



Emily Thornberry MP

ISLINGTON SOUTH AND FINSBURY

December 2023 Report



Christmas in Islington

Christmas is such a wonderful time in Islington - I get excited as soon as I see the lights go up. It's a time to reflect on the year that's passed, catch up with friends and family, and come together to celebrate as a community.

This Christmas one of my highlights was attending the Hugh Myddelton Primary School Christmas concert. Even though it was a tad chilly, their singing was enough to warm us all! And I also attended the Charterhouse and the Order of St Johns carol concerts, where I had the privilege of seeing Vanessa Redgrave read Gabriella Rosetti's *In The Bleak Midwinter*.

And I also want to say thanks to the Islington Ambulance Station for helping me spread Christmas cheer as the cover stars of my Christmas card this year. We shouldn't forget as we tuck into our turkey that our NHS key workers serve our community 24/7, including on Christmas Day.

So, however you're celebrating, I wish you a merry Christmas and a peaceful new year.

Celebrating with colleagues past and present at the Team Thornberry Christmas meal



Hugh Myddelton Primary School Christmas concert



With staff from the Islington Ambulance Service on the cover of my Christmas card



No place for prejudice in Islington

This month in my column for the Islington Gazette I wrote about how proud I am to represent a community where people of all backgrounds stand up against hatred and prejudice. That is why, as the terrible scenes we have witnessed in Israel and Gaza cast a long shadow over our country, I have been troubled to hear constituents reporting fears and experiences of rising antisemitism and Islamophobia in Islington. I am particularly appalled by the recent vandalism of the Islington Menorah, but was proud that the community rallied together to condemn this despicable crime and attend the relighting that evening.

The safety and security of my constituents will also be my highest priority. A place where people feel afraid to walk down the street or voice their views in public for fear of racism or even violence is not the Islington I know and love. There is no place in our community for prejudice of any kind, so please rest assured that I will continue to do everything in my power to ensure that Islington once again becomes safe for all.

You can read the full column [by clicking here.](#)

Safety for shop workers

This month I visited the Co-op on the Cally Road as part of USDAW's Support for Shopworkers day, and joined our local police on patrol around Upper Street. I'm really worried by the massive increase in violent, organised shoplifting which urgently needs greater attention from the government. No one should face threats or intimidation going to work every day and it is terrible to hear that for so many of our local shop workers, facing violence and abusive behaviour has become a normal part of the job.



I'm so proud of the work done by our police and community organisations like the Angel Bid, working together to keep shops safe. But it's clear that more needs to be done to protect shop workers and prevent retail crime on high streets like ours.



Infected Blood Scandal Vote

It's not often that you win a vote in opposition. But last Monday, we passed a Labour amendment setting up an independent body to administer compensation to the victims of the infected blood scandal - and handing Rishi Sunak a defeat.

Victims of the infected blood scandal have waited far too long for justice. It's testament to the hard fought campaigns led by victims and their families, and to the dedication of Labour's Diana Johnson MP, that they will finally receive the compensation they deserve. Sadly, far too many victims have passed away before reaching this point.

I was struck that this amendment passed by four votes: the same number as by-election seats won by Labour candidates in the last year. Every one of you who knocked on doors up and down the country has had a transformative impact on the lives of people affected by the infected blood scandal. Just imagine what winning a general election can do!

Challenging the Rwanda Bill

For the past two years, Labour has strongly opposed the government's unworkable and cruel plans to tackle illegal migration. But having already passed two laws in two years that have only made the problems in the system worse, Rishi Sunak is trying to pass another law to try and rescue his botched Rwanda deportation scheme. It's appalling that the government has already handed hundreds of millions of pounds to Rwanda for this expensive and ineffective gimmick, which is why Labour in government are committed to cancelling it and spending the money on hiring immigration caseworkers to clear the asylum backlog, and a new police unit to crack down on the criminal gangs.



At this month's [Attorney General oral questions](#), I challenged the government to release the legal advice they had been given over the legality of this Bill. The Attorney General initially refused, before relenting days later. The British people deserve to know what the government has been advised about this Bill, especially with regard to whether it is compatible with the Ministerial and Civil Service codes, so I won't stop challenging them to make sure Britain remains steadfast in our commitment to the rule of law.



Visit to St Mary's Church and Tower



Last week I visited St Mary's Church and tower with the lovely people of Islington Guided Walks.

St Mary's has watched Islington grow from a small hamlet, renowned for its fresh air and market gardens, to the bustling, multicultural, inner-city gem we know today. I saw how Islington's history is traced through the church, from Norman stonework in the crypt, to the eighteenth century tower, to the 1950s main body rebuilt after St Mary's was bombed during the blitz.

We climbed to the top of the church tower, which has been opened for tours for the first time since the 1700s. The views across Islington and London are spectacular.



All of Islington Guided Walks' tours can be booked [here](#) - I hear they make good Christmas presents!



What else I've been up to this month



Speaking at a fundraiser for Dartford CLP

Visiting the Microbiology Society in Clerkenwell



Speaking at the Resolution family law reception in parliament



Canvassing in Dover and Deal and visiting local businesses for Small Business Saturday - thanks to everyone who joined me!



Canvassing in Peterborough (and seeing the sights!)

Speaking on Labour's Crime Mission at the New Statesman Path to Power Conference



Diary

Constituency and campaigning

16 Nov - Town Hall Breakfast with housing providers
16 Nov - Constituency Labour Party winter social
17 Nov - Visited Magic Breakfast at Hugh Myddleton Primary School
17 Nov - Visited Caledonian Road Co-op
18 Nov - Campaigning in Peterborough
25 Nov - Small Business Saturday visit in Dover and Deal
29 Nov - Attended a Town Hall event to make Islamophobia Awareness Month
30 Nov - Police station visit
30 Nov - Visited the Microbiology Society
30 Nov - Visited Essex Road Tesco
30 Nov - Spoke at a fundraiser for Dartford CLP

1 Dec - St Luke's surgery
5 Dec - Charterhouse carol concert
8 Dec - Tour of St Mary's Church and Tower
9 Dec - Town Hall surgery
13 Dec - Celebrated Hackney Mayoral success with London Region organisers
14 Dec - Hugh Myddleton Primary School Christmas concert

Parliament and Shadow Attorney General

19 Nov - Radio 4 Westminster Hour
27 Nov - BBC Politics Live
27 Nov - Meeting with Liberty
27 Nov - Spoke at Resolution event
28 Nov - Spoke at New Statesman crime event
28 Nov - Meeting about Labour's Charging Commission
29 Nov - Fraud breakfast roundtable
29 Nov - Meeting with Justice
29 Nov - New Statesman/Santander fraud event
29 Nov - Meeting about fraud policy

4 Dec - A-Level Politics conference
4 Dec - City of London Law Society economic crime commission
4 Dec - Meeting with the Attorney General and Solicitor General
5 Dec - Meeting with Visa about fraud
5 Dec - Meeting about co-habitation reform
6 Dec - Meetings about whistleblowing
7 Dec - Attorney General Oral Questions
12 Dec - Meeting with Mumsnet

