


Stuart C. McDonald >

(Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East) (SNP)

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Q1. If he will list his official engagements for Wednesday 25 October. (Unique identification number 906714 (Unique identification number))

The Prime Minister >

(Rishi Sunak)

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I know that the sympathies of the whole House are with all those affected by Storm Babet and in particular the friends and families of those who lost their lives.

This morning, I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House, I shall have further such meetings later today.

Stuart C. McDonald >

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I join the Prime Minister in expressing my sympathies to all those affected by the recent storms.

Two million people just cannot be sustained from 20-odd aid lorries. Utter catastrophe is being unleashed in Gaza. Does the Prime Minister not now see that only a humanitarian ceasefire can bring about the scale of emergency aid that is needed? Of course Israel has a right to defend itself in line with international and humanitarian laws, but we must also speak out when those laws are breached. Surely he agrees that depriving 2 million civilians—a million of them children—of food, water, medicines and fuel is not in accordance with international law. Will he press Israel to restore the supply of these essentials for the sake of innocent civilians and the future of the entire region?

The Prime Minister >

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It is important that we do everything we can to get humanitarian aid to those who need it in Gaza, which is why, on Monday, we announced a doubling of our international aid to the region and why the Development Minister is actively engaged with our partners on the ground to ensure that that aid gets to those people as quickly as possible.

Alberto Costa >

(South Leicestershire) (Con)

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Q3. Double child rapist and murderer Colin Pitchfork had yet another parole review hearing only a few weeks ago. I thank the Justice Secretary for having listened to me and engaging the reconsideration mechanism rule. I know that the Prime Minister does not have any decision-making role on the independent Parole Board. It is independent of Government, but it is a wing of the Executive; it is not the judiciary. Does the Prime Minister agree that, generally, as a point of principle, men—sexual offenders—who rape and brutally murder young women, as Mr Pitchfork did to Dawn Ashworth and Lynda Mann in my constituency, should remain in prison for most of their natural lives? (Unique identification number 906716 (Unique identification number))

The Prime Minister >

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I agree with my hon. Friend that the public should be confident that murderers and rapists will be kept behind bars for as long as is necessary to keep the public safe. That is why we are reforming the parole system. Our Victims and Prisoners Bill will mean that minimising risk and protecting the public are the sole considerations in Parole Board decisions. It will also give the Justice Secretary the power to step in on behalf of the public and take a second look at decisions to release the most serious offenders, including murderers and rapists. Last week, we announced that we will be introducing longer sentences for dangerous criminals. For the most heinous crimes, life will mean life.

Mr Speaker >

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I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Keir Starmer >

(Holborn and St Pancras) (Lab)

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I join the Prime Minister in his comments about all those affected by the storms.

I start by welcoming my hon. Friend the new Member for Mid Bedfordshire (Alistair Strathern)—the first Labour MP ever to represent those beautiful towns and villages. He defied the odds, history and of course the fantasy Lib Dem bar charts. I also welcome my hon. Friend the new Member for Tamworth (Sarah Edwards). She will be a powerful representative for her constituents. Is the Prime Minister as relieved as I am that those constituents are not burdened with his defeated candidate, who told them—do not worry, Mr Speaker; I am going to sanitise this—to eff off if they are struggling with the cost of living?

The Prime Minister >

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I am proud of what this Government have been doing to support the most vulnerable over the past year. In fact I join the right hon. and learned Gentleman in welcoming the new Members to their places. After all, I suspect that the new Member for Mid Beds may actually support me a little more than the last one—*[Laughter.]* I did notice that the new Member said that they will be opposing new housing in their local area, while the new Member for Tamworth claimed that they will protect green spaces. I urge them to have a word with their leader, because that is not exactly his position—although with his track record of U-turns, who knows what his housing policy will be next week?

Keir Starmer >

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So much for being the change candidate! The Prime Minister cannot even distance himself from those appalling comments. I have to ask him, where on earth does he think his candidate got the idea in the first place that throwing expletives at struggling families was his Government's official position?

The Prime Minister >

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Let us just look at the record of what this Government are doing to help those people: paying for around half of a typical family's energy bill over the last year, support worth over £1,500; the most vulnerable in our society receiving £900 in direct cost of living support; record increases in the national living wage; record increases in welfare; and this winter, pensioners to receive an extra £200 or £300 alongside their winter fuel payment to help them through what we know is a tough time. All of that significant support, funded by this Government, would be put at risk by Labour's reckless plans to borrow £28 billion a year.

Keir Starmer >

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The Prime Minister keeps boasting about how great things are; the voters keep telling him that he has got it wrong. I can see why the Tamworth candidate thought that he was just following Government lines **GRO-C** and her two children lived in their home for eight years. In May, they were kicked out with a no-fault eviction notice. Despite his Government's pledge to scrap no-fault evictions, this week the Prime Minister crumbled to the landlords on his own Back Benches and killed the policy. What message, other than the message delivered by his candidate in Tamworth, could **GRO-C** possibly take from that?

The Prime Minister >

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We have taken significant action to help renters like **GRO-C** and others. We have capped holding deposits at one week. We have protected tenants from rip-off tenancy fees, delivered almost half a million affordable homes for rent, halved the percentage of substandard homes in the private rented sector, and strengthened local authority enforcement powers, because the Government are delivering for renters. We are also trying to ensure that the new generation can buy their own home, so perhaps the Leader of the Opposition can explain to **GRO-C** and millions of others why when we brought forward plans to unlock 100,000 new homes, he stood in the way of that? *[Interruption.]*

Mr Speaker >

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Order. Just to say, it is Prime Minister's questions, not Opposition's questions. *[Interruption.]* I am sorry, Prime Minister; it is Prime Minister's questions. I do not need you nodding against my decision.

Keir Starmer >

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I am sure that **GRO-C** and her children, who have now been evicted, will take great comfort from that non-answer.

GRO-C and her teenage son saw their mortgage go up by more than a quarter—*[Interruption.]* Government Members may think this is funny, but this is real life. After 16 years of dutifully paying the mortgage, for the first time she is having to choose between new shoes for her son and putting the heating on—all because the Prime Minister's party crashed the economy, pushing mortgage rates to their highest levels in decades. He says, "Ignore all that"—ignore the fact that the guilty men and women responsible are standing again as his candidates and still setting his policy. Can he not see why **GRO-C** might think that his party is telling them exactly where to go?

The Prime Minister >

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The right hon. and learned Gentleman keeps talking about the mini-Budget; I will not ask him a question, Mr Speaker, but I will just point out that he actually supported 95% of the things in that mini-Budget, which I did not. He has had a whole summer to get on top of the details, but he is still ignoring the fact that rising interest rates are a global challenge. They are at their highest level in America and Europe for more than 20 or 30 years. Mortgage rates have doubled in America and trebled in Europe.

To help mortgage holders, we want to ensure that they can use the mortgage charter we have agreed with the banks. Thanks to the steps we have taken, someone with a £200,000 property with about £100,000 left on their mortgage could save more than £350 a month and lock in a new deal six months before theirs ended, and repossessions will be prohibited for 12 months from the first missed

payment. The right hon. and learned Gentleman might have missed that that policy is twice as generous as Labour's.

Keir Starmer >

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Absolutely tone deaf. In every caff, pub and supermarket in Britain, people are having the same conversation: "We can't afford that —put it back on the shelf. It's too expensive." The Prime Minister is completely oblivious, just patting himself on the back.

GRO-C and **GRO-C** have worked hard and been saving to buy their own home. They were nearly there last year, but he scrapped house building targets because his Back Benchers pushed him around. House building has fallen off a cliff, shattering the simple dream of home ownership for people like **GRO-C** and **GRO-C**. Can the Prime Minister now see that, actually, his candidate in Tamworth was just loyally following the party line?

The Prime Minister >

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These prepared lines really are not working for him any more. The right hon. and learned Gentleman literally asked me a question about the support we are providing for mortgage holders; I gave him the answer to that question and then he read from his script that I had not answered the question. We are providing significant help for all these people.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman has moved on to housing targets. Here is the record: 2.5 million additional homes; housing starts double what we inherited from the Labour party; housing supply up 10%; on track to deliver a million new homes; and a record number of first-time buyers. He brought up his candidates in Tamworth and Mid Beds as we opened this session, and he is now saying he wants to build homes; well, both of those candidates say that they want to block new homes in their constituencies.

Mr Speaker >

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Simon Hoare.

Simon Hoare >

(North Dorset) (Con)

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rose—

Mr Speaker >

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Sorry—Keir Starmer.

Keir Starmer >

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Across our country the British people are rolling up their sleeves and getting on with it, doing their best in the face of a punishing cost of living crisis and a Government who have abandoned them—abandoned renters at risk of being kicked out, abandoned mortgage payers struggling to make ends meet, and abandoned people who dream of owning their own house. The truth is that the Prime Minister's candidate in Tamworth summed up perfectly just how he and his Tories are treating the British public, so will he just call a general election and give the British public the chance to respond, as they did in Selby, Mid Beds and Tamworth? They have heard the Government telling them to eff off, and they want the chance to return the compliment.

The Prime Minister >

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As we saw with the right hon. and learned Gentleman's recent decisions on building new houses, politicians like him always take the easy way out, whereas we are getting on with making the right long-term decisions to change this country for the better—on net zero, on High Speed 2, on a smoke-free generation, on education and on energy security. Contrast that with his leadership: too cautious to say anything and hoping that nobody notices. Let me tell him: come that general election, the British people will.

Mr Speaker >

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I call Simon Hoare.

Hon. Members

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More!

Mr Speaker >

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I said "Hoare," not "More".

Simon Hoare >

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Q5. That is the first time I have been confused with the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Speaker. (Unique identification number 906718 (Unique identification number))

Mr Speaker >

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There have been many rumours about you.

Simon Hoare >

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And of all them are true, Mr Speaker.

Like me, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has the honour and privilege of representing a rural constituency. I am sure that he, like I, occasionally feels a certain degree of frustration that although progress has been made in this area, the rubric of funding formulae for things such as the Environment Agency, local government, the police and education still fails to adequately reflect the difficulties and challenges of delivering public services in rural areas. Will my right hon. Friend the Chancellor and the wider Government use the opportunities of the autumn statement and the forthcoming Budget to explore those issues further and make the delivery of services better for the Prime Minister's constituents and mine?

The Prime Minister >

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I thank my hon. Friend for raising that important issue on behalf of his and my constituents. It is vital that we have the same high-quality services in rural areas as in our towns and cities. I am pleased to tell him that we are providing £95 million through the rural services delivery grant to help rural councils achieve exactly that. We are currently reviewing the police funding formula. I remember working with him to ensure that the national funding formula for schools takes account of the different characteristics of schools and their pupils. We will continue to keep all those things under review. I agree with him entirely: our rural communities must be given the same funding and public services as everyone else in our country.

Mr Speaker > [Share](#)

I call the SNP deputy leader.

Mhairi Black >

(Paisley and Renfrewshire South) (SNP)

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Yesterday, the UN warned that hospitals in Gaza had just 48 hours of fuel left to keep their electricity going. That was 28 hours ago; the electricity runs out tonight. We have a human responsibility to all the people in Gaza, but we have a particular responsibility for UK citizens, some of whom are in those hospitals, with no food, no water, no medicine and no way out. How much worse does the situation have to get before the Prime Minister will join us in calling for a humanitarian ceasefire?

The Prime Minister > [Share](#)

From the start, we have said that the first and most important principle is that Israel has the right to defend itself under international law—our support for that position is absolute and unchanged—but we have also said from the start that we want British nationals to be able to leave Gaza, hostages to be released, and humanitarian aid to get in. We recognise that, for all that to happen, there has to be a safer environment, which of course necessitates specific pauses, as distinct from a ceasefire. We discussed that with partners yesterday evening at the United Nations, and we have been consistently clear that everything must be done to protect civilians in line with international law and to continue getting more aid flowing into Gaza.

Mhairi Black > [Share](#)

The growing calls for a ceasefire are also about calming the situation in the broader region, especially the west bank. UNICEF has reported over 2,000 fatalities and over 5,000 injured children since the conflict began, due to unrelenting attacks. If we ignore that, we risk pouring petrol on a fire in a place that only requires a spark to ignite. Can the Prime Minister understand that joining calls for a ceasefire is now the best—and maybe the only—way to stop this conflict escalating beyond all control?

The Prime Minister > [Share](#)

We have to remember that Israel has suffered a shockingly brutal terrorist attack. Hamas are responsible for this conflict, and Israel has the right to protect itself in line with international law, as the UN charter makes clear. We will continue to urge the Israelis to follow international law, but we also have to remember that Hamas cruelly embed themselves in civilian populations.

We are doing everything we can to get aid into the region. I am pleased to say that an RAF flight left the UK for Egypt this morning carrying 21 tonnes of aid for Gaza. The relief supplies include more than 75,000 medical kits, solar lights and water filters for families, and warehousing equipment. Our team are on the ground, ready to receive. We will continue to do everything we can to increase the flow of aid, including fuel, into Gaza.

Aaron Bell >

(Newcastle-under-Lyme) (Con)

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Q6. In the matter of Walleys Quarry, my constituents have been utterly let down and failed by the Environment Agency. Not only has it failed to prosecute a rogue operator for the repeated breaches of its permit; we now learn that for the past seven years, all of its monitoring equipment—including in your constituency, Mr Speaker—has been grossly under-recording levels of hydrogen sulphide by a factor of approximately two or three. That is the monitoring equipment that people have been relying on to tell them that their

air is clean and safe to breathe. Given everything that has happened, we really need to see some proper action now. I have had enough of the EA, and my constituents have too, so will the Prime Minister do everything in his power to get a grip on this failing organisation? (Unique identification number 906719 (Unique identification number))

The Prime Minister >

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My hon. Friend is absolutely right to raise the concerns of his constituents. The Environment Agency's criminal investigation is ongoing so, as I hope he understands, I cannot comment further on it. However, with regard to his concerns about the measurement inaccuracies, I have been assured—and have checked—that the Environment Agency is working swiftly to understand the scale of the problem. The Environment Secretary is monitoring the situation, and I have asked her to keep my hon. Friend updated regularly.

Colum Eastwood >

(Foyle) (SDLP)

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A few short months ago, the world came to Belfast to celebrate the Good Friday agreement. At the heart of that agreement was the realisation that we could not use violence as a tool for revenge or to achieve our political aims. As 1,400 Israelis and almost 6,000 Palestinians lay dying or dead, when will the Prime Minister say enough is enough? When will he call for a ceasefire? When will he tell Israel to stop meting out collective punishment to the people of Gaza, and when will he and other world leaders insist on a political solution that involves a Palestinian state for the Palestinian people?

The Prime Minister >

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As I said, an important principle is that Israel does have the right to defend itself under international law, to ensure that attacks like this one—which was brutal and horrific for its citizens—cannot happen again. We continue to support that position, but, as I said, from the start we have also wanted to ensure that humanitarian aid can go in and hostages and foreign nationals can come out. We recognise that that means there has to be a safer environment, which of course necessitates specific pauses, as distinct from a ceasefire. We discussed exactly this with our international partners yesterday at the United Nations and will continue to do so. As I made clear on Monday, we have doubled down on our efforts to find a better future for the Palestinian people. That has been a feature of all our diplomacy in the region, and we will continue to give all our efforts to making that happen.

Robbie Moore >

(Keighley) (Con)

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Q7. For too long, Bradford Council has failed to represent the best interests of my constituents, whether in its catastrophic failures on children's services, its inability to invest our own council tax back into Keighley and Ilkley, or its refusal to instigate a review into child sexual exploitation across the Bradford district. Local residents and I are fed up of being ignored by Bradford Council, and we want out. Will the Prime Minister meet me to discuss my case for leaving Bradford Council and creating our own unitary authority that better represents Keighley and Ilkley, putting our priorities first? (Unique identification number 906720 (Unique identification number))

The Prime Minister >

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I know my hon. Friend is a passionate campaigner on this issue, having even introduced a private Member's Bill on it earlier this year. I agree that his council should be working to ensure that it delivers good services for all its residents, including his constituents, and I will certainly arrange for the relevant Minister to discuss his concerns further with him. As my hon. Friend did not do so, maybe I can plug his event this afternoon in the Jubilee Room—a Keighley and Ilkley showcase. Perhaps the Minister can come to that event and discuss it in person then.

Grahame Morris >

(Easington) (Lab)

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Q2. Just a year ago, the new Prime Minister promised to unite our country, not with words but with actions. Quite rightly, voters make a judgment on actions, but in my constituency—as in many others—the Prime Minister has not delivered on his promises. Arbroath House in Easington Colliery is a GP practice without the funding to deliver basic community health services. Communities such as Shotton, South Hetton, Haswell and Horden lack the police officers to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. We see sewage being dumped on our coastline at Seaham and Blackhall without prosecution of the privatised water companies, and we see investment for levelling up blocked for Horden. When will the Prime Minister call a general election and let Labour rise to the task of rebuilding Britain? (Unique identification number 906715 (Unique identification number))

The Prime Minister > [Share](#)

The hon. Gentleman raised crime. I am pleased to say that crime is now down by over 50% since Labour was last in office, and that includes significant reductions in antisocial behaviour, which he mentioned. Indeed, earlier this year not only did we meet our pledge to deliver 20,000 more police officers—a record number on our streets—but our antisocial behaviour plan is already making a difference, delivering immediate justice and clamping down on that type of activity.

Kate Kniveton >

(Burton) (Con)

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Q9. I support the Government's plans to build more homes and ease housing shortages. However, I have significant concerns about the impacts of developments on our ageing drainage systems and the potential flooding risk this poses, as we are seeing in places such as the Hazelwalls development in Uttoxeter. What steps will the Government take to ensure that, as more houses are built, existing infrastructure is upgraded and maintained by local authorities to ensure that it is not overwhelmed with additional use and less permeable surfaces? (Unique identification number 906722 (Unique identification number))

The Prime Minister > [Share](#)

As my hon. Friend knows, our traditional drainage systems are under increasing pressure, and that compares with the benefits of sustainable drainage systems, which work in a different way. It was already a requirement that sustainable drainage systems should be given priority in any major new development and developments in flood risk areas, but earlier this year we committed to requiring sustainable drainage systems in all new developments, on top of DEFRA's plan for water, which puts a statutory duty on water companies to produce plans to set out how they will improve, maintain and extend our robust and resilient waste water systems.

Charlotte Nichols >

(Warrington North) (Lab)

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Q4. This morning, I hosted the MS Society and people living with multiple sclerosis to hear about their experiences accessing personal independence payment. Ten years on from its introduction, people with MS and other fluctuating conditions are still too often being denied the support they deserve to manage the extra costs of their condition and to retain their independence for longer. Some 22,524 people with MS have signed a petition calling for a full review of PIP for fluctuating conditions, which is on its way to Downing Street right now. Will the Prime Minister listen to their call? (Unique identification number 906717 (Unique identification number))

The Prime Minister > [Share](#)

I am very sorry to hear about the experiences of those suffering with MS that the hon. Lady mentions, and I will ensure that the Work and Pensions Secretary looks at their concerns and writes to her.

Mr Speaker >

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I call the Father of the House.

Sir Peter Bottomley >

(Worthing West) (Con)

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Q10. We know that some duck serious questions today, aiming for electoral advantage in the future. May I note that the Prime Minister prefers to take decisions that will benefit the country now and in the longer term, so that we can have more jobs, better education and a shared prosperity? (Unique identification number 906723 (Unique identification number))

The Prime Minister >

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I thank my hon. Friend for his kind words.

Deidre Brock >

(Edinburgh North and Leith) (SNP)

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Q8. While the final report of the infected blood inquiry has been postponed until March, Sir Brian Langstaff, the independent chair, has already published his recommendations on compensation for victims of that scandal. Will the Prime Minister explain why his Government insist on postponing their response until after publication of the final report, kicking it into the long grass and delaying justice, once again, for my constituents **GRO-A**, **GRO-A** and **GRO-A** whose fathers died as a result of that scandal, as well as thousands of others across these isles? (Unique identification number 906721 (Unique identification number))

The Prime Minister >

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As I have said previously from the Dispatch Box, what happened was an appalling tragedy, and my heart goes out to all of those affected and their families. I have given extensive evidence to the inquiry, so my position on this matter is on the record. What I would say is that extensive work has been going on in Government for a long time, co-ordinated by the Minister for the Cabinet Office, as well as interim payments of £100,000 being made to those who were affected.

Simon Baynes >

(Clwyd South) (Con)

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Q12. The Prime Minister has been a great champion of transport projects on the Welsh borders, including the electrification of the main line in north Wales, the reopening of Corwen station and the Gobowen to Oswestry line, and also substantial levelling-up fund investment in the Llangollen and Montgomery canals. Will the Prime Minister now deliver on the long-awaited Pant-Llanymynech bypass and prioritise the dualling of the A5/A483 in Clwyd South and North Shropshire? (Unique identification number 906725 (Unique identification number))

The Prime Minister >

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We are making significant improvements to our cross-border rail services across the Union. Thanks to our decision on HS2, we can now provide an unprecedented £1 billion of investment to fund the electrification of the north Wales main line, which will ensure reliable, punctual journeys between north Wales and multiple cities across the north-west of England. We are also continuing to develop the Pant-Llanymynech bypass scheme in our next round of the road investment plans, and a section of the A5 in England will be considered by National Highways as part of the midlands and Gloucestershire to Wales route strategy.

Lilian Greenwood >

(Nottingham South) (Lab)

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Q11. It is important that the covid inquiry has all the relevant documents; that is what the public, including thousands of bereaved families, expect and deserve. But despite being a self-described tech bro, the Prime Minister has been unable to locate and provide his WhatsApp messages to the inquiry. Does he agree that devices should be handed over to experts to retrieve this information? (Unique identification number 906724 (Unique identification number))

The Prime Minister >

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Both the Government and I have fully co-operated to provide tens of thousands of documents to the covid inquiry, and I look forward to giving evidence later this year.

Peter Aldous >

(Waveney) (Con)

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Q13. With the ongoing national crisis in NHS dentistry being raised here most weeks, can my right hon. Friend advise as to when the dentistry plan produced by the Department of Health and Social Care will be published? Can he ensure that any clawed-back unspent funds are ringfenced for NHS dentistry, so as to deal with emergencies and to help clear the backlog? (Unique identification number 906726 (Unique identification number))

The Prime Minister >

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We are investing £3 billion in NHS dentistry, and the reformed dental contract is helping to improve NHS access for patients. I am pleased to say that NHS dental activity in the past year increased by almost a quarter compared with the year before, but the forthcoming dental recovery plan, which will be out shortly, will include action to incentivise dentists to deliver even more NHS care.

Ruth Cadbury >

(Brentford and Isleworth) (Lab)

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Q14. It is an honour to be elected to this place, and the standards by which we are expected to abide matter. Does the Prime Minister therefore accept that it was ill-judged for him to fail to declare to Parliament that companies linked to his wife had benefited to the tune of £2 billion from a fund he had set up as Chancellor? Will he correct the record now? (Unique identification number 906727 (Unique identification number))

The Prime Minister >

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It is worth bearing in mind that Labour Front Benchers backed the Future Fund when it was introduced—indeed, they were calling for more funding for it, not less.

The House will be aware of my wife's shareholdings in various British start-ups. That is her career. Those are on the record, and I am happy to put that on the record again. It is worth bearing in mind that the Future Fund helped more than 1,200 different companies. Neither the Government nor the British Business Bank chose any of those specific investments; it was open to any British firm that met the criteria.

Siobhan Baillie >

(Stroud) (Con)

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Q15. The UK is at risk of being left behind on hydrogen internal combustion engines. The EU and the USA now recognise hydrogen combustion engines as zero-emission and are supporting those industries, as all viable zero-carbon technologies will be needed—particularly for our HGVs, according to the Renewable Hydrogen Alliance. I am working with BorgWarner, PHINIA and many MPs on HICE, because this issue is crucial for UK jobs, skills and manufacturing. Will my right hon. Friend commit to urgently extending the scope of the automotive transformation fund industrialisation grants to include hydrogen engines, so that we win the HICE race? (Unique identification number 906728 (Unique identification number))

The Prime Minister >

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The Government are determined to ensure that the UK remains one of the best locations in the world for automotive manufacturing. Hydrogen fuel cells and their upstream supply chains are already in the scope of the ATF, and support for the fund has enabled Johnson Matthey's £60 million investment in Hertfordshire to develop hydrogen technologies. I am told by the Secretary of State for Business and Trade that the Department for Business and Trade is continuing to look at the future possibilities for renewable hydrogen and will consider the fund's eligibility in light of the new developments in this space.

Yasmin Qureshi >

(Bolton South East) (Lab)

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There is an email in my inbox from a constituent who has family in Gaza. It reads:

"My heart can't handle this anymore. We are being massacred, relentlessly bombed. Homes destroyed. No water, no food, no electricity."

Save the Children reports that one child is killed every 15 minutes. As I speak, the lives of 130 babies in incubators are in danger if fuel does not reach their hospital in time. This is collective punishment of the Palestinian people in Gaza, for crimes they did not commit. How many more innocent Palestinians must die before the Prime Minister calls for a humanitarian ceasefire?

The Prime Minister >

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I welcome the unity across the House on Israel's right to defend itself in the face of an unspeakable act of terror, but it is also clear that we must support the Palestinian people; they are victims of Hamas, too. Hamas use innocent people as human shields, and we mourn the loss of every innocent life of every people, every faith and every nationality. We are working as hard as we can to get as much humanitarian aid into Gaza as quickly as practically possible.

Dr Dan Poulter >

(Central Suffolk and North Ipswich) (Con)

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Last week, Suffolk experienced its worst local floods for over 100 years, with communities in and around Needham Market, Framlingham, Debenham and Wickham Market particularly badly affected. Homes and businesses have been destroyed. In Suffolk, the community has rallied together, in a very stoic and pragmatic way, to support those in need at this very difficult time. What

longer-term support can the Prime Minister offer to the people of Suffolk whose businesses and homes have been affected by these floods, to help them to recover and rebuild?

The Prime Minister >

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Flooding is a devastating experience, and I extend my sympathies to all those affected, including those in my hon. Friend's constituency. I am pleased to say that, through the flood recovery framework, we are confirming additional financial support for the most affected households and businesses. This will include a £500 grant for households and council tax discounts and business rates relief of up to 100% for three months. Small and medium-sized businesses will also be eligible for a £2,500 business recovery grant, and there is a grant of up to £5,000 to make flooded homes more resilient to future flooding. We recognise the heroic efforts of local councils like my hon. Friend's and of emergency responders everywhere who have been working tirelessly in affected areas. They have our thanks, and we stand ready to consider any requests from councils to support their recovery efforts.

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