

Churches Update

News from Rosie Cooper MP

Issue 1

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Welcome to my first Churches Newsletter—I hope you enjoy it.

Since becoming MP for West Lancashire, I have enjoyed visiting many different churches in the district and have always been touched by the warm reception I get at each of them.

Faith has always played a big part in my life and I believe it has an ever-increasingly important role to play in our society.

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I have a fully staffed constituency office when I am in Parliament. Any queries you have my staff are more than happy to help!

Cemetery for West Lancashire

I am delighted to announce that following my three year campaign, West Lancashire is to finally get a new cemetery and crematorium.

The lack of burial spaces across the district has been of immense concern to many of you, and I have spoken to local clergy who are now relieved that plans are now in the pipeline for Pippin Street, Burscough.

The news means that grieving families will no longer have to go outside the district to bury their loved ones - and face an added 'death tax' into the bargain for being non-residents.

This is a fantastic result for the people of West Lancs. It's taken three years of hard campaigning to get this far and it has been an absolute scandal that it has come to a point where there are no burial spaces left in the district. But when I was elected in 2005, I made this issue a number one priority and am over the moon the wheels are now starting to turn.

However, I want people reassure people in Skelmersdale I firmly believe the town should have its own facilities and that any opportunities there should be fully exploited. Negotiations have already begun on this and there is no reason why the district couldn't accommodate two new burial grounds. The council, after years of washing its hands of the situation by saying it wasn't obliged to provide a cemetery, seems to have finally grasped the nettle it has a moral obligation to allow people who have lived and contributed to West Lancs to be laid to rest here.



Supporting Fairtrade in West Lancashire and in Parliament

Since becoming MP for West Lancashire, I have campaigned for and supported the widespread use of Fairtrade products.

Recently, I asked a question on the issue at the weekly Prime Minister's Question Time. It concerned the fact that West Lancashire District Council would not consider becoming a Fairtrade authority.

I told the House: *"In Fairtrade fortnight, we congratulate those towns and parish councils that have managed to achieve Fairtrade status. They should be supported. Will the Prime Minister join me in congratulating them? However, in my area, West Lancs District Council, a Tory council, is reluctant to participate and has absolutely rejected the idea, on the basis that it is more expensive or the coffee does not taste correctly"*



In his response, the Prime Minister said: "Fair trade is important to the poorest countries of the world. The Fairtrade fortnight that is taking place means that there are many local celebrations that we should be supporting. UK shoppers have bought nearly 500 million fair trade products this year. That is up 40 per cent., which shows the great support that there now is for fair trade. Fair trade is not a gimmick. It is an important part of building justice throughout the world."

Last year, I joined Fairtrade supporters to celebrate Burscough becoming a Fairtrade town. I praised the work of the steering committee and in particular of Emily Lee, whose energy and commitment had made a major contribution to keeping the momentum going through almost three years of work towards achieving Fairtrade town status.



Battling for free bus and rail travel for pensioners in West Lancashire

The local district council is treating West Lancs pensioners like second class citizens.

Most councils are giving those eligible a free English National Bus Pass as well as a Free Senior Rail Card offering a third off most journeys. But West Lancs District Council are telling people they can either have one or the other. I've now launched a petition following a meeting with local pensioners who are furious at the council's actions. I have literally been inundated with people who are fuming with the district council over this.

They have friends who live in other areas who can get the bus and rail cards and are wondering why they're being treated as second class citizens.



Six ways to contact Rosie Cooper MP

I'm always keen to hear your views so please get intouch

- Write to me Freepost RRUG-LSEC-UUAY, Rosie Cooper MP, 127 Burscough Street, Ormskirk, L39 2EP.
- Telephone 01695 570094
- E-mail me on rosie@rosiecoopermp.net
- I hold regular surgeries. Call 01695 570094 for further details
- Drop into my office at 127 Burscough Street, Ormskirk, West Lancashire.
- Log onto my website at www.rosiecoopermp.net

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