



Andrew Dismore Member of Parliament for Hendon

Constituency Report #9
25th October – 21st November 2006

House of Commons and Westminster

The new session of Parliament began on the 15th November, with the Queen's Speech. The key issues in the **Queen's Speech** were security, with reference to reform of the criminal law and sentencing policy; and climate change. There may be a further Counter Terrorism Bill, but this will depend on the outcome of the review currently underway. If you would like to see a copy of the Queen's Speech, which lists most of the Bills which will be brought before the House in the next Parliamentary year, please [click here](#).

The key political issue towards the end of the last session of Parliament was the proposed change in respect of **faith schools**, to require such schools to admit 25% of students from another, or no, faith. This caused an enormous furore, and I received large quantities of emails and letters, particularly from the Roman Catholic and Jewish communities in the constituency. I was heavily involved in lobbying over this issue, meeting with the Secretary of State and many others to discuss it. You will soon be able to see my separate report on this issue on my website, just [click here](#) and then click on **Faith Schools Oct 06**.

In the last session of Parliament, I spoke twice in the House. Firstly, during the debate on **immigration policy**, based around the Home Affairs Select Committee report on this issue. I spoke about the change in immigration rules, which prevent highly skilled migrants settling in the UK after four years, being now required to wait five years. This has led to considerable injustice, for those who were here already and are now caught by the rules being changed retrospectively. For my speech [click here](#).

I also spoke in Parliament about the proposed reductions in the **budgets for MPs to communicate with constituents**, as a consequence of new rules being brought in. This will inevitably mean that I am not able to communicate as well as in the past, despite the introduction of a new 'communications allowance', planned from April next year. This will be far less than my present budget, seriously inhibiting my ability to keep people up to date. If you would like to see my speech [click here](#).

The **Joint Committee on Human Rights** continues its work. We called before us the Lord Chancellor, Lord Falconer, and Home Office Minister, Baroness Scotland, to discuss their respective departments' **reviews of the Human Rights Act**. The transcript of the session can be seen on the Select Committee website [click here](#).

We have now started our inquiry into the treatment of asylum seekers, with our first evidence session, where we heard from the NGOs. Again, the transcript of evidence can be seen on the Committee website [click here](#).

We published a **report** the day before the Queen's Speech, commenting on the reviews, and expressing concerns about various aspects of the **Home Office's reform proposals** in the Queen's Speech. To see our report [click here](#).

We also visited, for one day, **Northern Ireland**, meeting statutory, non-governmental, and academic organisations involved in human rights issues in Northern Ireland.

As chair of a Select Committee, I am also an *ex officio* member of the powerful **Liaison Committee**, the 'Committee of Committee Chairs'. We held an evidence session, with **Jack Straw MP**, the Leader of the House, to look at various aspects of improving scrutiny by Parliamentarians of Government business.

On wider issues, as chair of the **London Group of Labour MPs**, I organised meetings for the London Group with **Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Ian Blair**, where we particularly focused on developments in community policing; and with **Lord Warner**, the **Health Minister for London**, looking at NHS finances and proposed reconfigurations in the capital.

I also chaired the **Chinese in Britain** All-Party Group meeting, looking at issues relating to education, and met with a number of Chinese leaders, who are developing a network to increase involvement of the Chinese community in public life.

As you will be aware from my previous report, I recently visited **Cyprus** on a study visit as vice chair of the Friends of Cyprus group. During the last month I briefed Foreign Office officials, the Europe Minister's special adviser, and the Foreign Affairs Committee clerk, on my report after the visit. I also reported back to a Friends of Cyprus meeting and attended the Cypriot Brotherhood dinner, where I also spoke.

I met with **Transport for London to discuss road schemes**. In our area, the roads for which they are responsible are the A1, the A41, and the A406.

I briefly met with **Barnet Refugee Service** who were visiting Westminster; and the **WWF**. I attended the **LFI** briefing, updating on the Middle East. I attended the annual lunch of **Labour Friends of India**, of which I am also vice chair.

I also attended the lecture given by the **Greek Prime Minister**, Dr Karamanlis, at the London School of Economics.

Finally, at Westminster, I have started preliminary work on a new campaign, to achieve justice for the victims of British colonial authorities during the **Kenya emergency** in the 1950s. Terrible stories of ill treatment, torture, and indeed murder have started to come out, and I believe this is an issue that we as Parliamentarians ought to take seriously. I am presently at a very early stage in this

campaign.

I have sponsored and signed the usual wide range of **Early Day Motions**, to see them [click here](#).

To see my written **Parliamentary questions** use the [Parliamentary Search Engine](#), which you can use to see them all, or just those that you have a particular interest in.

Constituency

At this time of year, I pay great attention to the issue of **Remembrance**. I believe it is very important that we support the British Legion's efforts in this respect, and as usual, I spent a Saturday afternoon **poppy selling**, on this occasion in ASDA. I also attended the Remembrance Ceremony at **Mill Hill Cemetery**, at the Dutch War Graves. I attended the Remembrance Day service at **Edgware war memorial** this year, accompanying the local Royal British Legion, Edgware branch. I attended the **AJEX** service at Edgware synagogue.

This time of year, we have many festivals for our various minority communities, and I attended the Labour Party's parties, which we held for Diwali and Eid, both of which were well attended. I also held separate discussion meetings for Hindus and Muslims at my constituency office, meetings which I hold annually this time of year. In this connection I was also very pleased to visit 2 local primary schools to present the winners of my greetings card competitions **Barnfield School** whose pupil Alex Ronan won the Diwali card design and **Courtland School** whose pupil Eni Ayodele won the Eid card design. I will be announcing the other winners soon. If you would like to see the winning designs, they will soon be on my website [here](#).

I also visited **Hasmonean High School**, to speak to the sixth forms at both the boys and girls schools.

I met with the Chief Executive of **Royal Free Hospital** to discuss developments there.

I also met with the Leader and Chief Executive of **Barnet Council** to discuss matters of concern locally.

Media

As usual, I issued a range of press releases which you may be interested in seeing on my website. This is an opportunity to see short comments from me on a variety of matters. During this period I issued press releases on the following subjects:

- [Dismore speaks up for highly skilled migrants](#)
- [Dismore explains expenses](#)
- [Dismore raises cancer care for Hendon residents](#)
- [Dismore welcomes extra cash for Barnet Schools](#)
- [MP pledges to fight illegal dumping](#)
- [Dismore urges sports clubs to make Olympic sized savings](#)

- [Dismore supports Alexandra Palace](#)
- [Dismore backs Road Safety Week](#)

As far as media appearances were concerned, I appeared on **Channel 4**, to talk about terrorism and human rights; the Daily Politics Show on **BBC 2**, to discuss religious hatred and the British National Party; the **David Starkey** programme on More 4, where we discussed a number of issues during the hour's programme; I appeared on **Shalom FM**; and in relation to the JCHR report on the Government's review of human rights, I appeared on **Sky, Radio 5**, several **local radio** stations, and in print in the **Guardian**. The report was also extensively covered in the Times and Independent.

I was quoted in the **Jewish Chronicle** over the issue of faith schools.

I appeared in the **Sun** on two separate occasions and the **Evening Standard**, with quotes concerning the employment of Abu Hamza's son by London Underground and also by Westminster Council.

Finally, and last but not least, I received extensive coverage over my claim for allowances for post and stationery, featuring in the **Times**, the **Daily Express**, the **Mail on Sunday**, and even **Private Eye**!

(Incidentally, full explanations are given both in the speech I made in Parliament on the issue, see above, and in earlier press releases on the website).

The full range of press releases I have issued to the local and specialist press can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

I would be very interested to hear any feedback on the issues raised in this report. I have now started a series of occasional meetings for constituents, on Sunday afternoons, to receive feedback, both from these reports and more generally on what is going on in and around the constituency. Please let me know if you would like to have invitations to such events, which will be held at my constituency office next to the Town Hall in Hendon. To register your interest, email me with your name and address; just [click here](#).

I hope that you have found this report of interest, and if you would like to receive my specific subject based reports just [click here](#). If you have any comments, please do not hesitate to let me know by emailing me at updates@hendonlabourparty.com.

If you have any friends or neighbours in Hendon who might be interested in this report, please feel free to send it to them. If they would like to be added to my email list please ask them to email updates@hendonlabourparty.com.

I hope from this report you will see that, like most MPs, I had a pretty busy summer, and did not spend more than a statutory couple of weeks away from my duties.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Dismore
Member of Parliament for Hendon

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