

It is sad to have to write a column on last week's events in Westminster but at the same time it would have felt wrong not to. Despite business in Westminster continuing as usual, there is a sense of the tragedy resonating throughout the building. As MPs and the other 15000 pass holders stream in through the various gates into this historic building there is an immense sadness deep in the eyes of those who keep us safe. Because while business does go on and we fill our days working on the issues that matter to our constituents or delivering Government business of the day, on the way in and on the way out you can see the rows of flowers and messages pinned to the railings left to remember those who lost their lives last Wednesday and pay respects to the families who are now bereft of a loved one.

It goes to show that beyond the frustrations and animosity of many towards politicians, individually or collectively, most value our democracy and the freedoms that comes with it. The police who stand guard in the shadow of the imposing 19th century gothic building which I call my office and is a central feature of world heritage, do so in defence of all that it stands for. PC Keith Palmer paid the ultimate sacrifice last Wednesday doing so. He was doing his duty allowing MPs to do theirs.

I think of his family torn apart and I have been struck by the outpouring of support from constituents towards PC Palmer, including the cheque from a pensioner who wants to contribute to the fund in his memory but doesn't have a computer. The families mourn and my heart goes to them like I could never imagine and while kindness and defiance won't fill the massive gap left behind it will always win over the fear that the evil of terrorism tries to bring.