

WESTMINSTER REPORT

November 2011

FROM DAMIAN COLLINS MP



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KEEP ON-STREET PARKING FREE

On-street parking should continue to be free for those who want to visit and shop in our town centres, according to local MP Damian Collins.



Free time-limited on street parking in the centre of Folkestone, Sandgate, Hythe and New Romney - as it is now - encourages people to use and support local businesses at a time when they are recovering from the economic downturn.

The MP was responding to Shepway District Council's proposed parking strategy for the district, which sets out plans to introduce varying levels of charges to free up spaces and encourage greater use of off-street car parks.

Damian Collins said: "I believe it is vitally important for our local economy to be able to drive into and park freely on the street in the centre of our towns, without having to worry about charges and the inconvenience of getting a ticket.

"The council does need to address the issue of residents being unable to park close to their homes and to encourage greater turnover of vehicles, but this should not be at the expense of our high street shops.

"I have put my concerns to Shepway Council" -

Damian Collins MP

"If you need to go into town to quickly pick up some shopping and run a few errands, then that should be encouraged.

"People are understandably concerned about what some of the unintended consequences of these proposals might be and I would encourage everyone to respond by taking part in the public consultation.

"I have put my concerns to Shepway council and they have assured me that they will be given serious consideration as part of the consultation."

Shepway District Council will be rolling out their public consultation programme from January, details of which will be announced. If approved the scheme would be launched in three phases, with the first in Folkestone from April 2012.

PRAISE FOR COASTWATCH



Damian with members of the NCI and the Viscount De L'Isle

Damian Collins was present at a special ceremony to see the National Coastwatch Institution receive the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

He said: "We are fortunate locally to have so many individuals and organisations who give up their time to help others. "All of this work deserves recognition, but it is a matter for particular local pride when any organisation from our community receives a national award." The station, based at Copt Point, is manned by volunteers throughout the year.



■ A Seabrook lady has thanked Damian Collins for his support after she won the right to stay in the country and avoid facing possible threats in Zimbabwe. Lydia Werrett, 88, received national media attention after she was originally ordered to leave Britain. She arrived in 2003 when Mugabe's henchmen seized her family farm.

BELOW: Give EU powers back to Britain

Out & about

with DAMIAN COLLINS MP



Damian at the Coastwatch station

GIVE EU POWERS BACK TO BRITAIN

Britain should be part of the European Union but needs to renegotiate its membership, including repatriating some of its powers.

That is the belief of Damian Collins after he voted with the Government against a motion to hold a referendum on the EU issue.

The Folkestone and Hythe representative said: "Our relationship with Europe should be more like it was when we joined the Common Market in the 1970s.

"The EU has encroached too far into our national life. Many of the rules and regulations it has given us are holding Britain back, frustrating us with red tape and adding costs to business.

"The European single market is important for our trade, although we must do much more to build up customers for our products around the world; particularly with other countries in the Commonwealth and new markets like China and Brazil."

He said it is important to know what powers could be repatriated back to the UK before a proper debate could be had on whether to stay or leave:

"The motion in parliament would most probably not have given us a referendum for about two years and it would most likely have been on a completely different question to the one we debated."



■ Damian Collins hosted a Q&A session with school pupils from across Romney Marsh as part of Democracy Week. Topics covered included play facilities, school travel, tuition fees and employment opportunities. The MP told the students that attracting investment into the area to create jobs is his top priority, including a new power station at Dungeness.



■ Damian Collins joined staff at Asda in Bouverie Place, Folkestone for their Tickled Pink campaign. Donations are raised from selling pink versions of household products with the money split equally between two charities - Breast Cancer Care and Breast Cancer Campaign. The campaign has raised more than £25million since it started 15 years ago.



■ Romney Marsh Physiotherapy Centre has been officially reopened after gaining an open-access NHS contract. Damian Collins cut the ribbon in front of patients and guests and said that GP commissioning will make it easier to receive care locally and conveniently. The new premises are at the historic Oak House in the High Street.

If you'd like to let **Damian Collins** know about your organisation or an event in the area please get in touch using the contact details below.

DAMIAN COLLINS MP

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TheyWorkForYou is a website where you can look at Damian's voting record or sign up to receive an e-mail whenever he speaks in Parliament. Just go to: www.theyworkforyou.com/mp/damian_collins/folkestone&hythe

