

James Duddridge Member of Parliament for Rochford and Southend East Annual Report



JAMES SUPPORTS LLOYDS BANK STAFF AT JOBS FAIR

James Duddridge, Member of Parliament for Rochford and Southend East, offered his support throughout the year for the staff that faced redundancy following the announcement that Lloyds will be closing Essex House.

James was originally notified about the closure earlier this year and he was surprised to hear the news that Essex House will be closing. James was advised that there was no scope for this decision to be overturned and this was not a consultation. As a result James decided that he would concentrate his efforts and support the staff faced redundancy.

Over the year James has visited Essex House, held a surgery for the staff on site and also written to all employees offering any assistance they may require. In addition to this, James attended the Jobs Fair that was held at Essex House. The Jobs Fair saw local businesses, recruitment agencies, colleges and support services offering their advice, guidance, services, expertise and employment opportunities to the staff.

“As 2013 draws to a close, I wanted to write to residents with an overview of my activities in Rochford and Southend East throughout the year.”

James said

“I was made redundant in the past and can empathise with the uncertainty the news would have caused to the staff that were affected and as such wanted to do all I could to provide a light at the end of the tunnel. Working with Lloyds, Jobcentre Plus, Southend Borough Council, local businesses and organisations, we were able to put on a fantastic event for the staff. Everyone was extremely positive and felt that the event was a huge success and really beneficial to them.”

James also wrote a letter to all staff for any assistance they may require, not just now, but further down the line now that Essex House has closed.

WHAT THE CONSTITUENTS OF ROCHFORD AND SOUTHEND EAST ARE SAYING ABOUT JAMES

I can not express how grateful I am for the time and energy you have invested into helping me. Thank you.
MC Westcliff

..... Thank you once again for listening and following that up with concrete action, as well as your continued communication throughout, it is most appreciated.
DW Southend

I am writing to express my heartfelt gratitude. Due to your intervention I have received a letter from Southend council. It would not have happened if it were not for you. I have been telling friends and family you do make a difference.
JP Great Waker-

James has attended 138 events this year, 1,322 since he was first elected.

James has corresponded with 18,994 constituents since 2005.

James has featured in 149 articles in the local paper this year.

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SURGERY DETAILS

To book an appointment with James call 01702 616 135 or send an email to james@jamesduddridge.com

James holds regular surgeries within his constituency offices and also out and about within the community.



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WHAT HAS JAMES BEEN DOING?

Throughout the year James has with a large number of various local organisations and businesses to understand the work they do and the communities that they support. James had the privilege of meeting some incredible individuals who work tirelessly for the benefit of those less fortunate in society.

James said

“Unfortunately I am unable to I specifically mention every event I have attended this year but to give you a flavour of the type of events I have supported I have attended the Supporting Carers and Families Together (SCAFT) Firebreak passing out parade in Hawkwell, MIND Jubilee Centre, the Forum, SOS Rape Crisis Centre, Papworth Trust, Southend Association of Voluntary Services, Ingeus, Southend Cultural Festival, Shoebury Shop at my local launch event, Southend Adult Community College’s ‘Celebrating Achievement Awards’, Southend Hospital Staff Achievement Awards Dinner, Rochford Farmers Market, Barling Magna Farmers Market and I visited a number of local primary and secondary schools.

“I also unveiled a memorial plaque in Great Wakering Memorial Hall that marked the 60th anniversary of the 1953 floods. This was a poignant service with local residents who survived the floods giving their personal account of what happened.

I have also met with representatives from Essex Police, Southend Hospital, Rochford District Council, Southend Borough Council, South Essex Partnership Trust, Southend, Rochford and Castle Point Clinical Commissioning Groups and the Police Crime Commissioner, c2c and the RNLI.”

PATHOLOGY SERVICES

Pathology services were a talking point across the constituency earlier this year.

James said

“ My biggest problem with this particular issue was not necessarily the proposal itself, but the poor communication and lack of information that was provided to the general public. To address not only the concerns of my constituents, but mine as well, I met with Andrew Pike, Chief Executive of the PCT and I had discussions with Dr Husselbee, Accountable Officer of the Southend Clinical Commissioning Group and I toured the pathology department at Southend Hospital. I was encouraged that the final decision for the move was in the hands of the Clinical Commissioning Groups and they decided to retain this service in Southend. Decisions pertaining to health care and service provision should be made by health care professionals, not politicians or bureaucrats.”

Out and about with James



James in Parliament

In March James, along with fellow Southend West MP David Amess, hosted the 'Southend Day' in the House of Commons.

James was elected as Chairman of the Africa All Party Parliamentary Group in September.

In June, defending the late payment of a company based in Shoebury, James raised the issue of late payments regarding PAYE with the Treasury Minister, David Gauke.

In May, James called for Southend to be named as city of culture in 2017. He congratulated Southend council for all of their hard work in putting the bid together.

In December James spoke passionately in the Chamber about the continued struggle with the Visteon pensioners and Ford Motor Company.

In July, James asked the Minister of Defence if he there had been proposals on the viability of developing housing on Ministry of Defence land in Shoeburyness.

SOUTHEND DRIVING TEST CENTRE THE CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

Despite a rigorous campaign from number of Essex MP's in 2008 Southend Driving Test Centre closed. The campaign secured 3,000 signatures supporting the retention of a local test centre.

In 2011 James Duddridge MP started campaigning for Southend to be included on a pilot scheme operating elsewhere in the UK which provides driving tests within community facilities.

Mike Penning MP visited the potential site in Southend that had been identified as a suitable site to use for the driving tests. During this visit the Minister confirmed Southend will be added to the pilot

May 2012 saw the official opening of the Southend Driving Test Centre. Tests were available on Mondays and Fridays.

The Minister stated at the official opening that should the demand for tests in Southend increase then more testing days will be added.

17th August 2012 Mike Penning wrote to James Duddridge confirming that as of 28th September 2012 three examiners will be available on Monday, Wednesday, Fridays up to the end of the year, or extended, if demand remained at this level.

As of the 18th June 2013 there was a 16 week waiting list to secure a test date in Southend.

In June 2013 James Duddridge MP met with the new Minister responsible, Stephen Hammond MP, and requested that the centre be operational five days a week.

On 10th September James Duddridge MP received notification from the Minister that the centre will be operational five days a week.

The campaign continues and James is still campaigning to ensure that the test centre becomes a permanent facility and removed from the pilot scheme.

SOUTHEND'S driving test centre is to open full-time – nearly six years after it was closed completely.

Campaigners who fought the closure are jubilant the town will offer tests to learner drivers five days a week instead of the current three.

Stephen Hammond, a minister at the Department of Transport, announced the plans yesterday.

John Ashton, from Southend Driving Instructors' Association, which campaigned for a fully operational test centre in Southend, welcomed the news.

He said: "We are jubilant the minister has listened to us and told the Driving Standards Agency what we told them six

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years ago – that Southend should never have been closed."

Mr Ashton said the news would help both cash-strapped learner drivers and their instructors.

He said: "The general public of Southend and the driving instructors will not have to pay out to drive backwards and forwards around the county – wasting time and money – when we have got a facility in Southend."

James Duddridge, MP for Rochford and Southend East, had campaigned on the issue ever since the closure of the centre in Prittlewell Chase in 2008 and continued even when

it was reopened at the Tickfield Centre, Southend, for Monday, Wednesday and Friday tests last year.

Due to a 16-week waiting list at Southend, many drivers were forced to go to Basildon, Chelmsford, or even as far away as Clacton to take a test.

He said "I am absolutely delighted Southend Driving Test Centre will be operational five days a week. This is fantastic news. I am thrilled that local residents have supported our local test centre and it is continuing to go from strength to strength.

"When I speak to local driving instructors and learner drivers, they have nothing but praise for our local facility and I know they too will be thrilled with the news."