

Nigel Huddleston's May Report

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May Report

May in Parliament saw the annual pomp and ceremony of the State Opening of Parliament, marking the start of the parliamentary year and setting out the Government's agenda for the coming session in the Queen's Speech. State Opening is one of the most colourful events in the Westminster calendar with traditions tracing back as far as the 16th century. It began with the Royal Procession with the Queen leaving Buckingham Palace and arriving at the Sovereign's Entrance. Wearing the Imperial State Crown and the Robe of State, Her Majesty led the Royal Procession through the Royal Gallery to the chamber of the House of Lords from where she delivered the speech.

The House of Lords official known as 'Black Rod' is sent to summon the Commons. The doors to the Commons chamber are shut in his face: a practice dating back to the Civil War, symbolising the

Commons' independence from the monarchy. MPs then follow Black Rod to the Lords chamber where we squeeze up to the bar of the House - a small space at the back of the chamber - to listen to the speech. When the Queen leaves, members of both Houses debate the content of the speech, looking at different subject areas on each of the following days.

This year's speech announced measures to be introduced to reform planning and give local communities more power, as well as giving local authorities full control of the money they raise through business rates, to support adoption, to expand the academies schools programme where schools are poorly performing, to give further powers to prison governors, to bring forward a Bill of Rights and to give law enforcement agencies new powers to combat extremism.

Particularly welcome from my point of view was the Digital Economy Bill which will give every household a legal right to a fast broadband connection. This was the subject I chose to speak on, on the second of four days of debate, you can read my speech in full [here](#). Britain must be a nation where technology continuously transforms the economy, society and government. The UK has embraced digital transformation, and it is one of the most advanced digital economies on the planet. The issue is not so much about becoming a world leader in the digital economy, but retaining and further strengthening our leadership position. The first priority in doing so is ensuring that all those people who need and want broadband can get it, something I will continue to work on with constituents, Superfast Worcestershire and BT.

This month I have asked Parliamentary Questions of the [Minister of State for the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs](#) on delayed payments to farmers and suppliers, the [Second Church Estates Commissioner](#) on Christian communities in Iraq and the [Deputy Leader of the House of Commons](#) on the cost of holidays if we left the European Union.

I also spoke in debates on the BBC, both [before](#) and [after](#) the [White Paper](#) was published, and another on [Tenant Farming](#).

I had a number of meetings in Westminster including with Lord Nash, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools, Nick Gibb, Minister of State for Schools, Pank Patel, Regional Schools Commissioner, Brandon Lewis, Minister of State for Housing and Planning, and the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership. I also [hosted athletes from the UK Invictus Games Team](#), giving a tour of Parliament and hearing their moving and inspiring stories.

My work with the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee continues. In the last month we have carried on with our inquiries on [Countries of Culture](#), [Homophobia in Sport](#) and the [Accessibility of Sports Stadia](#). Our witnesses this month included one Peter Luff. [Sir Peter appeared as part of the Countries of Culture inquiry](#) in his role as the Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

In Worcestershire I have attended a number of events in the last month, including Cropthorne Walkabout, the Mid Worcestershire Business Lunch at The Crown and Sandys in Ombersley and [an EU information session](#) I hosted at Peopleton Village Hall with Richard Keel, UKIP spokesman for Mid Worcestershire. I have also visited Kite's Nest Farm, Evesham Community Hospital and Mucknall Abbey, as well as continuing to visit local schools, with St Barnabas First & Middle School, Cutnall Green First School and Swan Lane First School all ticked off my 'to-see' list in May.



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