

My Lord and Chancellor

Dame Annette Brooke has served Poole and the surrounding area for nearly 30 years, firstly at Poole Borough Council and then as the Liberal Democrat member of Parliament for Mid Dorset and North Poole. At 17 Annette's ambition was to be Chancellor of the Exchequer, and she studied economics at the London School of Economics. The ambition to sit on the benches of Parliament stayed with her until she was elected in 2001 at the age of 54. Annette has stated that achieving that dream was incredible.

Dame Annette spent 20 years as an economics teacher, 17 years as a Poole Councillor, and then 14 years as an MP. A former Mayor of Poole, Dame Annette successfully oversaw Poole's transition into a unitary authority. She notes that her early career and life experience before joining the Council and Parliament was vital in helping her to fight for the rights of her constituents.

Dame Annette retired as an MP in 2015. During her time at the House of Commons she was lauded as an authentic MP, one who successfully lobbied on behalf of young victims of human trafficking; for the rights of disabled children and disadvantaged youngsters. Her responsibilities included Serious Case Reviews into child welfare; these were harrowing cases which she argued should be made public.

Her lobbying on equal access for disabled children contributed to the final Harry Potter book being released in braille on the same day as the print version, to the joy of visually impaired children around the UK.

In Parliament, Dame Annette worked particularly closely with Save the Children, UNICEF and the NSPCC. Her charitable and parliamentary work has won her many awards and accolades including an OBE in 2013, and she was elevated to Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 2015. She also received the Women in Public Life Award, MP of the Year 2010 and most recently, she became a Privy Councillor in 2014. She notes that being first in line to meet the Queen was incredibly nerve-wracking.

Dame Annette remains committed to supporting the local area and community, and her astute questions in parliament mean that her legacy will continue far beyond the end of her term as an MP.

My Lord and Chancellor, I have the honour to present Dame Annette Brooke, and I ask you to confer upon her the degree of Doctor of Education, *honoris causa*.