

Emily Thornberry MP

ISLINGTON SOUTH AND FINSBURY

Annual Report 2023



2023 - a year where Britain cried out for change

After the chaos of 2022, we were promised that - with Rishi Sunak at the helm - 2023 would be a year of stability and calm. But instead we've had another year of the Tory infighting while the Prime Minister tried endlessly to reset his failing premiership. And all that time he's done nothing to address the fundamental problems plaguing our country, from the cost-of-living crisis to the chaos in our NHS and the climate emergency.

I have received thousands of emails from constituents this year calling for a change of government, so I hope that I have done those calls justice in all the work I've done to challenge the Tories to do better and to call the election that is so badly needed. And in my role as Shadow Attorney General I have continued to push the government to ensure justice for the victims of crime, whether that's protecting the victims of stalking, tackling the fraud epidemic, or securing rights for whistleblowers.

And the calls for change I have received from constituents have been echoed on the doorstep all round the country, where I have knocked on doors from Tamworth to Mid Bedfordshire, from Glasgow to Ramsgate, and from Derby to Peterborough. We know a general election is coming this year, but we also know that the Tories won't go down without a fight. So know this: in 2024 I will be doing everything I can to secure the Labour government the people of Islington and the whole country desperately need, so we can turn a corner on thirteen years of cruelty, chaos, and economic mismanagement under the Tories.

Good luck in 2024, and I wish you all a happy new year!



The year in Islington

Spending time out and about in Islington seeing the amazing work being done by members of our community is the great highlight of being your MP. Over the past year I have visited schools, places of worship, sheltered accommodation, street parties, and numerous local businesses. Here are some of my highlights!



Speaking at Winton Primary School



Laying wreaths marking Remembrance Sunday at Islington Green and Spa Green



Visiting New North Academy



Visiting the Margins at the Union Chapel



At the canal festival



Being shown round St Mary's Church and Tower by Islington Guided Walks



Visiting the TfL emergency response centre on Penton Street



Visiting the Highbury & Islington station defibrillator with Sadiq Khan and Mayor Gary Heather for Heart Restart Day



Visiting the Bethany House supported housing project in Clerkenwell



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

Making the law work for women

This year I have been working on plans to strengthen legal protection for women at home, online, at work, and in the streets by reviewing the law on cohabitation, on whistleblowing, and on stalking. It was a thrill to be able to finally announce all this amazing work in my speech to Labour Party Conference after months of hard work.

I want to strengthen legal support for the many women in cohabiting couples who rely on the myth of 'common law marriage', only to be left with nothing after the breakdown of their relationship. Likewise, we must better support women who are sexually harassed in the workplace to report their attacker without fear of losing their job. And building on Labour's crime mission, I believe we must better protect victims of stalking, so that no woman lives her life in the shadow of a stalker.

I am currently working alongside experts including Marina Wheeler KC - a leading lawyer in whistleblowing and employment law - and Nicola Thorp - an actress who was herself a victim of stalking - to develop a package of reforms that will strengthen protections not only for women, but for all those who have been victims in these areas.

This is important work I'll be continuing throughout 2024 in the run-up to the general election, alongside continuing work on subjects like fraud. To hear more, you can read my full conference speech announcing the plans [on my website](#) or watch it [on my Facebook](#).

POLITICS

Labour's common-law marriage pledge to give millions of cohabiting couples property rights

Emily Thornberry said men should not be able to kick partners 'out onto the street'



Emily Thornberry, the shadow attorney-general, told the Labour conference that those who reported harassment at work would get whistleblower's rights

IAN FORSYTH/GETTY IMAGES



Labour Party Conference 2023

It was wonderful to see so many local party members at Labour Party Conference in Liverpool in October, and in particular to catch up with you at Islington South and Finsbury CLP drinks. It was also great to meet so many members from across the Islington and Labour families.

As well as giving my main speech on the conference floor, I spoke on several panels relating to my work as Shadow Attorney General. These included discussing how to tackle fraud with the Social Market Foundation and members of the banking and social media sectors; and speaking to the Society of Labour Lawyers, the Law Society and the Bar Council about Labour's plans for the justice system.

After the chaos and disunity of the Conservative conference the week before, Labour conference was assured and confident, and proved how seriously we are taking the task of winning the next general election - and how hard we will work, together, to do so.



Impact of the terrible events in Israel and Gaza

The end of the year has been overshadowed by the appalling 7 October Hamas terror attack and the war in Gaza. Many constituents have shared heart-wrenching stories of friends and family who have been killed, or whose lives are still at risk. My heart goes out to all of those with loved ones still under threat and I hope the global calls are heeded for the release of all the hostages and for the attacks on Gaza to stop.

Throughout this war, I have been gravely concerned by the intolerable humanitarian crisis and loss of civilian life we've seen in Gaza. As Shadow Attorney General, I will continue to call for all parties to this conflict to follow International Law and for allegations of breaches to be treated with the utmost seriousness. I will always stand firm in my belief that Israel has a right to defend itself, but that must be within the confines of International Law and they must urgently take concrete steps to prevent further civilian loss of life. We urgently need a full, comprehensive and immediate humanitarian pause in the fighting across the whole of Gaza to ensure vital supplies can get to Gazans who desperately need it. That must be the first step towards a sustainable bilateral ceasefire and then the resumption of peace talks so we can achieve the long-elusive negotiated settlement we all want to see; a sovereign Palestinian state alongside a safe and secure Israel.

These terrible events have also cast a long shadow over our own community, and in my [December column for the Islington Gazette](#) I wrote about how troubled I have been 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 always be my highest priority. 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.



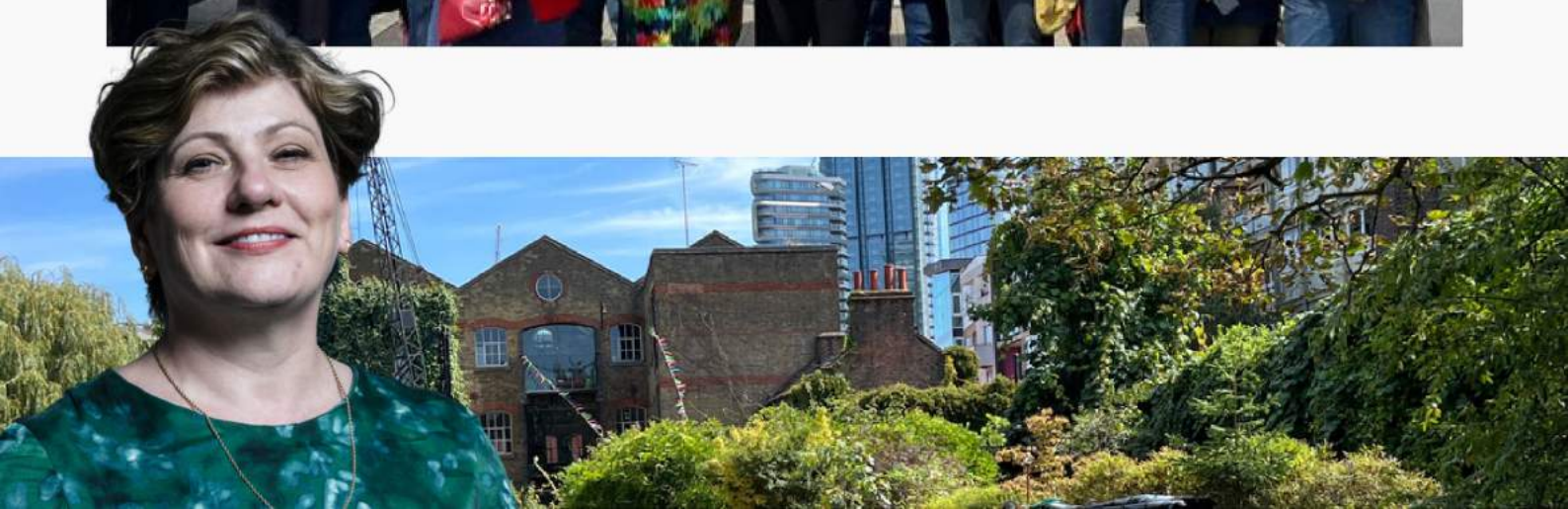
Local elections victory

In May, local elections took place across parts of England. In the weeks running up to the elections I was busy talking to voters across the country about Labour's plans for the cost-of-living, the NHS, and tackling crime - the issues people really care about.

That included knocking on hundreds of doors in places including Brighton, Swindon, Folkestone, Ramsgate, Milton Keynes, Derby, and in particular Redcar and Guisborough in Teesside where I was the shadow cabinet lead. Meanwhile, the Tory campaign was almost non-existent as they avoided facing voters' fury about thirteen years of chaos and incompetence.

It was amazing to see such a fantastic result, particularly in Teesside where I focused so much of my effort, with Labour gaining 537 seats and seizing control of 22 councils nationally, while the Tories suffered a devastating loss of 1063 seats. The result was a brilliant reflection of the hard work put in by so many Labour campaigners, including many from our CLP who travelled the country and contributed so much to this win.

With Labour now the largest party in local government for the first time since 2002, I am really hopeful for more fantastic local election results in May - including the re-election of Sadiq Khan as London Mayor - and encouraged that Labour activists will fight hard for the ultimate prize of a general election win.



Letter to constituents on the cost-of-living



As a Labour MP, my first priority will always be campaigning for a fairer society that protects the most vulnerable. With soaring inflation throughout 2023, I know that there are many in our community who have found the year incredibly difficult. That's why I've spent the whole year campaigning for more financial help for people to get through this difficult time, including for a proper windfall tax on bumper oil and gas profits to pay for more support.

In May, I wrote to thousands of constituents setting out what help is available from Islington Council, my constituency office, and from fantastic local charities and voluntary organisations.

And I also created a dedicated page on my website that signposts more information about cost-of-living support, and information about how to donate to local community causes. You can access it by [clicking here](#).

Fighting the Rwanda asylum plan

Hundreds of constituents have written to me this year, appalled and outraged by the Tories' heartless and incompetent management of the immigration and asylum system. It's appalling that, having lost control of the processing of asylum claims, the government has now handed hundreds of millions of pounds to Rwanda for their expensive, cruel, and unworkable deportation scheme, which was deemed illegal by the Supreme Court in November.



Challenging the Attorney General over the Rwanda plan in parliament

Labour has been fighting for a fairer and faster asylum system all year in parliament, and I voted against the Illegal Migration Act and the Rwanda Bill. But the fight isn't over, so please rest assured that I will continue to stand up for an end to the chaos and the cruelty as I fight for a Labour government in 2024.



Celebrating the Coronation

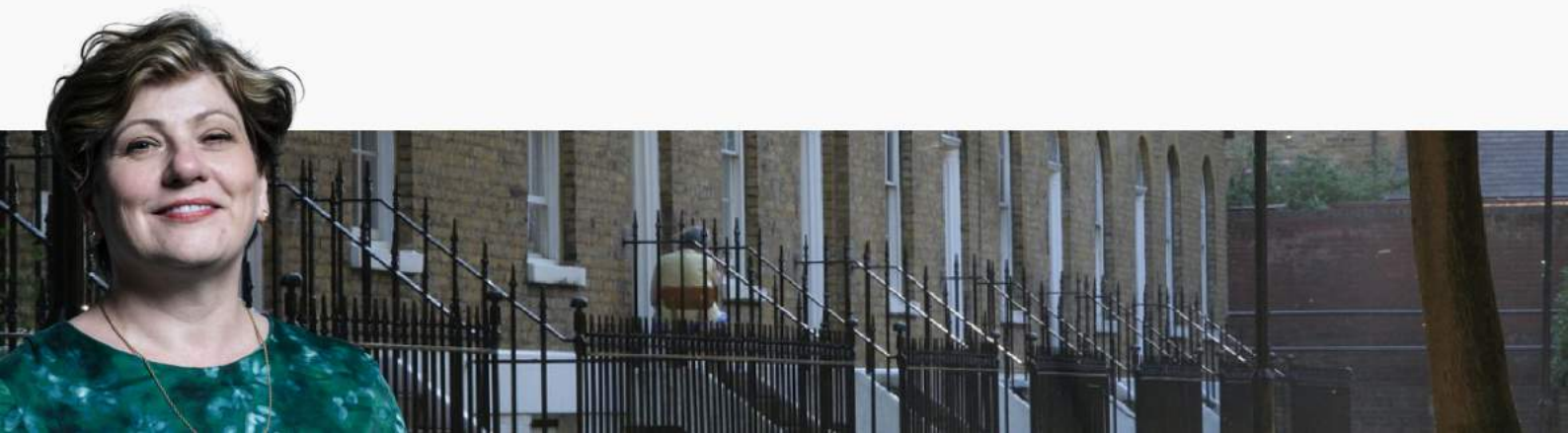


To celebrate the Coronation in May, I travelled the length and breadth of the constituency, fitting in eight street parties! The Coronation bank holiday weekend was one of my favourites of the year – it was fantastic watching such a special moment in history take place, getting to experience Islington's community get together and eating plenty of cake. It was a wonderful showcase of the strength of community in Islington as people got together, showed off their baking and musical skills, and set up beautiful street scenes of bunting, cardboard cut-outs of the King, and even exhibitions on local history.

Fighting crime in Islington

Throughout the year, I have met shop workers across Islington worried about the rise of organised, violent shoplifting in our borough, including when I visited a branch of the Cally Road Co-Op as part of USDAW's Respect for Shopworkers Week. No one living or working in Islington should be forced to face threats, intimidation, or violence in their place of work.

In December, I joined local police on patrol on Upper Street to see the work being done by both law enforcement and local business owners to fight retail crime. But it is clear that more needs to be done to make our high streets safe places to work, shop and live.



Marching in London Pride

It is always a joy to march in London Pride, and this year felt extra special because I got to march twice! - once with Stonewall and once with LGBT+ Labour.

I am always struck by how far we have come as a society in such a short space of time, from criminalisation to same-sex marriage in a generation! But this year it felt particularly important for people to make their voices heard, as the populist right step up their attacks on LGBTQ+ people and their hard-won rights. Pride - as both a celebration and a protest - should always stand as a reminder of how far we still need to go as a society, and that we mustn't be complacent about rights that have been won and could be taken away if we don't continue to stand up for them.



Parliamentary Staffer Awards



I'm delighted that in January, Frances Simmons, my Senior Caseworker, who so many of you know, came runner up for Constituency Staffer of the Year at the Parliamentary Staffers' Network Awards.

Coming second only to a constituency staffer for the late Sir David Amess MP is a huge achievement, which reflects Fran's eighteen years of dedication and dogged perseverance in supporting people in our community. I know there are so many in Islington South and Finsbury who will be delighted that the help Fran has provided to them over the years has been recognised by the many parliamentary colleagues who nominated her.



CLP Summer Party

In July, I hosted the Islington South and Finsbury CLP's annual Summer Garden Party, which as always was an absolute delight. The beautiful Culpepper Community Gardens provided the perfect location with over 100 people in attendance - local members and community champions coming together in their shared desire for the change that only Labour can bring. And our multi-talented Councillor Martin Klute and his band provided the ultimate soft smooth sound of jazz to ease us through the afternoon and get us into the spirit of summer. The party was a great success and raised more than a thousand pounds for the CLP.



Welcoming De Beauvoir to Islington South



Parliamentary constituencies all over the country are changing size for the next general election and Islington South and Finsbury is gaining a ward - De Beauvoir - from Hackney South and Shoreditch. That means residents of De Beauvoir will have me as their Labour parliamentary candidate at the next general election.

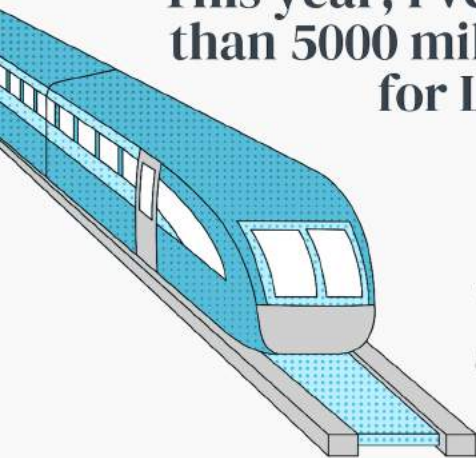


As many of you will know, Labour members in De Beauvoir have already been transferred into our local Labour Party. I really enjoyed getting out and about in De Beauvoir ahead of the Hackney Mayoral by-election in November, and I'm looking forward to spending more time getting to know De Beauvoir members and residents over the coming months.



A year of campaigning

This year, I've travelled more than 5000 miles campaigning for Labour!



Rutherglen & Hamilton West, Glasgow



West Lancashire



Selby



Stoke on Trent



Mid Bedfordshire



Uxbridge



Thanet



Hackney



Brighton



Dover & Deal

