

I've consciously tried to keep my columns focused on local issues rather than on my new ministerial portfolio but last week someone sent me an email saying they were disappointed that I hadn't used my column to say what the new job is like! I guess having used previous columns to talk about parliamentary process some readers are keen to know what challenges and opportunities being a minister brings.

The first thing to explain is that the new job isn't just sport. It also includes tourism, heritage, gambling, World War 1 commemorations, Royal Parks, Lottery, archaeology, appointments and honours and ceremonial issues like flags and major state events. It is a really interesting brief which isn't as odd as it first looks when you think how interconnected some parts are, such as the sport, tourism and heritage aspects. If there is a major sporting event that can help attract tourists which in turn showcases are great heritage.

While my first ministerial event was here in Kent on tourism, which this week was named as the best place for a family holiday, the main publicity has obviously come from sport. Naturally the resignation of Sepp Blatter and the whole ongoing crisis at FIFA caused much excitement among the press, and rightly so. He has presided over allegations of corruption which has dragged the reputation of the game that I and many others love into the mud.

So the portfolio is wide and varied and incredibly interesting plus I am really excited to be given the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of fellow Kent MPs Helen and Hugh. I am still doing an incredible amount of reading to get to grips with the full brief but having now done my first questions from the Commons frontbench (a petrifying experience), speech and Westminster Hall debate it is at least a little bit more normal, for now!