



# Witney Way



Lent and Easter 2017



*Parish magazine  
for St Mary's, Holy Trinity,  
St John's Curbridge, and St John's Hailey*

## Looking back

I am grateful for the team at *Witney Way* for asking me to write a short piece on the theme of looking back. This period of Lent is an important time to step back and take stock of recent events.

The past few months have not only been tumultuous for national politics, but have led to great changes in my own life. Last summer, I was celebrating the birth of my first child, Henry, and taking on the challenges of parenthood with my wife Kathryn. As any reader who have experienced this will know, this a great adjustment period, not least due to the lack of sleep!

Just as I was becoming settled in my new role as a father, working as a barrister in Oxford and Deputy Leader of West Oxfordshire District Council, my life took another significant turn. In October, I was very proud to be chosen by West Oxfordshire to represent you all in Parliament as the MP for Witney.

This has been a whirlwind few months, but I have been active in issues important to Witney from the very beginning. Westminster is a constant hub of activity. Being elected in the middle of the current Parliament, the period for settling in was short. What most people do not realise is that when you are elected, you do really start from scratch, having to set up desks and computers alongside your work in the Commons and the constituency.

I have now assembled a fantastic team around me and have an efficient Parliamentary operation. A typical week for me is now dominated by business in the Commons, with votes and committees, in addition to my primary concern: helping and responding to constituents. I then travel back to West Oxfordshire at the end of each week for my constituency day on Fridays, which can include anything from getting to know small business owners, visiting schools and meeting local organisations and charities. Of course, I always hold my weekly surgery, where I meet with constituents to discuss their specific concerns. At the weekend, I am active knocking on doors and listening to residents, and also enjoying the opportunity to visit and attend services at many churches in the constituency, introducing myself as the new MP.

As I reflect on the past few months, it is clear how much my life has changed. Becoming a Member of Parliament gives you a strong





insight into the passion of the constituency. I have had the pleasure of meeting so many people who are working hard to make a difference and help to improve the area where we live. These may be local charity workers, residents who drive community buses for those without access to transport, patient groups fighting to keep their GP surgery open and parish councillors championing local issues. It is these people who enable West Oxfordshire to be such a fantastic place to live and work. As a resident myself, and now as the Member of Parliament, I am excited to continue to meet residents and learn more about the important work they are doing for the area. Above all, as I reflect, I am conscious of the honour of representing West Oxfordshire, as I said in the maiden speech. I am acutely aware of the trust placed in me by voters in the constituency, and work every day to make things happen for you.

Any readers who wish to contact me as their MP are very welcome, either by email at [robert.courts.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:robert.courts.mp@parliament.uk) or by post at House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA. I would like to update as many residents as possible with the work I am carrying out on their behalf, both in Westminster and the constituency, and I encourage readers to sign up to my regular newsletter through [www.robertcourts.co.uk](http://www.robertcourts.co.uk). I would like to wish all readers a pleasant and peaceful Lent and Easter.

Robert Courts MP

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## Four months with the NHS

I don't recommend anyone do cartwheels down stairs. My attempt at it resulted in a severe spinal injury which took a spinal surgeon a lot of effort and quite a lot of metal work to put back together. I have also great respect for the ambulance service who managed to get me onto a spinal board and safely out of the house without undue extra damage. I am grateful to our national health service and to the nursing staff in the JR and Nuffield Orthopaedic Hospitals and especially to the nursing staff in Witney hospital for their care encouragement and good humour. I also wish to say thank you to everyone for their good wishes and especially to those who have held me and Ann in their prayers during this time.

Thank you all Phil Platt.