PRITI PATEL MP

Putting the Witham Constituency and Britain first!

Latest News From Priti Patel MP

Welcome to my constituency newsletter for July.

The Labour Government is in meltdown. This month there was a change in Prime Minister, with Andy Burnham replacing Keir Starmer. While the occupant of 10 Downing Street has changed, we are still faced with the same Labour Government committed to hitting families and businesses hard with higher taxes. Over the last two years since they came to office, we have seen taxes rise, economic growth falter and unemployment rise. We have a Labour Government filled with clueless Ministers who want to curtail are freedoms and tax you more. From releasing thousands of dangerous criminals early to failing to stand up for British interests on the world stage, every day under Labour is bad for Britain.

And here in Essex were are being hit hard too. Labour are continuing with their ill thought through plans to destroy the County of Essex under Local Government Reorganisation. I am fighting hard against this and am continuing to challenge Ministers on these decisions. This will cost you more in Council Tax and put local services at risk. Labour is also continuing to fail this part of Essex on infrastructure investment. It's now been a year since they cancelled the A12 Widening Scheme and this month we learned that this decision has seen over £212

million of taxpayers' money wasted as a result. Instead of investing in our roads, Labour have thrown money down the drain.

The consequences of Labour's planning policies also continue to be felt. Villages like Tollesbury are being surrounding by large development proposals, with no prospect of investment in the infrastructure and public services needed to support a growing population.

With new Government Ministers appointed this month, I have been writing to them on these key issues and others to stand up for the best interests of this part of Essex. You can read more below about the representations I have made as well my activities and visits around the Witham constituency during the July in this newsletter.

I am always happy to assist constituents on any issues or concerns you may have and to contact me at withammp@parliament.uk

All my very best wishes.

Priti Patel
Member of Parliament for Witham

Local Community & Action

Priti Brings Southeast Asian Ambassadors to Tiptree

I was delighted to invite and welcome dignitaries from Southeast Asia to Wilkin & Sons Ltd in Tiptree earlier this month. Wilkin & Sons is an incredible local business that employs hundreds of people and operates its world-famous jam factory in Tiptree, in the Witham constituency.

It was an absolute pleasure to welcome ambassadors, high commissioners and diplomatic representatives from Southeast Asian nations to Wilkin & Sons, where they were able to see first-hand the unique way in which the company's fruits, jams and conserves are produced. This visit will also help to strengthen trade between the company and the countries represented by the diplomats who visited the farm and factory.

Wilkin & Sons currently exports its outstanding and expanding range of jams, conserves and sauces to more than 70 countries. This visit provided a wonderful opportunity to showcase the business, its community and the people who make us all proud of this exceptional local brand and who work hard to fly the flag for it internationally.

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Team GB Training Athletes in Coggeshall

I had the pleasure of joining Arena Karate in Coggeshall, where I met seven of their outstanding athletes who have earned the honour of representing Great Britain at the European and World Championships. Their selection is a tremendous achievement and reflects the years of commitment, discipline and hard work they have dedicated to their sport.

Arena Karate has an excellent record of supporting athletes of all ages, and I met the coaches, families and everyone involved with the club.

The athletes receive no government or national funding and rely on family support and donations to cover their travel, accommodation and competition fees. I was pleased to make a personal donation to support their efforts, and I would encourage as many people as possible to support their fundraising campaign as they prepare to represent our country. We all wish them well with their training and at these important upcoming competitions!

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Support the Fundraiser

Celebrating 50 Years of Witham Carnival

2026 marks the 50th anniversary of Witham Carnival! Each year, this wonderful summer event goes from strength to strength, thanks to the incredible volunteers and representatives from across our local community who work so hard to make the second Saturday in July such a special day for our town.

The Carnival showcases the very best of Witham, with our supportive local businesses, charities, clubs, volunteers, school pupils and residents coming together to celebrate the community spirit that makes our town so special. Businesses, charities and community groups give up their time, staff, vehicles and resources to make this event happen, and I am grateful to everyone who contributes.

I would also like to thank the Army cadets, the bands, everyone who participated in the incredible procession and those who worked hard to create the many impressive floats and displays, which reflected the creativity, hard work and dedication of everyone involved. Thank you to the many volunteers who made this important anniversary such a wonderful success and to everyone who contributed to this special day.

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Woodham Walter Flower Festival – Celebrating the Local Community

I was delighted to attend the Woodham Walter Flower Festival alongside Maldon District Councillor Mark Durham and representatives from the local community, where I enjoyed the stunning flower arrangements on display, all created by members of the local community.

The annual flower show is a wonderful highlight of the summer season in Woodham Walter. It brings together people from neighbouring areas while also raising funds for the church. I

would like to thank everyone who made the festival such a beautiful occasion and who gave their time to organise this much-loved event. Their dedication ensures that the festival continues to be enjoyed by residents and visitors year after year.

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Local Based AUVA Showcased at the Farnborough International Airshow

I was delighted to visit the Farnborough International Airshow in my capacity as Shadow Foreign Secretary and to catch up with the world-leading AUVA, which is based in Little Braxted in the Witham constituency and has expanded its business around the world.

I caught up with Mike Venner from AUVA and his team to discuss how they are raising standards across the global aerospace and engineering sectors. Their work demonstrates the expertise, innovation and world-leading capabilities we have locally in Essex.

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Supporting Our Local Area

Backing British Farming

Harvest is one of the most important times of the year for our rural communities, and it gives us an opportunity to recognise the hard work, dedication and resilience of our farmers. Across the Witham constituency, farmers and agricultural businesses work tirelessly to produce high-quality food, manage our countryside and support the rural economy. Their contribution to our communities and our national food security must never be taken for granted.

We must support domestic food production, protect productive farmland and ensure that environmental policies work with farmers, rather than imposing further burdens upon them. British farmers must not be undermined by lower-standard imports, and the public sector, supermarkets and consumers should continue to champion high-quality British produce. As harvest continues, I want to thank our farmers, farm workers and everyone involved in our local agricultural sector. Their work feeds our country, sustains our rural communities and protects the landscapes that make this part of Essex so special.

Sign Our Petition

No To Labour's Housing Targets in Tollesbury

I am shocked and deeply concerned by the decision taken by the Maldon District Council's Planning Committee to grant permission to 200 new dwellings in the village. This decision is clearly linked to the appalling planning policy changes which the Labour Government have introduced. These policies are deliberately designed to circumvent local views and rig the planning system against local communities. Alongside the huge increases in housing targets which Labour have imposed, villages like Tollesbury face having unsustainable levels of development forced upon them without the infrastructure and public services needed to sustain this level of growth.

With further planning applications being considered, Tollesbury could be set for greater levels of growth than it can sustain and other villages across this part of Essex face similar

threats. While we all want to see more local homes for local families, these need to be developed with local communities. I have raised my concerns with the Labour Government and will continue to stand up local communities against these outrageous planning policies and targets.

Sign my Petition

Working With Residents on the Mulberries Estate, Witham

I am continuing to work closely with residents of The Mulberries estate, along with pressing Redrow, Trinity Estates, and the relevant local authorities, in relation to the extensive number of ongoing concerns relating to the maintenance, functioning, and management of the estate. I remain committed to ensuring that the persistent issues raised are acted upon and that the improvements residents want to see across the estate are delivered.

Most recently, I have received numerous reports of antisocial behaviour across the estate, and I am keen to assure all affected residents that I am actively raising these matters with the appropriate authorities to ensure such reports are investigated and appropriate action is taken.

I encourage residents to continue getting in touch with me about any concerns affecting the estate as they arise.

Read Here

National Highways to Begin Work on Woodend Bridge

Woodend Bridge in Witham has been a complete bottleneck for the past 11 years, with temporary traffic lights causing persistent disruption for all road users. After years of representations and engagement with National Highways, works have finally been planned to remedy this unacceptable situation.

By way of background, the repairs to Woodend Bridge were originally linked to, and planned alongside, the scheme to widen the A12, which should have begun last year. Following the Labour Government's cancellation of the A12 scheme, I have been pressing National Highways to take urgent action on Woodend Bridge and end the seemingly endless merry-go-round of road disruption that has blighted the town and the A12 for more than a decade.

The A12 widening scheme would have delivered upgrades along this entire stretch of road, but Labour's decision to cancel it was wrong and demonstrates its lack of commitment to our county and the infrastructure we rely on every day. Essex is a net contributor to the Treasury, unlike many other parts of the country, and under Labour, our county will be left subsidising the Government's public spending and borrowing choices. This is clearly not right, and I will continue to press for the investment our county needs and for a better government that listens to those who work hard and contribute to the economic well-being of our country.

Watch Here

Water Supply Issues and The Rivenhall Incinerator

Residents have reported to me concerns about water supply issues potentially linked to the operation of the Rivenhall Incinerator. I have raised these concerns with the Environment Agency, Anglian Water and Essex County Council. The Environment Agency are reviewing the matter and have provided the update below:

The incinerator is thought to be contributing to the low water supply in the local area. The mains water supply, associated pressure and amount available is the responsibility of Anglian Water and we are working closely with them to identify if there is an operating problem. The Environment Agency regulates the environmental permit for the Rivenhall Incinerator that includes the operations by Indaver, to take appropriate measures to ensure that water is used efficiently within the operational permit activities and to maintain records of water use.

We understand the concerns raised by the local community and are reviewing the site operation and water use and efficiency measures with the company. We will update our webpages and yourself as soon as we have further news.

Further News

Supporting Our Local Schools

Howbridge Junior School's Summer Fair

As we approached the end of the school summer term, I was delighted to attend Howbridge Junior School's annual summer fair, which is an important event in the school's summer calendar. It was a real pleasure to see so many pupils, parents, staff and volunteers enjoying the day and supporting the school's fundraising efforts.

The summer fair was great fun, and it was lovely to see the fantastic stalls, games and activities taking place. I was delighted to donate a prize to the raffle and to support the fundraising efforts being undertaken for the benefit of the school.

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Celebrating Get Witham Reading at St Mary's CofE Primary Academy

Get Witham Reading is now in its 15th year, and I always enjoy celebrating the joy of reading with schools and children and encouraging them to develop a lifelong love of books. It was a pleasure to visit St Mary's CofE Primary Academy and see pupils so engaged with stories, learning and reading for pleasure.

Reading plays an important role in a child's development by supporting literacy, imagination and curiosity. I was pleased to recognise the pupils' efforts by presenting them with certificates and bookmarks. I would like to thank the pupils, teachers, staff, parents and governors at St Mary's for the work they do to support children's reading and for taking part in this year's Get Witham Reading initiative.

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Get Witham Reading Comes to Howbridge Junior School

Pupils at Howbridge Junior School had great fun taking part in Get Witham Reading. Local author Linda Farrow joined me for the visit, and together we shared her creative stories, books and characters with pupils across the school. Her work brought the initiative to life and helped us celebrate the achievements of the pupils taking part.
Since its launch in 2012, Get Witham Reading has brought local schools together to promote literacy and encourage children to develop a lifelong love of reading.

Thank you to the pupils, teachers and staff at Howbridge Junior School for their enthusiasm and for making the visit such an enjoyable part of Get Witham Reading 2026.

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New Government, Same Labour

Calling on the New Education Secretary to Review Lodge Farm School Cancellation

Labour's decision to cancel funding for Lodge Farm Primary School was a disgrace. Since coming to office two years ago, Labour plotted to take money away from our County and the former Secretary of State and her ministers could not even be bothered to meet with me to discuss this issue."

With a new Secretary of State in place, I am calling on her to urgently review this decision and to meet with me to discuss the need for Lodge Farm to be funded.

This decision must be reversed as it has left parents and families that have moved into the new development feeling anxious and with new housebuilding targets Witham will face a shortage in school places without Lodge Farm.

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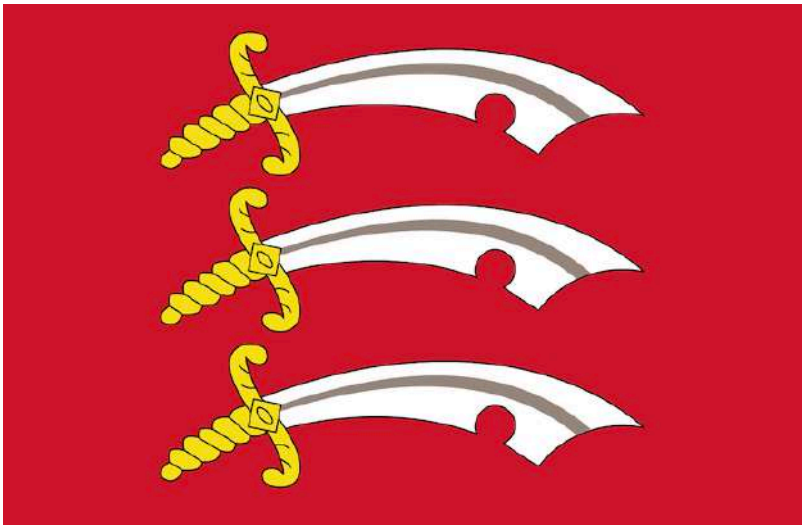
Labour's Destruction of Local Democracy

The Labour Government continues to pursue the destruction of local democracy in Essex with its plans to impose Local Government Reorganisation (LRG) on us. These plans will break up Essex County Council and force district, borough and city councils to merge to form five unitary councils across Essex.

These new councils will lack local identity and could lead to local services being cut and council taxes rising due to the huge costs involved of LGR. I am campaigning against these changes and have been challenging the Government to answer questions about these plans. You can voice your opposition and join calls for a referendum to be held on these plans by signing the petition below.



Sign Our Petition

Unemployment Across the Witham Constituency Increases

Once again, monthly unemployment data from the Office for National Statistics has shown that unemployment across the constituency continues to rise. Every business owner and employer I have met locally has spoken to me about the damaging impact Labour's job-destroying and tax-grabbing policies are having on their ability to employ staff and run their businesses.

Businesses across this part of Essex are under enormous pressure as the Labour Government's onslaught of policies has resulted in higher taxes, greater regulation and increased state interference, all of which are having a damaging impact on businesses.
From our high streets and industrial estates to family-run businesses and sole traders, everyone is under pressure from Labour's regressive policies. The number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits in the Witham constituency rose by 115 in the year to June 2026. The latest figures show 1,630 claimants, up from 1,515 the previous year, representing a rise of nearly 8%.

The Labour Government is damaging the economic security of local people and their families while pursuing economically illiterate policies that are affecting communities across the country. I will continue to support our local employers and those affected by Labour's damaging economic policies.

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Labour's Pylon Plans is Not Viable

The Labour Government continues to want to press ahead with its plans to destroy our countryside with over 100 miles of pylons and overheard powerlines. The former Energy Secretary Ed Miliband championed these plans and his replacement as Energy Secretary Miatta Fahnbulleh looks set to continue on this ideological path. I have written to her to press her to review and reconsider the approach being pursued.

There continue to be alternatives to support the reinforcement of the energy network which should be considered. I have also challenged her over the reports of cover-ups at the National Energy System Operator (NESO). NESO have informed decisions over the Government's Net Zero approach and there needs to be a full investigation into their actions as this is undermining trust in the decisions that are being taken.

See More

Labours Rail Nationalisation is Without a Plan For the GEML

Nine months after Labour nationalised rail services in Essex, Great Eastern Main Line passengers are still waiting to hear how the nationalisation of Greater Anglia will improve services. The Government has failed to provide any information about its future plans or funding for Greater Anglia, and there is no commitment to maintaining existing services or improving rail services to Liverpool Street.

What we do know is that rail passengers have been told they will continue to pay higher fares to subsidise Labour's rail nationalisation programme and services elsewhere in the country.

Greater Anglia was one of Britain's most successful rail franchises, benefiting from investment in new trains, stations and rail infrastructure, including signalling. This followed the work of the GEML Taskforce, which I established in 2012 with the then Conservative Government and Chancellor of the Exchequer. All this progress is now under threat because of Labour's ideological decision to nationalise the railways. They have put ideology and gimmicks before the needs and interests of GEML passengers, and their lack of a plan for future services is wholly unacceptable.

THE RT. HON. PRITI PATEL MP
WITHAM

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Gateline Investments and Greater Anglia Rail Investments

Dear Heidi,

I have noted your announcement today on gateline investments and the naming of Witham railway station as being due to have ticket gate barriers installed. I would welcome an update on the timescales for implementation and if you can advise if this will have an impact on manned operatives including a reduction in station staff and personnel.

More widely, however, Witham station should have had ticket gate barriers installed as part of a wider regeneration of the railway station.

Those plans have disappeared since Labour came to office as your Government persists in axing transport infrastructure funding for Essex. Moreover, despite announcing nationalisation and implementing it last year on Greater Anglia services, you have yet to come forward with a clear medium to long term investment plan. When the franchise model was in place, train operating companies had to present clear investment plans which they could be held to account for. So far, Labour have refused to announce plans despite my frequent questions and letters on these matters. Perhaps this is because you do not have any plans or are planning cuts but are ashamed to admit it?

Moreover, you and your ministers have refused to meet with me to discuss rail services and investments for my constituents and Essex, which once again demonstrates the contempt that Labour is showing towards Essex.

With this in mind, and as a matter of urgency, I would like to know details of the medium to long term investment plans, if you will reinstate the plans to redevelop Witham railway station, and clarity on the future of fares and investment in Greater Anglia.

Yours ever,

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Member of Parliament for Witham

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Labour Wastes £212.5m By Axing A12 Widening Scheme

Labour's decision to axe the A12 Widening Scheme has wasted £212.5m of taxpayers' money, data from the Department for Transport's annual accounts has revealed. This is a shocking waste of money. The Scheme was fully funded by the last Conservative Government but since coming to office two years ago Labour postponed then cancelled it. I have been challenging ministers over this decision but they continue to refuse to answer any questions. Once again, this part of Essex has been let down by Labour.

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Read More Local News Here

Local Issues, Local Action

The Conservative Party is focusing on the issues that matter to our communities and to the country.

Below are a number of our campaigns to strengthen Britain's economy, support businesses, ensure everyone gets a fair deal and get Britain working again.

Labour Axes New School in Witham: Lodge Farm Primary School

This Labour Government has made the appalling decision to cancel the building of Lodge Farm Primary School in Witham.

This school is urgently needed, and Essex County Council and I have met in recent weeks to discuss how we can press the Labour Government to get it built. Our town urgently needs new school places, including new SEND provision. Since Labour was elected in 2024, schools in Witham have faced real-terms funding cuts, and the Government has now removed vital educational provision and resources from children and families in the town.

I am directly challenging the Government over its cuts to school funding and educational provision in Witham. If you support my efforts to secure investment in children's education and get Lodge Farm Primary School built, please sign my petition below.

Sign My Petition

Stop The Silver End Development

Silver End and the surrounding villages have already experienced significant levels of housing growth in recent years, and these latest proposals are both wrong and unsustainable.

Labour's national housing targets are being imposed on the Witham constituency and will lead to the concreting over of the Essex countryside. Join me in protecting our countryside and saying no to unsustainable housing developments by signing my petition.

Sign My Petition

Tell Andy Burnham: No More Tax Rises

Labour promised not to raise taxes on working people. They broke that promise, raising tax to its highest level since 1945. Now, Andy Burnham's tax bill risks £2,265 more per working

household.

Tell Andy Burnham: No more tax rises. Sign our petition below.

Sign Our Petition

Tell Me Your Priorities for The Witham Constituency

Please take a few minutes to fill in this quick survey as Priti would like to hear your views, and don't forget to sign up for her monthly newsletter on what she is up to across the Constituency and in Westminster.

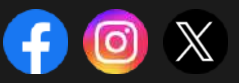
Your Priorities

Here to help

I am always available to support constituents with any issues of concern.

Please do not hesitate to contact me via email withammp@parliament.uk with your full address, postcode, and summary of the issue you require assistance with.

withammp@parliament.uk
www.pritipatel.uk



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