

THE CLACTON CONVERSATION
NEWS ROUND-UP FROM GILES WATLING MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR CLACTON

SAVE THE DATE: OLDER PEOPLE'S INFORMATION FAIR

Further to the information supplied in my previous newsletter, I am delighted that we have over forty exhibitors lined up to attend my Older People's Fair.

Details: Princes Theatre, Clacton, 10am – 2pm on 18th June. Turn up, no appointment or pre-booking necessary.

[Find out more information here.](#)

TRAVELLING SURGERY

Last week, I went on my first travelling surgery across the constituency!

[You can see some of the highlights below and on my Twitter page.](#)

It was a great event and I have no doubt that similar events will follow in the future. Please email my office for details, or if you would like to attend one of my other surgeries. You can reach me on: giles.watling.mp@parliament.uk.



On my travelling surgery – thanks Hedingham!

[NEWS FROM CLACTON](#)

I have held productive talks about healthcare improvements with the new Accountable Officer for the North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, Dr Ed Garrett. I know that people have real issues with local GP's, certainly with the appalling telephony service with the ACE surgeries. I am glad to see new performance measures being imposed and new investments being made to ensure greater GP capacity. [Read more here.](#)

I'd like to thank Jamesons Accountants and Ellisons Solicitors for organising the Tendring Business Briefing. Great to engage with the business community. [Read more here.](#)



At the Tendring Business Briefing at Frinton Golf Club.

I was honoured to receive The FA's Grassroots Champion award as part of their #FootballFootprint campaign. Grassroots sport is a lifeline to local communities, helping people with their health and well-being, nurturing talent and, most importantly, bringing people together. [Read more here.](#)

Went to see Hazardous Area Response Team in Braintree. These are the people ready to go into danger to save lives. They went to the Salisbury poisonings and are also out on the streets every day as Paramedics. [Read more here.](#)

I met with BJ Harrington, the new Chief Constable of Essex. We discussed many issues and we live in a relatively safe area, but like anywhere we have our issues. I am confident that, with our new officers, he will make a difference! [Read more here.](#)

At the moment, on average, three children in every classroom will be struggling with a mental health problem. My constituents often tell me what a big issue children and young people's mental health is for them and their families, which is why I'm glad to support YoungMinds' campaign and will tell Ofsted to make wellbeing a priority. [Read more here.](#)

Until Thursday 28th March 2019, small charities in the Clacton constituency, that are working in priority countries to deliver the Global Goals, can apply for grant funding from DfID's Charities Challenge Fund. [Read more here.](#)

Met with Peter Round and Shelley Maddocks of Realise Futures. They support adults with varying disabilities either physical or learning get into work. [Read more here.](#)

[The contact details for Realise Futures, can also be found here.](#)

[NEWS FROM PARLIAMENT](#)

Last week, the Chancellor of the Exchequer delivered the Spring Statement, which contained some encouraging economic figures. [You can read what it means for the Clacton constituency here.](#)

I am pleased that the Government will consider whether to criminalise unauthorised encampments, as has been done in the Republic of Ireland. From recent incidents in Clacton-on-Sea at Vista Road and Walton-on-the-Naze at the Bath House Meadow, I know that more needs to be done. [Read more here.](#)

I recently asked Ministers at the Department of Health and Social Care, about the publication of the social care green paper and GP shortages in the Clacton constituency. Their answers were encouraging. [Read more here.](#)

As a keen animal welfare advocate, I have also been pushing for a ban on the consumption of dog and cat meat in the UK – concerningly, the private slaughtering of dogs and cats for private human consumption is still legal in the UK! I have met with the Minister to discuss this, and we are making good progress. [Read more here.](#)

I got to wear a very jaunty hat in support of brain tumour patients recently. We need to push to find cures - please donate to help! [Read more here.](#)

I recently attended a drop in to support the All-Party Parliamentary Dog Advisory Welfare Group campaign to reform laws around Pet Theft. [Read more here.](#)

Following several Parliamentary events, I am also looking into what more can be done to tackle plastic waste. Watch this space! [Read more here.](#)

The Department for Work and Pensions will introduce the first Collective Defined Contribution (CDC) pension scheme in the UK. There is a clear appetite for this change and CDCs offer a third type of pension scheme designed to give members more certainty, and a better income, in their retirement. [Read more here.](#)

I would like to thank Carers Trust and Young Carers for inviting me to their recent Parliamentary reception. It was very moving to hear the experiences of young carers. I hadn't appreciated how many children are in a caring role and I will continue to lobby Ofsted to ensure that they receive more support when at school. [Read more here.](#)

Yesterday, I questioned Ministers on protections for businesses as we leave the European Union. [Read more here.](#)



At the Young Carers Parliamentary Reception – an incredibly eye-opening event.

BREXIT

See below for my statement on how I voted on Brexit last week. We need to deliver Brexit as soon as possible, but it is now clear that backing the deal was the only way to do that without a significant delay.

I have always wanted to deliver on the result of the referendum, and that has not changed. Some 70% of my constituents voted to leave and residents often tell me that they want Brexit sorted as soon as possible. I agree wholeheartedly with that position and while I have previously expressed my concerns about the Government's imperfect deal, I decided to change my position and support it last week. That was because it was clear to me then, as has been revealed this week, that the deal was the only way to deliver Brexit without a lengthy delay.

I do appreciate that some may be disappointed by my decision, but we must be realistic about the current political context – we now know that Brexit will not be delivered on 29th March 2019, and the majority of my colleagues are pushing for a far softer customs union Brexit, or simply no Brexit at all. My calculated vote took account of that reality and the fact that the political scenery has changed dramatically, meaning that a 'no deal' Brexit is now incredibly unlikely. The House voted last week to reject no deal by a majority of 43, and colleagues also decided to seek an extension of the Article 50 process, with a majority of 210. In those votes, I maintained my support for no deal, rejected any extension to Article 50, and voted against the amendment to bring forward a second referendum.

Granted, the vote on no deal was not binding, which means that it remains the legal default if a deal cannot be secured by exit day, and it is also true that there will not be any further votes on this version of the Government's deal. But, by voting to seek a postponement of the Article 50 process, the House has agreed to push exit day back and the Prime Minister has now written to the EU to open negotiations on that extension.

Concerningly, the length of this exit day delay is yet to be determined, and is a clearly point for the upcoming discussions, but President Tusk has already said that it should be for as long as possible. There are also reports that the EU want to use the delay for a second referendum and opposition colleagues are pushing for that same outcome – I will, of course, do all I can to prevent this from happening. But, even if this extension period ends without overturning the referendum result, no deal will be just as unlikely at that point, since the Prime Minister is not prepared to walk away without a deal, as she had the opportunity to do this week, and this House of Commons, myself excluded, will not allow any Prime Minister to do so.

In terms of where we go now, I am still pushing for further changes to the Government's imperfect deal, although we have no leverage to secure anything from the EU – after all, we have sabotaged our ability to walk away by rejecting no deal. Moreover, as I have set out, I believe it is unlikely that we will ever get a no deal Brexit, although I am certainly happy to be wrong on that point. The most plausible outcome is that there will be an indeterminate delay for further negotiations with the EU, and, possibly, an additional vote on an amended version of the Government's deal. But, when that deal does change, it would not be surprising if we get a much softer Brexit, and if we fail to pass the deal altogether we are more likely to get no Brexit at all. I understand that this is frustrating for those who voted to leave, and I share that frustration, but that does not change the reality of the situation we are in.

And make no mistake, I am angry at the way in which the Government has handled negotiations and the votes on the deal. But that doesn't change the fact that no deal is no longer a realistic prospect and that the only way to deliver Brexit without a significant delay was for me to back the deal. This is why, when I was faced with the choice of this imperfect Brexit or no Brexit at all, I chose the former, and would do so again. Undoubtedly, backing the deal offers the clearest route to Brexit, and events this week have vindicated that view. Moreover, as Jacob Rees-Mogg said recently: *"No deal is better than a bad deal, but a deal is better than remaining."*

So, that is where we are now – by failing to pass this deal, Brexit itself is now at risk. However, this is a fast-moving situation and it is probable that the political scenery will have moved again by the time this release hits the press.