



Dear Cllr Gerstner,

As May draws to a close, I wanted to send you a quick update on some important local issues affecting Fenland.

Community Hospitals Under Threat

There can be no doubt that Doddington Hospital and North Cambs Hospital are hugely valued by local residents. So when the Government announced its strategy to move more health services into community settings, it was very welcome news. However, new figures I have obtained show the opposite is actually happening.

In the last year alone, patient treatments at the North Cambs Hospital site have been cut by more than a fifth. Two years ago, over 70,000 patients were treated there. Last year that figure fell to below 55,000 — a 22% drop in just one year.

Similar cuts have taken place at Doddington Hospital, where services including audiology and urology have been stopped entirely. These reductions have happened without proper public consultation or transparency. When challenged, NHS managers have cited workforce pressures and the need to centralise services in larger hospitals. I have launched a survey to gather residents' views on how these sites are being used. If you haven't already completed it, please take a moment to do so here: stevebarclay.net/news/doddingtonhospital

I will continue to make the case for protecting local services.

Arthur Rank Hospice Funding Crisis

Another serious concern is the proposed cuts to our local Arthur Rank Hospice. One in six of their patients comes from Fenland, with more than 540 local people using their services in the last year alone.

The in-patient contract ended on 31 March 2026, and the Government's funding increase of just 2% falls well below inflation. This has left the hospice facing a £1.2 million shortfall this year.

These pressures put vital local services at risk, including the Alan Hudson Centre on the North Cambs site and the Hospice at Home service, which provides chemotherapy, blood transfusions, specialist nursing and counselling in people's own homes.

I will continue working across the community to highlight the importance of Arthur Rank Hospice and fight to protect these vital end-of-life services.

Neale-Wade Academy – Termination Warning Notice

The Department for Education has issued a Termination Warning Notice to the Active Learning Trust regarding Neale-Wade Academy. This month, I have written to the Regional Director, setting out my serious concerns.

This is the third successive Ofsted inspection that has rated the school as requiring significant improvement. GCSE English and Maths results remain very low (just 23.7% achieving Grade 5 or above), and well below national and local averages. Despite previous support and warnings, progress has not been good enough.

You can read my full letter here: stevebarclay.net/sites/www.stevebarclay.net/files/2026-05/SB%20letter%20to%20JD%20DfE.pdf

Greyhound Racing and its link to Fenland

I recently visited Kelli Windebank and her dedicated team in March, who look after 50 racing greyhounds and 14 retired dogs. It was a pleasure — particularly as a dog lover myself to see first-hand passion from the local staff and volunteers.

Kelli and her team of five local employees work tirelessly to ensure the welfare of these animals, and it is clear they are deeply committed to their wellbeing. Many people in Fenland will remember enjoyable nights at the old Fengate greyhound track before it closed, and it's great to see this sport still supported so well in our area.

While some groups continue to push for a ban on greyhound racing in England (following the ban in Wales last year), I believe it is important to support those who care deeply for the animals and the sport. Bans on traditional country sports often come from people who don't understand the strong welfare standards in place. I encourage you to visit their next open day and see the excellent work being done for yourself.

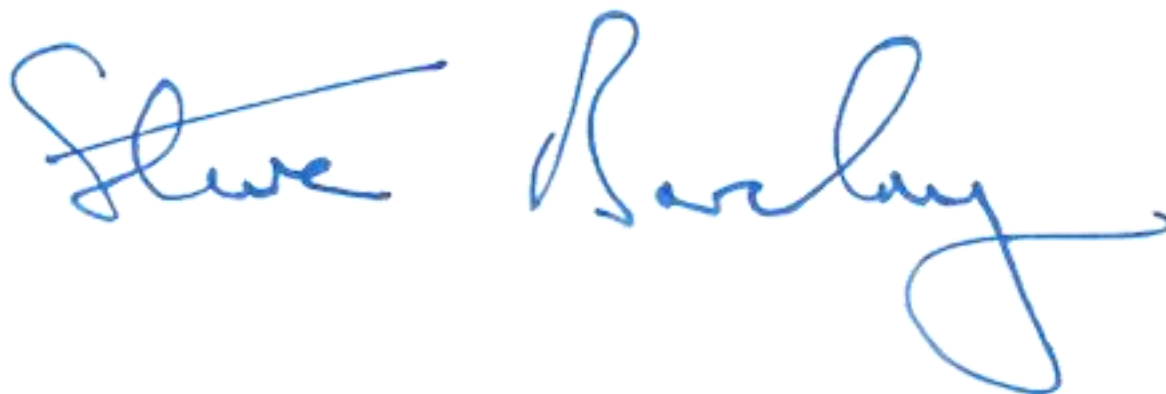
Read to Succeed – Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who has supported my annual Read to Succeed literacy campaign this year.

Thanks to generous local business backing, we have already raised over £8,500. This money helps provide a free book for every Year 4 child in Fenland to encourage reading over the summer holidays and greater use of our local libraries.

Thank you for taking the time to read this . I hope this update has been helpful and that you have a lovely summer ahead.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Barclay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

PS. Please feel free to forward this email or share it with friends and neighbours in Fenland. If you have been forwarded this, please do sign up at stevebarclay.net/newslettersubscribe

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