



*David Laws MP Writes for Viewers of CrewkerneTown.org and ChardTown.org*



The last few months have been a very tough time for our national economy – and the towns of Crewkerne and Chard have not been immune to these pressures. We have had a number of redundancy announcements, which it very difficult for all those affected. However, there has also been a variety of good news for both towns, some of which bears directly on the local economy.

In Crewkerne, we are now very close to the opening of the new Waitrose Store. This will be welcomed by many local residents and is also an opportunity to attract into the town many people who currently do no shopping at all in Crewkerne. We need to make sure that other businesses are also in a position to benefit.

Parking is a key issue in the town, and we need to make sure that there is adequate parking for the town's medium and long term needs. In the short term, I would like to congratulate the Chamber of Commerce on its success in persuading the Town and District Councils to back plans for free parking on the upper deck of the new car park – until late November.

Chard and Crewkerne are also celebrating the recent success of their schools in this year's GCSE and A Level exams. Holyrood School in Chard delivered their best ever results, and Wadham School in Crewkerne also saw a huge improvement in their performance compared with last year. My congratulations to the two head teachers concerned – Maurice Hicks and David Derbyshire – and to all their pupils, Governors and staff.

I am also very pleased that the Primary Care Trust has decided to build upon the recent improvement in access to NHS Dentistry in Chard, with up to 5,000 more NHS dentistry places in Crewkerne. This will be welcomed by many local residents who have struggled to access NHS dentistry over recent years.

Meanwhile, on the economic front, South Somerset District Council is continuing to give priority to bringing forward plans to regenerate the economy of Chard, including its town centre. I hope that all this work is going to pay dividends over the next few years – notwithstanding the tougher economic climate.

Very best wishes,

David Laws MP