

Badenoch: Journalism Is Important And My Party Will Always Defend It

By Leader of the Opposition Kemi Badenoch MP

Good journalism is critical to a functioning democracy. Without it so many scandals, blunders and miscarriages of justice would never have been revealed...and fixed.

As a politician, I recognise the importance of the media in keeping us all honest.

Before politics, I worked for a weekly magazine (albeit on their website – I am an engineer after all, not a journalist!).

This means I have seen close up the pressures, the dedication and the efforts journalists go to in their pursuit of the truth. And why I will always speak up for good journalism.

Right now, good journalism is in peril. People have got used to reading stories for free on the internet, and free doesn't pay for the sort of investigations and editorial that keeps our state in check.

Meanwhile Labour's proposals on AI would allow companies to scrape online content without creators getting paid.

Where Labour have got too bogged down defending AI, the Conservatives have brought forward serious proposals that would help bring transparency to AI companies' use of content, and help creators enforce their rights.

It is critical that we all support good journalism by paying for it when we can.

Especially when it comes to local journalism. Local news still reaches big audiences, and local papers and radio stations have led on some hugely important campaigns, as well as providing ongoing coverage of the impact of scandals and life-changing events, long after the national press have moved on.

As the government pursues its plan of devolving power away from Westminster, local journalism will be even more critical in providing robust scrutiny on behalf of the public.

Which is why we should all be concerned when local administrations, such as the Reform-led Nottinghamshire Council, seek to restrict access to their local newspaper.

The Conservative Party are tougher than that. We have a serious team, working on real plans to improve our country, and the backbone to take the criticism when we deserve it, and the experience to come back stronger and learn from it. Journalism is important and my party will always defend it.