



# News from the Commons

## The Miss And Shift Chancellor

In his eighth Budget as Chancellor George Osborne delivered yet more of the same – a Budget that is holding us back and threatening aspiration. It was a Budget where £4.4 billion was cut from the Personal Independence Payments budget while the wealthiest were given a top rate tax break saving them £523 a year, and a Budget that masks a £56 billion black hole in the government’s finances.

It is welcome that the Chancellor has decided to support the Welsh Labour Government’s creation of an enterprise zone in Port Talbot by offering enhanced capital allowance, but there was no mention of the Tidal Lagoon or electrification of the Great Western line and no announcements to help the beleaguered steel industry.

After the Chancellor made his announcement I wrote him an open letter highlighting how this Budget was a series of missed targets and shifted goals, a Budget in which the country is paying for his failure. The real story of this Budget is one of growth and investment revised down, exports down, productivity down, manufacturing stalled and borrowing up.

It can be summed up as this: ‘Budget 2016; a triumph of tactics over strategy; vintage Osborne.’ <http://bit.ly/1VfKoFV>

## Brussels Attacks



The attack on the airport and metro systems in Brussels was a real tragedy and my thoughts go out to all those affected by the attacks.

We must stand united with Brussels in the face of these atrocities. Many of the threats that we face, terrorism being one of them, are global threats which is why we must stand together to confront them at one.

## Welsh Affairs

I led the annual St David’s Day Debate on Welsh Affairs in the House. I concentrated on the challenges and opportunities that Wales



faces. I covered the steel crisis and its impact on the Port Talbot works; how south Wales is well placed to be at the forefront of the Fourth Industrial Revolution with the City Bay ‘Internet Coast’ plan; I called on the Government to make a decision on the Tidal Lagoon; and criticised the Government over the draft Wales Bill, Trade Union Bill and changes to the Parliamentary constituency boundaries.

<http://bit.ly/225q7bj>

## Call On PM To Join Me & Exhort Tata To Back Plan To Secure Future Of Port Talbot Steel Works

In the last PMQs before Easter Recess I called on the Prime Minister to join with me and exhort Tata to back the plan to secure the future of Port Talbot steel works:



I trust that the Prime Minister will be aware that there’s a critical meeting of the board of Tata in Mumbai on Tuesday, I’ll be flying out to Mumbai with the general secretary of Community union to make the case for British steel, that meeting will be deciding on the future of the Port Talbot steelworks in my constituency. Will the Prime Minister join me in exhorting Tata to stand with that plan and to secure the future of the Port Talbot steelworks?

<http://bit.ly/1S5VJ64>

## Steel Workers & Families Are Victims Of Government’s Laissez-Faire Doctrine



Labour again dragged the Government back to the House of Commons to debate the steel crisis. I spoke in the debate about the Government

standing up for Chinese interests and not British steel, Market Economy Status for China and the UK Government’s actions in Europe as the ringleader in blocking the scrapping for the lesser duty rule. [http://](http://bit.ly/1QRdmGC)

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# News from the Commons

## Government Defeat—Sunday Trading

Labour inflicted a significant defeat on the Government over plans to give local authorities control over Sunday trading hours. The plans would have allowed larger retailers to trade for longer than the current 6 hours they are permitted to on a Sunday. The Government lost the vote by 31 votes with the SNP and Tory rebels joining Labour in the lobby.



## International Women's Day

It was great to welcome young representatives from Aberavon to Parliament for International Women's Day. They had a tour of Parliament and visited Number 10 as part of the day.



## BIS Steel Lobby



Together with Carolyn Harris (Swansea East), Jessica Morden (Newport East), Nia Griffiths (Llanelli), Christina Rees (Neath) and Nick Smith (Blaenau Gwent) I went to a meeting with Anna

Soubry and Stephen Crabb to discuss the problems in the Welsh steel industry.

I chaired the meeting, and the conversation revolved around:

1. The urgent need to tackle the dumping of Chinese steel.
2. Support for the recently established Port Talbot task force.
3. The need for a long-term industrial strategy.
4. The need for the Chancellor to give maximum support to the Swansea Bay City Region development proposal.

I am very pleased we were able to secure this meeting to further emphasize our concerns about the government's lack of action in tackling the problems facing the steel industry across the UK. My constituency of Aberavon has the largest steel making facility remaining in UK - the thousands of jobs and families the steelworks sustains must be protected.

## Multinational Enterprises [Financial Transparency] Bill



I am supporting Caroline Flint MP's 10 Minute Rule Bill which will require multinational enterprises to include within their annual financial reporting

specified information prepared in accordance with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's requirements for Country-by-Country reporting.

The Bill ensures multinational companies have to include this information in their annual submissions to Companies House and thereby providing greater financial transparency in the public domain.

## Tidal Lagoon Needs & Deserves Rapid Advance

The lengthy procrastinations by the Government over giving the go-ahead to the Tidal Lagoon, which has seen



the announcement of a review, brought many Welsh MPs together in a Westminster Hall debate. There was a consensus across the debate as to the significance of this project in terms of the environment and the local economy to the south Wales area. Many local businesses and jobs have been built around the prospect of this going ahead and the Government indecision is putting the future of all

## Participation in Parliament

I opened the questions to the Leader of the House. I questioned their work on encouraging participation in the day-to-day business of the House and emphasises the need to concentrate on encouraging participation by youngsters. <http://bit.ly/1RUwKfg>



# News from the Commons

## Investigatory Powers Bill

The Investigatory Powers Bill returned to the House of Commons for its second reading. I, along with my Labour colleagues, abstained in the vote.

Britain needs a new legal framework in this area that is fit for purpose in the 21st Century but there are serious concerns over what is included in the Bill. This includes, but is not limited to: privacy protection; the operational case for bulk powers; judicial authorisation, oversight and the 'double lock'; Internet Connection Records (ICRs), bulk equipment interference and bulk personal datasets; basic definitions, thresholds and proportionality; and protection of sensitive material.

The decision to abstain was because Labour wants to work constructively with the Government to improve this legislation to achieve surveillance legislation fit for the 21st Century but that strikes the right balance between privacy, security and democracy.

I have been selected to sit on the Bill Committee to scrutinise this legislation.

## £1 billion Tax Credit Cuts

George Osborne has sneaked through a cut to tax credits which will hit 800,000 working families across Britain. I, along with Labour colleagues, voted against the Chancellor's changes to the Income Disregard which will result in families being chased for back payment if their income rises by more than £2,500, half the current rate of £5,000. This change could see many local families £1,000 a year worse off.

## A River



I hosted a viewing of "A River" in Parliament. It was great to showcase the film which charts the history of the river Afan and its recovery from pollution.

For more information visit [ariverfilm.com](http://ariverfilm.com)

## Safer Operating Solutions Charter

I am supporting Community Union's Safer Operating Solutions Charter which calls on all providers of justice and custodial services, awarded through government procurement processes, to adhere to the following 5 standards:



1. Reduction of violence against staff
2. Agreed staffing levels
3. Health and safety delivery
4. Consistent and effective training
5. Positive partnerships with local employers and community groups by reducing reoffending

Community has called on the Government to ensure that all new contracts adhere to the charter and to review all current contracts to ensure they meet these minimum standards.

## Personal Independence Payments

The Government have been in disarray over the Budget but one element has really been an Achilles heel for them—cuts to Personal Independence Payments (PIP).

Their plans to halve the number of points awarded under PIP for aids and appliances used for managing toilet needs and dressing and undressing is a shameful attack on dignity.

This divisive policy has led to the resignation of Iain Duncan Smith as Secretary of State, left the Government in turmoil and resulted in a £4.4 billion black hole U-turn.

Had the policy remained in the Budget I would have opposed it but the Chancellor withdrew it.

There is still some ambiguity over future cuts to welfare with the new Secretary of State for the Department of Work and Pensions announcing to the House that the Government would not be looking for further welfare cuts but this was quickly caveated by the Treasury who said that there are 'no plans' to make further welfare cuts.



# News from the Constituency

## Growing Business In Neath Port Talbot



I was delighted to address a breakfast meeting with local businesses about the challenges and opportunities facing businesses in the locality. In spite of the challenging global conditions there have been positive developments locally

including the state of the art Bay Campus, Baglan Energy Park and investment in Port Talbot town centre. The future also looks promising with the plans for the City Bay Region which could put the area at the forefront of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

## RWE Innology



I visited RWE Innology on the Baglan Industrial Estate. I had an interesting discussion with them about the work they are doing.

There's huge commitment here in Wales and amongst RWE to deliver onshore wind, and at the lowest possible cost to the consumer. What concerns me is that current UK energy policy threatens the future of this very industry. This puts at risk jobs in my constituency and inward investment.

## Ash and Lacy



On a recent visit to Ash and Lacy I learnt about how this locally based company is going from strength to strength. The factory in Baglan is new and manufactures metal fabrications and profiled cladding sheets. It is also a significant employer in the area.

## Hillside



I went on a very interesting visit to Hillside Secure Children's Home. I spoke with management about the fantastic work they do to rehabilitate youngsters back into the community. I was also given a guided tour of the facility by two of the youngsters who gave me an insight into their day-to-day life in the centre.

## Angela Eagle



I was delighted to welcome the Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills to Aberavon. Angela addressed a function in Margam Orangery.

## Wales Area Fire Engine Restoration Society

I visited the Welsh Area Fire Engine Restoration Society in Skewen and was given a guided tour



of the museum by Ray and Malcolm. The group has a tremendous variety of restored fire engines, fire service badges, uniforms, pumps, medals and other historical artefacts. It was a fascinating visit.



# News from the Constituency

## Steel 2020

With workers at the steel works finding out whether they have lost their jobs my thoughts have been with them at this very difficult time for their families and the community.

As the announcements were being made I wrote an article for Labour List:

‘This is the week that the impact of the January announcement of 750 job losses at the Port Talbot steelworks becomes tangible. In a series of meetings this week the men and women who have given years of service to the works will find out if they are amongst those being laid off.



So, this is the week that 750 is no longer just a number. 750 men and women (out of a total workforce of 4,000) will receive letters this week informing them whether or not they are listed for potential redundancy. It is possible that an alternative position in the works can be found for some of those listed, but the expectation is that redundancy will be the only option for the vast majority.

For a long time now we have seen this coming, and we have been calling on the government to act, but their record has been one of warm words matched by frozen actions. We asked them for relief on energy costs, but five years after accepting the need for action the money still hasn't arrived.

We've asked them to use procurement to support British Steel. But there is still no evidence of change, with the MoD's latest order of frigates being based on Swedish Steel.

We called on them to act against the dumping of Chinese steel. But instead they have been cozying up to China, and actively leading a campaign in Europe against effective trade defence reform.

We have demanded that they oppose Market Economy Status (MES) for China. Granting China MES would undermine our ability to protect British Steel from anti-competitive dumping. But instead of standing up for British industry they have been rolling out the red carpet for Beijing, and actively lobbying for China to be granted MES.

And for months now we have been urging the government to produce a long-term industrial strategy for the steel industry. The underlying cause of many of the failures that we have seen since 2010 can be attributed to the absence of a long-term industrial strategy for steel, with a commitment to a strategic approach to skills, investment, regulation and industrial relations.

Well, Sajid Javid may be happy to sit on his hands and do nothing, but I am not. I was therefore proud to announce, last week in the Commons, that I will be chairing – along with my colleague Anna Turley MP – a working group of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Steel that will produce a report, Steel 2020, to develop a blueprint for a long term industrial strategy for British Steel.

Think about the importance of steel: it is the basis of the houses we live in, the offices we work in, the bridges we cross and the trains in which we travel. Do we really think that the UK should be a country that no longer produces its own steel?

We may not be able to undo the pain that is being felt by my constituents this week, or the pain felt in Redcar last year. But with a long-term industrial strategy we can stop it happening again and begin to build a British steel industry that is fit for the future.' Read the full article at <http://bit.ly/1P9Lxr5>



# News from the Constituency

## It is now absolutely essential that Tata holds its nerve & continues to believe in the world-class workforce that we have in Port Talbot

The board meeting that will take place in Mumbai on March 29 will be crucial. It is now absolutely essential that Tata holds its nerve and continues to believe in the world-class workforce that we have in Port Talbot, which makes the best steel that money can buy, and is breaking all production records.

The Port Talbot transformation plan that will be reviewed on March 29 can deliver the desired results, but only if it receives the full backing of the Tata board. We also need to see a British Government that is committed to securing a long-term future for Port Talbot, although it has to be said that to date this commitment has been sadly and totally lacking.

Everyone knows that times are tough, but the workforce have achieved everything asked of them, and deserve the continued support of Tata. Steel communities like Port Talbot simply cannot afford to see the industry disappear.

Tata pride themselves on their values of social responsibility — and I will be doing everything I can to ensure those values are put into practice, and that Port Talbot is given the fair chance it needs to survive and thrive. <http://bit.ly/1Ry07tU>



### Bouldering Room YMCA

I enjoyed opening the new Bouldering Room at the Port Talbot YMCA. It is a fantastic state of the art facility. Climbing the walls there made a nice change from climbing the greasy pole of politics.



### Central Primary School

Great to join pupils from Central Primary School when they buried their time capsule at Port Talbot Parkway.

### Coffee Morning



I spent an enjoyable morning with residents from Glyncoed, Cymmer and Gwynfi at Noddfa Community Centre. We talked about a range of issues including funding from the Pen Y Cymoedd windfarm.

### SNAC

It was great to visit SNAC in Taibach, a wonderful facility with dedicated staff, volunteers and parents. Great also to see the children in a safe and fun environment.



### Briton Ferry OAP Group

I spent a great afternoon with Briton Ferry OAP Group. After talking to them about what it is like as a Member of Parliament we broke into a question and answer session.



### High Sheriff Awards

Great to be at the High Sheriff's awards ceremony, in Baglan. Some inspiring stories!





# Political Digest



## There's no such thing as a Soft Brexit

As the debate around Europe gets into full swing I wrote an article for City AM where I outlined the difficulties Britain will have negotiating an exit from Europe once Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty is invoked. Once a Member state signifies its intention to leave the European Union the cards become heavily stacked in favour of the remaining Member states. As such there will be no option of a soft Brexit. <http://bit.ly/1UdAKCG>

## Stronger In Aberavon Campaign

In the few campaign sessions we have had in Aberavon for the EU referendum campaign we have received a positive response to our message to remain in the EU. There is a long way to go to the 23 June so it is important we keep spreading the message.



## North Bedfordshire EU Referendum Debate

I spoke in an EU Referendum Debate organised by North Bedfordshire CLP. In the discussion I concentrated on the three pillars that EU Membership brings us: Prosperity; Security; and Influence.

Prosperity through the jobs and business. Security through the Social Charter that every day British workers rely on for a range of employment and social rights. Influence because we are not only safer together but we are stronger too.

## Government failing to increase 'quality' apprenticeships

During National Apprenticeship week Shadow Business Secretary, Angela Eagle, questioned the Government's approach to apprenticeships as being overly focused on quantity over quality. <http://bit.ly/1V69LK9>

## Why George Osborne's Budget needs to give small businesses a leg up

On the eve of the Budget, Shadow Business Secretary Angela Eagle, wrote of the importance to help small businesses. They provide most of the jobs in our economy and are vital to our future productivity, growth and competitiveness. Small businesses are also the fabric of our communities. Angela called on the Chancellor to turn warm words into real effective action. <http://bit.ly/24YxpMY>

## Labour Consensus

Next month I will be speaking at the launch of Consensus. The new group looks to bring together campaigners from across the Labour spectrum and the varying ideas that there are across the party. <http://bit.ly/1Pr6DkP>



## Another Heavy Lords Defeat For The Government

Yet again the Lords inflicted not one, not two, but three heavy defeats on the Government over its Trade Union Bill. The first defeat was on political levies – the changes apply to new members only and with a 12 month transition period. The Lords also voted to commission an independent review of electronic balloting for industrial action and against a cap on the amount of paid time public sector workers can spend on trade union activity.

## Exeter Labour Students –EU Referendum



I was invited by Exeter Labour Students to speak about why Britain should stay in the EU. It was a well-attended event and I was able to make the case for the UK remaining in the EU by emphasising the importance of working with others to be smart and innovative. The way to do this is through membership of the EU which allows us to attract, collaborate and work with some of the brightest minds.

## Contact Stephen

My office is open Monday-Friday between 10am and 1pm for a drop-in advice surgery with a caseworker.  
Outside of these times you can call to make an appointment.

**A:** Unit 7, Water Street Business Centre, Water Street, Port Talbot, SA12 6LF  
**T:** 01639 897660  
**E:** [stephen.kinnock.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:stephen.kinnock.mp@parliament.uk)  
**W:** [www.stephenkinnock.co.uk](http://www.stephenkinnock.co.uk)

StephenKinnock  
 @SKinnock  
 stephen\_kinnock