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The Year in Review

There is no spare time in the Parliamentary calendar. I know the Government have legislation backing up, ready for the Commons to begin debating again and we are already building up to the party conferences next month.

Even in the middle of all these preparations though, I have tried to make a little space to reflect on my first year in Parliament and take stock on some of the many incredible moments I have been privileged to share in as an MP.

Some of my memories of 'Year 1' are now moments in history, like the formation of the Coalition. I will never forget the thunderous reception I and my fellow MPs gave to David Cameron when he was introduced to us simply with the words "the Prime Minister" for the first time.

Conversely, when the Prime Minister made his first statement on the unfolding Libyan situation, many of us were struck more than ever before, not only of the gravity of the situation, but of the responsibility of being an MP. It was a very heavy feeling, knowing what could be the consequences of the eventual vote.

Other moments were important for me but figured a little less on the national stage. I imagine every new MP in some way dreads the first time they speak in the Commons, but in 2010 there were so many new MPs there was quite a traffic jam. I spent 12 hours 'bobbing' up and down try to catch Mr Speaker's eye - when I was eventually called I was so surprised I didn't really have time to be nervous.

My basic job as an MP is to represent the views of everyone in the constituency by voting on legislation but also by championing specific local issues. In September I was granted an entire 90-minute debate in Westminster Hall on the subject of unauthorised encampments – which have affected a number of villages in East Hampshire. It was an incredible feeling to take part in a debate which I had helped secure.

But the best part of being an MP is what you achieve away from Westminster, back in East Hampshire. Casework arrives via my fortnightly surgeries or by post, phone or email. It covers everything from housing allocations, special needs provision, healthcare matters, welfare claims and immigration cases. It is one of the most rewarding moments as an MP to know that, by your intervention, in some way you have made a difference, sometimes a big one, in someone's life.

I am sure that the next session will have more challenges and memorable moments, but the first year has definitely taught me what a privilege and a joy it is to be an MP.