

## **History of our broadcasting November 2018**

### **Women in Parliament January 2018 to November 2018**

by Boni Sones, Executive Producer, [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com)

We've had a good start to this new session of Parliament 2018 and can report that this year during #Vote100 we have conducted 46 interviews with women MPs in all parties reflecting the issues they have raised in parliament.

We will be publishing these and adding them to our national audio archives. They can also be listened to on [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) and all have been uploaded to Soundcloud and tweeted out to the MPs we interviewed for them to RT within a few hours of conducting these podcasts on the @bonisones2 account. This is a popular method of distribution. This session we have secured three exclusives which the mainstream media followed up on.

Our interviews are driven by the desire to create good strong journalism reflecting issues of concern that MPs raise in the House, and our content, while running parallel to that the Commons are producing during #Vote100 year, is significantly different as it covers contentious live current affairs issues rather than ones that are now resolved.

Thanks to the team and our journalists Jackie Ashley, Deborah McGurran, and Linda Fairbrother. Thanks also to our long standing Advisory Board of MPs, Dame Caroline Spelman MP, Conservative; Jo Swinson MP, LD; Dr Lisa Cameron SNP; and this year Daniel Zeichner MP. Sharon Hodgson for Labour has also given us much support as has Vicky Ford for the Conservatives and Baroness Susan Kramer for the LDs. Thanks also to Rich our web manager.

November will be busy for us with Linda and I reporting on Harriet Harman's Women in World parliaments event this week, a first for the Chamber of the House of Commons, and Jackie helping to chair an event in Cambridge with the

50/50 parliament group drawing together senior women MPs from all parties. Deborah remains on hand to issue us with much needed guidance and her senior editorial advice.

**All the interviews we have conducted as a team over 12 years are now housed in one of three national audio archives at the British Library, The LSE and now the History of Parliament Trust too.**

Our latest national audio archive at the History of Parliament Trust houses all our podcast interviews from May 2014 to July 2018. Thanks to Dr Paul Seward the Director. <http://historyofparliamentonline.org>.

Our Third book on women MPs: "When There's A Woman in The Room - Part 2" was first published in April 2017 and updated this year in March 2018. These include interviews from the Vote 100 Celebrations and our much praised documentaries. <http://www.bonisonproductions.com/books.html>

All our four books can be found in the National Libraries of Britain: The British Library, the Bodleian Library Oxford University, The Cambridge University Library, National Library of Scotland, National Library of Wales and Trinity College Dublin.

2018 has been a very special year for women MPs as they celebrate 100 years of women and the vote. We have regularly turned up and recorded interviews with them as they debate in the main Chamber of the Commons and the smaller Westminster Hall the issues of concern to their constituents. These debates often went unreported in the mainstream media as Brexit dominated the headlines.

We have done our fair share of Brexit votes interviews too, for and against the UK leaving the EU as the Brexit and Trade Bills wind their way through the Commons and the Lords but we like to think our coverage has picked up on issues that have been left mainly unreported.

During this Autumn 2018 session of parliament we have secured interviews with senior members of the parties including two exclusives, one with Jo Swinson MP on Proxy Voting in the Commons (while she held Baby Gabriel) and Carolyn Harris MP on her new PMB on State Pension age rises for Women.

Rupa Huq MP, Seema Malhotra MP, and Heidi Allen MP have all given us interviews on how #Brexit impacts their constituencies and their views on the public interest. Huq is working with Women against Brexit, while Malhotra is a member of the Brexit Select Committee and Allen is holding a series of public meetings to talk directly to her constituents.

Baroness Ros Altmann gave her reaction to Theresa May's conference speech, which played well with the Conservative party. We also caught up with the first public protest of this parliament, the #WASPI women and the #Backto60 groups who joined together to stage their #shouldertoshoulder rally.

Maria Miller MP, Chair of the Women & Equalities Select gave us a good exclusive with her reaction to the Cox Report on harassment in parliament after her speech in the Chamber calling for the speaker John Bercow to resign.

Gavin Shuker MP, who sits on the Equalities Select spoke to us about hate crimes and making misogyny a hate crime and online social media abuse.

Prof Peter Clarke, Modern British History, University of Cambridge also gave us an exclusive on his views on Theresa May's leadership and his predictions on how historians will judge this period of political history during the Brexit negotiations.

Before the summer recess we spoke with the Labour politician Siobhian McDonagh on housing and the proposed rent rises by the National Trust, and Baroness Susan Kramer, LD, speaking about food standards in the USA compared to Europe on Brexit. Also Vicky Ford, the Conservative MP and chair

of the APPG on women spoke about diabetics having monitors on the NHS and the PMQ she would have liked to have asked Theresa May, a diabetic.

In June we also set out in search of more local interviews in Cambridgeshire to capture the technology change political campaigns are going through and catching up with the women candidates in all parties who had newly won seats or engineered campaigns that allowed other women to win. These will update our 70 plus interviews for our 2015 through the Looking Glass Documentary charting the General Election campaign in Cambridge across party.  
<http://www.bonisonproductions.com/lookingglass/index.html>

We set out below the web links to all these interviews from January 2018 to July 25<sup>th</sup> 2018 when Parliament went into recess for the summer. The accompanying audio is now in the History of Parliament Trust archives. It can also be listened to on [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com).

### **Who we interviewed:**

From January 2018 to November 2018 in #Vote100 year we have conducted 46 interviews with MPs and Peers across party and six interviews with councillors.

We have interviewed: Conservative 16; Labour 21 and 5 councillors; LD 6 and 1 councillor and 1 other. SNP: 1. Others 1 cross bencher in the Lords. 1 correspondent and 1 historian on #Vote 100. 1 professor of modern political history.

### **Conservative MPs and Peers:**

Heidi Allen, Maria Miller, Baroness Altman, Vicky Ford, Sarah Wollaston, Lucy Allan, Maria Miller, Vicky Ford, Dame Caroline Spelman, Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Maria Caulfield, Maria Miller, Maggie Throup. Spelman, Helen Whatley, Vicky Ford.

### **Labour MPs and Peers:**

Gavin Shuker, Seema Malhotra (2), Carolyn Harris, Rup Huq, Siobhain McDonagh, Helen Goodman, Jo Platt, Cllrs Nicky Massey & Katie Thornburrow, Cllrs Jerri Bird and Carla McQueen, Dame Tessa Jowell, Cllr Clare King, former MP Denis McShane, Fiona Onasanya, Melanie Onn, Harriet Harman, Alison McGovern, Sharon Hodgson, Ruth George, Lucy Powell, Dame Tessa Jowell, Catherine McKinnell. Angela Eagle, Seema Malhotra, Fiona Onasanya, Sharon Hodgson.

### **LD MPs and Peers:**

Baroness Ros Altman, Baroness Susan Kramer, Cllr Bridget Smith, Jo Swinson, Cllr Catherine Smart, Baroness Shirley Williams, Economist Vicky Pryce, Jo Swinson, Jo Swinson.

### **SNP:**

Dr Lisa Cameron.

### **Cross Party**

Baroness Ruth Deech.

### **Documentaries #Vote100 February 2018: Women Speaking up for Women**

Women MPs speak about their speeches and debates on the 6th February 2018 as they celebrate 100 years since some women first got the vote.

You will hear Conservatives: Dame Caroline Spelman MP for Meriden, Theresa May the PM, Vicky Ford MP for Chelmsford, Helen Whately MP for Faversham and Mid Kent. We then speak to Angela Eagle MP Wallasey at the Labour women's photo call on College Green, before moving on to talk to Seema Malhotra MP Feltham and Heston and Fiona Onasanya MP for Peterborough in

Central Lobby looking at the Acts of Parliament on display for one day only that gave women the vote.

Finally we meet up with Sharon Hodgson MP, Washington and Sunderland West, about her debate in Westminster Hall on Free School Meals and her moving speech in the Chamber last week on her painful experiences after the birth of her stillborn daughter.

SNP and LD: Dr Lisa Cameron and Jo Swinson take us on their suffragette tour of Parliament.

### **Correspondents and Historians:**

Professor Peter Clarke, Anushka Asthana Joint Political Editor of the Guardian and Suffragette historian Elizabeth Crawford. .

### **All our interviews in full:**

#### **November 6th 2018**

#### **Are the Conservatives entering their third historical political phase of self-destruction?**

#### **Peter Clarke, Professor Emeritus of Modern British History, University of Cambridge**

Professor Clarke discusses Theresa May's leadership of the Conservative Party, her approach to the Brexit negotiations, and what he thinks will be the outcome of her Chequers deal when it is eventually put to parliament later this year.

Professor Clarke begins this 20 minute audio podcast by looking back to the split in the Conservative Party during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Corn Law reforms which lead to the resignation of the Prime Minister, Robert Peel and later the 20<sup>th</sup> Century tariff reforms under Arthur Balfour's Prime-ministership which ended disastrously for the party leading to an historic election defeat.

Clarke explains that although he feels May was dealt a “poor hand” taking over the Prime- ministership to deliver Brexit when she had voted Remain, she did then “dig herself” into the subsequent difficulties she now faces by triggering Article 50 too soon and spelling out her notorious red lines in the Summer of 2016 for the negotiations before there was a coherent position in the Conservative party and in the Country. He believes: “She needn’t have done any of that”.

He said: “We might feel sorry for Theresa May week by week in the difficulties that face her but many of them are of her own making.

“She over fulfilled her commitment. A more prudent leader, a more canny leader, perhaps a more devious leader would surely have been able to craft a tub thumping speech that would have shown her heart was in the right place but without actually tying herself down to a series of conditions which as it has turned out are impossible to fulfil.”

Clarke says he believes that the EU 27 have held together their negotiating position under Barnier well but that the UK should have realised when it signed the December 2017 agreement and pledged that there would be no hard border between Northern and Southern Ireland and no border in the Irish sea, that the EU was not going to backtrack on this.

He elaborated: “If you are going to make commitments to the EU 27 in writing and sign up to them you had better mean them because the EU notoriously is a much more bureaucratic, paper bound, pledge bound system of government where nods and winks and other exercises of pragmatism in the British tradition simply don’t cut the mustard.”

He continued by saying that the commitment to having no hard borders in Northern Ireland meant it was: “Always impossible to see how this conundrum could be resolved. Maybe the Brits signed up to it believing the EU would fragment but isn’t it remarkable that the 27 of them have kept together and it is

on the British side that the position has become increasingly incoherent. Over time it is on the British side that we have seen these spectacular resignations from the Cabinet of Boris Johnson and David Davis. “

Clarke explained that Cameron and Osborne, the previous Conservative PM and Chancellor, who had called the referendum were responding to the threat that UKIP had posed but that such “ideology” in the Conservative party was highly unusual.

He expanded his argument: “It is when the Conservatives have become ideological as they did before the First World War when the issue of Tariff reform came up that they have found themselves in trouble and indeed in opposition.”

Clarke says May can’t rely on her positive standing in the opinion polls, as they had been wrong before the 2017 General Election, but that the “storm has yet to break”: “That will happen when “the deadlines can’t be put off any longer as to whether there is a deal or no-deal”, he said.

He explained: “It seems to me the Conservative party is then quite likely to be fragmented in its views and the outcome – you would need to be bold to make one – but I can’t see a way that a majority can be put together within the Conservative party for any of these positions. When it comes to asking for Labour support – are you serious – is the party of Corbyn really going to prop up Mrs May by putting through some form of Brexit? I can’t see that happening.”

Clarke believes May could find herself and her government subject to a vote of confidence which “could be attached to anything” not just Brexit related legislation in which traditional party loyalties may well not apply just as they didn’t before May 1940 when Chamberlain’s government fell.

He continued: “I think with the magnitude of the issues at stake on both sides there will be very strong pressure to go for bust on this. Brexit as an issue has to be resolved one way or the other. Do we do it or not? Do we do it through a deal,

or through no-deal? Exactly which way it polarises, there are different possibilities, but there is a strength of feeling behind these views and then you have to put it together with the fact that there is no Conservative majority in the House of Commons.

“The way the Irish issue has resurfaced, as it has resurfaced so often in British politics in the last two hundred years, makes this even more uncertain. But the one thing that seems unlikely is that Mrs May will be in any position to put her sort of deal on Brexit through the British Parliament with success within the next few months. The timetable can't be altered without the consent of the EU and so I foresee a rather dramatic end to this story. “

Clarke thinks there could be both a People's Vote and a General Election, but that you can call an Election in three weeks but a referendum takes up to six months. He spelled this out: “Which comes first is a matter we can argue about but the reality is the clock is ticking, article 50 was invoked and everything must come to pass by the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019. This is not a decision that lies within the power of the British government or the British parliament, the cards there are in the hands of the European Union. So far they have been very good at maintaining their own unity and they are not going to be reluctant in the end to play those cards - not in a malicious spirit I think – but they like to do things by the book. How much they will bow to the needs of British pragmatism at that point is something that we can only speculate on.”

He ended by warning: “Generally speaking ideology and Conservatism although they may make an interesting mix in this country when they have boosted the Conservative party they have also in fact led to some of its outstanding difficulties. The Conservatives have been at their most successful when they have been the moderate party of pragmatism and they have left these sort of ideological contortions to the party opposite, be it Liberal or Labour. We are in perhaps the

third historical phase where the Conservatives are playing with dynamite themselves and who gets blown up is going to be the real issue.”

**October 30<sup>th</sup> 2018**

**Heidi Allen the Conservative MP for South Cambridgeshire gives her verdict on “fortune Phil’s” Budget and says why she held a public meeting on #Brexit**

The Chancellor Philip Hammond this week produced a budget giving extra money to public services, such as health, education, defence and even pot holes, and while he might not have convinced voters he was ending austerity he certainly produced one of the biggest give-aways of the conservative government’s tenure in office over the past eight years. He also provided an extra £1.7 billion to ease the hardship caused by the introduction of Universal Credit, but critics of the new benefit system, that roles 6 benefits into one, such as the Conservative MP Heidi Allen, who sits on the Work and Pensions Select Committee say he has not yet done enough and that they will continue campaigning.

Heidi Allen MP also represents a strong remain constituency were people are employed in agriculture, high tech industry and academia and while she thinks South Cambridgeshire will weather the storm caused by Brexit she believes it will do untold harm nationally to the UK economy. She didn’t march for a second referendum and People’s Vote but says one maybe necessary if there is no-deal and that she fully supports Theresa May in her negotiations with Europe. She said she couldn’t serve in a Boris Johnson government, but that the complexities and divisions within both the Conservative party and Labour might eventually result in a new political party emerging or even a government of “national unity”.

Allen supports a Norway type deal embracing both the single market and the customs union which would solve the problem of the Northern Irish border and is, she says, “gaining traction.”

Allen explained she will continue the campaign to reform the introduction of Universal Credit: “This is whatever way you look at it, is big spending, but our work on the Select Committee will continue and we will publish reports on the ongoing small, changes we still need to Universal Credit, that the PM, the Chancellor and the Secretary of State can see. The Budget was a massive step forward but it isn’t going to keep Universal Credit out of the headlines.”

Allen told [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com): “I hope that ultimately there aren’t that many in the right wing of the party that would in the cold light of day vote to put the Conservative government at risk or the Prime Minister at risk by voting for a no-deal. I hope they will put the country first and we won’t come to that point.”

She continued: “There is talk of a new party and if we were to reach economic meltdown, and the risk of it because of a no-deal on the table, I think people would look beyond party to a country national allegiance and party would be parked to the side for a while.”

“It was a budget of optimism, of economic recovery, of investment, and part of it I am sure would be a message to Europe, to say stick with us, we are a good solid economy.”

**October 17<sup>th</sup> 2018**

### **Maria Miller MP #CoxReport Harassment in Parliament**

Maria Miller the Conservative MP for Basingstoke who chairs the Women & Equalities Select Committee used a debate yesterday called to discuss the Dame Laura Cox report on harassment and bullying of staff in Parliament to call for the Speaker, John Bercow to resign.

Miller says she was disappointed with the number of MPs in the debate and that even though Cox did not name names the report makes it obvious that senior people overseeing parliamentary procedures including Bercow himself must now

step down rather than wait until next summer when he has indicated he would be willing to leave.

Some MPs suggested that Bercow must stay on to see the Brexit negotiations through to the end but Miller says there are others who can perform this role, such as the Deputy Speaker Eleanor Laing, who has sat in the chair 750 times over her five years as deputy, and that the reporting processes of the House of Commons Commission itself to parliament raised constitutional questions over responsibilities, transparency and accountability. She said staff who reported harassment or bullying needed to be sure the procedures were transparent and independent.

She said change could happen quickly if there was a will there: “The problem here in Parliament is that there is little accountability, there isn’t a will from the top to do this, else it would have happened already, and the culture of cover up and fear is still palpable. I think that came out in the debate yesterday when so many MPs absented themselves rather than risk being associated with a call for the Speaker to resign and so will he resign? I think only if some of those MPs have the courage to stand up and be counted.”

Miller said Dame Cox would give evidence to her Committee in parliament next week. She praised Chris Cook of BBC Newsnight who highlighted over several months the concerns of House of Commons staff about harassment.

## **October 17th 2018**

### **Gavin Shuker, the Labour MP for Luton South - #HateCrime**

Gavin Shuker the Labour MP for Luton South is a member of the Women & Equalities Select Committee which today heard evidence from the traveller community on hate crime.

The Committee has been looking more widely at the problem of hate crime in society, including that associated with race, disability and women. Some such as the Labour MP Stella Creasy have recently called for misogyny to be made a hate crime while others have responded to that by asking that misandry – hate directed towards men - be included too.

Hate crimes are offences motivated by prejudice against someone's disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity.

Gavin Shuker say why there must be reform to take down users who display hate on certain platforms such as twitter and Facebook.

He said: “There is a responsibility on social media companies to prevent the kind of anonymous abuse that goes on. It is only through international commitments we are going to be able to tackle these big tech firms and encourage them to do the right thing, it is being neglected. We are as a parliament withdrawing from some of these because of Brexit.

He said he wasn't sure about misandry being a hate crime too: “These characteristics are protected for a reason they should be identifiable.”

Shuker explained that the 2010 Equality Act only went so far and that if new “smart” legislation were introduced to tackle such crimes it would need European and USA co-operation to implement it as this is where many of the tech companies are based.

He continued: “That is why I am a proud internationalist and think we need to tackle these issues together rather than thinking a few hearings in Westminster will make a difference.”

Shuker said he was shocked by the Dame Laura Cox report on harassment in parliament, and agrees there needs to be a clean broom approach, but thinks

attacks on the Speaker, John Bercow, have been politicised and that Bercow has done some very good things.

He said: "He should go next summer and we put in place a new regime with oversight."

"At the minute the processes we have are inadequate whether you are the complainant or the complained about, you need a non-politicised process, we are starting to get that in the parties and we need it in parliament as well. It needs to be a fully independent process."

**October 10th 2018**

**Seema Malhotra #Brexit Select**

Seema Malhotra, the Labour MP for Feltham and Heston sits on the Brexit Select Committee and following today's meeting she took time to tell Boni Sones, Executive Producer of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) who the Committee had heard evidence from and what kind of "fudge" she thinks we will end up with.

Seema also tried to ask Theresa May the Prime Minister a PMQ today on the lives of children and the pressures on them. She said that by 2020 the Institute for Government has estimated that we will have spent £4 billion on Brexit and that money could have been better spent improving children's services more generally.

She also did not think we should set up a Royal Commission on Brexit but that the government should be taking more notice of the evidence already presented to it on the impact of Brexit including the reports produced by her own Select Committee.

She said: "On the NI border it wouldn't surprise me if there was some kind of fudge on the customs union. I have always said we need to stay in the customs union and I also think we need to stay in a reformed single market."

She continued: "When the government is ignoring all the evidence around the economy and the government is making its decisions based on what is happening around the wings of the Tory party I don't think any Royal Commission is going to have any greater influence than the Committees we have had. It is just about time the government listened and made decisions in the interests of the Country."

**Women's State Pension Rise Injustices  
Rally in Westminster October 10th 2018**

[#WASPI](#) [#Backto60](#) [#OneVoice](#) [#LondonRally10thOctober2018](#).

Hundreds of women marched from Hyde Park to Westminster today from all over the Country, in protest again at the rise to their state pension age. Carrying banners, and bringing traffic to a standstill outside Parliament several of the campaign groups associated with the SPA rises for women joined together [#shouldertoshoulder](#) to raise the issue yet again with politicians and Theresa May's government.

In this special moving [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) Executive Producer Boni Sones spoke to Karen Glynn, Janet Rhodes, Julie Delve, Christine Austin and Prafula Shah.

[#shouldertoshoulder](#) [#onevoice](#)

Timandra French and Leilah Leak from East Kent Waspi and [#Backto60](#) talk to Boni Sones of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) about their march to Westminster today to protest against state pension age increases for 3.5 million women which they say are unfair and causing much hardship.

**October 3rd 2018**

**Baroness Ros Altmann, a Conservative Peer and former Pensions Minister, gives her reaction to the Prime Minister, Theresa May's speech to Conference today.**

May ruled out a People's Vote and a Second Referendum saying it would be a "politician's vote" and diminish "faith in our democracy". But Altmann has been a leading proponent of a People's Vote and says she will continue to campaign alongside other Conservative politicians and those in other parties for one. May also ruled out a Canada or Norway style Brexit deal sticking instead to her Chequers Deal or a No deal.

Even so Altmann gives May 7/10 for the speech: "As a speech from our Party leader to our conference I would give Theresa May 7/10 at least because she has done what the leader has to do. I would not say she would get such high marks if this was meant to be a strategy for success with new negotiations, because we have seen already that the negotiations that she was supposed to enter on the basis of the Chequers deal broke down. The EU has made clear it will not accept that. More movement will have to be made by Britain but actually making such movement is in our interests."

A fringe event at Conference on #People's Vote which Altmann spoke at was not listed in the party brochure despite it having been entered for debate.

**October 2nd 2018**

**Exclusive**

**A new Private Members' Bill is being introduced to help 1950 women affected by the State Pension Age increase**

Carolyn Harris the Labour MP for Swansea East is bringing in a new Private Members' Bill to alleviate the hardship caused to 1950s born women who have seen their pension ages increased.

Women are said to be visiting food banks, sleeping in sheds, and suffering ill health and even considering suicide as a result of the financial hardship caused

by raising the State Pension Age for women from 60. At least 2.6 million are said to be affected by these staggered changes to the age at which they can now retire.

The Pensions (Review of Women's Arrangements) Bill was supposed to be read for a second time on the floor of the House at the end of October 2018 but Harris has asked for it to be rescheduled on one sitting Friday in November or December to ensure that it actually gets heard rather than dropped through lack of parliamentary time.

Harris has written her Bill but it has not been published yet. It proposes three measures that would alleviate the hardship caused in the worst cases of SPA increases. These are transitional payments to be made until women qualify for the pension at the new age; an extension of tax credits where there is no other income for the women concerned; and all women to be given the maximum pension entitlement rather than the staggered rates they may have qualified for.

Harris tells Boni Sones, Executive Producer of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) that she believes this is the fastest route to get some kind of justice for 1950s women and that even though it does not address the issue of whether or not the pension age increase should have taken place, it allows parliament to make amends in some of the worst cases that are still ongoing.

Harris, who has come in for criticism herself from some rival interested groups, pointed out that the All-Party Parliamentary group on Inequality and the State Pension Age, which she Chairs, is not associated with any particular campaign and that the recent report they produced took evidence from all groups and individuals equally and accepted evidence from 90 different consultations.

Harris told Sones: "It is a bigger issue for me than Brexit. I have become associated with the issue. Very many women write regularly to their own MPs and news outlets and they write to me as well. Every single day there will be letter a phone call, an email a message on twitter. Every single day there will be

something. It is something which I have more people talking about than they do about Brexit, for me I get more people concerned about this than any other subject.”

Harris said she thought the vote would be successful in the House when her Bill is finally scheduled: “We are number 16 or 17 on the list in October, but we now know there are 12 more sitting Friday’s and we want to re-table it on a Friday where it can be higher up on the agenda and then take it to a meaningful vote. There would be enough people voting for it I am confident of that. This is where we will get victory on this. It would be up to the government to structure a timetable to allow these three measures to happen and hopefully it could be done very, very, quickly. ”

**September**

**13<sup>th</sup>**

**2018**

**Exclusive**

**Jo Swinson MP & baby Gabriel #ProxyVoting.**

Jo Swinson MP has made parliamentary history today by taking her 11 week old son Gabriel into the Chamber of the House of Commons while she listened to the end of a debate on Proxy Voting.

Jo had previously spoken in that debate and then rushed back to her office in the Commons to feed Gabriel. In this exclusive [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) interview Jo told us, holding baby Gabriel in her arms, why she and other women MPs across party support proxy voting. You can hear Gabriel joining in the discussion too.

As part of her contribution to the debate Jo had spoken movingly about the difficulties of getting young babies to "latch" when breast feeding, and the difficulties for a young Mum of leaving a baby, she also revealed she keeps expressed milk not alcohol in her office fridge.

Jo confronted the controversy of Tory whips telling their MPs who had been "paired" with others, including a pairing arrangement she had just after Gabriel was born, to break that pairing arrangement in an important vote before the Summer recess on Brexit which subsequently the government narrowly won.

Jo told Boni Sones: "It was infuriating. I was at home with a two week old baby and the key Brexit pairing arrangement was broken. That is why we need to have proxy voting, a simple system where an MP with a small baby would be able to nominate a colleague to vote on their behalf so the vote of that constituency was still recorded. "

She added: "What happens if you are in the middle of a feed when a division bell rings? It's all very unpredictable and you need to have lots of contingency with a small baby and a proper proxy voting system".

**September 13th 2018**

### **Seema Malhotra MP Brexit**

Seema Malhotra the Labour MP for Feltham and Heston is a member of the Brexit Select Committee. Here she speaks to Boni Sones hot foot from the PMQs where the Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn had questioned Theresa May MP the Prime Minister on the issue of the role out of Universal Credit.

Boni asked Seema about whether she thought PMQs had been too noisy, the response May gave on Universal Credit and if she thought the Brexit Select Committee was doing a good job in holding the government to account. She also spoke of her personal reaction to the Chequers Deal and whether she would vote for it when and if it is put to a Meaningful Vote in Parliament in November or December.

Seema said:

“Today was pretty shouty and we couldn’t actually hear what Jeremy was saying. The speaker does need to intervene. There needs to be some level of respect and it wasn’t there from the Tory side today. This is a government that has failed in the roll out of Universal Credit. There will be greater calls for change.”

"I don't see how I could vote for it (Chequers). There are too many unanswered questions and we haven't even seen the final deal so it is always increasing. It is very hard to say but in terms of what I have stood for and what I have called for in terms of our relationship with the European Union I can't see how I would be supporting the government. I think the government has a lot more work to do and there is less than 200 days to Brexit.”

## **September 4th 2018**

### **Rupa Huq MP #Women&Brexit**

Rupa Huq the Labour MP for Ealing Central and Acton today held a debate in Parliament's Westminster Hall to discuss the impact of Brexiting the EU on women and their families.

She said Brexit would disproportionately affect women particularly those in low paid caring jobs, who would also have to bear the brunt of any resulting economic downturn when many were already in insecure and low paid jobs.

The Conservative Minister Victoria Atkins MP responded to her concerns by saying the government would be conducting a gender audit of any legislative changes post Brexit and that it would be protecting workers' employment rights. She said the UK was leading the World on its policies on gender pay gap audits but all this was not enough to placate Huq.

In this interview straight after the debate Boni Sones, Executive Producer of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) for women spoke to Huq and three campaigners who had suggested she stage such a debate.

They were Nina Parker of Women for Europe, Rachel Franklin of Women for a People's Vote, and Lauren Pemberton of Women for Europe.

Huq said: "Women will be the most adversely affected by Brexit for a number of reasons, employment protections, insecure employment, and they work in professions that are contracting, and also as consumers, and in all of our lives. Women are hit by Brexit women worse so."

Huq ended by saying she hopes her party Labour would reject Theresa May's Chequers deal: "We have six tests about whether we will get the same benefits or equivalent and if the Chequers plan doesn't satisfy these we vote against it and then it opens up for the leadership to support a People's Vote which I think we should do anyway. "

**July 24<sup>th</sup> 2018**

**Siobhain McDonagh MP: Housing and the National Trust rent rises; Proxy Votes; Brexit and Antisemitism in the Labour Party.**

Siobhain McDonagh the Labour MP for Mitcham and Morden asked the Minister for housing this week if he'd had any discussions with the National Trust about its plans to increase their tenants' rents to market levels. Siobhain believes this will mean a number of people, particularly those with disabilities will not be able to pay their rents and will become homeless and will end up being the responsibility of various housing departments and councils across the country.

One of her constituents, Maria, is having her rent put up beyond the level that housing benefit will pay, which ultimately will lead to a shortfall of about £350 a month, leading eventually to her eviction and reliance on the state for help.

Siobhain said: “It’s an extraordinary thing for the National Trust to be doing. They would say these are market rents but I think they have a bigger social responsibility to the 5,000 tenants they have across the country particularly as they are a much loved organisation who get a great deal of support from the government and bequests from members. I think they would be horrified to know this. They are very difficult to contact. Often bringing up an issue on the floor of the House gets something unlocked.”

Commenting on the Proxy voting row over the breaking of Lib Dem MP Jo Swinson’s pairing arrangement while she was on maternity leave she said: “It was such a breach of trust, I wouldn’t have any opposition to someone nominating someone to vote for them.”

On Brexit she said: “I believe in a Peoples’ Vote when we know what the deal is, or to Leave without a deal or to Remain”. “I am really concerned, I am concerned for the Country and I am concerned for London. What will happen to services? If London catches a cold everybody sneezes.”

On the row over antisemitism in her party and whether or not it will adopt the internationally recognised definition on this and the war of words between the respected Peer Dame Margaret Hodge and the Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn she said: “Dame Margaret Hodge is a national treasure. Why do we think we can come up with a different definition to that accepted by the UN and everybody else?”

**July 19<sup>th</sup> 2018**

**#AskHerToStand: Vicky Ford the Conservative MP for Chelmsford: Pankhurst Teas, Proxy Voting, Brexit White Paper, & her Prime Minister Theresa May**

Vicky Ford the Conservative MP for Chelmsford, who chairs the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Women in the House of Commons, this week with others laid a wreath at the statue of Emmeline Pankhurst, the leader of the suffragette movement, to commemorate Pankhurst's birthday, she was born in Manchester on 15th July 1858, and it is also the Centenary year of women and the vote. Vicky has also been attending Pankhurst parties in her constituency, which are also being held throughout the UK. She is part of a movement which is encouraging women from all parties to come forward and stand for parliament with the campaign group #AskHerToStand. Pankhurst was a Conservative politician but her family wanted the celebrations to be cross party.

We also asked Vicky to give an up sum of the weeks' events in Westminster, when the government narrowly got its amendments to the Brexit White Paper through when four Labour MPs voted with it, and her assessment of Theresa May her Prime Minister, only the second woman to ever hold this office of state. Another contentious issue this week has been the error that allowed a Conservative politician to vote when he should have been paired with the liberal democrat MP, Jo Swinson, who is on maternity leave leading to a debate in the Chamber on Proxy Voting which some are asking for and the Mother of the House, Labour politician Harriet Harman, asked May a PMQ about this.

Vicky told us: "We have been having Pankhurst Parties we had a big one in Chelmsford on Sunday. A bit like the Equaliteas. And we laid a wreath in Chelmsford. We have a woman Lord Lieutenant, the Mayor of Chelmsford is a woman, and I am the first woman MP in my constituency. We are running

#AskHerToSTand, because women need to be asked a few more times than men to stand."

"In terms of Pairing, I have used it. I was actually paired last night in order to let a member of the opposition who I think was unwell, to make sure their vote was still respected. I think the Proxy voting system would be complicated, particularly if there are local issues like there were with Heathrow. I think the pairing system has a long history, this was a silly error, and we need to make sure the pairing system is strong and robust. Brexit is a very, very difficult negotiation Theresa May is definitely the right person to be leading us through it."

**July 12<sup>th</sup> 2018**

**Baroness Susan Kramer says why Theresa May's Chequers Brexit Plan, future free trade deals and food standards post Brexit need greater scrutiny**

Baroness Susan Kramer the LD Treasury and Economics spokesperson believes Theresa May's Chequers Brexit Plan leaves much to be desired. She also warns that any future free trade deal with countries like America could mean UK consumers will be eating less healthy foods and to a lowering of standards on goods we import and the environment.

She tells [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com): "I was frankly stunned by the news of the Chequers Agreement. It seemed extraordinary they had agreed and they seemed to agree that everyone had agreed and then we had the news of the resignations and that seemed to be so much more logically.

"What is life like post Brexit if we do Brexit? I think there is a small possibility that we think all the options are so awful that we pull back. There is real unravelling. What kind of standards do we want for our foods? We want high standards of food safety, we want high quality, and labelling, and to make sure that harmful products like fats and sugars are highlighted and also to make sure animal welfare is key and not abuse of the animals we are going to eat. If we want

those standards it is logical that we stay within the EU. The US standards are much, much lower on every one of those fronts. “

She also tells us why she agrees with Donald Trump, the American President that the UK is in chaos at the moment.

**July 12<sup>th</sup> 2018**

**Sarah Wollaston MP: A new law on Stalking & supporting Theresa May on her new Brexit Plan**

Sarah Wollaston the Conservative MP for Totness has a new Private Members Bill going through Parliament that would allow victims of stalking to get the police to take out stalking protection orders. She hopes that the government will expedite the PMB just like it's down with Wera Hobhouse MP's Upskirting Bill to ensure it becomes law sooner rather than later.

Wollaston told [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) that SPOs would ensure women got protection from stalking earlier rather than waiting for a case to be taken through the criminal justice system.

She said: “This is designed to put something in place while the case is being built that sets out very clear restrictions on the stalker things that they can't do, like stopping them pursuing the victim and in some cases setting out a positive requirement that they attend a psychiatric assessment, or take part in a perpetrators programmes designed to stop this crime of obsession and fixation, to try and break the cycle at an earlier stage.”

She added: “I would love to see the government expedite this Bill if there is time, we have seen the Upskirting Bill being expedited, and stalking and its dangers means it should also be expedited.”

On the new Chequers Brexit Plan which led to seven resignations this week from the government and party, Wollaston said: “This is what pragmatic responses are

about and I think she is doing a very good job and we should give her a fair wind to get this through. There is no appetite in the party for a leadership challenge; the Brexiteers are behaving very badly.”

Wollaston also chairs the influential Health Select Committee.

**June 27th 2018**

**Lucy Allan MP for Telford: Child Sexual Exploitation - CSE**

Lucy Allan MP for Telford talks to Boni Sones, Executive Producer of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) about Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Upskirting, the expansion of Heathrow airport and why she strongly supports Brexit two years on from the UK's referendum which voted to leave.

On CSE Lucy said: “Unless you call something out for what it is, if you pretend it is something else, you are going to get a lot of resentment and nobody wants that. We have got a fantastic Sikh community of people in Telford who are part of everything we do, and they are engaged in community work and they provide free food to the homeless and they are feeling tarnished by this because nobody is actually saying it is this Muslim gang from this street, by just saying loosely it is people from an Asian origin, it is just terrible, and I do think we have to be careful not to be over sensitive about that”.

On Heathrow & Brexit two years on Lucy said: “I voted in favour of a new runway at Heathrow, in the context of Brexit and having passed the Withdrawal Bill we should be thinking about how we expand our horizons to be a more global trading nation. “

“I think if we were to have a second referendum there would be a much higher proportion of people voting to leave partly because of the way the EU has behaved in these negotiations. It’s been extraordinary how they have not adopted an

approach as we have looking for a solution, it has all been about punishing them. .. In my constituency there is a desperate need to get on with it and stop the EU dancing rings around us. If we were to have a second referendum in Telford it would be a much higher leave proportion than we were in 2016. “

@[Vote100](#)

### **June 27th 2018: Voice & Vote Exhibition, Westminster Hall, Women's Place in Parliament – Maria Miller MP**

In this special podcast Maria Miller MP, the Chair of the Equalities Select Committee gives listeners her very own tour of the new Voice & Vote Exhibition to be opened this week in Westminster Hall. It takes visitors through the historic moments of women's suffrage and their struggle for the vote from the Grill women used to have to look down on to see the debates going on below on the floor of the House to a large Orange wall that has in white writing the name of every women MP to ever sit in Parliament.

Boni Sones, Executive Producer of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) asks Maria to read from some of the plaques including that of Nancy Astor, the first women to take up her seat, and then to stand beside and look at probably the three most well-known women in Parliament, Barbara Castle, Margaret Thatcher and Shirley Williams who still sits in the Lords today. Maria tells Boni that Margaret Thatcher was the reason she decided to become an MP but that she also looks up to Barbara and Shirley.

Maria said: “These women were amazing individuals who did so much to shape the country. Equality is something that joins parties together, it gets parties to find their common agreement and their common values, and certainly my Committee has no problem in finding common ground in improving the lives of women. “

**June 15<sup>th</sup> 2018**

**Baroness Ruth Deech - #Brexit & the House of Lords Amendments**

Baroness Ruth Deech, who supported Brexit, tells us why she believes the House of Lords has every right to amend the legislation of the Commons and that the so called “ping pong” process by which amendments pass from one House to the other are good for democracy.

This week the House of Commons considered 15 Lord’s Amendments to the Brexit Bill, and overturned them all, but inflicting considerable damage to both the Conservative and Labour parties whose leaders, Theresa May the Prime Minister and Jeremy Corbyn were unable to get their respective front benches to vote with their party line. There was even one Conservative ministerial resignation, Phillip Lee, the Justice Minister before the vote on Wednesday. But May did stem off a threatened rebellion by the Remainer’s on one amendment the so called right to give Parliament a “Meaningful” vote on the final Brexit deal but only possibly to row back on that later.

Meanwhile six of Jeremy Corbyn’s front bench resigned some in support of the amendment that would allow the UK to remain part of the EEA, and a smaller number who didn’t want to vote for it or Labour’s fudge on the issue as it would then still have allowed free movement of labour, and uncontrolled immigration. Another contentious area was membership of the Customs Union.

Boni Sones, Executive Producer of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) asked Baroness Deech to give her view, as a Brexiteer and lawyer of those Lord’s amendments and the process and function of the House of Lords in a week which the mainstream press had described Wednesday’s debacle, including the SNP as a party walking out of Prime Minister’s Questions, as “Chaotic.”

Baroness Deech said: “(Ping Pong?)...I am not unduly worried we get this fudge with lots of legislation. This gives practicing lawyers years of lucrative work in

the courts... Our withdrawal, whatever form it takes, will give them lots of lovely work for years to come in the courts here and abroad. There will probably be a fudge but no wording is absolutely perfect and I just want us to get over that finishing line in March 2019 without too much chaos and respect the will of the people... My instinct is if we had another referendum vote it would still be 52 to 48...I think we would vote the same way again... I believe in the way the Lord's is as it is except it is much too big, it has expertise and diversity.”

“I think it is not more chaotic than other times in our National life. When Henry VIII broke from Rome, I expect it was completely chaotic. After all our current system is based on Henry VIII's break from Rome, and I think decisions which we made in the Second World War with Churchill were chaotic. When it is difficult times we do get chaos in parliament, but it is a good chaos it is a debating chaos, a democratic chaos, what the historians will say I don't know but they may say it is our finest hour, I hope so.”

“From a woman's point of view the EU and their leaders seem to be very, very, male. This is one of the problems. Mrs May, I think, I don't know her, is taking a conciliatory approach and trying to mediate, and we are faced with a bunch of male authoritarian Eurocrats, saying: “This is the law I am laying down the law to you”. This is one of the problems. The EU lacks the attributes that makes some women good at politics. “

“I think as a British person our human rights are very protected by our own Supreme Court, our Equality Act 2010 and the European Convention of Human Rights. We are much better off here than we would be if we relied solely on the Charter of Fundamental Rights. When it comes to the independence of the judiciary, the position of women, gay people, children and families we are far better off here than anywhere in Europe.”

**June 12th 2018**

**Bridget Smith, takes over as the new Liberal Democrat Leader of South Cambridgeshire District Council**

In the May 2018 local elections one result sent shock waves across the whole country. The normally safe Conservative parliamentary seat of South Cambridgeshire returned a Liberal Democrat controlled council with a healthy majority winning 30 of the 45 seats. There were boundary changes and a reduction in the number of seats from 57 but even so the Conservatives were reduced to just 11 seats when previously they had 35. There were also two independents and two labour councillors elected.

Some put the dramatic change down to the 2016 Referendum and Brexit, and the vote to leave the EU, in which 60 per cent of South Cambridgeshire voters wanted to Remain, but there were other factors at play too, such as no proper local plan, controversial housing developments, transportation, the lack of face to face debt advice, and the need for more affordable homes for young people to live in.

The Liberal Democrats, who have a reputation for being good local campaigners, also had a new phone App called Minivan which fed into a phone system called Connect. The app allowed them as they campaigned to know which houses they needed to call on to improve their vote in each ward.

In this interview Cllr Bridget Smith the new leader of South Cambridgeshire talks to Boni Sones, Executive Producer of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) about the victory, the issues on which the LDs campaigned, the impact of Brexit, and the vulnerability of the seat now in any future General Election and the importance of using that Minivan app.

Bridget told Boni: “By mid-day on Friday it was just a waterfall of yellow votes, they just kept on coming, so we exceeded our expectations. We had had 14 LDs in a council of 57 then we had a boundary review so we had gone down to 45

councillors, and we took 30 of them. The Conservatives were left with 11 and there are 2 independents and 2 labour.

“Putting it down to Brexit is far too simplistic. When we voted out suddenly our membership went through the roof so we ended up with hundreds and hundreds of new members that we didn’t have before. So what that gave us was a lot more activists and people engaged at a political level who hadn’t been there before so that was the main benefit of Brexit. We had people who were really, really, angry and who wanted to do something. That just makes so much difference to us in local politics as it is the candidates who have to go round with leaflets, so suddenly to have lots and lots of highly motivated people to help with that did help enormously.

“We have had four years of no local plan, and no five year housing land supply, so out of control speculative land development. The performance of the council so far as planning was concerned had been lamentable, so far as planning was concerned. And we had proven community candidates well known in their areas and people of the calibre who could make promises to deliver and people had the confidence they would deliver on those.

“There was a real need for liberal politics in South Cambridgeshire, after all those years of austerity. People are really upset by the effects of austerity it is really beginning to bite here. People were motivated by lots of things, and the green mandate and taking the environment and climate seriously as well, we were seen to be very credible. “

She went on to say: “We have set up a Brexit working group already to look at what we can do now. Transport, Debt advice, homes for children, what happens when people grown old, these were all issues too.”

The campaign was run efficiently and cleverly. Bridget explained: “Having the right data also helped and having a new phone app too. The data geeks were

giving us information all the time. They are telling you where you need to do extra work. I was pulled out of my village the week before the election and sent to work somewhere else because the data told them I was OK – I wasn't as OK as I would have liked to have been you only need to win by one vote. So it was about moving the resources around. You need to work somewhere where it is a slightly tighter thing, it was a very cleverly managed, clever campaign. And our literature was superior to that going through any of the other letterboxes. “

Will the LDs be hoping to take South Cambridgeshire at the next General Election, perhaps? Bridget said: “I would hope that this would worry the Conservatives and make us a target seat in the next General Election, absolutely. “

**June 6th 2018**

### **Vicky Ford MP for Chelmsford on #Abortion in Northern Ireland**

Vicky Ford the MP for Chelmsford speaks about her speech in the recent debate on reforming the abortion laws in Northern Ireland and amending the Offences Against the persons Act of 1861 proposed by the Labour politician Stella Creasey. The Debate was brought forward after a referendum in Southern Ireland where the vote was overwhelmingly in support of abortion reform leaving NI out of step with the rest of the UK.

In that debate there were moving speeches by women MPs from both sides of the House including the Labour MP Jess Phillips and the Conservative MP Heidi Allen, who both told of their own abortions.

Vicky said that as a former Euro MP she had frequently debated Abortion laws in other countries and always voted in favour of a woman's right to choose but also ended by saying the final decision should be left for when the NI assembly reconvenes and implored members to take up their seats to meet and take the

decision so Britain isn't forced to do it for them. Vicky was born in NI and went to Sunday school there.

Vicky talked to Boni Sones, producer, of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) the day before the Supreme Court rules whether or not the UK is in contravention of the Human Rights Act on this.

Vicky said: "It is their decision (NI) when to reform the Abortion laws, but it was very clear from a number of speeches in the House that it couldn't go on indefinitely."

## **June 6th 2018**

### **Helen Goodman MP supporting Labour's new Brexit Bill Reasoned Amendment**

Helen Goodman the Labour MP for Bishop Auckland talks about the announcement today that Labour will be putting forward its own reasoned amendment to the Brexit Bill on Tuesday when all 15 Lords amendments will be debated in one day to ensure it does not have to support membership of the European Economic Area. This would have meant the UK would remain part of the Single Market, but would also have to accept all of the four freedoms including the freedom of movement of people.

Helen represents a constituency that voted to leave the EU and as a member of the Shadow Cabinet she fully supports this new amendment and says she will be voting with her leader Jeremy Corbyn on it. She also spoke up in favour of two other of those 15 amendments, including membership of a customs union and the right for MPs to vote on the final agreement.

Helen said: "On the EEA we have put down a reasoned amendment rather than simply supporting the Lord's amendment. My constituents voted to leave. Their

primary thought was that they wanted to bring back to the UK control over immigration policy and by staying in the EEA that option is ruled out. The whole point of Brexit is to bring back control and not to give MPs a final say on Brexit would be a betrayal. We know already that businesses are holding back from investments and we see that in the NE, across manufacturing, so this is a real risk of Brexit.”

**June 6th 2018**

**PMQs: Jo Platt MP – Asks the PM if she will help set up a national database of ADHD sufferers**

Jo Platt, the MP for Leigh and the co-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on ADHD today asked Theresa May the Prime Minister if she would do more to help people with this condition and in particular help set up a national data base to establish the scale of the problem across health authority areas.

Jo together with her co-chair the Conservative MP Helen Whatley the MP for Faversham and Mid Kent launched this APPG for ADHD at the beginning of the year and has been working with support groups to not only set up a proper database but also to enable more research to be conducted about it and to ensure better integration of services.

Here Jo talks to Boni Sones, Producer of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) about her PMQ and the Prime Ministers supportive response to it.

Jo said: “I was really pleased by what Theresa May the PM said. She acknowledged the need for the data research and the Nice guidelines, which I would like to come back to her on”.

**June 1<sup>st</sup> 2018**

**Jo Swinson MP #EqualPower: NI abortion reform, women in the boardroom, women and rape, local election results, & MPs and maternity and paternity leave**

Jo Swinson MP is the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat's and the MP for East Dunbartonshire, having regained her seat in the 2017 General Election. She has recently published a book #EqualPower: And How You Can Make It Happen in support of gender equality.

Jo is about to go on maternity leave to have her second child but is likely to still be in Westminster right up to the birth to enable her to vote with her Remain supporting party in crucial divisions on the government's Brexit Bill when it returns to the Commons. The Lords have voted through 15 amendments which the government will be looking to reverse, so every vote will be needed.

Jo's husband Duncan was also an MP but after losing his seat now works for a charity. Jo might also get a chance to speak and vote on reforming Westminster rules on MPs taking maternity and paternity leave.

In this special podcast Boni Sones, Executive Producer of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) talks to Jo about the need to amend the Northern Ireland abortion laws in line with the recent Referendum vote in Southern Ireland supporting a women's right to an abortion, and bringing NI into line with the rest of the UK.

They also discuss Jo's Book #EqualPower, a new report on women in the boardroom, Germaine Greer's recent comments on women and rape, the LD's heartening local election results in May, and the need for MPs to be allowed to take maternity and paternity leave.

Jo explained that reforming the NI abortion laws, where women can still go to prison for having an abortion, was not an NI Assembly issue but one for Westminster to vote on as it was a human right's issue. She said: "It just seems to me we are in 2018 we have women who are every week trying to make this journey and who are being penalised in terms of money and in terms of the emotional stress they are experiencing for what is a basic medical health care issue and so I think it is time that we act. There is support right across parties for this kind of change, and I believe ultimately there will be a majority in the House of Commons to do this, but unfortunately the PM is hamstrung by her deal with the DUP who are not in a progressive place on this issue as is the case with their views on so many other things."

She said she would be working up until the very last moment before her child is born: "It is just about possible for MPs to take leave, but you don't get cover, so it's a logistical operation to make sure you have constituency office procedures and an excellent team of staff in place to make sure constituents get a good service."

"I am 37 and a half weeks pregnant, but we may end up with some crucial Brexit votes in the week before my baby is due so we are still waiting to get confirmation of that. There are plans in the offing to get proxy voting for MPs on maternity leave, so that is another thing I am likely to make it into parliament to vote for and speak in that debate too."

"I try to juggle it as best I can. There are another three MPs expecting babies and I think it is part of having a more diverse parliament I think it makes the institution stronger. There are things we can do to take away some of the barriers to women entering parliament and we should continue pressing to do that. "

**May 21st 2018**

**Nicky Massey & Katie Thornburrow, take up their council seats in Cambridge - Abbey & Trumpington Wards**

Two new Cambridge City Councillors will on Thursday attend their first Council meeting as newly elected councillors.

Both were selected on All-Women Shortlists for Labour, and both campaigned on local issues. Nicky lead the fight to get 10000 signatures on a petition to keep Sure Start Centres open in the face of national closures and also campaigned on a host of other issues including traffic flows and garden fences that had blown down. While Katie, an architect, spoke up for environmental improvement: more cycle ways; more electric car charging points; the introduction of water fountains to top up bottles to prevent the use of plastics; and affordable food shops.

Both say Brexit has been an issue on the doorsteps as they campaigned in their respective wards (Cambridge voted by over 70 per cent to Remain) and people are fearful and tearful about what will happen to their families once Britain does depart the EU.

They don't think their selection on AWS is an issue and that more women need to take up and fight for seats at a council level to balance the gender ratio in the UK's political parties in #Vote100 year.

Katie, was elected in Trumpington by just two votes winning her seat from the Liberal Democrats after a recount but she hadn't expected to capture the seat this year. Nicky meanwhile got a thumping majority in Abbey a traditional Labour ward, and is already thinking of how to fight for global women's rights within the UN.

They have campaigned all year long in their wards finding out what issues concern local residents and in the weeks and weekends leading up to the local

elections themselves spent many hours every day and evening knocking on doors and speaking to local residents to attract voters to their campaigns and party.

Nicky said: “We knew where the Labour vote was because Abbey was already a Labour ward but we needed to get the Labour vote out and I also wanted to speak to as many people as I could because as soon as you start talking to people and you understand what issues they have got and how you can help them as a Council, and sometimes it is just basic information they don’t know. I think that did make a difference and I was helping them with a small issues like fences or child support, and you say what they could go and do to get information. In Abbey there is no Conservative candidate to vote for so they really did need to make up their mind who to vote for to make a change to make a difference to make their voices heard regardless of who they might vote for nationally.”

Katie said: “I knew that I needed to take votes off the Greens, the Conservatives and the Lib Dems and also I needed to get a huge percentage of the Labour vote out on the day and I had a great team and a wonderful campaigner in Kelly Green and I thought it would take a year but we did it this year.”

**May 17<sup>th</sup> 2018**

**Councillors Jerri Bird and Carla McQueen: Cambridge City Council Local Elections May 2018**

Councillor Jerri Bird is well known in East Chesterton where she is a Labour Cambridge City Councillor and now she has also helped Carla McQueen win her seat on the council for Labour in East Chesterton too in the May 2018 City Council Elections. Carla was elected on an All-Women shortlist.

Jerri is a former Mayor of Cambridge and as someone who is in a wheelchair has campaigned on disability issues alongside championing the other concerns in her ward. Next year she is Deputy Mayor of Cambridge and may go on to become Mayor again.

Carla had just popped round to Jerri's house for a meeting about anti-social behaviour and dangerous driving in the area when Boni Sones, Executive Producer of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) spoke to both of them in this engaging 25 minute documentary.

Jerri told Boni: "I said I wanted to be Deputy Mayor one more time which I am going to do, which is exciting. I just keep going. I am 63 this year and I still have a lot of fight in me. I am going to fight fight, fight. And my main fight is for disable people. Whatever disability you have you can lead an equal life like anybody else."

Carla told Boni: "I felt so welcomed by the whole of the CLP and this sisterhood in the women is something to be celebrated, we work together really strongly, it is really good, yes. I'm all for social inclusion and giving our teenagers here a positive focus. Our roads are in a diabolic state so I will be keeping on at the County about those issues and events to bring the community together. People building self-confidence building all those things."

**May 18<sup>th</sup> 2018**

### **Remembering Tessa Jowell**

Remembering Baroness Tessa Jowell & what she did for us!

We play again a documentary we made in May 2015 in which Tessa Jowell and her Labour Cabinet colleagues talk about their achievements in government for Labour.

Tessa is interviewed by Jackie Ashley. Tessa reflects on women in parliament, and her two biggest achievements #SureStart & #Olympics2012.

Tessa died on Saturday after a heroic struggle with a brain tumour during which she fought for better treatment for cancer patients. The government has now said it will double brain cancer research funding to £40 million a year.

**May 10<sup>th</sup> 2018**

**Clare King Labour Candidate for West Chesterton, Cambridge: Local Elections May 2018**

Clare King was selected on an All-women shortlist to be the Labour Candidate for West Chesterton in the Local Elections in Cambridge on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2018. She didn't quite get in, losing by just 111 votes, but three of her other female colleagues who were also selected by AWS did win their seats elsewhere in the city.

This wasn't the first time the Cambridge Labour Party had used AWS for the selection of candidates to fight ward seats but it was the first time the rules had been applied so strictly. Clare was not only a candidate in the local elections, she was also in charge of the procedure committee, the Cambridge PLP General Secretary, and press officer for her party. Sitting on the procedure committee she ensured objections to candidates on AWS were dealt with properly and that enough women came forward to stand in one case pausing the process to ensure a woman came forward to stand. The Labour controlled Council currently has 10 out of 26 Labour councillors who are women.

Clare previously held a seat for the LDs but changed party after the LDs went into a coalition government in 2010 with the Conservatives, and although she didn't get elected this time for Labour, living in the ward she one day hopes to represent, she feels she did close the gap with her rival in the LD party and will one day, hopefully take the ward for Labour. Clare is also a member of Momentum, and supports the Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, and says the significant increase in party membership has helped ensure a more active party at the grass roots including on other equality issues such as race and disability.

Clare told Boni Sones, Executive Producer of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) that: "On AWS I like to think that we played by the rules and we did it right. As I say

I am delighted to say that one of the people we paused (our selection process) for Carla McQueen, is going to be a wonderful councillor and someday I hope she will make a wonderful MP. At the moment I am tired, I am tired from all the canvassing, and everything else I did. Because of my other roles I had to play a major role in supporting people in other Wards as well, I am sort of the go-to person in Cambridge for anybody who has a query about anything. Sometimes it is a bit disconcerting about how much they think Clare will know the answer. I have a reputation to keep up. I need to take a breath. I strongly believe that women make a real difference and as I said on the doorstep having a bolshie women on the Council is no bad thing for anybody. Yes I would love to get on because there are things I would personally like to do on the Cambridge Labour Group but I am happy they share my views. My big achievement was as a community activist to build a school. ”

### **Catherine Smart the Cambridge LD Agent: Local Elections May 2018**

Catherine Smart, was the Liberal Democrat Agent for local elections in Cambridge in May 2018. She is a former Cambridge LD Councillor, and well versed in canvassing, door knocking, and writing election literature. But as the agent she also had to take charge of the election literature of others, the expenses of the election, which are tightly regulated, and was there at the Count in the Guild Hall in Cambridge on Thursday May 4th the night of the count, until the early hours of the morning.

Here Catherine talks to Boni Sones, Executive Producer of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) about her role in this important mid-term local election, which her party staged a recovery in. It had a surprise win taking control of the neighbouring council in South Cambridgeshire although in Cambridge itself Labour kept control and the LD's improved their position by just one seat.

Catherine requested that Antionette Jackson, the CEO of Cambridge City Council and the official Returning Officer for the night, conduct a recount in Trumpington Ward which was a knife edge win for Labour by just four votes, but originally two votes had been put in the wrong pile.

Catherine told Boni: "In Trumpington Ward there were only six votes separating us and Labour and I asked for a full recount. The Returning Officer said a bundle count which I agreed to, but they found two votes in Labour's pile which it shouldn't be so their lead was down to 4. So I asked for a full recount and they agreed, but it was the same again, a 4 vote lead for Labour so I conceded. The first return was at 2pm but the last one was 4pm, they had two recounts in Trumpington and one Bundle count in Castle and that holds things up obviously, so I got home at 4.30."

Labour now has a majority of 10 on Cambridge City Council - the same as its majority before the election.

The Lib Dems have 14 seats, one more than they had before. Despite losing Trumpington, the party won Market from Labour and Castle from an Independent.

In South Cambridgeshire the Lib Dems more than doubled their number of council seats taking 30 seats in all and ending more than a decade of Tory rule in the district.

**April 20<sup>th</sup> 2018**

**The LD Peer Baroness Shirley Williams & the former Labour foreign office minister Denis McShane** speak to Boni Sones Executive Producer of [www.parliamentaryrayradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryrayradio.com) about today's @TutuFoundation #PeaceSummit2018 @regentsuni in London.

Shirley said: “I think we should be quite willing to say it is not working, and it is better for us to go ahead with the idea of a customs union and come back and think where we go in another sense. ...We accept that you have a single market and a customs union and we then agree to the European Court of Justice as the European Court for all of us that is when we can begin to start building a serious and constructive Europe. So far Europe has delivered no less than 50 years of peace, they have refused to be sucked into wars with one another. The EU has been successful in creating peace with its elder members. We need to think about what we have got rather than take it down and start all over again. ..I am living with the hard realities of life and realising they need changes and new ways of thinking. ”

Denis said: “What kind of country do we want. Will people want to have the political leadership to help them think again in whatever form. My next book is called: “From here to BrexEternity”, Brexit is going to be for eternity, there are MPs who are as yet unborn who will have to find a way of dealing with the consequences of Brexit unless we find a way of drawing a line under it now.”

Thanks to Carole Stone CBE for organising the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Peace Summit.

**April 9th 2018**

### **Female MPs Part Two**

In this special [#Vote100](#) documentary [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) selects soundbites from interviews we have conducted with women MPs of all political parties about the issues they have championed during 2018.

In Part Two we speak to: Swinson, Hodgson, George, Powell, Miller, Jowell, McKinnell, Throup, Spelman, and May.

The interviews were conducted by Boni Sones.

**April**

**6th**

**2018**

## **Female MPs [#Vote100](#) Documentary**

In this special [#Vote 100](#) documentary [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) selects soundbites from interviews we have conducted with women MPs of all political parties about the issues they have championed during 2018.

We speak to: Spelman, Trevelyan, Onasanya, Onn, Harman, McGovern, Caulfield, Hodgson, Eagle, Malhotra, Onasanya, Spelman, May, Ford, Whately, Cameron, Swinson.

The interviews were conducted by Boni Sones.

## **March 26th 2018**

### **Dame Caroline Spelman MP: Yezidi Women: Isis Survivors**

Dame Caroline Spelman MP hosted an exhibition of art in Westminster Hall today portraying the work of artist Hannah Rose Thomas who has drawn gold leaf portraits of Yezidi women who had escaped ISIS captivity. Working with the Christian Charity, Open Doors, Hannah hopes her exhibition will draw further attention to the plight of Yezidi women.

“These paintings tell the stories of these women and their families and convey their dignity, resilience and unspeakable grief,” said Hannah.

Boni Sones, Executive Producer of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) spoke to Dame Spelman, Hannah, and Rosie Winterton MP, who has visited the camps, and Open Doors Head of Advocacy Zoe Smith.

Dame Caroline said: “It’s Westminster women standing up for women isn’t it, whose voice needs to be heard. I was very struck when I met the Yezidi female survivors, of the terrible atrocities they had suffered, I was shocked by it. I was keen to help Open Doors with this exhibition and their suffering and the fact their situation is not resolved. Hannah’s pictures are beguiling and the women are

beautiful, and they are victims of terrible war crimes of our day. She would want us to speak up for the Yezidi women to help get their lives back together.”

**March 21st 2018**

**Review of the Week: Anushka Asthana Joint Political Editor of the Guardian**

Anushka reviews her week in UK politics. She tells Boni Sones, Executive Producer of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) about the stories she has been covering including, the implementation deal on Brexit, the election of Putin again as President of Russia during the spy poisoning stand-off with the UK , the election of a new General Secretary to lead the Labour Party, upsetting some in the Party, and the further closure of Sure Start Centres around the country, with impending local elections in May 2018. Oh! and she did manage to squeeze in today's fishing protest on the Thames in support of the UK fishing industry, who were none too pleased with the implementation agreement which means that they will have to accept the CFP of the EU and fishing quotas until we finally do Brexit.

**March 21st 2018**

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP: Brexit protecting our Fishing PMQ**

Anne-Marie Trevelyan the Conservative MP for Berwick upon Tweed speaks to Boni Sones, about her PMQ to the Prime Minister Theresa May MP today on protecting the UK's fishing rights during the Implementation phase of our Brexit negotiations.

Anne-Marie had joined other disgruntled Brexit MPs earlier in the day when they staged a protest on a fishing boat on the Thames outside Westminster throwing haddock overboard.

Anne-Marie told Boni she would be watching the Implementation phase carefully to ensure the rights of those fishing our waters and their fish quotas were protected until we finally Brexit the EU and get the chance to renegotiate the sector deal ourselves outside of the CFP.

**March 21st 2018**

**#SlingTheMesh PMQ**

Fiona Onasanya the Labour MP for Peterborough speaks to Boni Sones about her PMQ to the Prime Minister, Theresa May MP today calling upon her to support and join the [#SlingTheMesh](#) campaign to prevent further Mesh implants which can damage women's health. Theresa May said she would be writing to Fiona about her concerns.

Fiona also tells Boni about local authority spending cuts in her constituency, a topic of discussion between her leader Jeremy Corbyn and the PM today, and also about the controversial transitional Brexit deal agreed this week between the EU and the UK. There are concerns in Peterborough about its impact on farming but Fiona welcomed the provisions to give EU nationals the same rights to residency in the interim as before the vote to Brexit.

**March 21st 2018**

**Melanie Onn MP - Westminster Hall Debate Rejuvenating our Parks**

Melanie Onn the MP for Great Grimsby and Labour's Shadow Housing Minister talks to Boni Sones, about today's Westminster Hall Debate on protecting and rejuvenating our parks called by her colleague Chris Leslie MP.

**March 15th 2018**

**50 years on and Still NO Equal Pay in #Vote100 year**

Economist Vicky says why she thinks women have still not achieved equal pay 50 years this year since those Dagenham women went on strike to demand the same wages as their male counterparts in the Ford car making factory. That strike lead to Barbara Castle's 1970 Equal Pay Act.

In #Vote100 year when women are celebrating 100 years since some women achieved the vote Vicky said that women in boardrooms are making no difference to what women are being paid, but that getting more women into senior executive roles in companies is a better solution and that there should be government imposed quotas for this.

"Where we are lacking is in ensuring that women stay, and continue to contribute and they are treated in a way that allows them to have the same opportunities as the man, to rise through an organisation and not get put off by culture. In my view we need quotas for senior positions. If you change the culture, and allow more flexibility, it benefits and works for all minorities and everyone. "

**March 15th 2018**

**Philip Hammond's Statement to the Commons & Brexit**

Economist Vicky Pryce tells Boni Sones, Executive Producer [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) about her reaction to the Chancellor Philip Hammond's March Statement to the Commons this week and his optimism over the performance of the UK economy. The debt maybe reducing by Vicky thinks it could all have happened sooner without the Conservative's austerity policies.

Vicky goes on to tell Boni why she is an optimist on Brexit and why she thinks that in the end after all the fractious debates the UK will be heading towards a "soft brexit" to everybody's advantage.

"I think what we have done is the wrong type of austerity. We have cut capital spending, we have not encouraged investment, either by the public sector or by the private sector as a result as studies show we have lost some 14 per cent of national income. If things had been different we would have been 14 per cent richer right now."

"Whether by another referendum, or through parliament exercising its authority, or by Theresa May being very practical, one way or another I think post Brexit we might end up with a regime that is quite similar to now."

**March 6th 2018**

**#IWD2018**

**Harriet Harman, Q & As for #IWD 2018**

Harriet Harman MP gives her view on getting more women and BME MPs into Westminster and the barriers they face. She says "mentoring" is fine but "training" is not. She commented: "What are we training them for, to become Winston Churchill in the Darkest Hour!"

She is introduced here by Alison McGovern the Labour MP for Wirral South who chairs the House of Commons Works of Art Committee which hosted the #IWD2018 talk Harriet recently gave to Parliament.

**#IWD2018**

**Alison McGovern MP talks about Harriet Harman MP the Mother of the House, and those all too male works of art in Westminster.**

Alison McGovern, the Labour MP for Wirral South was just one year old when her colleague Harriet Harman the Labour MP for Camberwell and Peckham was elected to Parliament. Here Alison tells Boni Sones, Executive Producer of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) why Harriet is an inspiration to other women, and why Westminster needs more female works of art.

Alison Chairs the House of Commons Works of Art Committee which commissioned the fabulous Mary Branson New Dawn artwork which hangs over the St Stephen's entrance and just recently a portrait of the Labour politician Dame Joan Ruddock which now hangs in Portcullis House.

**In celebration of International Women's Day 2018: Harriet Harman MP Speaks about her life in politics.**

The Mother of the House Harriet Harman the Labour MP for Camberwell and Peckham delivered her 2018 International Women's Day speech to a specially convened House of Commons Works of Art Committee audience in Westminster today.

Boni Sones, Executive Producer of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) was there to record it. Thanks to Melanie Unwin of #Vote100 and the House of Commons Curator's Team.

Thanks also to Harriet for being an inspiration to women including her Labour colleague Alison McGovern MP, the Chair of the Works of Art Committee who introduced her. Alison was just one year old when Harriet was first elected to Parliament in 1982. Listen in, Harriet has much to say and it is amusing too.

**NB: The following interviews are included in our Third Book, Revised, "Where There's a Woman in the Room – Part Two".**

**2nd February 2018**

**Maria Caulfield MP: Helping Children with Autism get better care**

Maria Caulfield, the Conservative MP for Lewes is campaigning for better care for children with Autism. She is a member of the APPG on Autism which has recently published a report calling on the government to ensure teachers, schools and Local Authorities statement children with autism earlier.

She says if LAs published proper data on the numbers of children with autism in their area it would help to stop them falling through the educational attainment gap and ending up with poor employment prospects and poor mental health.

Maria told Boni Sones, Executive Producer of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) that she hopes the government will be capable of delivering on the APPG report by the end of 2019.

Maria said: "We have had a very positive response. Our launch of our Autism Report was one of the very first Damian Hinds attended in his first few weeks of being Secretary of State for Education, and he was very positive so my job now is to follow up on that. We are not saying to all of the LAs that they have to capture all of the data by the end of 2019 but to plan for services you have to know what is required and the level. The autistic spectrum is huge some children need a little bit of support some need a huge amount. If you don't know what that level is it is very hard to commission services and to then argue for provision to provide those services."

## **#Vote 100 - 6th February 2018**

### **Women Speaking up for Women**

The Conservative Women MPs speak about their speeches and debates on the 6th February 2018 as they celebrate 100 years since some women first got the vote.

You will hear Dame Caroline Spelman MP for Meriden, Theresa May the PM, Vicky Ford MP for Chelmsford, Helen Whately MP for Faversham and Mid Kent who speak to Boni Sones, Executive Producer of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com).

We then speak to Angela Eagle MP Wallasey at the Labour women's photo call on College Green, before moving on to talk to Seema Malhotra MP Feltham and Heston and Fiona Onasanya MP for Peterborough in Central Lobby looking at the Acts of Parliament on display for one day only that gave women the vote.

Finally we meet up with Sharon Hodgson MP, Washington and Sunderland West, about her debate in Westminster Hall on Free School Meals and her moving speech in the Chamber last week on her painful experiences after the birth of her stillborn daughter, Lucy which she was not allowed to register and now wants others to be able to do.

**1<sup>st</sup> February 2018**

### **#Vote100 our Suffragette and Suffragist tour of Parliament**

Dr Lisa Cameron the SNP MP for East Kilbride and Jo Swinson the LD MP for East Dunbartonshire and Deputy Leader of her party take us on their suffragette and suffragist tour of the Houses of Commons as women celebrate on February 6th 100 years of women being given the Vote. They are escorted by Boni Sones Executive Producer of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) as they look at five important tributes to those brave women. The tour begins in Central Lobby as they look at the Grill, then onto a statue, down to the broom cupboard where Emily Wilding Davison hid, and then to the modern artwork New Dawn which hangs over the St Stephen's Entrance before arriving at the scarf Emily Wilding Davison wore on the day she was knocked down by the King's horse at Epsom races.

**31st January 2018**

**Sharon Hodgson MP: Personal Independence Payments Debate:  
Westminster Hall 31st January 2018**

Sharon Hodgson MP, the Labour Washington and Sunderland West and Shadow Public Health Minister, and Ruth George the Labour MP for High Peak and a member of the Work and Pensions Select Committee talk to [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) about today's debate in Westminster Hall on the impact of new rules introduced for Personal Independence Payments on constituents.

This week the government said it would review every person receiving PIP after the DWP decided not to challenge a court ruling saying that changes to PIP were unfair. It had limited the support received by people with mental health conditions.

Sharon said: "Some of these people may die before they ever see this resolved".

Ruth said: "This is one change that affects 200000 of the 3 million who have claimed PIPs, but a very small number will benefit from this review. It is great for these people but what we have heard from the Minister today gives us no hope that the government will go away and consider this wasteful and cruel system as a whole."

**26th January 2018**

**This week in Parliament: Maria Miller MP, Lucy Powell MP, Baroness  
Tessa Jowell**

It was a week when Parliament brought to life the humanity of the work of an MP and those in the upper Chamber the Lords. Sexism and charity dinners, a call for criminal justice reform, and the need for better cancer treatments were all major

talking points. Here we put into one 30 minute audio podcast our three interviews with those Parliamentarians pushing for change.

You can RT our interviews from [soundcloud.com/streambonisones2](https://soundcloud.com/streambonisones2) or from our twitter account @bonisones2.

## **Maria Miller MP**

### **The Presidents Club Charity Dinner**

Maria Miller the Conservative MP for Basingstoke and Chair of the Equalities Select Committee gives us her reaction to the FT's exclusive report on the President's Club Charity Dinner. The all-male event employed women as hostesses and has led to complaints of sexual harassment against them and with charities refusing to accept donations from the event.

Maria Miller MP said: "It is right the Charity Commission is investigating if they were in breach of the rules. It could also constitute sexual assault. Women don't feel confident in bringing these sorts of claims because of how it might impact their ability to get work in the future."

## **Lucy Powell MP**

### **[#JointEnterprise](#) Debate & JENGBA Gloria Morrison**

Lucy Powell the Labour and Co-op MP for Manchester Central called on Parliament to reform the laws on #JointEnterprise. She received widespread support from fellow Labour MPs such as David Lammy, and Stephen Pound. Pound said the law was "nonsensical, cruel, and brutal" and that "This law stinks." Conservative MPs too supported reform including Bob Neill and Andrew Mitchell. The debated was watched and supported in the public gallery by the reform group @ JENGBA and its spokesperson Gloria Morrison also talked to us.

## **Baroness Tessa Jowell**

The former Labour minister Baroness Tessa Jowell received a standing ovation for her ten minute speech calling for better treatment for brain cancer patients. She herself was diagnosed with a brain tumour earlier in the year. In a power finale to her speech she quoted Seamus Heaney's last words "Don't be afraid" and said "What gives life meaning is not only how it is lived but how it draws to a close"!

Here from the Lord's Press Gallery we recorded and play Baroness Jowell's full moving 10 minute speech.

**17th January 2018**

## **Jo Swinson MP AI and Ethics**

Jo Swinson the Liberal Democrat MP for East Dunbartonshire and Deputy Leader of her Party talks about her debate in Westminster Hall today on Artificial Intelligence and Ethics.

Jo said: "There will always be a need for people to look after us into old age, and when we are ill. This is the time to review these care roles because they have been traditionally under-valued and disproportionately done by women. I think that as our humanity becomes more of an appreciated asset because more of the drudge work can be done by machines, then we really need to start to value that human interaction and those interpersonal skills and caring in society."

## **Maggie Throup MP Junk Food debate**

Maggie Throup the Conservative MP for Erewash talks about her debate this week on junk food and its impact on children's health.

Maggie supports the government's moves to clamp down on the sugar content of foods but says advertisements for junk foods should not be shown when children are likely to be watching. She hopes that the presenters of family programmes that children watch will work with her and others to get such ads dropped. She also thinks more home cooking could help solve the problem of childhood obesity which is at an all-time high.

Maggie said: "There is a lot of junk food advertising that is really influencing children and the way they eat. And the obesity epidemic in children and adults is getting worse. There is a huge cost to their health and to society and at the moment junk food advertising is banned on children's programmes and other social media aimed at children, but it is still played out on other family programmes."

### **Catherine McKinnell MP: Carillion and apprenticeships and childcare vouchers**

Catherine McKinnell the Labour MP for Newcastle North talks about her debate this week on the government's introduction of a new system to help parents with the cost of childcare which replaces the previous system of vouchers. Her debate follows a petition that asked the government to think again before making the changes and phasing out vouchers which will cause hardship to some. Catherine also asked Theresa May, the first PMQ on the order paper today about what will happen to apprenticeships now that the construction company Carillion has gone bust.

Catherine said: "I am the co-chair of the APPG on apprenticeships so I have been very concerned about the situation with Carillion. They employ 1,400 apprentices I have met some of them locally but they are now seriously in jeopardy and they are now left hanging not knowing if they will get paid or if they can continue training. The Childcare voucher system has been in place since 2005 there are 780,000 parents currently using it and millions who have benefitted from that

support. I wanted the government to recognise not just the importance to families and often women to get support with childcare but also how fundamental it is to our economy and to our productivity."

**2nd January 2018**

**#Vote100 Readings by Elizabeth Crawford**

In celebration of 2018 and 100 years of women and the vote [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) asked Historian Elizabeth Crawford to read from her book: *Enterprising Women: The Garrett's and their Circle*.

Elizabeth tells us about politics, education, the home and culture of the Garrett family and their campaigning friends.

This special documentary is produced by Boni Sones, who grew up in Sizewell and Leiston, where successive generations of her family worked on the Garrett's' Engineering works.

The book: *Enterprising Women* tells the story of a group of women around the Garrett family, who in the second half of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth changed the position of women in Britain forever. Pioneering access to education at all levels for women both in academic and vocational subjects as well as training for the professions - medicine, architectural decoration, and landscape design - they also involved themselves in politics and the campaign for women's suffrage. You can buy the book here: [https://secure.francisboutle.co.uk/product\\_info.php?products\\_id=7](https://secure.francisboutle.co.uk/product_info.php?products_id=7)

**End.**