



Commons DIARY

Amid steel rallies, rehabilitation and 10km runs, **Stephen Kinnock** still finds time on the clock to honour Bevan plaque

Wednesday 28 October

If you want something done, ask a busy person. I was on the phone at 7:50am speaking to BBC Radio Wales about the current crisis in the UK Steel Industry, repeating the five 'asks' the industry and Labour are pushing the government to act on as soon as possible. I then had a few minutes to check my speaking notes for my next appointment, a Westminster Hall debate on Transforming Rehabilitation. I was leading the line on asking the government how it plans to solve the numerous serious problems that have arisen since it split the probation service in the last parliament. Normally a debate like that would be the big moment of the day, but Wednesday was also the Community Union march on Parliament to Stand Up for Steel. I met with Community's General Secretary Roy Rickhuss as well as my fellow steel

constituency MPs at Old Palace Yard for a photo with a huge 'Stand Up For Steel' banner, before the Opposition day Debate on Steel began. I managed to intervene to demand that the government act urgently to address the double whammy

of crippling energy costs and Chinese dumping that are creating a perfect storm for British steel. At 4.30pm I joined colleagues for a meeting of the APPG on Russia. Having lived and worked in Russia from 2005 until 2009 I feel very strongly that understanding the country is a pre-condition for effective engagement. Later I was honoured to be giving a short speech and presenting an award at the Centre for Turkey Studies fourth anniversary dinner. Like Russia, Turkey is a vitally important player with which we must work effectively if we are to make any progress at all towards stability in the region.

Thursday 29 October

"Godmorgen!" At 9:00am I walked into a room full of visitors from Denmark who had asked me to brief them on British politics. We had a very informative session, I even got the chance to practise my Danish, which doesn't happen much anymore. From there I went straight into a meeting with a journalist from the *Independent* to discuss the benefits of the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon. I reminded him how many jobs it would create for my constituents, and reiterated the pressing need we have as a country for reliable and innovative renewable energy sources. Shortly afterwards I jumped on a train down to Port

Talbot Parkway to arrive in time for my local Labour's party's executive committee meeting. These gatherings are very important right now because of the upcoming Welsh Assembly Elections, and I will be working flat out to get my Assembly Member David Rees re-elected in May, but this particular meeting focused on developing exciting plans for engaging with the hundreds of new members and supporters that have joined my CLP this year.

Friday 30 October

Friday was the usual mix of meetings with constituents, businesses and community groups, ranging from the crisis in the steel industry, to an issue around Personal Independence Payments, to major problems caused by the government's decision to pull the plug on solar feed-in-tariffs. The challenges are diverse, but the conclusion is the same: poor decisions taken in Westminster are having serious impacts locally, and are patently failing to build the 'one nation' country that we hear so much about from the Tories. In the evening I held my regular advice surgery, before attending the launch of *The Hungry Writer* with local author Lynne Rees – plenty of wonderful tales from Lynne's childhood in Port Talbot, combined with some great (and mercifully simple!) cooking tips.



Saturday 31 October

First up a campaigning session in Glyncorrwg, with David Rees and the campaign team. Great response on the doorstep, and we left with a real sense that Welsh Labour will perform well in May's elections. In the afternoon I watched a thrilling display of rugby from the Aberavon Wizards as they inflicted a convincing 44-22 victory over Llanelli in the Welsh Premiership, propelling them to 2nd in the league, and sending the men in red back to west Wales with nightmares on Halloween.

Sunday 1 November

There's nothing quite like a bracing run on a Sunday morning, and the Richard Burton 10km along the scenic hills around Cwmavon is certainly not for the faint hearted! The race is popular amongst serious runners and fun runners alike, but it's also a chance to raise money for charity and this year I was running for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust. The Richard Burton 10k is a fantastic community event, made possible by sponsorship from Tata Steel and the good will and hard work of a dedicated team in the community. I ran it in 51 minutes - two minutes slower than the 49 I did it in last year. Twelve months older and slower, maybe? No, that can't be right; must've been the unseasonably warm weather we had this year...!

Monday 2 November

Getting back to Westminster on a Monday is always a wrench, but I had very little time to think about that as I went straight into a 9am meeting with a man with an industrial regeneration plan that could have hugely beneficial effects across my constituency. But really today was all about the TUC's lobby of Parliament to ask MPs to vote against the Trade Union Bill. I met with delegates from Aberavon Labour and Aberavon Unison, and then we went for coffee on the Terrace. It was great to see some familiar faces up here in Westminster, and great to be able to share views on this regressive and vindictive bill. At 5pm every Monday I go to the Shadow Business, Innovation and Skills team meeting to discuss upcoming legislation. As the PPS to Angela Eagle, I have to make sure that my colleagues table questions for the next BIS oral questions session on Tuesday 10th. Because we were staying late to vote, I took the opportunity to talk to as many Labour MPs as possible about tabling, and I was still at it at 11pm!

Tuesday 3 November

Another particularly busy one, these seem to be becoming the norm. I kicked the day off with another Westminster Hall debate, this time asking the Government to fulfil its own manifesto promise to enforce corporate liability for economic



crimes such as LIBOR.

Then I jumped on the tube to Chelsea, a part of London we Labour MPs rarely venture to, where some guy called Neil Kinnock was helping unveil a blue plaque for Nye Bevan and Jenny Lee, founder of the NHS and the Open University respectively. Both are big heroes of mine, and it was a fantastic feeling to see their names up on the wall of 23 Cliveden Place. Nye and Jenny lived at this address from 1944 to 1954, so it's no exaggeration to say that it is the home of our NHS. There was a small crowd there including Ellie Gellard, the young woman who campaigned tirelessly for the plaque to go up after she fell ill and was treated by the NHS, and Jaselle Williams, Nye's great-niece who was beaming with pride. That evening I was honoured to attend a reception with the three Welsh Regiments of the British Army, and was updated on the deeply professional and courageous work that the men and women of the Queen's Dragoon Guards, Welsh Guards and Royal Welsh have been doing in the last year. 🇬🇧

Stephen Kinnock is MP for Aberavon