

Kevan Jones

December
2018

Member of
Parliament for
North Durham



Newsletter

Brexit Update

It is clear that the Prime Minister's failed negotiated deal will not be passed by the House of Commons when it is put before MPs in the week beginning 14 January.

I campaigned and supported the UK remaining in the EU and voted remain in the referendum.

I did this because I believed it would be in the best interests of our country, but unfortunately this was not the outcome of the referendum.

However, for me the main task is to protect our trade and relationship with the EU and at the same time protect the benefits that we have gained in the UK from EU membership for the future. Some sort of customs arrangement which allows this, along with protecting the interests of EU citizens and UK nationals living and working in Europe, is important.

The present deal which the Prime Minister has attempted to put forward is not one that I can accept. Having read the detail it is not a final deal and in many ways postpones the agreement we need with the EU to protect our future trading relationship with Europe, and does not address many of the contentious issues which still need to be decided.

I am not prepared to give the Government another two years to try and accommodate the internal divisions of the Conservative Party, rather than making decisions that are in the national interest. Theresa May's blundering approach, putting party interests first over what is in the national interest, now presents enormous risks.

Concerning a second referendum it is unclear to me how this would be achieved and what questions would be put on such a ballot. There is also the added risk that if the result of that vote was to leave without a deal, then this is something that would have a devastating impact on the UK and on the North East in particular.

As always, I am happy to meet with any constituents who would like to discuss this further. If this would be helpful, please contact my office.



Kevan supported the North Durham Women's Conference in Stanley with Cllr Lyn Boyd.



Kevan visited Sacriston Academy for the Official opening of their new playground with Cllr Heather Liddle.



Kevan and Cllr Tracie Smith planted trees with Nursery Children in Chester-le-Street as part of the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy.



Follow Kevan on Twitter: @KevanJonesMP



Kevan visiting the Just for Women Centre in Stanley with Cllr Carl Marshall.



Kevan at Lumley Infant and Nursery School discussing their partnership with a school in Eastern Uganda.



Kevan at the CWGC Parliamentary Event, pictured with Armed Forces Minister Mark Lancaster TD MP.

Budget 2018

On 31 October, Kevan spoke in the Budget debate, highlighting the impact that eight years of austerity have had on the North East.

Intervening early on in the debate, Kevan said:

“Durham County Council has lost nearly half its budget since 2010, and the cuts are still going on. This Budget contained no change to next year’s cuts in revenue support grant, so another £40 million will be taken out of the council’s budget.”

Later on in his speech, Kevan criticised the Government’s inertia on providing adequate resources for mental health, saying:

“We need to hardwire mental health into Government policy-making and not have this ridiculous situation where policies such as cuts to local authorities and universal credit lead to a mental health crisis. We need to address the core problem, and this Budget is not doing it.”

Kevan finished his speech by saying:

“This Budget is a missed opportunity. Communities are going to suffer, and if we get what we have had from this Conservative Government in the past few years, even where there is extra money, it will be doled out like a pork barrel to areas that support the Conservatives.

“Other areas that they do not really care about will get nothing. We only need to look at the North East to see that that strategy is continuing with this Budget, and it is an absolute disgrace.”

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

On 21 November Kevan hosted a drop-in event for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), giving MPs from all parties and across the country the opportunity to meet with staff from the Commission and talk about its sites and work in their areas.

The event was a huge success attracting the attendance of over 50 Members of Parliament, including Defence Minister Mark Lancaster MP, pictured.

In 2017 Kevan helped to inaugurate CWGC’s charitable arm, the Commonwealth War Graves Foundation, to engage young people in the work of the Commission and to tell the fascinating stories of those that the CWGC commemorates.

Kevan’s eight-year term as a CWGC Commissioner has now ended, but he will continue to work as a patron of the Foundation.

Education Funding

On 13 November Kevan spoke in the Commons Opposition Day debate on Education Funding.

In the debate, which was tabled by Labour's Shadow Education Secretary Angela Rayner, Kevan spoke about the impact the lack of central government funding for learning disabilities was having on children in County Durham.

During the debate, Kevan said:

"The Secretary of State will be aware that there are pressures on all authorities in providing for children with special needs and disabilities.

"The Cabinet Member for Education in Durham, Olwyn Gunn, has written to the Secretary of State highlighting the plight of Durham, which had a £4.7 million overspend last year and is projected to spend even more this year. What is the Secretary of State doing to help authorities tackle the demand that many are now facing in providing for special educational needs?"

In response to Kevan's question, the Education Secretary, Damian Hinds, said that he recognised the issue that Kevan raised.

Across the country, council overspending on children's special educational needs and disabilities has trebled in just three years, from £61 million in 2015-16 to £195 million in 2017-18.

Research published by The Observer newspaper identified 40 councils that have either cut special needs funding or are considering doing so next year.

Centenary of the Armistice

Kevan reflected on the lessons of the past in Commons Centenary of the Armistice debate.

On 6 November Kevan spoke in the House of Commons debate on the Centenary of the Armistice, marking 100 years since the cessation of hostilities on the Western Front in the First World War.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission commemorates the dead of the First and Second World Wars in 23,000 locations in more than 150 countries and during his speech Kevan thanked the staff and partner nations for all they have done throughout his tenure.

Kevan used his speech to highlight the sacrifice made by the people of North Durham in the Great War, including those commemorated on the mahogany War Memorial recused from Sacriston Memorial Hall.

Speaking of the names inscribed on the memorial, in capacity as both a Member of Parliament and as an outgoing Commonwealth War Graves Commissioner, Kevan said:

"The individuals marked and remembered on that memorial were sons, brothers and husbands. When I look at their names, I think of the sacrifice that they made for this country, but I also remember that their ambitions and dreams were unfulfilled, and their loved ones left behind were worrying and thinking about what could have been.

"There was an outpouring of remembrance after the Armistice. Throughout the nation, memorials such as the one in Sacriston were built, as well as clocks, parks and memorial halls."



Kevan supported the annual Tesco Food Bank collection in their Sacriston store.



Kevan visited Lanchester Road Hospital to present a certificate to an Award Nominee as part of the NHS70 Parliamentary Awards.



Kevan supported Cllr Carole Hampson, Cllr Mark Davison and local residents in opposing a planning application on the Old Greenlands Infant School in South Moor.



Kevan met with a local walking group at Beamish Museum.

Sovereign Capabilities



Kevan held a public meeting on Train Services in Chester-le-Street. Please see his [website](#) for further details and the latest updates on the campaign.

On 20 November, Kevan spoke in a Westminster Hall debate on Sovereign Capabilities, calling on the Government to create a defence industrial strategy and invest in UK jobs and prosperity.

In the last eight years the Government has awarded numerous major defence contracts for new equipment overseas, without competition, putting UK industry and jobs at risk.

Speaking during the debate, Kevan said:

“Since 2010, this Government have had no industrial strategy on defence. Some of the short-term decisions that were taken in 2010, when the Government slashed the defence budget by 16%, have resulted in capability gaps.

“The Ministry of Defence and the Treasury have adopted Donald Trump’s mantra of “Make America great again”, because the procurements that have taken place are suggestive of an “America first” strategy. In the past few years, they have procured more than \$8 billion-worth of contracts from the United States.

“Why is Sovereign Capability important? If we want to have certain capabilities for the defence of our nation, we need to invest in them.”

Addressing the new Defence Procurement Minister, the fourth incumbent of that position since January of this year, Kevan said:

“I hate to use the phrase “go back to basics”, but that is what the Treasury and the Ministry of Defence need to do. They need to make it clear that we need to procure and manufacture in the UK under sovereign capability, which should be the starting point for the defence industrial strategy.”



Kevan joins the Dogs Trust in calling for an end to puppy smuggling.



Kevan attended an event with the Big Lottery Fund which has funded £4.73 million in North Durham.

Monthly Advice Surgeries:

- Saturday 5 January
- Saturday 2 February
- Saturday 2 March

For more information about Kevan’s Advice Surgeries please see Kevan’s website at www.kevanjonesmp.org.uk

GET IN TOUCH

Please feel free to contact me about any issue, and I’m always happy to arrange tours of the Palace of Westminster.

Constituency Office: 0191 371 8834

Westminster Office: 020 7219 8219

Email: kevanjonesmp@parliament.uk

Website: www.kevanjonesmp.org.uk