

Marie Goldman



POINTS OF VIEW

MP for Chelmsford

More substance and less theatrics and tradition needed in Parliament

WESTMINSTER gets all the TV coverage, all the gossip and all the glory, but really, what matters most to voters is what happens in their own constituency.

What we see on the TV of what happens in the House of Commons and the House of Lords can make for interesting watching.

I think it's important for constituents to see their own MP standing up in Parliament talking about the place that they represent and speaking up for the issues that matter most to residents. But at the end of the day, if little they say or do translates into making a difference, you have to wonder what the point is.

You might think that's a bit of a strange way to start this week's column, but I'm struck by how much of Westminster in my (admittedly limited) experience so far is really about theatrics and tradition rather than substance.

I know it's part of the spectacle and it really is an honour to be elected to be part of it, but I can't help wondering when the real business will start and how much more could be done if we slimmed the traditional down a bit and focused more on the pressing needs of the British public.

And there are lots of pressing needs. Since July 4, my inboxes have been inundated with emails. To be clear, this hasn't been a case of messages trickling in, but more flash flood territory. I'm not complaining, merely stating a fact.

I'll admit it's been hard to keep on top of them and my response time is not (yet) anywhere near where I would like it to be. That should change soon as I recruit staff and get my office set up. By September, when Parliament resumes after the summer recess, I hope it will all be in much better shape. But for now, please do bear with me.

Email subjects have been varied, but broadly fall into three categories.

The first is fairly obvious: casework. People who need help with one issue or another. By far the largest single, urgent issue is housing and the threat of homelessness. I wish I could do more to help with



Chelmsford MP Marie Goldman attending the 'Be Their Lead' celebration in Central Park, Chelmsford
MARIE GOLDMAN MP

this, but the bottom line is that unless we start building more homes across the whole country - and quickly - we won't be able to house everyone.

In Chelmsford right now there are more than 470 households living in temporary accommodation, waiting to be permanently housed. And that

doesn't include the hundreds more who are already in permanent accommodation that isn't suitable, often because of overcrowding or disabilities. That's why my party campaigned to build more houses (but with the infrastructure that must go with them) and why I'm pleased to see the Labour government bringing back housing targets to ensure that every area plays their part in this.

But it isn't just about building homes - we need to build communities too. And that includes GP surgeries (with the GPs to go in them), schools (with well-paid teachers and proper resources), and proper

sustainable transport to link it all up. And we absolutely must properly fund local government so that it can deliver the on-the-ground services that residents rely on. I'll be writing to Angela Rayner to stress the importance of this and how it affects Chelmsford.

The second category of email that I've been receiving is what I would describe as lobbying, mainly in the form of templated emails. These come in fits and starts. In the early days of the General Election campaign, I was frequently receiving identical emails from residents who had signed up to a website campaign to speak up for cats, which then sent an email to their local candidates.

Speaking as someone who is on the receiving end of these, I don't find them particularly helpful. Sure, they give politicians an idea about whether an issue is important to constituents and is capturing their imagination, but as they are so short-lived, their impact is limited.

If you feel strongly about a particular issue, in my opinion, it would make more of an impression to write personally to your MP on the subject - and for maximum impact, save it

for a time when there is less going on so that it doesn't get buried in the avalanche sitting in your MP's inbox at busy times of the year.

Thirdly, I have received so many messages of congratulations, I'm genuinely amazed. Thank you so much - I have tried to respond to them all, even if just to say a very quick thank you, but please know that I am grateful for your support and will do my best to live up to your expectations.

Several people have been in touch asking about constituency surgeries. As I don't (yet) have an office or staff (I'm working on both), I'm not holding any in-person advice surgeries. But I'm happy to do ad hoc online meetings for urgent issues, so please just send an email with your name, address and a brief summary of the issue you want to discuss to marie.goldman.mp@parliament.uk and I'll try to find a mutually convenient time for us to chat.

Finally, I try to post regularly on social media about what I've been up to. Please do follow me there using the links below.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MarieGoldmanLD
X/Twitter: x.com/mariecgoldman

I also send out regular email newsletters, which you can sign up to here: www.cmltd.org.uk

One of the first events I have attended as the MP for Chelmsford was last week in Central Park where I spoke at the 'Be Their Lead' celebration in Central Park.

This was the culmination of some fabulous work by young women from The Boswells School who had designed some enhancements they want to see especially for girls in the park, ideas that will soon become reality so do watch out for them.

I was lucky enough to attend a presentation from the girls earlier this year when they presented at Chelmsford City Council.

Such a great way to take early steps into politics - making a positive difference for their community and putting forward their own ideas to make our city an even better place to live. So nice to be able to take part in this event.

Westminster gets all the glamour and the coverage, but these sorts of events and projects are where ideas get put into practice and so much real change is made. Great to see.

Keep well and thanks for reading.
Marie

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