

It is wonderful to be back and writing a weekly column for the KM after our election break. I am so grateful to all those who supported me during the campaign and to those who may not have voted for me but still wished me well. It really is an honour to be back representing you in Westminster. I promised to remain a strong voice for residents, and will be despite my rather surprising promotion!

Locally excellent councillors were elected, enabling me to work in partnership across every ward to ensure that our communities are defended, protected or improved where necessary. It is exciting that we now have 4 to 5 years (depending on which level of government) to deal with issues across the borough.

There are a lot of challenges ahead locally. Traffic continues to be a major concern for people in Malling with our roads suffering on a regular basis, either as a consequence of too much traffic or road works, causing major delays and congestion. In addition the issue of parking is one that cropped up in every area I canvassed. Sometimes it related to inconsiderate pavement parking, an issue I was heavily involved with legislatively in the last Parliament, or simply lack of availability due to houses being built a decade ago with inadequate spaces per house.

With major developments currently happening or in the pipeline these issues are unlikely to go away. It is important that while recognising we require additional housing, particularly affordable housing for first time buyers, these infrastructure challenges need to be discussed and dealt with sympathetically going forward.

So welcome back to my column and I look forward to writing on a variety of issues, political, parliamentary or personal. But most of all I promise not to be boring!