

Ukraine at the fore as Dame Diana Johnson addresses Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce

Hull North MP Dame Diana Johnson described Russian President Vladimir Putin as a “mass murdering dictator” as she told business leaders how the region stood in solidarity with Ukraine.

The prominent Labour figure sits on the National Security Strategy Joint Committee and chairs the Home Affairs Committee, and was back in the constituency to address Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce.

She said: “I cannot ignore the bear in the corner of the room. We meet today at a time when we face the biggest threat to world peace for 70 years.

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“The independence of a sovereign democratic nation and the freedom of its people are being threatened by the gangster actions of a mass-murdering dictator.

“Hull’s MPs are aware of our city’s long-standing associations with the cause of liberty and the sacrifices this city had made in standing up and beating the Nazis in the Second World War.



Dame Diana Johnson speaks to business leaders as Hull city centre buildings light up in support of Ukraine.

“I want to be very clear, Hull’s MPs stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and I also know that the Chamber members across the Humber will want to play their part in the humanitarian response to the Ukrainian people in the weeks and months to come.”

A guest at the dinner following the annual meeting that saw Mike Whitehead emerge as president, after Phil Jones’ two-year stint, he had earlier underlined the position in the formal element of the meeting at the MKM Stadium.

Former NHS manager turned property developer Mr Whitehead, seconds after being elected president of Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce, told how he was taking over from the “Zoom President” who didn’t want to be known as the “Pandemic President,” adding: “I hope I’m not the Nuclear War President. I think it is appropriate to say we as a Chamber stand with

Ukraine.”

It came as civic, business and community figures mobilise to support the effort, with action ranging from collections in town and city centres to a huge £280,000 donation to the Disasters Emergency Committee Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal from Drax Group at the region’s western gateway.

Hull City Council has partnered with Hull 4 Ukraine, set up by Magda Moses in the immediate aftermath of the invasion and Hull 4 Heroes, the veterans charity that will provide logistical support.

Chamber members were also presented with the latest guidance on Ukraine from the British Chambers of Commerce.

Claire Walker and Hannah Essex, co-executive directors at the parent organisation, said: “The invasion by Russia of Ukraine is an appalling act of aggression with terrible loss of life and displacement of potentially the largest number of people in Europe since World War Two. We understand that people across the Chamber network and member companies will be sickened and upset by the consequences being witnessed each day.”

Advising how the situation for businesses operating in or with clients and customers in Russia and Belarus is moving quickly, they underlined how airspace is closed to Russian flights, with major shipping lines not sailing to or from Russia and Russia-linked ships banned from UK ports.

They said: “While it remains a moral and commercial decision for UK companies on what actions to take under any contracts with Russian or Belarussian customers or suppliers covering goods and services not under sanctions, it will become more difficult for any trade to be conducted. We are pressing the UK government to produce guidance to UK businesses in terms of the war in Ukraine.”

Force majeure clauses are being explored.

BCC is also working with the British Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce to explore support opportunities.

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