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HAMPSHIRE CHRONICLE

## Letter from Westminster



**Steve Brine,  
Winchester MP**

I HAVE no idea where the time went but this is my final column of 2015; a year which has been eventful, exciting, tragic and extremely hard work.

Events in Iraq and Syria continue to dominate the national and international news. Voting for

military action is the heaviest of responsibilities for any MP and I am no different.

Of course bombing alone is not the answer and I wouldn't support a strategy that said as much. It's become fashionable nonetheless to claim that is the Government's position and I refute that absolutely.

The far-reaching Vienna process and the comprehensive strategy laid out by our Prime Minister is much more than what takes place from RAF jets and that has to be right. I have posted more on this and links to my most recent contribution in Parliament at [www.stevebrine.com/westminster](http://www.stevebrine.com/westminster)

Alongside the fight against Daesh, and of course one result thereof, is the tragic refugee crisis. I am proud Winchester is doing its bit and the first Syrian families arrived in the city this month. I am due to meet them before Christmas and will of course be extending the warmest of Winchester welcomes.

This year also saw the subject of assisted dying return to Parliament. My postbag has rarely seen an issue that has interested so many people and I read them all, as well as reading widely during my summer hols. The House spoke very clearly against in the end, but the debate itself was superb, carried out in the finest traditions on what was a free-vote matter of conscience for MPs.

As the year ends we of course have the crucial Paris climate change agreement. I think many, some may even be correspondents with this newspaper, were sharpening their knives for our Government in anticipating failure at this summit but in the end we had a real result.

The talks have culminated in a global deal, between 195 countries, with every one of them now signed up to play its part in halting climate change.

In other words, this generation has taken vital steps to ensure that our children and grandchildren will see that we did our duty in securing the future of our planet.

Locally, we remain in limbo with the saga that is Silver Hill and the lawyers continue to be the only winners in my opinion. We should ask ourselves now, which path is most likely to lead to the regeneration of this increasingly embarrassing part of our great city.

Meanwhile Barton Farm seems stuck in the mud but it will resume and, while readers will know I was very much against this development, we must go ahead without delay as part of Winchester's signed-off Local Plan. Not least because we have opportunities with this scheme including the exciting new Barton Farm Academy school.

Finally, May's General Election was certainly a good moment for me. It was a real honour to be asked to represent this constituency once but to do so again with such an increased majority and share of the vote was brilliant. It's been business as usual for the team and I ever since and will be for the next five years.

May I wish all readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.