

# SOUTHEND WEST CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION

# NEWSLETTER

Edition 1-2020



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## Message from Chairman - Kevin Thomas

Hello!

I hope you are keeping safe and well in these troubled times.

As you will have read from my recent message, sadly we have had to postpone all SWCA activities and events for the foreseeable future until such time as the virus threat passes and it is safe for us to get back together. But please do not let this stop you from keeping in contact with our members and sharing your lockdown experiences!



SWCA continues to thrive despite the present hiatus and you can rest assured that your Officers and I are raring to get back to normal as soon as is practicable - we have so many campaign events, member activities and social occasions ready to recommence as soon as the virus danger has gone. Rather than wait to contact you then, we thought a Spring Newsletter would be in order now.

You will see a contact form on the last page. Please would you complete this and let us have your details so we may check these with our records? We are conscious that members may change address, email account or telephone number but we do not always get told. We just want to be sure we have your latest contact information.

Thank you for your continued support of your Association, our members, our Councillors and not least for Sir David. I very much look forward to seeing you again soon, hopefully in the not too distant future. If you need to contact me or the office please use the numbers above. We are still here albeit in a virtual world!

## News from Southend Borough Council - Cllr David Garston (Prittlewell Ward)

As I write, it is nearly a year since the Conservatives lost control of Southend Council. Many of the electorate think that we are in control, but sadly we currently only hold 20 out of the 51 seats on the Council. We need to get to at least 26 to retake control and with your help we can do it. May 2021 is the opportunity to take back seats and retake control. Winning six seats and holding our currently held seats is no easy target and as soon as lockdown is lifted we must start work again in earnest.



**Why is it so important that we retake control?** The Administration is led by a left wing Labour group and supported by Independents and Liberal Democrats. A momentum-led Council will mean higher Council Tax and charges and poor control of the issues that we face. Consider some of the issues: Better Queensway, Seaway Car Park, Airport Expansion and Night Flights, Homelessness, Education, Social Care, parking and maintaining good roads, pavements and public transport.

The Independent Deputy Leader of the Council has already announced that he will not consider any new requests for street improvements for two years. Sir David Amess MP has been pressing Parliament to make Southend a City. What sort of support will he get from this administration? My guess, and yours I am sure, is NIL! Unfortunately, we could be in opposition for up to three years, which is sad because we are winning all the arguments in Council and losing the votes.

The way forward is to work really hard in all of our wards to ensure that the electorate know we are here and do offer the best alternative.

## Message from D/C (Political) - Cllr Kevin Buck (Prittlewell Ward)

The outbreak of the Coronavirus has presented all with challenges that most of us would not have witnessed since the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. Whilst incredibly heart wrenching to be losing loved ones to this terrible disease, we also face the challenge of adapting our lives to live as normally as possible until a vaccine can be found. Our thoughts and prayers are with those who have, or are dealing directly with the consequences of this dreadful disease and, of course, to our dedicated team of NHS and Care Workers who are putting themselves at selfless great risk in caring for others.



Whilst a time of national crisis is no time for public politics it was, therefore, understandable that the local elections have been postponed until May 2021. By this time, we will either have discovered a vaccine, adapted better to living with the virus and nature with its 'herd immunity', would also have played its part in helping us return to some form of normality.

With this in mind, politically it has been a little quiet. Following the outstanding general election result for the Party and Boris Johnson in December 2019, the general feeling locally by many, including those who may not be considered as 'traditional Conservative supporters', was that we were on track to have a good result locally in May 2020. It is therefore vital that we do not take our foot off the accelerator or become complacent with the recent political results. There are no quick wins in politics, therefore we must continue with the policies and strategies that helped the party nationally to ensure we can continue to carry that wave of support in to 2021 locally.

I've said it before, but think it is worth repeating again. In my time as a Councillor, I have learnt that it is the hard work of knocking on doors with the right policies that will win you votes. Whilst it undoubtedly has its place in politics, you cannot work a ward just from social media and my experience, particularly when canvassing with Sir David, is that knocking on doors works and people respond and engage with it and as yet, there is no better substitute for it.

If we are to regain control of Southend Council in May 2021, we must continue to work hard collectively as a team and closely with our colleagues in the East. Having a positive vision and a focused direction is what instilled the confidence in the general public and created the outstanding result for Boris Johnson, we must repeat this locally and stick to our principles and remain focused.

So, let's continue to work on our In Touches, so they are ready to go through doors when we are all able to walk the streets again and continue to work the wards, connecting with the electorate at every opportunity. Thank you to all of you for your support and Stay Safe and Stay Home at this unprecedented time.

## Message from D/C (Membership & Fundraising) - Judith Suttling

Since the last newsletter our membership has increased slightly, and we have had ten more under 23yr olds join, which is a pleasing sign. During the General Election campaign we had good help from members who came to Iveagh Hall to help with sticking address labels on leaflets. We just need more people to volunteer to take part in Ward Committees, or help with delivering leaflets!



**The Marlborough Club** lunches have proved a great success with approximately 30 people attending each time. Admittedly, catering ourselves, involves a lot of work, but it is very much a team effort by the Committee - Judith Suttling, Jackie Davidson, Jenny Snoch, Joyce Lambert and Judith Canham. We were delighted to receive from Sir David, the Award for 'Most Fundraising' at the AGM in March.

The same team cooks and prepares food for the Chairman's Tea Party, which is a pleasant social occasion in the summer and winter, and although we do not charge entry, is self-financing through the obligatory raffle!

**The 1955 Supper Club** is taking the usual winter rest, but this was preceded by the Annual Sunday Lunch. This was well attended and held in November at Affinity when the guest speaker was James Duddridge MP. Dinners will resume when safe to do so.

## Conservative Women's Organisation

Hi everyone, from all of the Committee and myself we send everyone our very best wishes at this unprecedented time that we find ourselves in.

Our February luncheon went off very well with 38 people booked to attend, and our speaker for the day was Andy Bunker from Alton Garden Centre, who brought along a variety of plants and gave a great talk on preparing our garden for spring. He gave us so many tips on planting seedlings which surprised many of us there who found we were doing things wrong!

I hope, once the lockdown is over, people will come back and enjoy the ambience of the Arlington Rooms, good food and wonderful speakers. Like me, you are confined to your homes. If you feel like a chat please feel free to call me on 01702 510016 or 07804274502, it will be lovely to hear from you.

God willing we will all get through this and return to our usual friendly monthly lunches.

In the meantime until we all meet again in the Arlington Rooms TAKE CARE.

Best wishes, Mo Butler, Chair CWO

## ANNUAL DINNER

Our main fundraising event, the Annual Dinner in October 2019, with The Rt. Hon. Dominic Raab MP as our guest speaker, was a great success, with 138 bookings. The event was held in the Jubilee Room at Saxon Hall, where there was a very good atmosphere, with guests commenting on social media afterwards about how much they had enjoyed the evening. In addition to our special guest, we were pleased to welcome the Rt. Hon. Mark Francois MP, who gave a very measured speech once Dominic Raab had departed. With the raffle and Sir David's auction we raised over £4,300.

Thank you to all who supported this wonderful event!



**The Brexit Party** at Iveagh Hall on the 31st January was a great success! With just a few weeks to organise (by Judith Suttling), 94 people came, many dressed in red, white and blue. It was good to have many members of the Iveagh Conservative Club join us too. The Hall was decorated in red, white and blue bunting and balloons. We started with a quiz followed by fish and chips. We were fortunate in having David Stanley from the Music Man come and play for us and we all joined in a rousing sing song of patriotic songs whilst waving our Union Jacks. The Town Cryer read from a scroll whilst Sir David raised the Union Jack on our flagpole. After this we had fireworks at 11pm to celebrate. Judging from the remarks made afterwards, everybody really enjoyed the evening. It seems a long time ago now!



## A Word from Westminster.....

What is happening to our country and the world right now is quite surreal. Nearly all of us are shaken to the core as to the rapid way this crisis we find ourselves in has unfolded. Perhaps most frustrating of all is the fact that the enemy which we and the rest of the world are united in defeating, is to all intents and purposes invisible - the Coronavirus.

What is quite shocking is the speed at which this national emergency has hit us all. It was really only at the start of the year that we heard serious reports of the Coronavirus emerging in China with many fatalities. Nevertheless, it seemed remote and unlikely to affect us, how wrong we were. In no time at all this pandemic has spread throughout the world, with alarming reports of people found to have the virus increasing daily, together with a sharp rise in fatalities.

Now let me get to the heart of the matter - this is not just a national crisis, it is a world crisis, and when the worst has passed, we will undoubtedly be determined to find out the truth of how it all happened. However, for the moment, all efforts should be directed towards stopping the virus spreading and saving as many lives as possible. The Government is following carefully proven scientific advice, which in essence is, if at all possible, stay at home to halt the spread of the disease, protect our NHS and save lives. Hourly and daily, the situation has been changing in such a way that no sooner has the Government made an announcement, it is overtaken by further events with yet more announcements being necessary.

From Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March, my Westminster office moved to Iveagh Hall at 67 Leigh Road. My team are working remotely, and we are linking up daily via video conferencing. I assure everyone that all phone calls, emails and letters are being dealt with as quickly as possible. We are currently inundated with questions which cover every single facet of our lives that have been affected by this national emergency. I and my team will do our best to provide an answer to all these queries as quickly as we can.

For the moment, I am suspending my regular surgeries, instead operating from my local HQ, dealing with constituent's queries as they are brought to my attention. If anyone feels the need, they can call me and visit Iveagh Hall, whilst of course observing the Government guidelines on social distancing. I have access, together with my Parliamentary colleagues, to an MPs hotline on each and every issue which has thus far been brought to my attention.

I very much understand the huge anxiety felt by every single one of us, in what for all of us are uncharted waters, as we battle against an invisible enemy. But I have no doubt that with our strong local community spirit, not just in Southend, but throughout the whole of our country, we of all nations will overcome the challenges which we are now facing.

With all good wishes,

Sir David Amess MP, Tel: 0207 219 3452, Email: [amesd@parliament.uk](mailto:amesd@parliament.uk)



### PLEASE WRITE IN BLOCK CAPITALS

Name

Address

Postcode

Home

Mobile

Email address

The information that you provide will be used only by the Conservative Party, including its candidates, representatives and Associations. We will not pass on this information to anyone else.

We would like to keep in touch with you, send information about membership, social events, political events, and campaigning activities, local and national political issues/campaigns. Please tick the relevant boxes to indicate how you would like to receive this information: Post  Email  SMS  Phone

Under the new data protection laws, if you tick the 'Right to be forgotten' box, we will be required to delete everything except the information that comes from the register of electors, and our records will be updated accordingly.  Right to be forgotten