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Independent, non-attached Member of the European Parliament

Nikki Sinclair MEP

Elected to serve the counties of the West Midlands

REPORTING BACK: Mid term report



Objectives and achievements

I can list with some pride, however, the facts that:

My Mobile Surgery. (pgs 6-7) It has visited every city and medium-sized town and many of the villages in the West Midlands so that my constituents can meet me and vice versa - a record unequalled by any other MEP or any MP (save when begging for votes, of course!)

Speeches. I have thus far made numerous speeches (pgs 10-11) in the European Parliament - one of the most regular British speakers. I have made more references to West Midlands issues in the Chamber than all the other six MEPs put together. These include factory-closures, immigration, the invasion of travellers in Hatton and Meriden and many other subjects which would have been better dealt with at local level but which now fall into the bailiwick of an unelected and ignorant EU Commission.

The Campaign for a Referendum. I organised the Campaign (pgs 8-9), signed by over 120,000 people (and still counting!), which caused the biggest rebellion yet in David Cameron's uneasy coalition and brought the subject of our membership of the EU to the front pages of newspapers worldwide.

EU committees. I have served on Civil Rights, Women's, Human Rights and Employment committees.

Fact-finding trips. I have visited conflict-torn Tunisia, the Gaza Strip and Afghanistan (pgs 22-23). I have turned down many junkets to rather more peaceful spots which keep my colleagues amused.

Fighting for the West Midlands. I have fought and continue to fight many minor and several major battles - on behalf of the people, small businesses, agriculture and manufacturing and against big government, bureaucracy, big business and waste.

Beliefs and goals

The United Kingdom should be an independent nation, governed by its own people in its own Parliament in Westminster.

The UK should have a free trade agreement with the European Union and should also be able to trade freely with the rest of the world without hindrance from the EU.

The UK should have smaller, cheaper, more representative government which serves the people rather than vice versa, less bureaucracy and no QUANGOs.

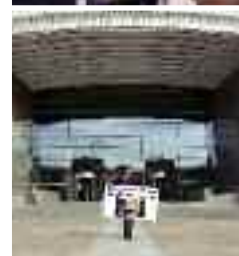
Our education system and our NHS should be free from interference and constant upheaval at the hands of politicians and should be placed in the hands of parents, teachers, patients and health professionals – the people at the sharp end who do the work and know their subject.

The UK should remain on friendly and co-operative terms with the EU, retain membership of NATO and keep our place as permanent members of the UN Security Council.

The UK and its politicians should stand up for our culture and all the many traditions which go to make it up. Rural communities warrant as much protection as urban, and Greenbelt land should be preserved from inappropriate development.

Equality of opportunity and personal freedom under the rule of law should be absolute. Liberty and respect encourage responsibility. Endless State handouts, marginalisation and regulation create dependence and discontent.

In collaboration with local communities and families, the State should supply a reliable safety net for all those who cannot look after themselves.



On the road to deliver information and advise



Nikki's mobile surgery has visited every town and many villages in the West Midlands. She regards it as an essential part of her job to maintain contact with the electors, to inform them about what is going on in Brussels and Strasbourg and, above all, to listen to their concerns, great and small.

"This is the second best part of my job – getting out to the streets, squares and village greens and meeting the people who entrusted me with this job.

"The general public cannot even identify most of their MEPs and only get to see their MPs at election time. The constituencies are too large and the MEPs are too busy



collecting attendance allowances and attending cocktail-parties abroad. As Nikki observed, being an MEP is the only job which pays you more the less you do. The mobile surgery gives me the chance to meet you and to listen to your concerns – in short, to do the job properly.

"Many people approach to sign the petition and stay on to ask for help and advice. Some of the subjects discussed are personal. Others relate to education, health,



local services, planning concerns, regulations, small businesses and lack of a representative voice. It is astonishing and alarming how many people, in a supposed democracy and an age of instant communications, feel that no-one is speaking for them any more.

"And that is the best part of the job: actually battling through the bureaucracy and regulations to give a voice to the people



whom I serve and to sort out problems which are none of their making."

I gain many fascinating insights into the constituency which are denied to those politicians who simply rely on the media.

"A large number of enquiries relate to small businesses and enterprises (SME), already hidebound by EU regulation but now denied EU grants since the quango 'Advantage West Midlands' was given its marching orders. As you would expect of a quango, during their notice period, they simply licked their own wounds rather than continuing to assist SMEs. Unbelievably, although the money – British taxpayers' hard-earned money - is available, if it is unused, it is returned to the EU for distribution elsewhere.

"And then there are the debates about

membership of the EU itself.

"Most people simply want to get Britain out and to get on with the already tough business of living and working without interference. Some are obscurely persuaded that the EU must confer some benefits, though, when challenged, they haven't been able to tell me what they are!

"It's safe to say, however, that the people of the West



Midlands want that referendum. It's bad enough suffering the consequences of membership, but suffering without having a voice or a choice in a democracy is intolerable."



As well as her mobile surgery Nikki has other campaign vehicles. Pictured above the Land rover and Ad Van

Campaign for a Referendum on our membership of the EU

The first step of the Campaign for a Referendum on our continued membership



of the EU was an unqualified success. The coalition government had pledged that any petition carrying 100,000 signatures would trigger a Parliamentary debate. We attained that target in record time - hardly surprising, given that a YouGov poll which Nikki commissioned showed that 52% would get out of the EU right now,

only 30% wanted to stay in and 60% want a referendum on the all-important issue - who governs Britain? Nikki delivered the petition to Downing Street, and you kept signing. A further 20,000 signatures were delivered.

All three leaders of the principal parties had promised a referendum when they sought power.



Left to right Trevor Colman MEP, Mike Nattrass MEP, Kelvin Hopkins MP, Nikki Sinclaire MEP, Nigel Dodds MP and Kate Hoey MP



Once elected (barely) by a popular vote, they weren't going to allow a little thing like the will of the electorate to get in their way. All of them imposed a three-line-whip on their MPs, forbidding them to obey their voters. 81 Tory MPs rebelled.

"We've forced them to have the debate,"

Nikki was quoted in the Independent "but they have imposed whips. This shows complete contempt for the people who gave them their positions. They may think this will just fizzle away, but I will organise another campaign and another until the British people get the right to choose who governs them."

"This is no longer about membership of the undemocratic EU. It is about whether democracy still functions in the UK."

Within a week, Nikki had launched a new campaign. You can sign the petition on www.haveyoursay.eu "We are only asking that the people should have the right to decide who governs them,"

she says. "Somehow, 33,973



people in Witney, Oxfordshire and 27,324 in Sheffield who voted Cameron and Clegg into Parliament have that right. Democracy stops there. But we will go on until a supposedly democratic Government listens to its bosses and does what it is told."



Campaign for a Referendum

on our membership of the European Union

Let the people decide

Campaign for a Referendum continues to fight to get the people a referendum on our continued membership of the European Union. We have had a massive response to the NEW petition which seeks to create a bill for a new debate in Parliament. If you would like to sign, you can do so online at www.haveyoursay.eu or phone us on the number below.

www.haveyoursay.eu

Tel 0800 157 7916

Nikki speaks in the EU Parliament

Watch more of Nikki's speeches in the European Parliament on-line: <http://yourmep.org/speeches.html>

Nikki's speaks about the damages of Schengen agreement

Criticising the Schengen agreement and what it has actually meant to Europe. Nikki warns the EU that the British people will fight back and they will win.



You can watch this online at: <http://yourmep.org/schengen-speech.html>

Nikki slams non EU co-operation to help small businesses

Co-operation when it comes to small businesses in the European Union, is just not possible according to Nikki. Member states should take care of their own small businesses.



You can watch this online at: <http://yourmep.org/small-speech.html>

Nikki raises human rights issues in Iran and slams the unelected High Representative

Human rights defenders are subject to ill treatment in Iran, in particular women are at risk. The EU and in particular the High Representative, Cathy Ashton, say a lot but do very little on the issue.



You can watch this online at: <http://yourmep.org/iran-speech.html>

Begone with your begging bowls

Nikki talks about how the Euro is now a burden to financial recovery for the EU 27 countries. More job growth is created outside the Eurozone rather than in. The UK needs to divorce itself from this failure - be gone with your begging bowls.



You can watch online at: <http://yourmep.org/begone-speech.html>

Standing up for the Greenbelt

Nikki slams the EU for encouraging the UK government to develop on Greenbelt land. Nikki says destruction of our greenbelt land shows a disregard for our culture and traditions.



You can watch this online at: <http://yourmep.org/greenbelt-speech.html>

Nikki says no to the 36% rise in health care budgets for MEPs

Healthcare in member states is subject to cuts, yet MEPs enjoy budget increases in this area. Nikki highlights this fact in this speech.



You can watch this online at: <http://yourmep.org/cuts-euspeech.html>

Nikki speaks to Brussels about Campaign for a Referendum

Nikki talks in Brussels about her successful campaign, Campaign for a Referendum. Nikki's constituents want a say on Europe, and Nikki tells the EU, "Let the People Decide"



You can watch this online at: <http://yourmep.org/referendum-speech.html>

Nikki slams a lack of EU transparency

For the Pro-Europeans in the UK, it is becoming a very difficult job to promote the idea of the EU! The EU works under a cloak of secrecy - and the EU has no intention of ever becoming transparent.



You can watch online at: <http://yourmep.org/transparency-speech.html>

Goodbye to cheaper car insurance

Nikki condemns new legislation that means that women will no longer get cheaper car insurance, and the new ruling means that car insurance could go up by as much as 25%.



You can watch this online at: <http://yourmep.org/insurance-speech.html>

Nikki says stop positive discrimination

Nikki spoke on International Women's Day to call for the end of positive discrimination. Positive discrimination creates victims. Women do not need to be patronized by quotas.



You can watch this online at: <http://yourmep.org/positive-speech.html>

Nikki slams unnecessary spending on Body Scanners

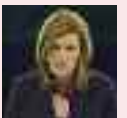
In a time of financial austerity, Nikki slams the 725000 euros that have been spent on body scanners that sit obsolete in the Parliament carpark. Spend money wisely, we have a shortage of money.



You can watch online at: <http://yourmep.org/bodyscanner-speech.html>

Nikki asks why is the UK being asked to prop up the IMF

A country from outside the Eurozone, a country that was ridiculed and threatened in the chamber in December, is being asked to prop up the IMF. Why?



You can watch online at: <http://yourmep.org/danish-speech.html>

A pictorial chronology of Nikki's half term as an MEP



Nikki's acceptance speech on EU Election night 2009



Taking her position in Brussels - Nikki has been one of the most active eurosceptic MEPs



Meeting UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon at Birmingham University



Speaking to BBC Radio about David Cameron's promise for a Referendum on the Lisbon Treaty



Nikki in Brussels with a delegation from the NFU



Nikki visits Auschwitz

Standing up for British poultry farmers and egg production from EU regulations that has harmed their industry



Nikki stands up to Birmingham City Council by saying No to HS2



Nikki launches the Campaign for a Referendum



Speaking in Brussels about the need to protect human rights in Camp Ashraf



Protesting with the residents of Meriden to preserve the greenbelt and say no to special rights for travellers



Serving in the Royal Air Force Parliamentary Scheme



Debating voting systems with Robin Walker MP and Sixth Form Students



Presenting 100,000 signatures for the Campaign for a Referendum



Supporting local football teams, Nikki pictured here with Worcester City



Nikki meeting with her constituents of the West Midlands



Nikki in Afghanistan with British forces



Challenging the Prime Minister to listen to the people and his MPs

The West Midlands - Employment and Agriculture

The West Midlands is one of the world's most successful mixed economies. Throughout its long history, it has been famous for innovative genius – from William Shakespeare to Charles Darwin, from Edward Elgar to Ozzy Osbourne. It has been the heart of British industry, yet that heart pounds in the midst



of beautiful, productive agricultural land. 20% of the constituency is Green Belt. The Archers - the long-

running Radio 4 'everyday story of countryfolk' - is set in a fictional village just 19 miles from the mighty industrial powerhouse of Birmingham.

The EU has overseen the decline of everything in the region but its pride and its originality. The British motor industry and manufacturing in general have been run down and sold off at bargain-basement prices to foreign interests, usually with sizeable EU deal-sweeteners. Now Brussels is preparing to launch an attack on financial services.

There are a quarter of a million unemployed people in the West Midlands, and that figure is constantly rising. 72,000 of these are aged 18-24. That's an unemployment rate of 20% - twice the national average.

Nikki hosted an

NFU delegation to Brussels to hear farmers' concerns about the rural economy. She said, "Our agriculture has been all but destroyed by the one-size-fits-all Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), a bureaucratic mess which adds 25% to the average family of four's weekly food bill. Quotas mean that we must import inferior foreign products rather than keeping our young in work and eating local produce.

The UK is forced to import 18% of its dairy products from the EU whilst our farmers throw milk down the drain.

"The traditional rural infrastructure has crumbled, with public transport routes

abandoned, pubs and Post Offices closing daily, churches standing locked and empty and EU-sponsored house-building gnawing chunks out of the Green Belt.



"Ambridge in The Archers is still about a mutually supportive society. The reality is about youth alienated and fleeing for the towns, the old and infirm isolated, half the cottages empty save at weekends and the pub and the church sold off as holiday homes for London bankers."

"Meanwhile we pay £48 million a day to the EU (just £100 million would have saved Rover, for example, whose closure cost thousands of jobs), to be squandered in waste and corruption. To add insult to injury, Tony Blair even meekly and arbitrarily gave back the UK rebate which at least went some way towards compensating the British people.

"The EU has a thing called the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF). In December, the Parliament voted £3.9 million for the retraining of 528 redundant workers in the Trentino region of

Italy, which has an unemployment rate of just 3%.

The British government has never made a single claim on the EGF, despite having staff at the Dept for Work and Pensions specifically to cover this area. The EU

makes 500 million a year available for retraining and reintegration of redundant workers. Our neighbours feast at this trough. British workers –

such as those from Peugeot, HP and Spode, to name just three - have never even been thrown a scrap.



"I meet thousands of people, urban and rural, right-wing and left, young and old. Their commonest complaint is of feeling disenfranchised, impotent to influence or change things and desperate to rebuild communities and to be involved in the running of what was once their own nation."



The West Midlands - constituency issues

High Speed Rail Link 2

The proposed High Speed Rail link between London Euston and Birmingham International – an EU scheme with next to no consultation with locals - will cut a motorway-wide swathe through 150 designated nature sites, including ten SSIs and four nature reserves.

It will necessitate the construction of a vast new car-park at Birmingham International. It will cost £17 billion which, at the moment, we in Britain can ill afford.

“With that money,” says Nikki, “we could, for example, upgrade the existing line, cutting the London-Birmingham time to 50 minutes, electrify the entire rail network, reinstate

Story below reported in the Birmingham Post 23 June 2011 for full story go to www.yourmep.org/hs2.html



Building Schools for the future, keep two aircraft carriers and a full quota of 'planes on them, reverse cuts in our police forces and services, build 60,000 affordable homes a year and stop increases in university fees.

“All of these would benefit the entire nation and create long-term employment. HS2 will create short-term employment, much of it imported, and benefit a few business people on expense accounts. It will damage innumerable communities along its route and



marginalise intervening cities such as Coventry and Northampton.

“It is a grandiose, pointless, criminally expensive vanity project which risks turning the West Midlands into a suburban satellite of London.”

So Birmingham City Council spent taxpayers' money on propaganda for the project rather than consulting with locals.

Nikki challenged their right to do this. She reached into her own pocket to pay for 'No' banners to match their 'Yes' ones. You can read her arguments against HS2 on <http://yourmep.org/hs2.html>



Meriden and the Greenbelt

If you or I started digging up Green Belt land with a view to development, we would be prosecuted. But when complete strangers turned up and started ravaging the surrounding landscape, the law-abiding people of the peaceful villages of Meriden, Hatton and Barnicle found themselves totally unprotected by the law. John Prescott had granted 'travellers' – with precious little definition of the word - the 'right' in certain circumstances to build on Green Belt land.



In keeping with her ardent belief in freedom, Nikki supports the rights of genuine travellers to live as they will, provided that they do not inhibit the freedoms of others.

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), however, makes special provision for 'travellers', affording them not equal but special rights which mysteriously outweigh those of law-abiding residents.



Nikki outside the the European Court of Human Rights, Strasbourg with saying yes to equal rights 'no' to ECHR special rights

Nikki has spent many nights by the campfire with those residents who have set up a round-the-clock vigil opposite the Meriden development. She has also hosted them in Strasbourg where they handed in a letter of protest entitled Equal Rights, Not Special Rights.



It should be noted that the Conservatives were committed to preserving the Green Belt and to freeing Britain from subjection to the ECHR. That, of course, was before they were elected.

“The rule of law is meant to be a contract,” says Nikki. “If you play your part by being law-abiding and paying your taxes, you have the right to expect the full protection of the law or the contract becomes void. Of course travellers have the right to travel. Of course we must provide suitable spaces for them to gather, but they have obligations too, which must include respecting the rights of others. It cuts both ways. When the law sides with one interest against another, it becomes tyranny.”

Human Rights

The EU makes much of human rights. The great thing about human rights is that, if they can grant and enforce them, they can also take them away. Human freedoms, however, are ours without EU permission, so they don't like them at all.



I sit on the EU human rights committee because it is a subject dear to my heart. I am woefully aware of how little substance there actually is in all the fine words.

Every Thursday afternoon when we come to Strasbourg, there are votes on human rights issues. There is never more than a handful of MEPs present. Most have qualified for their allowances by voting in the morning, and by now are headed home after a slap-up lunch. Few have any interest in issues such as the persecution of Christians, protection for human rights activists or the right of defence in a criminal trial.



These are matters of crucial importance to me. Not only do I sit and vote, but my travels abroad have not been sunny junkets but trips to



countries where human freedoms were endangered by war and revolution.

I visited Tunisia just three weeks after the dictator of 23 years, Zine Ben-Ali, was overthrown by popular uprising. I had a meeting with interim Prime Minister Mohammed Ghannouchi. He told me that

the EU had contributed aid to the old regime, supposedly for economic reform of which there had been no sign. Defence Minister Abdelkarim referred to Cathy Ashton's slow and uncertain response.

The transition from dictatorship to democracy is hard. The Arab states have long been torn between traditional deference to authoritarianism and the increasing influence of the west. A strong civil society, free media and women's rights are essential for the establishment of stable democracy, but most of the strength and expertise resides in the old regime.

The people of Tunisia, although naturally eager to swallow freedom at a gulp, are trying hard to make a balanced transition, but the revolution has meant that tourist revenue and the international credit-rating have plummeted. If ever aid and support were needed, it is surely by such a society on the very brink of democracy.

I visited Gaza, where I was privileged to see an UNWRA primary school at work and saw the consequences of generations of blood-feud. There are both warmongers



and intelligent people anxious to attain reconciliation on both sides of the traditional divide.



The EU has been the principal donor of aid to Palestine, but, at a meeting with Commission officials in Jerusalem, no-one would tell me how much of the €3.5 billion given has found its way to Hamas. Certainly there have been extensive under-the-counter meetings between European officials and Hamas leaders.

I was the only UK parliamentary representative at the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz – a solemn and moving experience which will remain with me always.



I was delighted to welcome UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon on a visit to the West Midlands and to meet up with another champion of human rights, Sultan Mahmood Chaudry, the former PM of Kashmir. He has campaigned tirelessly for the self-determination of his people. I was saddened

– and I do not think that the irony was lost on him – to reflect that we in Britain have sacrificed our own right to self-governance and are now engaged in a similar battle.



I also met Cypriot President Dimitris



Christofias and other Cypriot leaders. Cyprus was given fine promises many years ago, this time by the EU. They have not been kept. Turkey, still in possession of the lion's share of that lovely island, is being wooed relentlessly as a future member-state, although the problems of dispossessed Cypriots have still not been resolved.

But then, the EU, for all its grandiose words and missionary zeal in other countries, breaks its own rules. Article 21 states that 'The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government...' How does this tally with the fact that 75% of our laws are made by an unelected Commission, that the British people never voted for such a surrender and that that same Commission has consistently disregarded the outcomes of referendums?

Women's committee

Why a separate page on women's rights as though women were a 'special case' or another species?

Because that is how the EU wants to treat



women. Romanian MEP Rovana Plumb calls for women to enjoy 'positive' discrimination

in 'social, economic and political life' and even (!) in education.

She goes so far as to suggest that member states should revise their immigration policies to allow female immigrants easier access to jobs.

Nikki's belief has always been that all discrimination creates victims and, in the long term, resentment. "'Positive' discrimination is simply discrimination against men with a cutesy spin put on it," she says. "We have no need of patronising special assistance. We have battled for centuries just to have human rights. You give us the ball and we will run with it. Then tackle at your peril!"

Nikki conducted an opinion poll which showed that the British public overwhelmingly share her views. 86% said that it was unacceptable for a person to receive preferential treatment in order to get a job based on gender, with women (89%) more likely to say it is unacceptable than men (84%).

"We should be concentrating on removing barriers to women's progress," she said, "not merely in patriarchal societies such as the

renascent Arab states, but in the EU itself. According to a Commission report in 2008, Malta, Slovakia, Lithuania, Czech Republic and Poland have poor child support and childcare facilities. Ireland has also suffered from low investment in this area despite a particularly high birth rate.

"I have spoken again and again in the Parliament to stress that special rights just continue the battle with someone new occupying the high ground, where what we want are universal freedoms and so productive peace and alliance. I will continue to fight all discrimination of whatever kind."

Nikki has highlighted one typical instance where common sense has been swept aside by highblown theory. For generations, insurance premiums have been set – by hardnosed business-people, not pantomime villains - on the basis of scientific risk assessment. Young women have been shown to be safer drivers than their male counterparts, so have enjoyed cheaper motor-insurance.

No longer. The EU deems this discrimination. As a consequence, insurance premiums for women under 40 will rise by 25%. "Commonsense is anathema to the EU," Nikki sighs.



Transparency

Since the beginning of Nikki's term as an MEP transparency has been of paramount importance to her. She has had her accounts independently scrutinised by auditors. Each year these accounts show the amount to which Nikki has subsidised her office.

More detailed information is available on-line <http://www.yourmep.org/transparency>



Nikki's General Expenditure Accounts Totals

Year	Received from the EU	Expenditure	Subsidy from Nikki
2011	£45,050.40	£86,977.87	£41,927.47
2010	£43,543.00	£70,055.00	£26,512.00
2009	£22,039.00	£32,492.00	£10,453.00
2011, 2010, 2009			£78,892.47

General Expenditure Allowance 1st January - 31 December 2011

As specified in Article 28 of the EU regulations

- Office management and running costs, in particular rent and related charges (heating, lighting, insurance and cleaning): £23,152.73
- The cost of purchasing or renting office equipment: £966.12
- Telephone, including mobile telephone, and postal charges: £29,409.02
- The cost of purchasing office supplies and stationery: £3,196.77
- The cost of purchasing books, periodicals and newspapers: £290.73
- The cost of using public data consultation networks: £35.00
- The expenses involved in equipping Members with communications equipment and maintaining that equipment, for example the purchase or rental of a telephone, a fax machine, a computer, a modem or communications card, a printer, other IT equipment, computer peripherals and software packages: £3,318.42
- The cost of a subscription to the Internet and to databases: £545.15
- Representation activities: £22,176.86
- Hotel bills and other related expenses incurred in travelling in a Member's Member State of election: £3,887.07

Total General Expenditure: £86,977.87

Nikkis subsidies to General Expenditure: £41,927.47

Total General Expenditure Allowance received from the EU: £45,050.40

This payment is received by every UK MEP from the EU regardless of their expenditure for this period.

By the way the EU accounts haven't been passed by the auditors for 17 years.

RAF training and Afghanistan

Nikki joined the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme in order to understand at first hand the pressures, experiences and camaraderie of the UK's armed forces.



She has undergone basic training and duties for junior officers and other ranks. These have involved a two-day survival course, numerous Ministry of Defence briefings

and a visit to Camp Bastian in Afghanistan.

Above all, she has worked alongside those who serve the nation and whose fates are so often in the hands of politicians who know little or nothing of their lives and the risks which they take.

"It has been an enormous privilege," she says, "to get to know so many brave men and women whose sacrifices and loyalty are so often taken for granted or celebrated only in weary newspaper platitudes, and to



observe even briefly the risks that every one of them is willing to take.

"The trip to Afghanistan taught

me a huge amount about their dedication and the diversity of their roles.

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is not just reducing the capability of the insurgency but helping the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) to maintain security and creating trust and significantly improving the lives of the people.

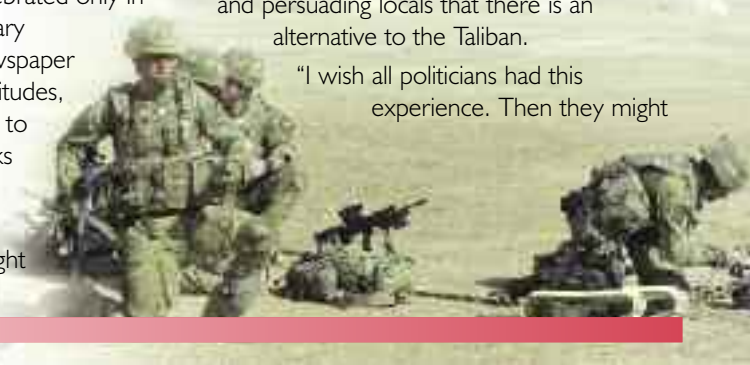


"They've been successful in all these. Insurgent attacks have been reduced by 24% in the past year. Healthcare access for the local population has increased from 8% under the Taliban to 60% today. Infant mortality has been

reduced by 20%. Access to education has substantially increased and, of course, now includes girls to whom the Taliban denied instruction. There are 13,000 more schools, 170,000 more teachers and 7.3 million more students.

"British forces within ISAF are creating trust and persuading locals that there is an alternative to the Taliban.

"I wish all politicians had this experience. Then they might



them from the board at will."

The Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme is funded by £45,000 from BAE Systems, Rolls Royce, Augusta Westland and their predecessor each year. The programme has been supported by

stop moving the armed forces around like chess-pieces and removing



Supporting local football

Nikki stands up for the West Midlands in more than just politics. A lifelong football fan herself, she has taken the unprecedented step of sponsoring players from 14 different teams from across the region.

"After the stuffy environments and the constant foul play of the political arena, my greatest pleasure is to get out in the fresh air of a Saturday afternoon and to cheer on the local teams," says Nikki.

"The differences between fans of various squads are nothing like as great as those that unite them. Football unites people of all ages and backgrounds and gives them common ground. The Midlands is blessed with a rich footballing culture, this is something I am very proud to be involved with."



Nikki at Port Vale Vs. Shrewsbury Town



Nikki, who sponsors the players out of her own salary, gives all corporate benefits from sponsoring the players to charity. "It's just a bit of fun which again gives me a chance to be

part of the community, get to know my constituents and make a tiny contribution to the region's pride."

NIKKI'S SPONSORED PLAYERS

- Stoke City – Peter Crouch
- pictured above with Nikki*
- Birmingham City – Boaz Myhill
- Coventry City – David Bell
- Walsall – Mat Sadler
- Shrewsbury Town – Matt Richards
- Hereford United – Yoann Arquin
- Kidderminster Harriers – Jack Cresswell
- Tamworth – Liam Francis
- Nuneaton Town – Adam Walker
- Worcester City – Simon Brown
- Port Vale – Marc Richards
- Burton Albion – Danny Blanchett
- AFC Telford – Robbie Williams
- Solihull Moors – Karl Broadhurst



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I would like to receive more information from Nikki Sinclair MEP

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