



## Slow Broadband in 'Tech City'

I represent most of Old Street's Silicon Roundabout – or Tech City, as we are now encouraged to call it. You would assume that any Tech City worthy of the name would have 100% superfast broadband. I was shocked therefore to hear that some of the cutting edge digital businesses in Tech City are still struggling with ridiculously slow broadband – because BT does not think it is commercially viable to upgrade their copper cables.

When the Tories came to power in 2010, David Cameron gave a Tech City speech, promising that “British Telecom has agreed to bring forward the roll-out of superfast broadband in the area, so you have some of the fastest internet speeds in the whole of Europe”.

Five years later, some businesses do have superfast broadband – but some still don't.

I visited some of the companies in February. One film company – where it can take all day to upload a 2 ½ minute film – said it was quicker to send high quality sound files to Covent Garden by bicycle than via their broadband connection. They need their products to be high quality – they send Rolex ads to Switzerland. Tech City should not be



having to rely on Game of Thrones ravens or a carrier pigeon to do business!

Another was a property company – they had agreed to pay BT several hundred pounds a month for their own leased line, but two months after moving in they still had no broadband and no phones.

**On 11 February, in an adjournment debate in Parliament I pressed the Government to take a stronger line with BT on this issue.**

Nine hours to upload one short film is ridiculous. And waiting two months for BT to connect a cable is beyond a joke. This just isn't good enough – BT have infrastructure which was once a public asset, the least we can expect is that they provide superfast broadband to Tech City.

# Angel RBS finally opens to the public

After more than 2 years of persistent lobbying, including a trip up to RBS HQ in Edinburgh, to doorstep on of the Directors. I have persuaded RBS to open the gardens in the centre of their building by the Angel to the public.

The gardens, which have been closed to the public for over a decade, will be open from Monday to Saturday 8am until 4pm.

On Friday 13 February I officially opened the gardens and was joined by Angel AIM, local councillors, the Islington Association, local resident associations, the Islington Pensioners Forum and local residents.

Given the lack of open space in Islington opening this garden in central Islington is very important and I am grateful to RBS for finally opening this to the public.



I will continue to lobby RBS and their landlord the Prudential to allow the front of the building to be used as retail space. The building was designed with that in mind and yet it has never happened.

## Crossrail Coffee Evening

On Monday 16 February I organised a coffee evening for resident in Farringdon and Charterhouse Square to discuss the Crossrail development which will run through the constituency.

We were joined by three members of the Crossrail team: : Linda Miller, Farringdon Project Manager; Simon Bennett, Crossrail Programme Community Relations Manager and Wendy Franks, Community Relations Officer and about 40 residents.

There was a presentation on the works that are currently underway and the Crossrail team fielded questions about how the station will affect users and the local community.



all those who came found it helpful and informative.

I have written to those who attended to encourage them to stay in contact with Crossrail and to attend the regularly community liaison meetings.

# Local and National Campaigning

The General Election is 77 days away! With the long campaign well and truly underway local activists and I have been out campaigning in wards, knocking and dropping our Introductory Letter.

We must not forget that while we have an excellent result in the local elections the majority in Islington South and Finsbury is only 3,569, smaller than most of Labour's target seats around the country.

I have been out in Clerkenwell and Canonbury over weekends with activists and in Canonbury, Barnsbury, St Mary's and Bunhill on several occasions during the day and on weekday evenings.

Most wards are about a third of the way through the delivery and knock and drop of their long campaign letters.

I have also been campaigning in the key seat of Ealing Central, with Rupa Huq and will be joining Catherine West in Hornsey and Woodgreen on the 28 February and 28 March.



**Please put May 7th in your diary and do all you can to ensure you're available for the whole day.**



## Fundraising and Events

With the General Election campaign to cost about £20,000 raising money to fund it is essential.

**General Election Launch Party on Wednesday 18 March** at St James' Church Crypt with a canvass session starting at 6pm. Tickets are £20 waged/£5 unwaged. Pub Quiz, speeches, bring and share supper.

**Fundraising Dinner at Fredericks on Sunday 22 March** with Yvette Cooper and Grayson Perry. Tickets are selling fast and are £95 each. **Please email [funds@islingtonlabour.org.uk](mailto:funds@islingtonlabour.org.uk) for more information.**



Dates and locations of future canvassing times can be found at [islingtonlabour.org.uk/events](http://islingtonlabour.org.uk/events) and I will email around with the dates of when I'll be joining wards each week.

# My Diary - January/February 2015

## Constituency and Parliamentary Work

- Held regular surgeries at the Town Hall and St Luke's Community Centre
- Held a coffee morning in Holloway
- Met with 'Tech City' companies about broadband coverage
- Met with the Peel Centre
- Hosted Laycock Primary School in Parliament for a tour and Q&A
- Attended the anniversary memorial service for a constituent who was murdered 2 years ago
- Opened the Angel RBS Gardens
- Hosted a coffee evening for constituents affected by the Crossrail development at Farringdon
- Met with Unison and Eversheds to discuss my Equal Pay campaign
- Secured an Adjournment Debate in Parliament to press the Government on improving Broadband connections at 'Tech City'

## Media Appearances

- Appeared on Sunday Politics regional show
- Met with Isobel Hardman from the Spectator
- LBC on child abuse, London Live on Tech City debate

- Received coverage of the Broadband Adjournment debate in the Telegraph, Evening Standard and specialist tech magazines.

## Campaigning

- Canvassing locally in St Mary's, Clerkenwell, Barnsbury, Canonbury and Bunhill
- Campaigning nationally in Ealing Central and Acton
- Had meetings with my election agent to discuss the budget and structure of the campaign
- Met with the Fundraising Committee to arrange auction and raffle prizes and organise ticket sales
- Met with the CLP's campaign committee to discuss the short campaign, fundraising and election day
- Had meetings to draft the first of three election addresses.

Tom sends out emails each week with details of upcoming campaigning. If you are not receiving these, please email him on: [tom@islingtonlabour.org.uk](mailto:tom@islingtonlabour.org.uk) or call him on 0755 711 5196.

You can also contact the office about campaigning on 0207 607 8373