With Parliament now in recess, it has been a real pleasure to spend more time at home in Exmouth with my family and to be out and about across the Exmouth and Exeter East constituency. Recess provides a valuable opportunity to focus on the constituency, meeting local people, visiting organisations and businesses, and hearing directly about the issues that matter most to our communities.

It has been another busy month, from visiting local charities and businesses to holding a Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) workshop and supporting community events across the constituency. Alongside my local work, I have continued campaigning on national issues including student finance, national resilience and support for our armed forces, while ensuring your views are heard both here at home and in Parliament.

As ever, if there is anything I can do to help then please do get in touch at david.reed.mp@parliament.uk or give my office a call on 01395 493213.

With warm regards and best wishes,

David

David Reed MP
Member of Parliament for Exmouth and Exeter East

Recent Highlights

Bluebird Care Visit

It was a pleasure to visit the team at Bluebird Care in Exmouth recently and hear more about the vital support they provide to people across our community.

Helping people remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible is something we should all support, and it was valuable to hear about both the opportunities and challenges facing the home care sector. We had a good discussion about workforce pressures, technology in care, and the importance of ensuring providers have the support they need to continue delivering high-quality care.

I am committed to supporting our health and social care sector as much as possible, and to ensuring that those delivering these essential services have the backing they need to continue their vital work.

Thank you to everyone at Bluebird Care for taking the time to meet with me, and for everything you do to support local people every day.

South West Blood Bikes

It was a great to welcome South West Blood Bikes to my constituency office.

Their volunteers give up their own time to transport blood, medical samples, medication and other urgent supplies for the NHS, providing an invaluable service to patients across the South West.

One issue they raised was that their riders and drivers are not currently permitted to use bus lanes in Devon, even when responding to urgent call outs. In places such as Exeter, congestion can add valuable minutes to these time critical journeys.

I have now written to Devon County Council asking it to consider allowing clearly marked South West Blood Bikes vehicles responding to live emergencies to use bus lanes, as already happens in some other parts of the country.

These volunteers provide an outstanding service to our NHS and local communities, and I hope the Council will give this proposal serious consideration.

Thank you to everyone at South West Blood Bikes for coming to see me and for sharing more about the remarkable work you do. I look forward to supporting your work in the future.

Local Government Reorganisation

The Government confirmed it will press ahead with its plans for Local Government Reorganisation in Devon.

This means Exmouth, Budleigh, Whimple and many other surrounding communities will become part of a new "Greater Exeter" unitary council.

I've consistently raised concerns about these proposals because they are being imposed despite many local people telling me they do not want to see these changes. My survey found that 60% of respondents opposed changing council boundaries, yet the Government has chosen to move ahead regardless. I am still keen to hear your views, which you can submit below.

Complete my Survey

Campaign Success: Dartmoor Ponies

Campaign success for Dartmoor's iconic ponies! This is a welcome victory for common sense.

Following a huge public campaign, backed by the Conservatives and more than 220,000 people, the Government has confirmed that Dartmoor ponies will no longer be counted towards livestock stocking rates. A new payment will also support those who keep these iconic animals on the moor.

Dartmoor's ponies are part of our landscape, our heritage and our rural way of life.

They should never have been put at risk by flawed policy.

Love Budleigh

It was a pleasure to speak at the Love Budleigh Membership Launch recently.

Love Budleigh plays an important role in bringing together local businesses, organisations and volunteers who do so much for the town. It was great to hear about their plans for the future, and thank you to everyone at Love Budleigh and the volunteers at Budleigh Information Centre for organising the event.

I'm looking forward to working with Love Budleigh to host a "Meet Your MP" talk and Q&A this autumn, giving people the opportunity to ask questions, raise local issues and discuss the priorities for Budleigh Salterton.

SEND Workshop

Few issues generate more letters and emails to my constituency office than special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Back in March, I promised to bring together parents, carers and professionals from across Exmouth and Exeter East to discuss the challenges facing local families. That workshop has now taken place, and almost 400 individual points were raised. What stood out was not how different people's experiences were, but how remarkably similar they were.

Across every discussion, one message came through consistently. Before creating a new system, government must fully understand why the current one is not delivering for so many families. Parents want legal timescales that are met, a consistent caseworker who understands their child's circumstances, and decisions based on need rather than the financial pressures facing local authorities.

I will ensure the experiences shared at this workshop inform the conversations I have with ministers and continue to raise the concerns that families have shared with me. It is essential that families have confidence any reforms will not leave children without the support they need, and that any changes are judged by whether they improve outcomes in practice.

If you have experience of SEND in Exmouth and Exeter East, whether positive or negative, I would still like to hear from you.

Nello's Longest Table

I was delighted to attend Nello's Longest Table with my family in Topsham as part of the Topsham Food Festival recently.

It was fantastic to see Fore Street, the Quay and Ferry Road transformed into one long community table, with thousands of people coming together to share locally sourced food, friendship and conversation. The event, inspired by the late Nello Ghezzo, is a wonderful celebration of everything that makes Topsham such a special place and raises money for local charities and community organisations.

A huge thank you to all the organisers, volunteers, and everyone who took part in making it such a memorable evening. It is fantastic to see what a success the event was, with 439 tables taking part and a tremendous amount of money raised for good causes.

Campaign Success - Coastguard Rescue Officers

The Government has confirmed it will abandon plans to cut the payments Coastguard Rescue Officers receive for training and callouts.

I backed the Save Our Service campaign from the start because I know how vital our Exmouth Coastguard Rescue Team is to keeping people safe along our coastline. I also raised this issue directly with the Minister in Parliament, pressing him to guarantee that any changes would not weaken our local Coastguard service.

This is a welcome victory for Coastguard Rescue Officers in Exmouth and across the country who made the case so powerfully, and for everyone who campaigned to protect this important service.

There is still more work to do to secure a long-term future for the service, but this is a significant step in the right direction.

In Parliament

Student Finance

I was really pleased to see the comments from the new Secretary of State for Education, regarding our student loan system.

I have argued for a long time that our student loan system is broken and in urgent need of reform, so I welcome her describing it as "egregious". No one is in a better position to deliver meaningful change, and I hope these words are now followed by action.

The cross party Treasury Select Committee recently reached much the same conclusion, publishing a highly critical report that found the current system is no longer fit for purpose. The Committee concluded that students were effectively mis sold their loans, criticising governments for comparing repayments to the cost of a mobile phone contract, failing to make clear that repayment terms could later be changed, and relying on exemptions from consumer protection law that leave borrowers with very limited legal recourse.

I have long argued that young people deserve far greater honesty about the debt they are taking on and what it will mean for their financial future. For many graduates, the system now functions less like a traditional loan and more like an additional tax, with nine per cent of earnings deducted for up to forty years. That makes it harder to save for a home, build a pension, start a family and get ahead.

The Committee also highlighted how successive governments have shifted more of the cost onto younger generations, recommending that the repayment threshold freeze be reversed to honour the commitments made to graduates. That would be a welcome first step, but it cannot be the end of the conversation.

There is now growing cross party recognition that the current system is unfair and unsustainable. I was pleased to work with rethink repayment as one of their lead sponsors to encourage colleagues to get behind a cross-party letter to the Chancellor with over 120 signatories, regarding the compounding financial pressure on recent graduates and early-career professionals, we need a student finance system that is transparent, sustainable and fair, and I will continue working with colleagues from across Parliament to help make that happen, which you can read here.

National Resilience

Recently, the Government published its Annual Statement on National Resilience. While it sets out ambition, I remain concerned that it lacks the concrete action needed to prepare Britain for growing national security threats.

Over the last few months, I have been focusing heavily on national resilience - our ability as a country to prepare for, respond to and recover from major emergencies, from floods and cyber attacks to threats against our critical national infrastructure.

Exmouth and Exeter East, like every community across the UK, depends on us being better prepared for future crises.

I recently held a debate in Parliament on national resilience, where I argued that we need to have a more honest conversation about the challenges we face and what is required from both the state and the public. Whether it is protecting our energy and food supplies, supporting our emergency services, or ensuring we can respond to major incidents, preparedness must become a national priority. You can watch the debate here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFrvc4_JPjo

I then travelled to Denmark to learn from their approach. Like Britain, Denmark has enjoyed decades of peace at home, but it has taken practical steps to strengthen its resilience. Its Ministry of Resilience and Preparedness helps coordinate government efforts and engage wider society in preparing for future challenges.

Resilience must be a whole-of-society effort. The Government is right to recognise the importance of public engagement, but today's statement still leaves too many unanswered questions about what will actually be done, who is responsible, and how progress will be measured.

As part of my role on the Shadow Defence team, I have been working on a number of projects and policy proposals recently. See below a snippet of what I have been up to:

Conservatives Plan for Reservists

Delighted to share that under the **Conservatives** plans, reservists will not pay tax on their first 30 days of annual service per year. This will save reservists up to £2,149 a year to help lighten the load of their service and reward them for their service to our country.

We are committed to expanding the reserves to 50,000 personnel and this policy will help recruit and retain service people.

Our policy is fully funded - we will restore the two child benefits cap and the money saved from the cap will go directly towards this policy as well as many other reforms we intend to make to strengthen Britain's armed forces.

Labour entered government in 2024 without any concrete plan and we are all including our armed forces - paying for such. Under Kemi's leadership, we will not make the same mistake.

Armed Forces Housing

Earlier this year I sat on the Armed Forces Bill where we pressed the Government on its promise to improve forces housing.

The Committee was assured that £9 billion had been allocated to refurbish and rebuild military homes, with ministers making clear the funding was "ring-fenced". That was a welcome commitment to our armed forces personnel.

The Defence Investment Plan broke that promise and has pushed hundreds of millions of spending into the next Parliament and out of the government's responsibility, resulting in major delays to work on 14,000 homes. The Sunday Times are now reporting that the figure has now increased to £3 billion.

The Labour Government is once again failing in its commitment to our armed forces.

Looking Ahead

July marks two years since I had the honour of being elected as the Member of Parliament for Exmouth and Exeter East.

Since then, my team and I have worked every day to be a strong local voice, helping constituents with individual cases, standing up for our farmers, campaigning for better banking services, holding South West Water to account and ensuring that new development is matched by the infrastructure our communities need, to name a few issues that I have worked on over the last two years.

I have met thousands of local people across every part of the constituency, and your ideas, concerns and experiences continue to shape the work I do both locally and in Parliament.

There is still much more to do, and I will continue working hard on the issues that matter most to our community.

Thank you for your support over the past two years. It remains a privilege to serve as your Member of Parliament. As always, if there is anything I can help with, please do get in touch.

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