

The people were asked and they have answered. Locally and nationally people voted to leave the European Union and change the future direction of this country. Here in Tonbridge & Malling 80% of voters turned out to cast their ballot with 55% of people choosing to leave, a lot lower than the 65% of voters at the Medway end of my constituency but a majority nonetheless.

I have said it before and I will say it again, both campaigns were appalling. Residents I have spoken to both before and after the election feel the same. Those without pre-determined views on the issue of the EU feel that they never got the truth and whenever someone spouted a “fact” it was immediately claimed as scaremongering or la-la by the other side. It turns out some of the commitments were not true and some of the lies were indeed truths. No wonder no-one has faith in the wider political industry.

But now the result is in, family and friends split by their intentions are reunited and so must we as a nation. Whether we like the result or not it is what it is and we have to get on and make it work for us. I, as your elected politician, now have a duty to ensure that the negotiations reflect the needs of individuals, families, businesses, employers and employees within my constituency. As a minister I need to make sure that our tourism and sport sectors have their needs met and that we as holidaymakers and spectators face the challenges of Brexit and turn them into opportunities.

Democracy is a powerful thing. The outcome of our democratic process shook the markets across the world, and the political establishment here in the UK. We need a period of calm so we can turn concerns into positivity and get a deal that works for us at a local and national level.