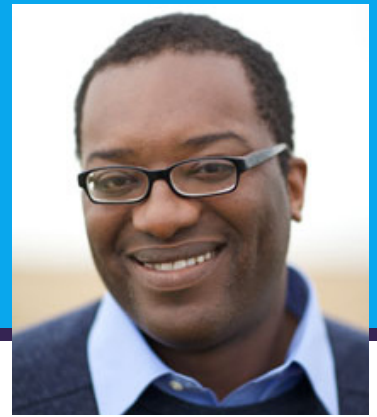


Kwasi Kwarteng MP

a Year in Review

To the Spelthorne Conservative Association AGM 2014



From Westminster

It is hard to imagine that the next general election is now just a little over a year away. Time has flown by.

In 2010, the Government made it clear that sorting out Britain's finances was its priority this parliament.

In 2013, government policies started to bear fruit. Between July and September, the economy grew by 0.8%, faster than the US, Japan and Germany. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to grow complacent. Small businesses, which will create the wealth and jobs we need long term, still need greater support. In June, I published a report arguing that small companies and start-ups should be exempted from business taxes for three years.

In July, I left the Transport Select Committee after three years. I subsequently joined the Work and Pensions Committee. Over £200bn – nearly a third of the Budget – is spent on social protection. Being on this Committee gives me an opportunity to scrutinize where and how this money is being spent.



With Helen Hicks, winner of the Spelthorne Business Plan Competition 2013

In December, the Davies Commission shortlisted a third runway to the north-west of Heathrow as one of three options that could be implemented to expand UK airport capacity. The Commission will make a final recommendation in June 2015.

Flooding

The Borough was deeply affected by flooding over the winter. Flood levels reached a height not seen since the great floods of 1947. There are questions as to why the response to the flooding was not as quick as it could have been, about who is accountable for reacting in a flooding situation and about issues of communication. I have been in regular contact with

Thames Water, the Council and the Environment Agency, and I am working hard to get to the bottom of things. It is important that steps are taken now to ensure that the events we witnessed do not happen again.



Assessing the flood damage at Nauticalia, Shepperton

Spelthorne Business Plan Competition

To promote local enterprise, I launched the Spelthorne Business Plan Competition in July. The idea was inspired by a visit to Brookland's College I made in December 2011, when I met students with lots of exciting ideas and practical skills.

The final took place at BP Sunbury just before Christmas. It was a brilliant community event and a great celebration of the Borough's business life. The overall winner was Helen Hicks, from Sunbury, for her plan to provide a professional pet funeral service for bereaved pet owners. She received £3500 in prize money and her business is developing well.

Elections

In September, I was very pleased to be reselected as the Conservative candidate for Spelthorne. It is an absolute privilege to represent this great Borough in Westminster. I am looking forward to fighting a vigorous election campaign.

The European elections are edging closer. Given that we are a party of Government and have failed to provide a referendum on Europe, which I and many others want to see, there could be a backlash. Local campaigning will be challenging. We must stick together and engage the electorate to arouse the support that runs deep locally and get people to the ballot box ticking Conservative. I will be out canvassing most Friday evenings; details of where I will be are sent out in the Spelthorne eNewsletter.

Out and About

Being in Spelthorne is a part of my role that I enjoy immensely. On Fridays and at weekends, I address residents' issues during my weekly surgery, visit sites across Spelthorne and generally get a feel for what is happening. Here are some of the places that I went to over the last year.

Stanwell Rose Community Centre

In early March 2014, I visited the Stanwell Rose Community Centre, which opened in September. The Centre has already proved to be a significant addition to the area and it is fantastic to see the impact it is having on the local community. Residents have been very positive and the Centre's many events and sessions are already reaching out to a wide variety of people in Stanwell.



In Stanwell, March 2014



At Mars FM, March 2013

MARS FM

In late March 2013, I visited Mars FM, Matthew Arnold School's student run radio station. The DJs were very professional and enthusiastic. They asked me some good questions during a live interview and it was a pleasure to take part.



At St Michael's, July 2013

St Michael Catholic Primary School

In July, I visited St Michael's Catholic Primary School in Ashford. I met Miss Beirne, the Headteacher, and toured the classrooms to meet pupils and talk about my job in Parliament. The School is a very happy place, in the classroom and in the playground. It was also good to see that achievement in sport and in the classroom is readily celebrated and rewarded.

BP Community Day

BP first moved into the Borough in 1917. They are a major local employer. Over 5000 people now work at their Sunbury HQ in 55 different teams to support almost every part of BP's capabilities: scientific, technical, marketing and commercial. In June, I attended the company's Global Community Day, which brings staff together to showcase the breadth of their activities. The event was a very useful way to better understand what BP does.



At BP, Sunbury, June 2013

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