

ROBERT COURTS MP

Working hard for Witney & West Oxfordshire



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1. Good afternoon from Westminster!

I am writing to you this week from my office in Westminster. I am busy this week with meetings and business in the House of Commons, before Parliament is dissolved for the coming General Election. As ever, I have been busy here in Westminster and in West Oxfordshire meeting with many of you, and working on your behalf.

2. General election on 8th June 2017



The Prime Minister has announced that a General Election will be held on 8th June. Parliament has voted overwhelmingly to dissolve, and will do so early next week.

I wholeheartedly back this decision. I understand that, particularly in West Oxfordshire, we have had a lot of elections recently. However, there is a choice to be made. It is a clear one between strong local and national leadership or a floundering coalition that will not provide certainty and direction the country needs. The Government and Theresa May must receive an electoral mandate from the people of the

UK as we begin our negotiations to leave the European Union. This is a crucial time in our history and it is essential that the Prime Minister's negotiating hand is strengthened, safe in the knowledge that she has the backing of the country.

I will be standing on a positive, optimistic, compassionate platform, as a hard-working local constituency MP, continuing to ensure that West Oxfordshire has influence in Government, protecting our values and ensuring change where it matters. I am excited to have the opportunity to continue to speak up for West Oxfordshire, and work tirelessly on your behalf. There is so much more we can do together to make West Oxfordshire better for everyone.

Since October, I have been campaigning on all aspects of [my plan](#), both locally and in Parliament. Education, healthcare, businesses, transport, broadband and housing development have dominated my postbag and my diary, and I very much hope to be given the chance to continue with this work after the General Election, should you re-elect me as your Member of Parliament.

Nationally, the choice is clear: leadership in the national interest under Theresa May or a weak and unstable coalition Government with Jeremy Corbyn as our Prime Minister.

Locally, it has been an honour to serve you since the by-election and I hope very much to be able to build on the flying start I have made since then. There is so much more we can achieve together and I am looking forward to setting out my vision for our constituency over the next five years.

In West Oxfordshire, this election is therefore about two issues: stable, strong leadership for the country, and ensuring that West Oxfordshire has influence in and on Government. That is what I offer, and that is what I seek. I look forward to meeting many of you around the constituency over the coming weeks, in the run-up to the 8th June.

3. Note regarding casework

Over the course of the campaign period, I want to reassure you all that although I will be the Conservative Parliamentary Candidate rather than the MP, I am still able to deal with casework from constituents; politics should not take precedence over this essential duty.

As I will be based here in Witney during this time, please do contact me at robert@robertcourts.co.uk or by phone at 01993 702302.

4. County Council elections (Thursday 4th May) and General Election Deadlines

As you may know, the County Council elections for Oxfordshire are taking place on Thursday, 4th May 2017. Whilst there is the excitement of a General Election campaign beginning, it is essential that residents turn out to have their say on who they want to represent them at the County level as well.

Find out all the information you need about the election [here](#), which gives notice of the election as well as details about your candidates. There are outstanding Conservative candidates in every division and I urge you to support them to provide the strong leadership needed locally as well as nationally.

If you have not received your polling card informing you of your polling station, please contact West Oxfordshire District Council's election office [here](#).

Unfortunately, the deadline for registering to vote for these elections was Thursday, 14th April. However, please register to vote [here](#) so that you are able to vote in the General Election on Thursday, 8th June.



5. Small Business breakfast meeting



On my most recent constituency day, I held my quarterly breakfast meeting with local businesses, this time focusing on small and micro businesses. I greatly enjoy these meetings as a chance to discuss issues which are affecting businesses locally and nationally.

Our local businesses are key to ensuring that West Oxfordshire continues to grow and thrive. Their interests are a [priority](#) for me, as shown by my election, in my short time as your MP, as the [Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Small and Micro Business](#). Through my work with the [Federation of Small Businesses](#), I will continue to make an impact in Parliament, should I be chosen to remain your MP after the General Election on 8th June.

I hope to hold many more of these meetings in the future.

6. Sustainable House Building in West Oxfordshire

When I talk to people around the constituency, the message is clear. Communities understand the need for houses people can afford to live in, whether to rent or to buy. However, they must be the right houses in the right place, complementing not crowding existing towns and villages, both in terms of their architecture and facilities. In this way, we can achieve what I want to see in West Oxfordshire: that it remains the beautiful area we are lucky to have; unique, rural, tranquil – whilst providing homes for our young people at a price they can afford.

Any development must come with the appropriate roads, schools and shops which enable a community to develop. These developments must also be in keeping with the area

where they are built to ensure that West Oxfordshire remains the beautiful place that we all know and love, which is why I made this one of [my top priorities](#) on becoming your Member of Parliament.

[Ede Homes](#) are an excellent example of a family-run local business, who have been building high quality homes here in West Oxfordshire for over fifty years. By building small scale development in keeping with our towns and villages, we can ensure that we provide well-built sustainable homes which address our housing need.

I greatly enjoyed the chance to discuss Ede Homes' priorities as a local business and what can be done to produce homes for our children, whilst protecting West Oxfordshire's unique spirit.

On a further note, the public consultation on the Government's Housing white paper will close on Tuesday 2nd May. Even during this busy time, I shall certainly be contributing to ensure that my constituents views are heard. I would encourage you to do the same [here](#).



7. Historic England working to preserve West Oxfordshire's rich heritage



On this theme, I also met with [Historic England](#) in Burford to discuss how new development can be sympathetic to our historic towns and villages. We are lucky to live in an area as well-preserved and as rich in history as West Oxfordshire. It is essential that this is maintained for future generations.

Any developments must complement its existing setting. Historic England told me of their work to ensure that these developments will blend with existing buildings in the future, and I look forward to working with them closely, should I be re-elected on 8th June.

8. Working to improve broadband here in West Oxfordshire

Having met so many of you over the last few months, I am very familiar with the frustrations of inadequate broadband. This is a major concern for businesses in West Oxfordshire and for people needing access to services in our rural areas.

Since becoming your MP, I have worked hard to make progress on this important issue. I have raised this in Parliament [here](#) and [here](#), as well as having meetings on the issue. Only a couple of weeks ago [I met with Wurzel](#), a local rural broadband supplier, to discuss their business and possible ways to improve West Oxfordshire broadband coverage.

This week, I have met with BT to discuss their broadband rollout and the progress being made in West Oxfordshire, and what more can be done. I have further met with the Minister of State for Digital, Matt Hancock, who is responsible for broadband provision, once again stressing the need for improved coverage in West Oxfordshire. At present, the Witney constituency is approximately 90.5% covered by high speed broadband, which is on course to reach 97% by December 2017. We need high speed broadband throughout West Oxfordshire and I will continue to work hard until this is achieved.



9. Transport issues key to West Oxfordshire's future



This week, I attended an update meeting about the review into safety on the A34. Congestion is a major part of the issue, and West Oxfordshire residents will appreciate that the A40 junction is part of the overall problem. This is a key route which many West Oxfordshire residents rely on every day. It is essential that these changes are made, particularly as there have been a number of collisions near the Pear Tree roundabout. I am sure you all remember the awful crash on the A40 just after Christmas in 2016. Should I be re-elected in June, I will work with those writing this report to improve safety and congestion on the A34 and A40.

I have further met with the Secretary of State for Transport to again emphasise the need for dramatic improvements to the A40. For a former daily commuter to Oxford, I am all too aware of the frustration faced by residents and businesses daily. I will be campaigning strongly on gaining real long-lasting improvement in congestion on the A40, an essential route to the continued growth of West Oxfordshire.

10. Defence and the Armed Forces are essential to West Oxfordshire

As I am sure I have made clear in past editions of this newsletter, I am passionate about defence and the future of the armed forces here in West Oxfordshire. Attending the annual St George's day dinner at RAF Brize Norton last week, I was clearly reminded of how closely the base and people of Carterton work together.

I am a keen member of the APPG for the Armed Forces, regularly attending briefing meetings to discuss the future of the armed forces. I shall continue to promote the many businesses based at RAF Brize Norton, making West Oxfordshire a centre of the defence industry, as well as ensuring the welfare of our resident service personnel.



11. Want more?

This update contains just a snapshot of my work locally and in Westminster; I am of course very aware you will have big issues in your area (or on your mind) which I haven't covered and hope you know you can get in touch at any time. Much more also exists on [my website](#) and [YouTube](#).

For those wishing to share or print this newsletter, you can download it [here](#).

12. Get in touch!

You can also follow me [on Twitter](#) for instant updates on my work or find me [on Facebook](#) and join that community.

For any casework queries please email me at robert@robertcourts.co.uk.

You can also take a look at [my columns](#) written exclusively for the Witney Gazette.

Hope you are all doing well and I look forward to updating you on my work in my next newsletter.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Courts". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Robert Courts MP

MP for Witney

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Promoted by Dominic Coupe on behalf of Robert Courts both of 58-60 High Street, Witney OX28 6HJ.