

PRESS RELEASE

FROM: Fiona Bruce MP for Congleton Constituency

DATE: 4th March 2011



Fiona Bruce MP meets Holmes Chapel, Goostrey and Sandbach Lip Reading group

A Lip Reading group which has been meeting for 20 years in St Margaret's Hall, Holmes Chapel with residents attending from Holmes Chapel, Goostrey and Sandbach, invited Fiona Bruce MP to one of their recent meetings.

Fiona said:

'The visit was an opportunity for me to learn more about this skill – and how challenging it is to develop it'.

One of group's members, John Brown, told Fiona:

'The biggest problem I have in hearing is in a group – like in a pub, where picking out a single conversation is difficult with so much background noise. Hearing aids do not filter out background noise, so lip reading helps'.

Another member told Fiona:

'Not everybody can have a hearing aid'.

Lip reading trainer, Julie Norman, who runs the class said:

'You have to work quite hard to lip read. You have to be a detective and totally focus on what people are saying. You cannot, for example, write at the same time, or hear speakers in a conversation if they turn away from you, and many words look the same – for example 'Wiltshire' and 'wager'. You can miss out on parts of conversations because you are always having to work words out'.

Another member of the group, told Fiona:

'Coming to this class has helped me – it has made me realise there are other people like me'.

The group contacted Fiona to highlight the fact that lip reading classes need to be reclassified from 'leisure' to 'educational' – so as to open up more funding streams to support ongoing classes.

Fiona, who is a member of the All Party Parliamentary Group for the Deaf, which seeks to improve support for those suffering from hearing loss, told the group:

'After spending time with the class, I now fully appreciate and accept that lip reading is a real skill and that teaching and learning it require both dedication and concentration. This is much more than just a leisure activity – learning to lip read can considerably improve the quality of life for people who suffer from partial or whole hearing loss'.

ENDS