

NUMBER OF LETTERS TO MPs SOARS IN ECONOMIC CRISIS

James Duddridge MP and David Amess MP have become aware of a significant increase in the number of letters they receive from constituents since the economic problems of the country have started to take hold in Southend.

James, who is Member of Parliament for Rochford and Southend East, and David who is MP for Southend West have both seen a dramatic rise in the numbers of constituents asking for help with financial related problems.

James said, "Constituents will often write to me about all manner of things - such as problems they're having with housing, or wanting to express their opinion on a contentious issue like immigration, the European Union or Southend Airport. As their MP I want to listen to people and take note of which issues are particularly affecting residents.

"Recently I have noticed that many more people are writing about financial problems they are having. Some are struggling to get credit, others can't keep up their mortgage repayments despite the

rate cuts, and others are having to move house to bring their bills back in line with what they can afford."

With the economy in the difficulty it is, both James and David are doing everything they can to help constituents who contact them about problems.

David added, "I am particularly concerned for the elderly population of Southend. Elderly people are hardest hit in times of recession as they receive a diminishing pension at the same time as having to face higher energy bills. I would urge anyone who is troubled by the state of their finances to contact me."

James is also concerned about how the economy and Southend residents will fare once we're well into the New Year. He believes that much of the population has not yet felt the full impact of the



economic troubles, with many people who were reluctant to tighten their Christmas spending. Now that the festive season has passed the issue of financial difficulties can no longer be avoided.

James said, "That is why it is really important that people get in touch with

either David or I as soon as they think they may be getting into financial trouble, and we will do everything we can to help.

"The Citizens Advice Bureau is also an extremely helpful organisation which can offer detailed advice on a range of scenarios."

INSIDE: Find out who's your local MP - and how to contact him

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Promoted on their own behalves by James Duddridge MP and David Amess MP, both of House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA and paid for from their respective Communications Allowances.

David's 25th Anniversary Dinner



David celebrates 25 years in the Commons (from left): Anne Widdecombe MP, Mark François MP, his daughter Katherine, David, his wife Julia, Frank Carson and HM Queen Elizabeth impersonator, Mary Reynolds

James awards winners of Christmas card competition

James hosted the winners of his annual Christmas Card design competition in the Houses of Parliament in early December.

The five students from local schools were selected from over 100 entries to have their designs printed on James's Christmas Card which is then sent out to over 1,000 people in Rochford, Southend and London. The theme of this year's competition was 'Christmas in Westminster' and the winning card which showed Santa climbing Big Ben was designed by **David Mackay from Hinguar Primary School.**

The four runners up, who feature on the back of James' card were:

- **Lola Goss - Hamstel Infant School**
- **Harry Fuller - Great Wakering Primary School**
- **Noor-ul-Huda - Temple Sutton Primary School**
- **Woody Marron - Bourne's Green Junior School**

The five winning children and their parents were invited to the House of Commons for a tour following which the children were presented with their certificates and goody bags as prizes.

James said, "I am so pleased that the Christmas card competition got so many entries again this year from so many talented young artists.

"I really enjoyed meeting the winner and runners up of my Christmas card competition in Westminster and I hope that they enjoyed their day. Congratulations to David and the runners up for their wonderful designs."



Your local MPs working together for Southend

Who's your local MP?

David Amess and James Duddridge work together for the residents of Southend - but only one of them is *your* local representative in Parliament. If you need help or advice, or want to speak to your MP for any reason, here's who you should contact:



Representing the Southend wards of:
Belfairs, Blenheim Park, Chalkwell, Eastwood Park, Leigh, Prittlewell (west side), St Laurence, West Leigh and Westborough



Representing the Southend wards of:
Kursaal, Milton, Prittlewell (east side), St Luke's, Shoeburyness, Southchurch, Thorpe, Victoria and West Shoebury

Representing the Rochford wards of:
Barling & Sutton, Foulness & Great Wakering and Rochford

MP for Southend West

David Amess

@ Email: amessd@parliament.uk

☎ Tel: **020 7219 3452**

📠 Fax: **020 7219 2245**

✉ Write to:
**David Amess MP
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA**

www.davidamessmp.com

MP for Rochford & Southend East

James Duddridge

@ Email: james@jamesduddridge.com

☎ Tel: **01702 616 135**

📠 Fax: **01702 619 071**

✉ Write to:
**James Duddridge MP
Strand House
742 Southchurch Road, SS1 2PS**

www.jamesduddridge.com

If you want to be totally certain, visit www.theyworkforyou.com and enter your postcode

It's warm on the Southend front

On Friday 28th November, David visited constituent Mr Eric Lampard at his home in Belfairs Park Drive to promote the 2008 Warm Homes Campaign which is being run by the National Energy Action group.

Mr Lampard lives in a detached house which he owns. With the help of National Energy Action, his home has benefited from the installation of loft insulation, two new radiators and low-energy lightbulbs, and he has received energy advice. This work was carried out under the Warm Front Scheme which Mr Lampard is eligible for as he is in receipt of Pension Credit. David is pictured enjoying a hot drink with Mr

Lampard to celebrate the fact his home is now warm all year round!

David is an enthusiastic supporter of the Warm Homes Campaign, especially since he was the architect of the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act of 2000, which requires the Government to alleviate and eventually eradicate fuel poverty. During the winter of 2006-2007 there were more than 22,000 excess winter deaths in England. More than 90% of these deaths occur in the pensioner population. With recent fuel price increases, there is no better time to help avert such a high number of preventable deaths. Energy efficiency schemes such as Warm Front provide heating and insulation improvements to

ensure that the home is adequately and affordably heated and the occupants are free from the health risks posed by cold, damp homes; a factor known to exacerbate conditions such as circulatory and respiratory disease.

With latest figures from National Energy Action stating that 17.2% of households in Southend West are living in fuel poverty, David and James are urging all those across Southend as a whole to find out if they might be eligible for help from the Warm Front scheme.

You can call 0800 316 2805 or visit www.warmfront.co.uk



David with Southend resident and Warm Front beneficiary, Mr Eric Lampard



James and David with staff from the Southend Women's Aid and representatives from the Big Lottery Fund

Southend Women's Aid

In October James and David visited a charitable project in Southend which had received funding from the Lottery to help its work.

Southend Women's Aid in Southend East, or the Dove Project as it is called in Southend West, provides a support facility to help victims of domestic violence in Southend. The charity is part of a national network which works to end violence against women and children through policy influence, prevention of abuse and provision of support.

The project in Southend aims to develop and expand an on-going

scheme of work with victims of domestic violence. The programme of support and counselling on offer aims to develop services for sufferers to include parenting skills, individual therapy, communication skills and trauma recovery. Individual therapy is provided to children experiencing emotional and educational difficulties as a result of domestic violence and a 'parental support package' is tailored to each family's needs.

Following his visit to the centre, James commented, "It is immensely reassuring to know that the facilities and dedicated support offered by Southend Women's Aid and the Dove

Project is available to the women and children of Southend who may, tragically, one day need to call on its services. The staff here are committed to their work and committed to the people who approach them for help."

Whilst Southend Women's Aid was fortunate to receive the funding they did, David has become increasingly concerned that other charities in Southend have not been receiving a fair share of lottery funding. Following a meeting with the Big Lottery Fund's chief of staff, Peter Wanless, David has secured an event in February for local charities to discuss options funding options and improve awareness of the sources available.

More information on Women's Aid can be found at; www.womensaid.org.uk

MPs attend official opening of Fire Station Headquarters



James and David with other Essex MPs at the opening of the Essex Fire Service Headquarters

James and David were invited to attend the opening of the new Essex Fire Service Headquarters in Kelvedon.

The Essex County and Fire Service relocated to the new premises from their previous headquarters in Rayleigh Close. Kelvedon Park has the facilities to allow the Fire Service to develop a training and management centre to support its staff.

James, pictured with other Essex MPs, said, "The new headquarters at Kelvedon Park are very modern and spacious. As it allows the Fire Service to bring certain operations back together under one roof this will mean a more efficient and effective Fire Service for everyone in Southend, as well as the wider Essex area."

James asks local businesses what they think

James Duddridge, MP for Rochford and Southend East, released earlier this year a business survey which was sent to small businesses in the area.

The aim of the survey was to determine how local businesses are being affected by the economic downturn.

59% of businesses replied saying they felt their businesses had been negatively affected by the downturn. A staggering 98% felt that more should be done to reduce the burden on local businesses, and 67% expected their profitability to go down.

James expressed his concern, saying, "The results of the survey were very worrying. For local businesses - who do not rely on exports - the economic crisis will have a very severe impact on their profits and may ultimately lead to the closing of businesses and job losses across Southend. The Government is saying the recession will only last 18 months but many financial institutions and business groups

disagree with this estimate and it is consumers and businesses who will suffer.

"I conducted this survey to help give me a better idea of what local businesses are going through and let business owners know that their MP is listening to them and they can approach me for help."

The survey also revealed that people feel nervous about the state of the economy and the town around them. 61% expected local unemployment to go up, whilst 57% expected local house prices to fall. 33% believed that a reduction in business rates would help them through financial difficulties, although 80% expected their personal taxes to increase.

James went on to say, "I will be conducting another survey next year to assess the progressive impact of the credit crisis, so if any businesses did not receive the last survey but would like to add their contribution to the next one please get in touch with me using the contact details on page 2."



WORKING FOR SOUTHEND AND ROCHFORD

As the two local Members of Parliament for Southend East or Southend West, we work together on behalf of your interests.

As your MPs we will try help out wherever possible if you contact us with a problem - no matter how you voted at the General Election. We are very concerned at the impact the national economic problems are having on Southend and will continue to monitor how Southend residents are coping throughout 2009.

You can contact us through the details on page 2 if you need help with a problem and we both hold regular surgeries at which we can meet with constituents in person.

We hope you have enjoyed reading this wraparound and if there are any concerns or comments you have please feel free to get in touch with us. Although we work together on many issues, a strict Parliamentary convention prevents us from dealing with any one else's constituents. So to find out if you're a resident of Southend East or Southend West please have a look at the map on page 2 to find out which one of us is your local MP.

We look forward to hearing from you.

David Amess
MP for Southend West

James Duddridge
MP for Rochford & Southend East

Help for small businesses in Essex



AS a way of helping out in difficult economic times, James and David would like to encourage businesses to look into taking up the Small Business Rate Relief. Roughly half of eligible businesses do not claim the relief, simply because they don't know it exists. Yet it could save local shops up to £1,100 per annum.

The relief is eligible to those properties with a rateable value of less than £5,000 who will get 50% rate relief. The relief is also available above £5,000 but by 1% for every £100, below a maximum rate of £10,000 rateable value.

The relief is only available for ratepayers who either:

Have one property and are not in receipt of any other relief.

Have one main property not in receipt of any other relief and other additional properties with values of less than £2,200, to a total value £15,000 outside London or £21,500 inside London.

The local billing authority will calculate the exact reduction. The rate is calculated to each chargeable day.

The relief is not automatic and must be applied for.

James is urging small businesses to visit the website: www.leaseholdersunited.com

If a business is eligible it can then print out a form, fill it in and send it to their Council.

James said, "Our shops and businesses are facing tough times but they are the life blood of our economy and our community. We want to help them and this online tool is a simple way of achieving this. It will point them in the right direction to ensure they're not losing out on what could be critically important funds".

James with Charlie and Mohinder Bhogal celebrating outside the Sutton Road Post Office after hearing it had been spared from closure ▼



David, James, Mayor Gwen Horrigan and Cllr Hilary Davison at David's fourth annual Centenarians' Tea Party

David switches on Leigh Lights at St Clements Church with Mayor Gwen Horrigan and 'Never Mind the Buzzcocks' star Phill Jupitus ▼



David with Olympic gold medallist Rebecca Romero ▼



Are you registered to vote in local and national elections?

Remember, local Council elections and the Euro elections are in June and a General Election could be called at any time, so it's important that you keep your registration details up-to-date to ensure that you can have your say.

To find out if you are registered, and to complete the necessary form, contact the Electoral Registration Officer at Southend-on-Sea Borough Council on:

01702 215 116

If you live in Rochford, call Rochford District Council's Elections Line on: **01702 318 187**