

Marie Goldman



MP for Chelmsford

POINTS OF VIEW

We need to put an end to slippery shoulders of construction industry

PARLIAMENT is now in recess so that the political parties can hold their conferences. Last weekend was the Liberal Democrats' conference in Brighton and next up is Labour in Liverpool.

Parliament resumes on October 7, which means MPs now have a couple of weeks or so to spend in their constituencies and deal with other business that isn't reliant on Parliament being in session.

But the week before we broke up was very busy. On Monday September 9, I attended the opening remarks of the Lampard Inquiry into mental health inpatient deaths in Essex.

This is an important statutory inquiry that is likely to be ongoing for at least two years and has already been hearing heartbreaking stories about loved ones lost when they should have been safe in the care of our mental health system.

Tragically, that wasn't the case and it's the role of the inquiry to work out exactly what went wrong and, far more importantly, to make sure things change so that it never happens again.

On Wednesday, September 11, I was privileged to be given the Liberal Democrat spokesperson slot in the general debate on building safety and resilience in the House of Commons.

This was the first proper debate in the chamber on this subject following the release of the second and final report from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, dealing with the awful tragedy of 2017 that saw 72 people lose their lives in a fire that engulfed a tower block in west London.

The report makes for stark reading and ultimately concludes, devastatingly, that all of the deaths were avoidable.

As I said in my speech, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to the survivors of the tragedy as well as the families and loved ones of the victims for the bravery they showed in providing evidence to in the inquiry.

Just as for the Lampard Inquiry, the legacy of the Grenfell fire must surely lie in the lessons we learn from it to ensure that nothing like this can ever happen again.



Marie Goldman MP was Liberal Democrat spokesperson in the general debate on building safety and resilience in the House of Commons

Unfortunately, we know that isn't yet happening.

A lot of the discussion about Grenfell understandably centres around the combustible cladding that ignited and essentially turned the tower into a raging inferno, but I was

very keen in my speech to draw attention to the other fire safety issues

that not only exist in buildings that precede Grenfell, but also in buildings that were constructed post-Grenfell, just in the last few years.

We have several of those in Chelmsford and, I'm very sad to say, some of them are affected by fire safety issues.

A key issue concerns entrance doors to flats. These are supposed to be fire doors that conform to a spe-

cific standard, but I know of several examples in Chelmsford where this isn't the case, having either been incorrectly specified or poorly installed in the first instance, and they need to be replaced.

I think this should be the responsibility of the building owners - i.e. the developers and their management agents.

It's sadly of no surprise that instead, leaseholders are being asked to foot the bill, potentially leaving them thousands of pounds out of pocket for an issue that should never have existed.

As I said in my speech, we need to put an end to the slippery shoulders of the construction industry who need to take the financial burden for sloppy workmanship and a very poor attitude to building safety.

You can watch my contribution to the building safety debate on Parliament TV, starting at about 2.56pm.

MPs have meetings with lots of different organisations - some short,

some considerably longer - listening to their concerns and the issues they need help with.

Among other organisations, I have recently met with the WASPI women seeking compensation for the pension age increase, the Scouts, the BMA and the NHS.

I also attended the first meeting of the Modernisation Committee, which is looking at modernising the rules, procedures and working practices of the House of Commons.

I'm very pleased to be able to confirm that I am now a member of this committee, which is made up of 14 MPs, including my Liberal Democrat colleague, Wendy Chamberlain MP.

I look forward to detailed discussions about improving and making more efficient the operations of the House of Commons, bringing it more in line with what I believe the public expects and what I think you would be shocked to see. More on this at a later date.

Finally, one of the lovely events that I had the joy of attending was the BBC Essex Make a Difference Awards, celebrating amazing and wonderful work that people from all walks of life are doing across Essex to contribute to their community and to help other people, as well as for acts of bravery and outstanding contributions.

A huge congratulations to all of those who were nominated for an award and especially those who made it through to the final, which included Chelmsford constituents.

It was such a heartwarming event, if occasionally tear-jerking.

Well done to BBC Essex for hosting it.

I know that local radio has been hit by huge cuts in recent times but this is exactly the sort of thing that brings the community together.

I hope they can keep it going for a long time to come.

Keep well.

Leaseholders are being asked to foot the bill... for an issue that should never have existed.

Marie Goldman MP