

# BOB RUSSELL



Bob Russell has been dubbed "The Voice of Colchester" because of his regular contributions in the House of Commons as well as on radio and television and in the newspapers. Here he joins presenters at SGR Colchester when he was a guest co-presenter one morning for the local radio station's breakfast programme.

Colchester United captain Karl Duguid and MP Bob Russell with the trophy presented to the U's when the football club won promotion to the Championship. Bob, a season-ticket holder, has been active in the campaign towards building a Community Stadium.



Millennium Volunteers proudly display their certificates which were presented by Bob Russell.

## BUSY MP

In addition to having the best voting attendance record of any Opposition MP in the country, Bob Russell also asks more Questions of Government Ministers (on a wide range of local, national and international issues) than the majority of MPs. Every month he writes nearly 1,000 letters either to constituents or on their behalf to Government departments and numerous public agencies. He usually works a 7-day, 80-hour week.



The official opening of the new Stanway School, replacing the one built 40 years ago, was marked with the ceremonial planting by Bob Russell of an oak tree - one of several trees he has grown from acorns and donated to schools.



Through his membership of the Home Affairs Select Committee, Bob Russell addresses a meeting of Parliamentarians from European Union countries held in Brussels. He spoke about the need for greater co-operation between the police forces of the 25 EU countries in tackling international crime, terrorism and illegal immigration.

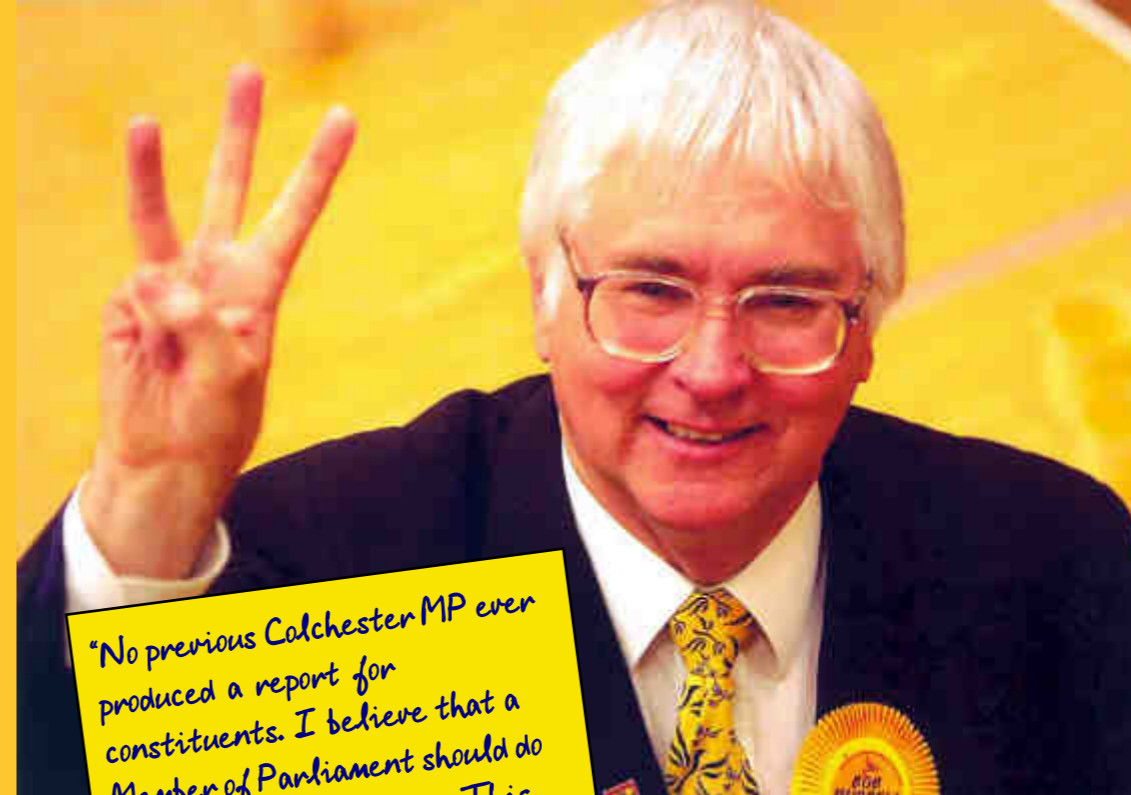
Colchester-based builders' merchants Kent Blaxill invited Bob Russell to officially open the company's enlarged trading premises in Layer Road.



A group of Iraqi politicians were welcomed to the House of Commons by Bob Russell.

MP Bob Russell's long memory saved Colchester Council Taxpayers £100,000. He recalled that former Highways Depot land (sold for housing) over which the County Council had laid a financial claim had in fact been bought 30 years ago by the Borough Council.

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*"No previous Colchester MP ever produced a report for constituents. I believe that a Member of Parliament should do so, I hope that you agree. This report covers the Parliamentary session following last year's General Election to this autumn."*  
Bob Russell

**Hat-trick! Bob Russell celebrates after being elected for the third time as Colchester's MP.**

## 1st IN COLCHESTER

Bob Russell was re-elected as MP for Colchester in last year's General Election - his majority increased yet again to 6,277, more than trebled from when he was first elected in 1997 - as residents showed their support for Bob's record of hard work representing the town and its people in Parliament. He polled 21,145 votes, pulling further ahead of the Tories with Labour continuing to lose support and once more coming third.

**Bob Russell**  
21,145 votes

Last year's General Election Result

**Con**  
14,868

**Lab**  
8,886

**MP for COLCHESTER**  
Reporting back to you

### TOP IN BRITAIN

Official figures published by the House of Commons Library confirm that Bob Russell has once again - for the ninth consecutive year! - registered the best voting attendance record of any Opposition MP in Britain. At 92 per cent, Liberal Democrat Mr Russell's attendance is not only better than the county's Labour MPs but also significantly higher than that achieved by Conservative MPs in Essex who averaged only 70 per cent. Mr Russell's performance is all the more remarkable because he spent time away from the House of Commons visiting troops in Iraq through his membership of the Armed Forces Bill Committee.

### LEADING BACKBENCHER

MPs from all political parties nominated Bob Russell for the coveted title of "Back Bencher of the Year" for 2005 in recognition of his performance in the House of Commons as a hard-working MP - in the chamber for questions and debates, membership of committees and service on all-party groups. The previous year he was nominated as "Parliamentary Environment Champion" in recognition of his involvement in environmental issues.

**Britain's hardest working constituency MP**

# Working for Colchester...

## Dear Resident,

First, my sincere thanks to all residents who voted for me in last year's General Election. To be elected for my home town is a great honour – to have topped the poll at three consecutive Elections, with an increased majority each time, is particularly gratifying. I like to think that this is a vote of confidence in my record of service.

Whether you voted for me or not, you have my assurance that I will at all times do my best for Colchester and its residents.

Life both at the House of Commons and in Colchester continues to be very busy, generally involving a seven-day, 80-hour week. The workload has not eased – it has increased! There is greater demand for appointments at my Advice Bureaux (one lasted seven hours) and the volume of correspondence grows all the time.

I had the honour to be the last MP to be called on the final day the Commons sat before the Summer Recess – and I took the opportunity to highlight the collapse of the proposed £167 million expansion of Colchester General Hospital.

I have followed this up with Parliamentary Questions and letters calling on the Government, and those responsible for the National Health Service, to ensure that our local health services have the necessary expansion. Improved medical facilities are clearly necessary in a growing town.

In addition to my normal busy diary of engagements at Westminster, during the past year I was a member of the Armed Forces Bill Committee which looked at the disciplinary procedures of the three Services and agreed changes which will harmonise these and make them more relevant for today's needs. Our investigation included visiting soldiers serving in Iraq.

A major cause of concern was the Government's proposals to abolish the Essex Police Force and merge it with the Police Forces in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. My membership of the Home Affairs Select Committee helped me take a prominent role in opposing the merger directly in the House of Commons – eventually common-sense prevailed, and the merger plans were dropped.

In line with my acknowledged commitment to "green" issues, I was fortunate to win time for a debate on the massive decline in wild flower meadows in the UK over the past 50 years – a loss of some 97 per cent. I called on the Government to encourage land owners, both private and public, to create new areas of wild flower meadows, something which I pioneered in Colchester when I was a Councillor.

I also had a debate calling for a better deal for retired Gurkha soldiers.

During the year I introduced a Bill which would enable residents to call a Referendum on a major issue being determined by their local council. Lack of Parliamentary time, however, meant that it did not make any progress – but I intend pursuing this. I believe residents should be allowed a say on controversial projects.

On the domestic front, my wife and I are looking forward to two important family events next year – our Ruby Wedding Anniversary in April, and in June the marriage of our daughter Nicola.

In conclusion, I am grateful to residents for once again giving me the opportunity to be their MP. I hope that from this Report, and through the media and my Party's local literature, people will agree that at all times I do my best for Colchester.

Best wishes.

**Bob Russell**



**Colchester is Britain's leading Garrison Town – Bob Russell takes a keen interest in Army matters both in Parliament and in Colchester. As a member of the Armed Forces Bill Committee he visited soldiers serving in Iraq – he is pictured here with a group he met in Basra. Bob Russell is a member of the Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Defence Team. He is a graduate of the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme, and is a Parliamentary Advisor to The Royal British Legion.**



**Proposals to widen the Avenue of Remembrance – which would have resulted in the loss of memorial trees as well as the greensward and the display of daffodils – were scrapped by Essex County Council after Bob Russell's opposition was overwhelmingly backed by residents.**

**Bob Russell was prominent in the successful campaign to persuade the Government to drop its controversial proposals to merge Essex Police with the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire police forces.**



**At one time it was feared that industrial fan manufacturers Flakt Woods would move to Poland, with the loss of around 400 jobs, but following the intervention of Bob Russell the company decided to stay in the town. In recognition of the MP's efforts, he was asked to officially open the new factory off Severalls Lane.**



**A survey by the "Essex Pensioner" magazine declared that Bob Russell has the best record of all the Essex MPs when it comes to representing pensioners' interests. Here he signs an Age Concern Parliamentary Petition at the House of Commons.**



**Bob Russell welcomed Gurkha veterans to London, and later had a debate in the House of Commons calling on the Government to give the former soldiers a better deal.**

## YOU CAN CONTACT BOB RUSSELL MP

- By writing to him at Magdalen Hall, Wimpole Road, Colchester CO1 2DE.
- By phone ( Colchester 506600.
- By e-mail to [brooksse@parliament.uk](mailto:brooksse@parliament.uk)

For a regular update on Bob Russell's work, visit his website at <http://www.bobrussell.org.uk>

In the course of the year Bob Russell welcomes many local groups and individuals to the Houses of Parliament, including those from schools and voluntary organisations. Contact Bob's office if you're interested.

**Another busy year – locally and nationally for Bob Russell Member of Parliament for Colchester**



# ... and on national issues.