

Marie Goldman



MP for Chelmsford

POINTS OF VIEW

What a whirlwind! Looking back at my first 100 days since the election

ON Sunday (October 12), it will be 100 days since the General Election. A lot has happened since so I thought I'd spend this article telling you about just some of the things I've been up to since the lovely people of Chelmsford elected me as the first non-Conservative Member of Parliament for 74 years (and the first liberal for 100 years!).

■ July

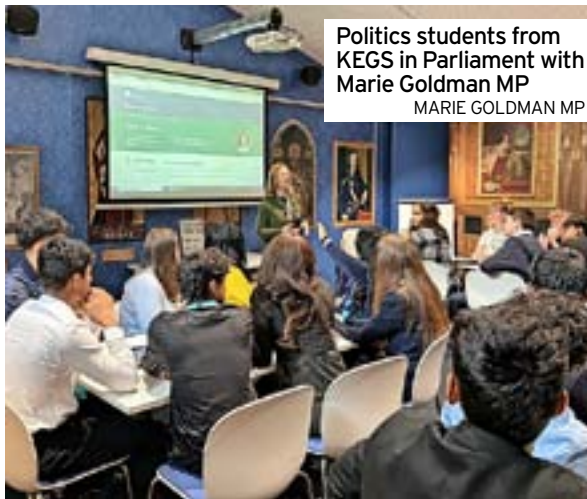
July was a bit of a whirlwind of emotions and, if I'm being brutally honest, not actually as fun-filled as you might expect. Following the General Election on Thursday, July 4, and the count that lasted into the early hours of the morning of July 5, I had just a couple of days to get used to the idea of being an MP before heading straight into Westminster on the Monday morning.

That first week was a melee of meetings, interviews, inductions, briefings, sessions in the House of Commons chamber, receptions and not very much sleep. Which might all sound fun, but it came off the back of many months of hard campaigning and then six weeks of very intense activity after Rishi Sunak called the election. I'll admit that by this point I was exhausted.

But there was a HUGE amount of work to do. Not least learning how Parliament works on a day-to-day basis and, of course, working out what staff I need and advertising for the roles.

Meanwhile, I was receiving hundreds of messages through every possible method of communication every single day. I joked that it became a bit of a game of whack-a-mole - no sooner had I dealt with emails in one inbox than several more appeared in another one. When I turned my attention to that one, more came into the original one. And so on and so forth. I know that the vast majority of new MPs were in the same position and, as I have said before, that's a terrible experience for MPs, but an even worse one for constituents.

Something had to be done as it was clear that I was never going to be able to catch up, let alone keep on



Politics students from KEGS in Parliament with Marie Goldman MP
MARIE GOLDMAN MP



Marie Goldman MP discussing local hospital improvements with other Essex MPs
MARIE GOLDMAN MP



Marie Goldman MP talking about building safety in the House of Commons
MARIE GOLDMAN MP



Marie Goldman MP viewing the state of construction at the new Beaulieu Park railway station in Chelmsford
MARIE GOLDMAN MP

top of that volume of correspondence (and don't get me started on the paper-based stuff that includes regular copies of the newspaper China Daily that I never asked to receive, don't want to receive, but can't somehow seem to unsubscribe from!). That something was recruiting staff. So very early on, I put together job descriptions for the key roles that I knew I needed to fill to get me going and I set up adverts.

In July, I (and some amazing volunteers who helped me out) put 728 emails into my caseworker system (helpfully called 'Caseworker', which also had to be bought, set up and learnt). From that, we created 337 pieces of casework on issues as diverse as education, Universal Credit, immigration, crime and social care.

In the House of Commons, I attended the King's Speech at the

state opening of Parliament (I was lucky enough to be able to squeeze into the back of the House of Lords as the King delivered his speech), had various different meetings and attended debates in the chamber.

Back in Chelmsford, I met with representatives from organisations including the NHS, Essex County Council, Chelmsford City Council, and the police. I also attended various community events, including with one of the Chelmsford-based Hindu groups.

I also recruited two members of staff, although both of them had notice periods to give in their previous roles.

■ August

Parliament was in recess for the whole of August and yes, I did go away with my family on a camping holiday that had been booked for the better part of a year.

But I took my laptop and there was hardly a day when I didn't spend some time trying to deal with urgent emails.

On one memorable day, I was holding online interviews via Teams

all day. Just as the first interview was about to start, two little sparrows flew into my tent. One of them managed to get trapped between the bedroom inners and the outer canvas of the tent.

Out of sight of the camera, my amazingly supportive husband was desperately trying to guide the tiny bird out to freedom. It was comical, but did make me realise that this is a side to the life of an MP that very few people ever get to see - trying to fit things in at all hours of the day, in sometimes strange locations.

I remember taking an urgent call about visa issues from my brand new (but very experienced) senior caseworker as I sheltered from the rain, having just stepped off a boat on to a quay to wait for onward transport to continue my journey home from holiday. As I commented about the situation, she told me this was often par for the course for MPs.

In August, we opened 407 cases and dealt with 606 emails received through the casework system (although this is by no means the total number of emails I received,

not all of which end up in Caseworker).

■ September

September was the month where I really started to get going on Parliamentary business. I delivered my maiden speech in the House of Commons and spoke in a Westminster Hall debate about special educational needs (SEND). I was the Lib Dem spokesperson in a general debate in the chamber about building safety, where I included examples of fire safety issues from right here in Chelmsford.

I attended the Lib Dem conference in Brighton where I spoke about the importance of extra-curricular activities and, yes, SEND, at a panel debate. I met with ambassadors and dignitaries from Israel, Japan and Austria, and had meetings with several different organisations, including Greater Anglia, the British Medical Association, the Music Venue Trust, the Post Office, Lloyds and the Salvation Army.

Back in Chelmsford, I viewed the impressive progress at Beaulieu Park Station, walked around the nearly complete new Beaulieu Health Centre, visited Farleigh Hospice, attended a meeting of the Chelmsford Garden Council (OK, that was just at the very beginning of October), spoke with residents about outstanding remedial works on their flats and met several parents of children with SEND.

In September, my small team received 1,048 emails into Caseworker, created 655 new cases and sent 609 emails. (Again, this is just in the Caseworker system, and doesn't include the many, many bits of correspondence outside of that.)

Please bear with us. I've got a genuinely fabulous little team, but we're only human and haven't yet been able to invent the power to add more hours to the day, so we're still playing catch-up. If you need to get in touch and your matter is urgent, please send an email to marie.goldman.mp@parliament.uk and mark it as urgent in the subject.

Parliament has since returned from conference recess and I'm looking forward to getting stuck into my new roles, which now also include being the Liberal Democrat Shadow Leader of the House of Commons.

Watch this space for more information about what I've been up to.

Thanks, as always, for reading.

Marie

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Marie Goldman MP