

Thanks to everyone who has been in touch. And thanks to my family for being so patient!



# Martin Horwood MP

Annual Report 2009

My report  
back to you.  
Martin

# Cheltenham in numbers

## How to get in touch with your MP, Martin Horwood



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Martin was elected MP for Cheltenham in May 2005

You can read Martin's latest contributions and questions in Parliament at [www.theyworkforyou.com](http://www.theyworkforyou.com).

Martin holds regular surgeries at his Hewlett Road office and other locations around town. Feel free to get in touch to

book an appointment or look in local newsletters for more details.

Please let Martin know what you think of the report. It is paid for from public money so Martin will only continue to send it to you if you find it useful to know what your MP is doing on your behalf.

**5.5%** The new peak in local unemployment this year. Despite our affluent image, Cheltenham's jobless total is about average for the country and we have pockets of really high unemployment.

**0**

Still the number of overseas flights Martin has taken as your MP. He's not promising he'll never take a foreign trip but this is well below average!

**1,735** **6,757**

The number of older people in Cheltenham estimated to have to choose between heating and eating last winter and the total number defined as in 'fuel poverty'. Martin backed a Fuel Poverty Bill to tackle energy inefficient housing in the long-term and force energy companies to give better deals to the least well-off in the meantime.

**2°**

Two degrees, on average, is the amount most scientists say we can afford to let the Earth warm up before really catastrophic and irreversible changes to our climate start to happen, for instance making floods like the ones that devastated Gloucestershire much more common.

## Martin's expenditure as your MP

Martin has called for more openness in MPs' expenses and voted for the abolition of some outdated practices like the infamous 'John Lewis' list. The rules will be tightened this year and expenses audited more thoroughly. But here are details of Martin's own expenditure for 2007/08, the last year for which we have complete numbers:

- Staff salaries and expenses (three in Cheltenham, one in London) £92,048
- **Staff travel** £514
- Office running costs and rent (mainly Cheltenham) £19,753
- **Staying overnight in London (mainly rent)** £21,449
- IT costs £1,008
- **Communications allowance (including last year's report)** £9,837
- Stationery £2,003
- **Other travel costs** £147

# Helping Cheltenham people



Martin brings officials to Cheltenham after the floods. Flood issues like insurance are still affecting people across the town

## Martin and his hardworking team take up more than two thousand cases a year for local people.

The top issues include

- jobs and employment rights
- roads, trees and pavements
- care by the local NHS
- pensions, benefits and tax credits
- housing
- family issues
- school admissions

## A terrible case of neglect

Possibly the worst case across Martin's desk this year was the harrowing story of Tom Wakefield, a lively young man with learning disabilities who died after his painful throat condition went undiagnosed for years despite the pleas of his family.

The Wakefield family were supported by disability charity Mencap and by Martin in Parliament. Government and ombudsmen's reports prompted action and apologies from many in authority but still left questions open for Martin to keep asking.

## Happy endings

Some stories have happier endings. Martin and his team helped one family escape nearly £10,000 of unfair tax credits charges. Another woman in constant pain won funding for a special op after Martin took up her case. And one young woman began her university career after Martin argued with university authorities who tried at the last minute to impose fees she could never have afforded.

**We can't promise results like this every time but we promise to try. Call 224889 or email [martin@martinhorwood.net](mailto:martin@martinhorwood.net) if you want us to help.**



## Standing up for Cheltenham

backing local businesses in tough times \* better health - and mental health \* protect the countryside \* stop garden-grabbing \* a better deal for local schools \* defending post offices \* helping the homeless \* noise \* backing good policing \* remembering the fallen

pages 4, 5, 6 and 7

## Success in Parliament

A good start on climate change \* a better deal for charities \* peace and justice around the world \* winning support for animals \*

pages 8 and 9

## Helping Cheltenham people

care by NHS and social services \* pensions, benefits and tax credits \* schools and university admissions \* housing \* family issues \*

page 10



## As the downturn bites, Martin is working flat out to support local employers through the tough times

Martin is working flat out to support local employers through the tough times. Martin has talked up Cheltenham's prospects, kept in touch with Cheltenham businesses of all sizes and championed them at national level.

### From the biggest employers...

At **Messier-Dowty** Martin discussed the twin challenges of recession and climate change and found a world-class aerospace firm confident about the future. Martin was proud to champion issues in Parliament for **Chelsea**, a mutual building society with strong values a world away from the riskiest practices of

their competitors, making them more secure now.

Back at his old desk at **Tangible Response** for a day, Martin found the marketing agency winning new business despite the crunch. He found others like **UCAS**, software specialists **Carbonflame** and branding and design stars **Asha** building strong businesses and strong community links too. And he took building services experts **DIS** to Westminster to champion quality apprenticeships.

...to vital small businesses Martin has offered support to traders from **Bath Road** to the **Lower High Street** and

spoken out for threatened local shops and pubs like those in **Hewlett Road**. Martin has supported the jazz, science, literature and music festivals, hosting a high-profile event in Parliament.



Martin with Roland Elliott-Berry, owner of Battledown Brewery in Cheltenham

## Winning support for animals

Martin is a supporter of better animal welfare and President of Cheltenham RSPCA. He brought the RSPCA, Dog's Trust and young campaigners Speak Out For Animals (SOFA) together with like-minded MPs to support a universal microchipping system for dogs. For a few pounds per animal, a rice-grain sized chip would identify lost pets and help local authorities and animal shelters to tackle dangerous dogs.

Backed by Cheltenham-based charity Naturewatch, Martin highlighted the rising numbers of animals being used in research and supported the 3 Rs - refinement, reduction and replacement - to promote non-animal alternatives. Just months later the government awarded a £1million cash boost to the national centre for the 3Rs and announced plans to double 3Rs funding.

“Martin is an active supporter of better animal welfare”



## A better deal for charities

Martin's career before he was an MP included charities like Oxfam and the Alzheimer's Society - and a Cheltenham business that worked with charities.

Martin and other MPs worked together successfully for a new Charities Act that would help local and national charities and their supporters - tightening up fundraising rules, easing red tape and generally making charity law fairer and more up to date.

Now he supports local charities as diverse as

**Cheltenham Open Door, Gloucestershire County Association for the Blind and the Holst Birthplace Museum Trust.**



Martin supports local charity Vision 21



Martin celebrates Charlton Kings pupils doing their bit for the environment by winning Green Flag status

# A good start on climate change

In his shadow environment minister role, Martin Horwood called for a tough Climate Change Act that included all greenhouse gases not just CO<sub>2</sub>, raised Britain's target for reducing them to 80% by 2050 and counted pollution from planes and ships too.

Because targets aren't enough, he also called for changes to the Energy Act to one day pay a guaranteed price

to anyone feeding renewable energy into the national grid from their own small wind turbine or solar cells.

With fantastic support from Friends of the Earth and many thousands of individual campaigners, all these measures were eventually accepted by the government.

But Martin knows this is just the start and we need much more action on the environment.



## Peace and justice around the world

Local churches and campaigners often urge Martin not to forget those facing injustice around the world. In Parliament Martin has raised Britain's mixed work on rural poverty in Africa, welcomed the Dalai Lama and his campaign for a free Tibet, supported peaceful resolution of the dreadful conflict in Gaza and tougher international action against injustice in Darfur and Zimbabwe.

Martin set up a parliamentary group to champion the rights of tribal peoples threatened by deforestation and illegal relocation - a cause that won the support of 150 other MPs as well as Bruce Parry, presenter of TV's Tribe! series.



## Martin has set up a parliamentary group to champion the rights of tribal peoples

# Getting us moving - faster, greener and quieter



We need to get the county moving with more investment in better, greener train services

In Parliament, Martin has welcomed an active government response to the downturn but warned we mustn't just fuel future debt and reckless economic growth. He has argued for investment that supports local jobs, saves energy and helps our long-term prospects - like a new local light rail scheme or doubling the single Swindon to Kemble line which would mean quicker, more reliable train services. Good for business, jobs and the environment. He was delighted when ministers told him they'd put in £900,000 to kick start the plan.

And Martin has argued for environmental and noise limits on new flights from Gloucestershire Airport at Staverton.

## Five green stars

Martin wants Cheltenham to lead the new environmentally-friendly business world that has to follow. He's already found print managers **Brightsource** pioneering 'carbon footprinting', **Think Lighting** producing bright and beautiful replacements for wasteful halogen lights, architects **Heath Avery** specialising in sustainable homes and buildings, **Plexus Technology** offering computerised systems that can halve clients' energy bills and **Ethical Investors** seeking out financial products that don't cost the earth. Just five Cheltenham green stars - and Martin wants to find more.

## Remembering the fallen



Whatever your views of current wars, it is impossible not to be moved by the courage and sacrifice of our armed forces - past and present.



# Protecting green spaces

Regional plans for nearly 14,000 houses in and around Cheltenham - far more than we really need - are putting much-loved green spaces at risk.

Beauty near Charlton Kings, Green Belt near Hatherley and Springbank and green fields near Leckhampton. The battles continue.

Martin opposed the plans here and in Parliament, backing residents defending the Area of Outstanding Natural

Martin backs the Borough Council's new clamp-down on garden-grabbing but wants government rules changed too.



## A shelter in crisis

There are still more than 3,000 people on Cheltenham's housing waiting list. Martin has called for more new homes - not on treasured green spaces but wherever possible on previously developed sites. In particular he wants more homes for rent for our least well-off families. Martin took up the cause of the Housing Aid Centre who were facing closure and is supporting calls for a crisis shelter for people sleeping rough.



More community-based policing is good news - but it mustn't be undermined by budget cuts

# Defending local services

The threat to most of **Cheltenham's NHS** has receded - for now. But Martin has kept on lobbying for the return of overnight beds to Battledown children's ward. He's backed charities like **LinC** and **Maggie's** who want even better services for

families facing cancer. Martin's still concerned about **local mental health services** and pleased the NHS now accept the need for 'safe havens' for those who want them.

Martin opposed local post office cuts but realised a

national rescue plan was needed for the whole Royal Mail group - based on public and employee ownership not wholesale privatisation. Martin backed calls for a **Post Bank** to help post offices survive and offer a really safe place for savings.



Martin presenting the Cheltenham Youth Football League Cup

# Supporting schools and young people

Martin challenged the rushed closures of popular **Monkscroft** primary school and fast-improving **Kingsmead** secondary. He backed the new academy to bring major investment in education to the west of town, inviting Pate's, UCAS

and the university to get involved. But he argued against admissions based on religion. He has also supported Cheltenham's **MAD Youth Council** and Members of the UK Youth Parliament.