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HAMPSHIRE CHRONICLE

Letter from Westminster



Steve Brine
Winchester MP

AFTER a break from my column last month during the General Election it is good to be back.

First of all, thank you to my constituents for re-electing me as our MP. It was nice to once again receive over 50 per cent of the vote but

much as I enjoy campaigning, after fighting (and winning) three elections in seven years, you'll forgive me if I just want to get on with the job.

A year ago I was at an event in London with Speaker John Bercow when news reached us that an MP had been attacked in her constituency and was critically injured.

As history records, that was Jo Cox MP and her murder still haunts Parliament and every one of us. The unveiling of a memorial plaque in the House of Commons, featuring a coat of arms her children helped create, was a nice touch but it should never have happened and those children remain in my prayers.

The awful events of that day were quickly followed by the divisions of the European Union Referendum result, the resignation of a Prime Minister, three horrific terrorist attacks in as many months, a divisive General Election and last week the tragedy that is Grenfell Tower. With young children myself, I cannot think of the terror those families faced when they were woken in the early hours with their homes on fire.

This is a human tragedy that requires a human response, not a political one that encourages citizens to take the law into their own hands and seeks to divide. A disaster of this scale clearly requires a comprehensive Government reply in the immediate and a full independent inquiry soon after. Both are happening.

As I said on election night in Winchester, our country is divided right now and, while that is sadly not new, I think we should remember Jo Cox and her maiden speech message that we've far more that unites us than divides us.

I visited every area of my constituency this past month and knocked on hundreds of doors. Thank you for a warm welcome and whether young or old, city or urban (even Leave or Remain) thanks for knowing Jo was right.

Once again this year I ran a 100 per cent positive local campaign and I am so grateful to the many who got in touch to recognise that. We all have a part to play in unity over division; we all have a responsibility to practice what we preach.

Finally, my Prime Minister's Questions ballot will shortly return; you can add your name to the draw, and check dates as they are published, via www.stevebrine.com

Steve Brine
MP for Winchester & Chandler's
Ford