop Auckland

POST OFFICE CARD ACCOUNT RETAINED



Over 800 constituents wrote to me about the Post Office Card Account, and having raised this repeatedly with Ministers, I am delighted that the Government decided this valuable service will remain at the Post Office.

I received more letters and postcards about this issue than any other this year, and it is clear that public opinion won the day!



To keep up with all Helen's news, visit:

www.helengoodman.co.uk

It was shortlisted for Best MP's Website in the 2007 British Computer Society Website Awards.



WORKING HARD FOR YOU

As your local MP, I have two main roles.

Firstly, and most importantly, to represent you at Westminster, to help wherever possible with constituents' enquiries and concerns, and to listen and respond to your opinions, letters and e-mails.

In the last year I have responded to **over 1,500 enquiries**. I have also held regular drop-in and street surgeries across the constituency, and attended **more than 150 constituency events and meetings**.

In June I was also appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department of Work & Pensions. In this role, I focus on **combating child poverty, improving childcare** and helping young people get back to work through the **Future Jobs Fund** – a £1 billion scheme which will create 150,000 jobs for 18-24 year olds.



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BISHOP AUCKLAND HOSPITAL

After the long campaign about Bishop Auckland Hospital, I was assured by the Foundation Trust that there will be **more services and more patients treated at Bishop** and that the long-term future of the hospital is secure.

I was therefore delighted to open Bishop's new state-of-the art cataract centre in September (see photo left), which will be the main specialist centre for eye care in Co. Durham.

EXPENSES

Many of you wrote to me this year about MPs expenses, and I am pleased that **the independent Legg Review has now given me a clean bill of health**.

None of the claims I submitted since 2005 call for any repayment or further supporting evidence.

I am sure you will agree that it is now vital that we make a clean break with the old expenses system and start to regain public trust in our politics.

You can view my expenses claims by visiting:

www.helengoodman.co.uk/about/expenses/





INVESTMENT IN YOUNG PEOPLE



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There have been a number of really positive developments in our schools, colleges and early years' facilities.

Almost 70% of children in our constituency now achieve 5 or more good GCSEs, and in schools such as Sunnydale in Shildon there has been an **11% increase** in the last year alone.

With better exam results and **with all children now able to stay in school or training until 18**, there has also been a **15% increase** in the number of local students who go to university.

I am also particularly delighted that **£1.1 million will be spent on building new play areas** (photo left) across the County such as the new



Photo: Copyright © North News & Pictures

Groundwork playground scheme I recently opened in Proudfoot Drive, Bishop Auckland.

I am also sure that all parents will be pleased that after persistent campaigning from local MPs and Durham County Council, **all local primary school children now receive free school meals.**

NEW FACTORIES OPEN

In February I was delighted to open Thorn Lighting's new £24 million factory in Spennymoor (see photo below), and I also recently visited NetPark – the North East's leading science and technology park – which has just opened a 3000 sq metre centre for developing printable electronics technologies.

Both developments are really impressive and prove that even in the current economic climate **we continue to attract high quality investment.**



NEW, AFFORDABLE HOUSING

By 2012 all homes in the constituency will have reached the Government's Decent Home Standard. This will see **more than £40 million invested in housing in Wear Valley alone.**

More than 2,000 new homes have also been built in the constituency in the last five years, including the excellent new eco-friendly development in Cotherstone (see photo below), which I opened in July.





CLIMATE CHANGE

I set up a local climate change action group last year, and in March we held a **Climate Change Fair** in Barnard Castle (see photo right).

It was a really enjoyable and successful event, and since then I have lobbied Government Ministers about a number of



issues constituents raised with me concerning climate change, energy efficiency and green technologies.

I also recently visited the Teesdale Conservation Volunteers (see photo left) – a local conservation group dedicated to improving our local environment.



CONTACT HELEN

Last October, I moved into a new constituency office at **1 Cockton Hill Road, Bishop Auckland**. I was joined at the opening by the Foreign Secretary and fellow North East MP David Miliband (see photo left), and the Office is now fully equipped with disabled access.

I often hold my drop-in surgeries in this office, where constituents can discuss any issue of concern with me.

The schedule for upcoming surgeries is:

- Friday 4 December 2009, 17:00** – Tudhoe Community Centre
- Friday 8 January 2010, 17:00** – Constituency Office, Bishop Auckland
- Friday 5 February 2010, 17:00** – Cockfield Workmens Club
- Friday 5 March 2010, 17:00** – People's Centre, Main Street, Shildon



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GET IN TOUCH

You can find out more surgeries and my work in the constituency by visiting my website:

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