

# TWO CITIES Life

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with the  
Cost of  
Living**

**SAVE OUR  
BUSES**

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**HAVE YOUR SAY  
ON POLICE PRIORITIES**

**NICKIE AIKEN MP**

**A STRONG LOCAL VOICE FOR THE TWO CITIES**

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## A MESSAGE FROM NICKIE



It is an honour to be your representative to Parliament and champion the area which I am immensely proud to call my home.

As your strong local voice in Parliament, I've taken on your priorities since day one. Supporting the most vulnerable in our society, tackling rising crime, giving our children the best start to life, speaking out against poor housing repairs, championing our businesses, and making the case throughout the pandemic and rising cost of living to give local people the support they need.

Please take the time to read this magazine and find out more about what we have all achieved by working together. From forcing the Mayor to abandon almost all of his planned bus cuts, winning the argument for our pedicabs licensing scheme and achieving a tourist accommodation registration scheme to name but a few.

But, there's more work to do to make our neighbourhoods even safer, greener and cleaner places to live.

If I can be of any help on any issue, please do not hesitate to get in touch. My contact details are below.

*Nickie Aiken*

Nickie Aiken MP  
 Cities of London & Westminster

## SECURING FURTHER POWERS FOR LEASEHOLDERS

Nickie was pleased to hear the Government's plan for leasehold reform in last year's Queen's Speech.

Anything that gives leaseholders a greater say over their property is welcomed. Government action already means leaseholders in new, qualifying long residential leasehold properties will be protected from excessive pricing.

The Government has

committed to make it easier and cheaper for leaseholders to extend their lease or buy their freehold as well as make it simpler and quicker to take control of the management of their building.

As legislation makes its way to Parliament, Nickie will make the case to give leaseholders a greater say over their property.



Nickie met with local people on the Vale Royal House estate and heard about their leasehold concerns

## STANDING UP FOR THE ENGLISH NATIONAL OPERA

Nickie was unimpressed by Arts Council England's decision to cut funding for the English National Opera and that they

told the ENO there would be no further funding if they remained in its historic home, the London Coliseum. Nickie met with the ENO, the Arts Council and Ministers to seek a solution.

She has floated her idea of a model based on the Royal Shakespeare Company. This sees the theatre company have a base in both Stratford-upon-Avon and the Barbican Centre,

City of London. It works well and allows audiences from London and the south-east to continue enjoying world-class theatre while supporting theatre-going and tourism outside the capital. Nickie believes replicating this model would allow the ENO to retain its home at the London Coliseum and serve other parts of the country. Discussions are continuing and Nickie has secured cross-party support for her idea.



Nickie championed the English National Opera in Parliament

Get in touch...

EMAIL [nickie.aiken.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:nickie.aiken.mp@parliament.uk)

WEBSITE [nickieaiken.org.uk](http://nickieaiken.org.uk)

PHONE 020 7139 5125

ADDRESS House of Commons, Westminster, SW1A 0AA

FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, TWITTER, YOUTUBE

@TwoCitiesNickie



SCAN ME

# ONLINE SAFETY ON ITS WAY

Throughout 2022, Nickie lobbied Ministers to persuade them to include online scams and fraudulent advertising into the Online Safety Bill. Internet fraud is the fastest growing crime in the UK and for too long, too many people have suffered the humiliation of losing money, sometimes their life savings.

Nickie campaigned to ensure online fraud is included as a priority harm in the Online Safety Bill, meaning that companies would have to take a proactive approach to taking down fraudulent content. Nickie secured the support of the Bill Committee, and the Government accepted her arguments to include an Online Fraud Amendment which will become law later this year.



## HELP WITH THE COST OF LIVING

So many people across the Two Cities have been in touch with Nickie, sharing their concerns about the rising cost of living for both households and businesses.

Nickie launched a **Cost of Living Help Hub**, putting in one place all the different ways Government, energy companies, organisations, businesses, and banks and building societies can help you. Help is out there. Visit [nickie.news/CostOfLiving](https://nickie.news/CostOfLiving)



Nickie joined forces with Westminster Citizens Advice Bureau for a joint surgery to bring information, advice, and practical help closer to you

to find out what support you may be eligible for. **No one should feel they are alone.** Please do seek help and advice, and if you have a question that's not covered in her Cost of Living Help Hub, please get in touch with Nickie. Contact details are on page 2.

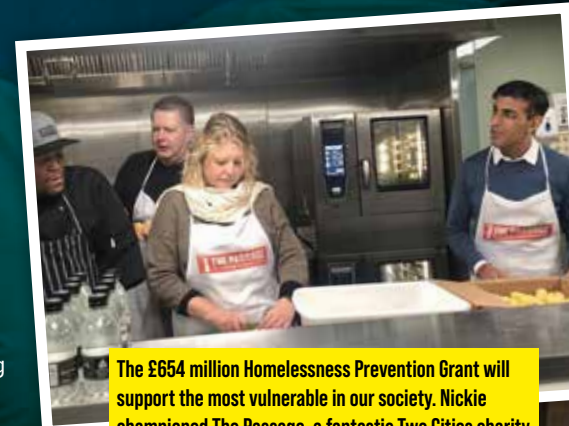
# SUCCESS IN OUR CAMPAIGN

## TO SUPPORT THE MOST VULNERABLE IN OUR SOCIETY

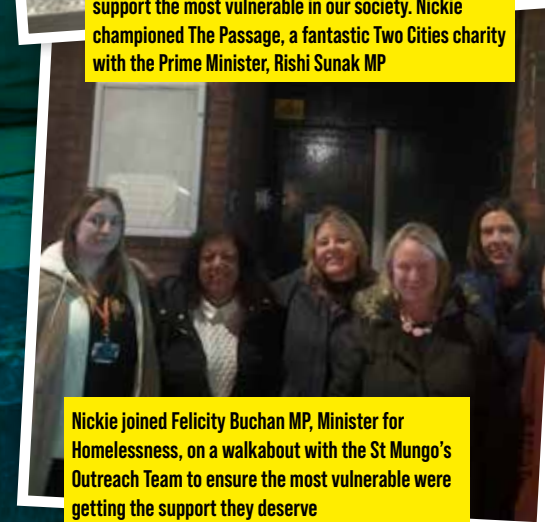
For more than a decade, Nickie has campaigned to improve services and support for rough sleepers. She has worked alongside Crisis, St Mungo's and The Passage to secure the repeal of the Vagrancy Act [1824], an antiquated piece of legislation which criminalised rather than supported rough sleepers.

Thanks to the campaign which Nickie led, the Government listened and in February 2022 repealed the Vagrancy Act. Repealing the Act will ensure rough sleepers are no longer criminalised.

Following the repeal of the Vagrancy Act, Nickie exclaimed, "Many of you will know that I have campaigned to have the Vagrancy Act repealed for years and particularly since I've been in Parliament. I am absolutely delighted and extremely proud of the work that I have done alongside Crisis, St Mungo's and The Passage and to have secured the support of my colleagues, including Robert Jenrick MP. This is a victory for common sense, and it means that rough sleepers will no longer be criminalised. It is about helping people turn their lives around. Thank you for all your support in helping secure the repeal of the Vagrancy Act."



The £654 million Homelessness Prevention Grant will support the most vulnerable in our society. Nickie championed The Passage, a fantastic Two Cities charity with the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak MP



Nickie joined Felicity Buchan MP, Minister for Homelessness, on a walkabout with the St Mungo's Outreach Team to ensure the most vulnerable were getting the support they deserve

Nickie also welcomes the Government's long-term commitment to support the most vulnerable in our society through the Homelessness Prevention Grant. The £654 million grant will ensure local authorities such as Westminster City Council and the City of London Corporation can provide the support and services people deserve.

## VICTORY IN OUR PEDICABS CAMPAIGN

After her long campaign, Nickie warmly welcomes the Government's commitment to a pedicab licensing scheme.

For too long, a minority of pedicab riders have caused nuisance on the roads, blared out their music and charged dodgy fares. **This will now stop under the new licensing scheme.**

Nickie is pleased that Westminster City Council is continuing with the joint police operations that she introduced some time ago to tackle pedicabs. These operations have taken scores of dangerous vehicles off our streets over the last five years but are no permanent answer. Nickie has met with the Secretary of State for Transport, Mark Harper MP, who reaffirmed his commitment to a pedicabs licensing

## Improving OUR AIR QUALITY

Over the past 12 months, Nickie has been working with local people to make the case to the Treasury to encourage more refurbishment of major buildings by either offering VAT relief for refurbishments or introducing VAT for rebuilds.

When a developer assesses a site for development, VAT adds significantly to their costs. The current system of zero-rating new builds therefore incentivises the demolition of existing buildings. But with the climate crisis, **Nickie believes it is time for the Government to**

**ensure the retention and redevelopment of all buildings comes in line with the green agenda.**

Nickie has discussed the issue with the Prime Minister and the Chancellor and will continue to make the case ahead of this year's Spring Budget.

Nickie met the Transport Secretary, Mark Harper MP, who reaffirmed his commitment to her pedicabs licensing scheme

scheme. **We need the scheme up and running as soon as possible** and Nickie is working with the Secretary of State to confirm the timetable.

If you haven't already backed Nickie's campaign, now is the time to make your voice heard. The more support the campaign has, the better. Visit [nickie.news/Pedicabs](https://nickie.news/Pedicabs)



SCAN ME



## ACTION ON ROGUE SHORT-LET LANDLORDS

Short-term, holiday style, lets allow homeowners to rent a property or room over one or two days. Over the course of a year, homeowners in London are allowed to let their property for up to 90 nights.

They can be a great way for tourists to visit our neighbourhoods, but Nickie repeatedly hears from local people about the misery out-of-control rogue short-let landlords cause, with some visitors creating anti-social behaviour, excessive noise and rubbish dumping, particularly where properties are rented out more than 90 nights a year.

Short-term lets also create immense problems for long-term, secure rental properties. Research shows across six of the largest online letting platforms, **by 2019 there were over 73,000 listings in London of short-term lets.** Equivalent to one in every 50 homes in the capital. **These are not new homes**, but homes that would have previously been rented out

on long-term leases for professionals and families to call home.

**Nickie has petitioned Parliament, lobbied Ministers, led the short-term lets debate in the House of Commons Chamber, and secured a UK-wide Government consultation on this important issue.** She is delighted that her campaign for a registration scheme to combat the unintended consequences of the exponential rise in short-term lets has been successful. The Government has agreed to include new legislation in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill to allow councils to establish a registration scheme if they want to.

Nickie added, "My campaign for a registration scheme, supported by the likes of Airbnb, will allow local authorities to know which properties are being short-let and allow them to take action as soon as problems occur."

Find out more and show your support at [nickie.news/ShortLets](https://nickie.news/ShortLets)



Presenting Nickie's petition for a short-term lets registration scheme at Downing Street



Nickie pushed the Minister for Tourism, Stuart Andrew MP, for a short-term lets registration scheme. She welcomes Government action to do just that



## Changing the way those going through fertility treatment are treated

Almost 3.5 million people in the UK are struggling to conceive naturally. Many turn to fertility treatment such as IVF. But currently, employees must take time off to attend medical appointments for early stages of IVF treatment.

Unlike employment legislation for pregnancy, maternity and paternity antenatal care, **there is no requirement for employers to give time off work for IVF treatment.**

Furthermore, most workplace protection policies exclude “elective” medical processes, placing fertility treatment in the same category as cosmetic surgery.

**Nickie has embarked on a campaign to raise awareness of fertility treatment and to support those going through it. She launched the Fertility Workplace Pledge**, working with organisations like Fertility Matters at Work, Burgess

Mee Family Law, and Fertility Network UK. Already, the campaign has gained the support of major national companies like NatWest, the Co-op, Channel 4, and Zurich Insurance UK. Nickie has also tabled legislation through a Private Members’ Bill which would give those going through IVF treatment the right to paid leave for medical appointments.

Nickie explained, “It’s 2023, not 1923, but employees going through fertility treatment still need permission to take time off for medical appointments during the early stages of fertility treatment. After

hearing from Ann, a Two Cities resident, I was shocked that she was forced to give up her career because she was going through IVF treatment. She left the job she loved, and had 19 years’ experience in.

Nickie added, “Ann is not alone. Too many individuals and couples feel they need to choose between IVF treatment and a career. This should not be the case. The Fertility Workplace Pledge and my Bill seeks to raise awareness and create a conversation around how people going through fertility treatment are treated.”

Find out more about Nickie’s campaign at [nickie.news/IVF](https://nickie.news/IVF)



## Who are your **TWO CITIES HEROES?**

Across the Two Cities, Nickie knows there are community heroes making a difference to the lives of local people.

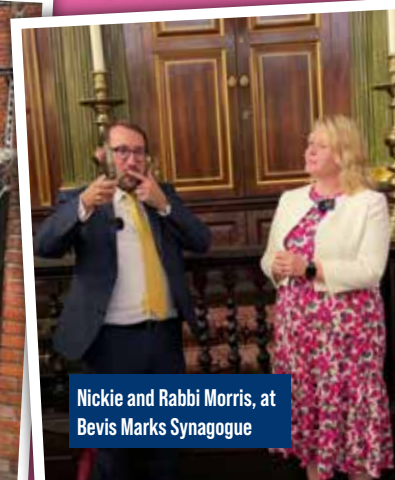
They are at the heart and soul of our neighbourhoods. They go the extra mile to improve the lives of others. Nickie is looking for your Two Cities Heroes so she can say a huge THANK YOU!

Do you know someone who has gone above and beyond locally? They may run a local club for young people or look out for older people; they may run a small charity supporting their neighbours or strangers. Nickie has already said thank you to local heroes Jane Buttigieg, John Fletcher, Jeremy Goring, Bevis Marks Synagogue and Lady Christabel Flight.

Tell Nickie who your hero is and read their stories at [nickie.news/TwoCitiesHeroes](https://nickie.news/TwoCitiesHeroes)



Nickie caught up Jane Buttigieg, a Pimlico legend



Nickie and Rabbi Morris, at Bevis Marks Synagogue

# ENSURING YOUR SAY IN THE LICENSING AND PLANNING PROCESS

Since arriving in Parliament, Nickie has lobbied Ministers to give local people a greater say in the licensing and planning process. On issues like al fresco dining, it's clear that a one-size-fits-all approach does not work, and local authorities such as Westminster City Council and the City of London Corporation must be able to give individual neighbourhoods their say.

It's this view, giving local people a greater say, that Nickie is working with Government to reflect within legislation, especially as the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, which lays out the Government's reforms to the planning and licensing system, makes its way through Parliament.

Nickie commented, "As your local MP since 2019, and in my 16 years as a Councillor, I have only ever met people who are passionate about their neighbourhoods.

You know what works best and I will reflect that approach in this important legislation."

Nickie is also continuing to lobby the Government over Section 618 of the Housing Act following discussions with the Barbican Association and City of London Corporation. The clause bars City of London Councillors from speaking or voting on issues that affect the areas they represent if they rent a home from the Court of the Common Council, part of the Corporation of London. Nickie believes that this antiquated law puts City of London residents at a disadvantage compared to residents in any other local authority and is working very closely with the City of London Corporation to effect change.



Nickie listening to local people about the issues that matter most

# LISTENING TO YOU ON LONDON WALL WEST

The City of London's proposals to knock down and redevelop the former home of the Museum of London and Bastion House into office blocks are causing huge concern for many in the Barbican. Nickie is working with the Barbican Association and Barbican Action Quarter to ensure local voices are heard and genuinely listened to.

Twentieth Century Society has now submitted an application to list the building, but following Nickie's meeting with the Barbican Association she wrote to the City of London's Policy Chairman, Chris Hayward, asking him to rethink the

plans. Nickie also spoke to the Policy Chairman and the Mayor of London directly on the proposals and is pushing for consideration to be given to changing the development from commercial property to accommodation and community provision. Nickie's proposal would also include affordable housing, ensuring local people can continue to live in the place they grew up in.

Nickie caught up with Adam Hogg, Barbican Association Chairman, and heard why the proposed development is causing huge concern for so many local people



# SAVE OUR BUSES

After the Mayor of London and Transport for London launched their plan to cut 22 bus routes across central London, and change many more, Nickie spoke out and launched her petition to Save Our Buses.

Thanks to your support, Nickie and neighbouring MPs Greg Hands and Felicity Buchan, as well as London Assembly Member, Tony Devenish, secured over 10,000 signatures backing the campaign, forcing the Mayor to abandon almost all his planned cuts.

But, the Mayor is ploughing ahead with plans to cut route 211, Westminster's hospital bus route, with the route no longer serving Westminster; and with changes to route 11, which currently connects Westminster to the City of London.

Sign Nickie's new petition to Save Our Buses at [nickie.news/SaveOurBuses](https://nickie.news/SaveOurBuses)



Nickie commented, "Thank you to everyone who signed my petition to Save Our Buses. The Mayor's plan would cut so many of our pivotal bus routes. He has already received over £6 billion of Government support throughout the pandemic, but he needs to get a grip on Transport for London's spiralling costs. So many of us rely on the buses, but the Mayor's taking his poor planning out on our buses.

The Mayor's plan will rip through our neighbourhoods and break up the seamless journeys we enjoy now to our local hospitals and the City of London. We cannot allow this to happen."



SCAN ME



# LISTENING TO YOU *Out and About*

**Nickie is always out and about across the Two Cities, listening to what local people have to say and hearing about the issues that matter to them.**

From a Q&A session in Portsoken, City of London, leading the campaign to Save Our Buses from the Mayor of London's appalling cuts, speaking out in Parliament on your behalf, or backing our Two Cities businesses, Nickie is continuing to champion the Cities of London & Westminster, and be your strong local voice to Government.

Follow Nickie on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube [@TwoCitiesNickie](#) or visit her website [nickieaiken.org.uk](http://nickieaiken.org.uk) to see how she is working for you.

If you have a local, national or international issue you think Nickie can help with, please get in touch by emailing [nickie.aiken.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:nickie.aiken.mp@parliament.uk)



**Out in the Hyde Park Estate**



**Backing our fantastic businesses**



**Christmas cheer at The Abbey Centre**



**With the outstanding children at St Matthew's Primary School**

## RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE

**Russia's abhorrent attacks on Ukrainian schools, hospitals, homes, and places of refuge continue to send shockwaves around the world.**

Government action so far to aid the Ukrainian resistance and cripple Putin's economy has seen unprecedented sanctions on individuals and organisations aiding Putin's invasion, especially the Economic Crimes Act which will take the mask off companies hiding behind secretive chains of shell companies.

The UK stands with the people of Ukraine, and

Nickie pays tribute to everyone who has opened their home and offered refuge to a Ukrainian.

Nickie also works with the Ukrainian Welcome Centre based at the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral in Mayfair. The team offer a one-stop shop for guidance and advice to ensure everyone has the information they need on life in the UK.

The volunteers are also there to listen to anyone and hear their stories of the devastating impact of war.



**The Ukrainian Welcome Centre is your single point of contact for all essential information for arrival, settling and long-term living in the UK**

Find out more at [nickie.news/UWC](http://nickie.news/UWC)

As more and more reports come out from Ukraine about the appalling use of sexual violence being used as a weapon on war, Nickie has continued to speak out with the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative to ensure perpetrators are held to account. Find out more about Nickie's work on this important initiative at [nickie.news/PSVI](http://nickie.news/PSVI)

## Standing with the people of Afghanistan

**When the Taliban took over Afghanistan, the Government continued its immense evacuation of both British and Afghan nationals to ensure as many people got to safety as possible.**

So far, more than 21,000 Afghan nationals have been resettled in the UK. Nickie met with a number of those living in our

neighbourhoods to ensure their voices were heard by the Government and is working to secure permanent homes.

Nickie took their views directly to the then Minister for Afghan Resettlement, Victoria Atkins MP, and Nickie is pleased that many have now been able to put down roots and start building their future.

# WOMEN'S HEALTH STRATEGY:

## UPDATE



Since arriving in Parliament, Nickie has spoken out to break the taboo on women's health issues, ensuring women get the healthcare they deserve.

Nickie has lobbied Ministers, spoken out in Parliament, listened to our incredible doctors and nurses - including at the maternity ward in St. Mary's Hospital - and joined the Menopause Revolution, the campaign to change the way we think and feel about menopause.

The Government has now launched its Women's Health Strategy. Find out what it means for you at [nickie.news/WHS](http://nickie.news/WHS)

EVERY WOMAN GOES THROUGH THE MENOPAUSE. IT USUALLY OCCURS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 45 & 55

### MENOPAUSE

DO YOU HAVE ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS?

- HOT FLASHES
- HEADACHES
- MOOD SWINGS
- PALPITATIONS
- TENDRILS
- HAIR LOSS

YOU MAY ALSO EXPERIENCE:

#KnowYourMenopause. Everyone, men included, has a role to ensure their partners, mums, sisters, friends and colleagues are supported at the life-changing moment of the menopause

# SAVING WESTMINSTER'S HISTORIC GAS LAMPS

Nickie welcomes Westminister City Council's decision not to push ahead with its plan to replace the majority of Westminister's gas lamps.

Nickie is proud to have worked with local people, councillors and The London Gasketeers to secure this announcement.

Commenting on the victory, Nickie exclaimed, "I am pleased the Council listened to the genuine concerns which many people had. This is a major victory for all those who treasure Westminister's heritage. Thank you to everyone who got in touch, raised their concerns, and had their say."

The gas lamps are a part of our heritage and are loved by so many people across Westminister.

# HAVE YOU BEEN AFFECTED BY DOCKLESS BIKES?

Dockless rental bikes from companies like Lime, Tier and Dott have popped up across the Two Cities. They can be a fantastic way to move around our neighbourhoods, offering a clean and green alternative to the car and other modes of transport.

For a number of local people, however, they experience these rental bikes parked on the pavement, blocking or obstructing the way forward. This type of parking not only affects every pedestrian but has a huge impact on the way mobility and wheelchair



Nickie makes the case with Dott to encourage good practice of bike parking

users, people with pushchairs, and blind or partially sighted members of our community can get around.

# Enough is enough.

## WE ALL NEED TO WORK TOGETHER TO PARK THEM SAFELY AND SENSIBLY.

Nickie has met with Dott, Lime and Tier, to urge them to reward good practice but come down hard on users who persistently park their bikes poorly.

She believes the penalties these companies hand out for bad behaviour should also be increased and is lobbying Westminister City Council, calling for them to work with the providers to find kerbside parking to stop them being left randomly on pavements. If you have any examples, please do email Nickie at [nickie.aiken.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:nickie.aiken.mp@parliament.uk)





# TELL NICKIE YOUR VIEWS ON POLICING AND CRIME

Nickie wants to hear from you about your policing and crime priorities to make the Two Cities a safer place to live. Respond to her survey at [nickie.news/SaferStreets](http://nickie.news/SaferStreets)

Nickie is increasingly hearing from local people with concerns over growing incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour in neighbourhoods across the Two Cities. She has led meetings with the Westminster Borough Commander, Owain Richards, and representatives from residents' associations to discuss the situation and urge for a larger police presence.

On a walkabout in the West End, Nickie also brought Chief Superintendent Richards along to show him several crime hotspots and the need to see more officers on the street, night and day.

The Government has recruited an additional **3,109 more officers to the Metropolitan Police** since September 2019, but the Mayor of London, who is in charge of our police, needs to put them on our streets!

The **City of London Police force** has also been uplifted by an **additional 161 officers** since September 2019, and in November, Nickie brought Commissioner Angela McLaren to Golden Lane following a number of concerns raised by local people and the Golden Lane Estate Residents' Association about anti-social behaviour on the estate.

Nickie will continue to lobby the police as well as the Deputy Mayor for Policing to ensure we see a zero tolerance towards all anti-social behaviour and crime. Please share your views on policing and crime with Nickie by responding to her survey at [nickie.news/SaferStreets](http://nickie.news/SaferStreets)



**VISIT [NICKIEAIKEN.ORG.UK](http://NICKIEAIKEN.ORG.UK)  
TO SIGN UP TO MY COMMUNITY E-NEWSLETTER**