

School money

I had a meeting with the Schools Minister this week in the House of Commons to push again for more money for Wokingham and West Berkshire schools. I also asked for explanations of some individual schools budgets now that I have the actual figures that Wokingham Borough are sending to the schools, as well as the indicative budget figures which the government had provided. The Minister has promised to get back to me over the detailed queries, so I will keep you posted.

Public borrowing forecasts were far too gloomy

Yesterday we got news that the total net borrowing of the public sector was £42.6bn. This compares with the March 2017 budget forecast of £58.3bn. So the result was £15.7bn or 27% lower than forecast.

This reflects the general gloomy bias of official forecasts. It does matter, because Ministers rely on these forecasts to make spending and tax decisions. If forecasts are unrealistically gloomy they can also adversely affect confidence and outlook.

The public sector net cash requirement was similarly overstated in the Budget estimates.

I understand the difficulty of getting these forecasts exactly right, but they should strive to offer realistic forecasts.

England and St George

Yesterday I was invited to give a short talk at a St George's Day reception in Parliament. Present were representatives of the Royal Society of St George.

I began by commenting that England to many in Parliament is the forgotten country. England is so often unassuming and quiet. It was perhaps fitting that this particular event should take place the day after St George's day as if an afterthought, however much it was uppermost in the minds of its keenest supporters. Events and bookings had conspired to let England take her place a

day late.

April 23rd is memorable not just as England's special day, but also as Shakespeare's birthday. The conjunction reminds us of some of the richness of drama and literature that England has shared with the world. Our ancestors have been bold and enterprising, innovative and entertaining. We have given many sports, cultural events and technologies to the world, and have been greatly engaged in exploring and bringing together the trading empires and outposts of our globe.

In recent years Labour did its best to fracture the United Kingdom with its lop sided devolution. England has accepted this settlement, where Scotland has a Parliament, Wales and Northern Ireland have Assemblies, and England has no such recognition. The last government went half way to tackling the injustice in Parliament by preventing the Union Parliament from forcing onto England a law its MPs do not want, but fell short of giving us the complementary power to propose and advance legislation that England wants without needing the consent of the rest of the Union Parliament.

I did not renew my vows on a new English constitutional settlement in the 2017 election, because the priority is Brexit. That is constitutional change enough for one Parliament. The people of England voted for Brexit by a larger majority than the people of the whole Union. England now expects their Union government to deliver.

National Consultation with the States/UTs on Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Swasthya Suraksha Mission (PMRSSM)

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare organized a National consultation with States/UTs to seek feedback on draft guidelines for implementing PMRSSM, on 23rd April, 2018 at New Delhi. The workshop was attended by CEOs of the State Health Agency, State Nodal Officers and Senior IT officials of the state agencies.

[Go to Source](#)

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[P.P. Chaudhary in St. Vincent and Grandines, calls on Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves](#)

Shri PP Chaudhary, Union Minister of State, Ministry of Law and Justice & Corporate Affairs, Government of India is currently on an official visit to St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Barbados. On the first day of his visit, Shri PP Chaudhary met Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr. The Honourable Ralph Everard Gonsalves.

[Go to Source](#)

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