

MEET YOUR MP Peter Gibson

I hold regular surgeries around the constituency. If you would like to arrange an appointment to discuss an issue of concern to you, please email me.



Parliamentary Business



My role in Parliament has gone beyond representing my constituents in the chamber. I have had the privilege during the last few months of being chosen to be a member of the Women and Equalities Select Committee, and to have sat on the Domestic Abuse Bill Committee.

On these committees I have been able to debate, scrutinise and amend Government policy to help the most vulnerable.

As a member of the Women and Equalities Select Committee, I have worked with colleagues from all parties to address inequalities across the UK. I have had the opportunity to question experts and Ministers on a variety of topics. I look forward to continuing this role and supporting some of the most vulnerable communities.

It was a privilege to serve on the Domestic Abuse Bill Committee, scrutinising this ground-breaking piece of legislation. I have met many

victims of domestic abuse, each with a moving personal story of their ordeal, and I wanted to ensure this Bill delivered for all of them. I was glad to support this Bill as it brought forward important legislation after much delay over the previous year.

Sadly, I am all too aware of the impact that abuse can have on a family. We are lucky to have incredible organisations in Darlington that support all victims of abuse, and I will continue to fight to ensure they have all the support they need to plan into the future. ■



Darlington Support Group



In March, the Coronavirus Support for Vulnerable Darlington group was formed to coordinate voluntary support to assist our community through lockdown and self-isolation.

This year did not begin as we all expected, and I know a lot of people across Darlington are still suffering from the impact of Covid-19. So many in the community faced challenges in accessing basic things like shopping and prescriptions so the support extended by Coronavirus Support for Vulnerable Darlington proved a vital lifeline. The transformation of this group into Darlington Support is an exciting prospect. With the aim of continuing the coordination of volunteers, providing a long-term support network for the town's vulnerable and helping with community projects, the group can help to improve our town. Peter said: "Being involved with groups like these is so rewarding and the potential benefit this particular group is going to have for our community is immense". Darlington came together in the face of the coronavirus, differences were put aside, and many continue to work with each other to ensure that, as a town, Darlington can fight through this. ■

Peter Gibson

Member of Parliament for Darlington

DARLINGTON COMES TOGETHER



The challenges each and every resident of Darlington has faced over recent months has been significant.

We all had our part to play in helping to turn the tide against Covid-19, whether you are a doctor or nurse on the frontline, a keyworker ensuring vital services could remain open, a

parent teaching their children at home or any of the myriad of other crucial tasks that helped us get through. I would like to personally thank every one of you for your commitment to our community across the town this year. We have all helped each other, whether that be shopping for a neighbour or collecting a prescription or fundraising for NHS charities.

It has been a difficult few months, but it has also shown the best of us and what can be achieved when we come together for the common good. As we look now to the future, it is about how we build back better than before, how we harness that collective energy and ensure that Darlington is truly one of the best places in the country to live. ■

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Train Station Redevelopment

In March, Chancellor Rishi Sunak announced in his first Budget that the redevelopment plan for Darlington railway station will be approved and fully funded.

£80 Million has been awarded to the project to upgrade Darlington Station, which will improve rail travel across Darlington and the North East. The proposed plan will create a brand-new local station and train platform which will see rail capacity increase by more than 300%.

An increase in capacity across the region will mean that everyone in Darlington will be able to take advantage of up to 8 trains an hour into Teesside

This is a long overdue project which will put more trains on the local lines, cut journey times, improve regional transport links, and give visitors an incredible welcome to Darlington and our area.

Along with a wider redevelopment of the Victoria road area, the redevelopment of Darlington station sets to revitalise a beloved part of our town and ensure that Darlington continues to be a vital stopping point along the east coast mainline whilst maintaining great links with the rest of the region.



Locomotion No. 1

Locomotion No. 1 has spent the last two centuries in Darlington, spending its working life running from Darlington to Stockton, then on display for public consumption since its working life ended.

Locomotion No. 1 is a part of what makes Darlington special. The

Engine features in our Coat of Arms, the badge on our football kits and it is incorporated into buildings, monuments, and structures across our town. Darlington's MP, Peter Gibson, and Council Leader, Heather Scott, have called for the Engine to remain in Darlington as part of our

Bi-centennial celebrations of the creation of the steam train. Peter Gibson said:

"The decision to move the engine, without thought or scrutiny, is nothing less than cultural vandalism. As we approach the bicentenary of the engine's first journey, it is more important than ever that we protect our history as the birthplace of the railways."

It is widely accepted that the Pease family wished for the engine to remain in Darlington to celebrate the town's culture, and that is what I wish to achieve. Circumstance and accident are the only reason the train is currently not in legal ownership of the town itself. Peter Gibson has committed to fight in the campaign to keep Locomotion No. 1 in Darlington and will continue to lobby on behalf of the town, continuing to meet with ministers. Mr Gibson even managed to ask a question in PMQs, where the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, pledged his support for Locomotion No. 1 remaining in Darlington. ■



Local Business Support

Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Conservative Government has set out a number of measures to ensure that businesses of all sizes are supported to enable them to tackle the impact of the virus.

There have been significant challenges for businesses across the UK in 2020, and businesses are still now looking at innovative ways in which to engage with their consumers as we continue to tackle the ongoing pandemic. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, has enabled over 12,000 people to be furloughed across Darlington, supporting businesses and employees alike. The popular Eat Out To Help Out Scheme, aimed at supporting the hospitality sector saw over 50,000 meals purchased across the town.

Peter has hosted a number of virtual forums with members of the local business community to gain an understanding of the challenges they are facing and what the Government can do to assist them and limit the impact of Covid-19 as much as possible.



When asked, Peter said: "I could not have been more pleased with the series of schemes which the Chancellor implemented. Schemes such as the Small Business Grant, the Local Authority Discretionary Grant and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme have ensured businesses across the country have had access to the funds they needed to weather the recent difficulties."

The Government has also implemented further measures which aim to help businesses recover for

the long-term. These include Business Rates relief for companies operating in the retail, hospitality, leisure, and childcare sectors, worth £11 billion. £1.25 billion in support for innovative firms. A new £2 billion pound Kickstart Scheme is due to launch shortly, which will help to create hundreds of thousands of jobs for young people across the country and this will be paired with large scale investment in training, with additional funding for apprenticeships, traineeships and sector-based academy placements. ■



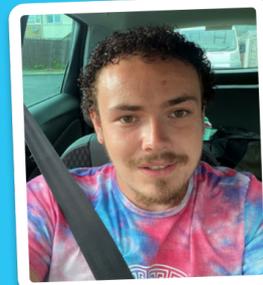
Dave, Taylor and Toby

Father, Dave and his sons, Taylor and Toby, bravely shaved their heads to raise money for the NHS.



Stacy Flinn

When the Heineken Race to the Castle was cancelled, Stacey did not put her training to waste but still took on the 100km challenge, exchanging moorland, rivers, and woodland for the streets of Darlington and raising over £1,000 for Parkinson's.



Jamie Johnson

From baking a loaf of bread for every neighbour on his street, to lighting up his house in blue to show the support for the NHS and collecting food and medication on behalf of his neighbours, Jamie has been a true example of community spirit in Darlington.

Lily Israel

Raising money for the NHS by running a half marathon in fancy dress, using a different fancy dress costume each day and surpassing her initial goal of £100 by raising an amazing total of £2,183.75. What an inspirational young girl.



Millie Cadman

A very brave little girl who stayed with her grandmother so her parents could continue their work in the NHS, wrote a beautiful poem in support of the staff teams in the NHS.



Sarah Garbutt

Organised a fun run on the street to raise money for St Teresa's Hospice. Hoping that at least 10 neighbours would take part, it is fantastic that about 20 took part, with more supporting and raised £2,385.49. What fantastic community spirit.

Town Centre Fund

In September 2019, the government invited 100 places, including Darlington, to develop proposals for a Town Deal as part of the £3.6 billion Towns Fund.

The Towns Fund is part of the government's plan for levelling up the UK economy. Towns across England will work with the Government to address growth

constraints and to ensure there is a course of recovery from the impact of COVID-19.

Having met twice in July, the town deal board, on which Peter Gibson sits as a member, has created and submitted a Town Investment Plan.

Darlington submitted its TIP, seeking £25M funding, in the first cohort of towns at the end of July 2020.

On the 1st July 2020 Darlington received an offer of £1,000,000 grant funding from Government to fund capital projects targeted for delivery in 2020/21. This grant is to be used to support capital spend.

The Conservatives continue to invest in our region and now, with more Conservative MPs elected than ever, the benefits are really beginning to surface. Investment from the Government in our local economies will allow not only Darlington, but the entire area to thrive. ■

