

## Clive Jones: My First Year as a Member of Parliament

The Spring / Summer Open Meeting of the Wokingham Society was held on Wednesday 23 July 2025 in the main chamber of the Town Hall. Approximately 40 people attended to hear a review by Clive Jones, MP for Wokingham, of his experiences during his first year in office.



*Photograph by Keith Malvern*

Clive said that he is very proud and privileged to have been elected to represent the Wokingham constituency on 4 July 2024. He previously served on Wokingham Borough Council from 2016 to 2024. He has lived in the Borough for many years and has a professional background in the toy manufacturing/importing industry.

He noted that he himself had first visited the Houses of Parliament as a child; on a visit from Bulmershe School – which he attended. He

encourages schools and local groups to be in contact with his office to arrange a tour/visit to see and experience the House of Commons and get a first-hand insight into democracy in action.

Clive spoke of the amount there was to learn as a ‘new starter’ in the House of Commons, particularly regarding the protocols and etiquette of behaviour in the House and associated committees and groups – including occasionally being ‘told off’ by the Speaker!

He noted that catching the Speaker’s eye is a bit of an art and can involve much bobbing up and down. If one is named on the order paper this increases the chance of being called to speak. There is also some preference for length of service (old timers).

It was interesting to note that there was no formal training and little induction to life as a new MP – there were more experienced party Members who operated as mentors in the early period after the election, which was welcome.

Clive has received over 40,000 emails since his election. A significant number of these contacts (6000+) have been assisted through his actions and interventions.

The appointment of staff and formulation of an efficient structure to keep abreast of, and respond to, this volume of correspondence and the wide variety of issues raised was a challenge to get to grips within the earliest days/weeks in office. The MP has to set up his office in the constituency and recruit their staff, luckily Clive had help from volunteers to help with this. His staff has now grown to circa five full time equivalents, some staff members work part time. He noted that office space in Westminster took a while to organise, as former MPs are allowed to keep their offices for up to 3 months; Office space was only formally released in September 2024.

Clive gave an overview of his voting history in the House of Commons.

Right from the start, Clive has contributed to a very wide range of debates and asked many questions in the House. Working hours in the House are lengthy, often starting at 08.00am and continuing until late evening sometimes after 10.00pm on Monday to Wednesday. Thursday the house usually finishes a bit earlier and there are 16 sittings on a Friday.

In September 2024, following the lib Dem party conference, Clive was appointed as a Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Trade. This fits in well with his previous career in the Toy Industry.

A big focus and priority for Clive is on the development and implementation of a National Cancer Strategy. Clive is hoping that this will be published and in place by the autumn of 2025. He has had several meetings with health Ministers and has been able to lobby the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on this issue.

He is also active in the campaign for the replacement of our local hospital – the Royal Berkshire Hospital (RBH) in Reading - with its significant maintenance liability and associated costs.

He produces and circulates a weekly newsletter that gives an overview of his activities. A wide range of issues have been covered/raised. These have included: special needs education; supporting brewers in the Wokingham area (of which there are an increasing number); tackling the cost of living crisis; protecting our environment through lobbying

our water companies to clean up our rivers; the replacement of Ofwat (Water Services Regulation Authority); access to GP surgeries; local bus services; the MINI plant in Oxford (electric vehicle production); funding for local councils; and Reading Football Club.

Questions were then invited from the audience. This attracted many comments and queries ranging from how friendly other MPs are; the adversarial / confrontational nature of conduct in the House; views on the reduction on the voting age to 16; and the situation in Gaza. Questions were followed by light refreshments which Clive kindly stayed to be part of in order to continue engaging with those in attendance. We hope that this interaction may be able to be repeated in future.