

# SOUTHEND WEST CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION

# NEWSLETTER

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## Message from Chairman - Kevin Thomas

Hello,

I hope you are keeping well and in good spirits.

So, who would have thought this time last year we would be looking back over 2020 as we are now doing? It has been the most difficult and strangest of years. Certainly not what anyone could foresee and hopefully never to be repeated again, as we move into 2021.



In spite of everything, our Association moves forward thanks to the valiant efforts of so many. Often work goes unnoticed and, dare I say, unappreciated. Throughout the year Jackie has kept the office running with her usual enthusiasm and high spirits; my officers have been working away on a selection of matters relating to membership, campaigning, finance and administration; our Executive Council has continued to meet and ratify strategic issues and day to day matters; our Councillors have continued unabated their great work; Sir David has tirelessly and unceasingly represented us all with unwavering fortitude as our MP; and all our members have helped whenever they can. A massive and heartfelt THANK YOU to you all, have a lovely Christmas and very best wishes for a Happy New Year.

Next year will be a tough year on the campaign trail. We have local elections in May 2021 that will go ahead Covid or not. We have a first class team of candidates but they need everyone's help if they are to be elected – we cannot take anything for granted this time around. Please have a think about what you can do, no matter how small, to help them and take back control of the Council. We really need everyone to do a bit!

Very best wishes,  
Kevin

## Message from Deputy Chair (Political) - Cllr Kevin Buck



As we emerge from our 2<sup>nd</sup> lockdown, it is essential that we all try to get back to living our lives as normally as possible, whilst continuing to take the appropriate precautions.

January will be upon us soon enough and political campaigning will hopefully start in earnest for the May 2021 local elections. We recently held a 'Zoom' meeting of the ward chairs, to discuss our strategy as well as ward resources. If you are able and willing, volunteers to help with campaigning, leaflet delivering or general support is always needed and most welcome. Your association needs you!

The airport is once again in the local headlines and the Southend Conservative group has issued a position statement. Whilst we support the airport and its day time operations and the principles of its aspirations, the endless night time cargo flights continue to blight the lives of thousands in Leigh on Sea and the surrounding wards of the airport 24 hours a day. Whilst the number of flights has dropped dramatically in recent months, there is no question they will be back to pre-Covid levels within a year or two. We support Sir David's position on this and are all working tirelessly to achieve a solution that stops our sleep from being continuously disturbed with no prospect of respite.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support of the Southend West Conservative Association and all the hard work our volunteers do. We could not do this without you, so thank you and have a very Merry and safe Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

## Message from Deputy Chair (Membership & Fundraising) - Judith Suttling

I am pleased to report that our membership stays at a steady number.

**FUNDRAISING (every little bit helps!)**



Thank you to all members who purchased raffle tickets for the National Christmas Draw.

We have raised over £300 for the Association. Good luck!



### An Evening with Sajid Javid

We held a zoom fundraising meeting on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November, when we were fortunate in having the Rt.Hon. Sajid Javid MP as speaker. Sajid was an excellent speaker, firstly giving a short speech followed by answering many questions, ranging from the economic situation at present and prospects in the future, to telling us which kind of books he likes to read.



24 people joined us for this zoom event, although two or three people were unable to log in, but we made a profit of £10 per head. Unfortunately there was a Council meeting that night, so only three Councillors joined in. I have to stress that whilst we cannot hold fundraising meals, everything we can raise will help towards next year's Local Elections expenses, and it would have been nice to have had more support.



Joyce Lambert had a novel fundraising idea: making and selling Christmas masks! Joyce did a splendid job, and raised nearly £200 for the Association. Thank you Joyce! (pictured wearing one of her masks)

### Young Conservatives

Many of you will remember being a YC, what a social life it gave us all those years ago!

The name Young Conservative has been revived and replaces Conservative Future. This is for 15-25 year age groups, and they have a discounted membership of £5 per year. The overriding objective of YCs is to create a well equipped, disciplined and engaged generation of members who can strengthen our party as a whole. We have 27 YCs at present; if you know of anyone who would like to be a member please let us know. Before Coronavirus I did organise one evening at Iveagh Hall which was enjoyable. If you or any young person you know would like to join a sociable evening at the Iveagh Club, after lockdown, please let me know. The first drink is on us!

## News from CWO - Mo Butler, Chair

Unfortunately we, like all other organisations, due to this Coronavirus, are unable to meet up for our luncheons. Therefore the CWO are in no position to raise any funds for the Conservative Association this year. However, the Committee and I have not been idle in thinking how we can promote the CWO in the future.

We have therefore, in honour of Nancy Howard, who did so much for South-end West Association and the CWO in particular over so many years, decided to privately purchase and have engraved our own Silver Rose Bowl, which the Committee will present each year to the person who we feel has assisted the CWO for the past year.

The first person we have nominated for the Rose Bowl is Estrellita Stanley, for all the hard work that she has done for Nancy and the CWO for so many years. It was with great pleasure we presented the Rose Bowl to Estrellita and she was delighted and honoured to be the first name on this wonderful trophy.

As we are not likely to meet up for some while, the Committee and I wish everyone a very happy Christmas and a healthy year ahead. Let us all pray that, with the forthcoming vaccine, we will soon be able to all meet up once again.

In the meantime please keep safe and well.

Mo Butler



*Mrs Estrellita Stanley being presented with the award by Mo Butler*

## COUNCIL UPDATE - Cllr Meg Davidson, Conservatives Deputy Group Leader



There's a lot going on at Southend Council at the moment with crucial decisions coming up on a number of major projects. These include the **Better Queensway** housing project which is due to entail radical alterations to the road layout between Victoria Gateway and the Southchurch Road roundabout. The Conservative Group remains resolutely opposed to the plan to close the Queensway underpass.



More details are emerging about the proposed **Roots Hall/Fossetts Farm** housing developments and the long awaited relocation of Southend United Football Club. We are concerned that there are no assurances that the crucial infrastructure, particularly improved road links, will be put in place before the housing is built.



The Council has recently launched "Your say Southend", a dedicated website to give residents more opportunities to participate in discussions and public consultations. Consultations currently running include: Selective licensing scheme for private landlords, review of local dog control laws, and Southend Conservation Areas appraisals. For more information, check out <https://yoursay.southend.gov.uk/>

The Council is gearing up for **Census Day on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2021**. The census is a survey which happens every ten years. It's not just a headcount of the population: it provides vital information for government to plan and fund services. It's really important that everyone in the Borough of Southend is counted on the day. Census 2021 will be the first ever "digital-first" census, but paper forms will be provided for those who need it.



## A WORD FROM WESTMINSTER....

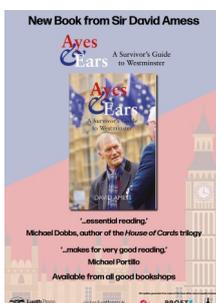
Much has happened since I last wrote to you. Whilst the coronavirus pandemic has placed huge restrictions on all our lives, politics in Westminster and our country continues on a relentless path. For my part, I have been less than satisfied with the way a number of issues have been handled. Now, however, is not the time for a proper investigation, but there will nevertheless be a moment for some robust analysis of our government's response to the countless challenges that the coronavirus pandemic has presented us with.



Sir David Amess MP

I am in constant touch with constituents on all manner of issues, and I and my team, from our Westminster base, are doing our level best to help people with their many and various problems. I have found it particularly frustrating over the last few months not to attend the many seasonal functions that would normally take place and as we move towards Christmas, I continue to feel that frustration.

During the coronavirus pandemic we have lost many members and friends, the latest being Mike Dolby, someone who gave me real practical support from the moment I was first elected. I shall miss him very much.



On 25<sup>th</sup> November my book 'Ayes & Ears; A Survivor's Guide to Westminster' will be published. It will be available in bookshops by the end of the month and can be pre-ordered on Amazon. A promotional video is available to view on my YouTube channel. Please contact Julie Cushion at [cushion389@btinternet.com](mailto:cushion389@btinternet.com) for more information.

I wish each and every one of you a very happy Christmas, good health and a far better New Year.

## NEWS FROM WARDS

### BLENHEIM PARK

With Sir David Amess, Councillor Helen Boyd had an interesting visit to a socially-distanced mother and baby group and to local businesses, including the new butchers shop in Eastwood Boulevard. Wishing all our workers the best of luck in these difficult times.

Helen has been walking around the ward, reporting issues, and picking up litter in the park. She has reported ruts on the verges and fly tipping, all via the MySouthend app at the Council.



*Cllr Helen Boyd with Sir David Amess MP  
on a tour of Prince Avenue School*

In collaboration with the other 2 Ward councillors, Helen is arranging for white lines to be painted in the car park by the fire station, and advocating for more litter bins.



On a lighter note, when Helen is not solving issues around the Ward, in her spare time, she has been frantically knitting poppies to raise monies for the Royal British Legion. £70 has been raised so far. Well done Helen!

### LEIGH

*Paul Gilson (local viewpoint) writes...*

“I was dismayed to see the Belvedere on Leigh Cliffs vandalised and covered in graffiti so soon after its restoration. It is a magnet for anti-social behaviour, drink, drugs, and wanton vandalism. Some of us got together to clean the site: we filled six bags with glass, tins, and fast food wrappings + 300 gas cylinders from an area smaller than a cricket square. Within days it was back as it was, with mountains of broken glass. The site needs to be looked after and kept secure or the money spent on rebuilding the Belvedere will have been wasted.”



Paul welcomes the new gardening group, Friends of Love Leigh Cliffs (FROLLC), who have been doing sterling work bringing new life to a run down area. Their tireless work tending the plants and trees and restoring the Leigh Library Gardens has been recognised with a 2020 Green Flag Award. The annual award scheme is run by Keep Britain Tidy and aims to recognise and reward well managed parks and green spaces throughout the country. Leigh Library Gardens was one of 7 Green Flag awards in the Borough of Southend, alongside Belfairs, Chalkwell and Priory Parks. Well done!

## NEWS FROM WARDS (cont'd)

### PRITTLEWELL

**In Touch newsletter.** Our Autumn 2020 Prittlewell In Touch has gone out to every household in Prittlewell Ward. We managed to complete deliveries by the end of October, just before the lockdown came into force.

**Visit by Sir David Amess** Prittlewell Councillors Kevin Buck, David Garston and Meg Davidson welcomed Sir David Amess to Prittlewell Ward during the recent Parliamentary recess. The Prittlewell "tour" included Priory Park, Gainsborough Park and The Bell junction.

During his visit Sir David learned about the local councillors' plans for using funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy to reinstate the fountains in the walled garden at Priory Park and improving the facilities in the play area of Gainsborough Park.



**Remembrance Sunday commemoration** Kevin Buck and Meg Davidson joined Sir David Amess on Remembrance Sunday in a socially distanced act of remembrance at Priory Park.

Sir David laid a wreath at the war memorial dedicated by R.A. Jones just over a century ago.

### ST LAURENCE

#### **ASTRONAUT ESTATE**

Recently, but before the new lockdown restrictions, Councillors Mark Flewitt and David McGlone with Sir David Amess MP had a walk around the St Laurence Ward.

We are seriously concerned with all aspects of the pandemic but also to highlight the usual work that needs to be carried out on the Astronaut Estate regarding long overdue white line highway markings. These have been reported since January 2020. More delay....(after 10 months)

**ACTIONS....NOT JUST PROMISES! The white lining around the Astronaut Estate begins.....**

**BEFORE.....**



**AFTER.....**

# *Sir David's tribute to Mr Michael Dolby*

My memories of Mike Dolby are far more than of just a political ally, but of a loyal friend.

I first met Mike when I was the MP for Basildon and used to bring my then small children to Never Never Land. He and his lovely late wife Pat were always welcoming and made sure our visit was a pleasure. Never Never Land encapsulated for me the simple, wholesome fantasy world that allowed children to look and listen in wonder at the various exhibits. It is such a shame that future generations no longer have that opportunity that my children did to live their dreams.

On becoming the Member of Parliament for Southend West, Mike and his wife were among my staunchest supporters, always there for me. I was so pleased that Mike became a Councillor for St Laurence Ward, which he represented with great distinction on the local Council. He and his wife both became Leigh Town Councillors, Mike becoming its Chairman, a role which in his inimitable style he relished. Mike was never grand or full of self-importance, he was down to earth and as honest as the day is long. He was insistent that any monies levied from the local rate payer would be spent well and not on unnecessary layers of bureaucracy/administration.

For many years Mike was associated with the Carnival Association and was a regular attendee of Chalkwell Fair. He was involved with any number of interest groups. He loved animals, giving wonderful homes to dogs, cats and fish. He was a model train enthusiast and as an electrician had huge skills in fixing electrical problems. He was very fond of jigsaw puzzles and somehow always managed to find and complete the puzzle. He never allowed anything to beat him. He was involved with many charities and acted as a friend to see that people held in custody suites were safe. He was a Christian and a staunch supporter of the Salvation Army.



*Leigh Town Council*

Myself and Mike might have looked like the odd couple, he certainly looked like Albert Steptoe, but I was able to get him to smile, he had a great sense of humour. Whatever the event was and wherever it was, he would be there at my side to help in whatever way he could. He was a big fan of Rolls Royces, however in later years I think the size of the car got the better of him and the least said about his driving skills the better. He was, in short, a good, decent, hard-working, real gentleman.

I, and so many other people have lost a great friend, we will miss him very much.

I offer my deepest sympathy to his children and grandchildren.

# Further tributes to Mr Michael Dolby

*His banter and humour will be sadly missed.  
Rest in peace*

Councillor Fay Evans .....

Mike was the founder of Leigh Town Council, which he was extremely proud of. Geoff Fulford and his assistant alone ran the Council at that time and were truly excellent.



Mike was proud of his Rolls Royces. The first one he wrote off completely and promptly purchased another one which turned out to be in need of a lot of work which took a long time to rectify. He used to drive up to my house and I would have to go out and admire it. He wanted me to drive it, but before I could take up his offer he drove it into a lamppost! It's still in the workshop, although Mike said it wasn't his fault, a previous engineer was at fault.

His model railway was magnificent, then he decided to give the whole lot to a friend! I think he regretted that decision because within a few weeks he decided to build another one, sadly towards the end he found it difficult to crawl under the table wiring the models, but it still looked good.

Mike was a dear friend and fellow Councillor and, of course, he was so proud of his friendship with Sir David; they spent many times together mulling over the latest. He will be sadly missed.

Councillor Mark Flewitt...

Former Councillor Mike Dolby was a St Laurence Ward Councillor, with Brian Houssart and Simon Gorham. Subsequent elections saw this line-up change until I replaced Simon Gorham against two Liberals.



Mike saw changes, that perhaps for his generation, were not easy, but his welcome to the change was always positive and both Mike and Pat made us all welcome at his home for committee meetings and social gatherings. He sadly had to witness yet another twist in St Laurence Ward representation, with Labour gaining a seat.

In Mike's passing, we pay tribute to all his party efforts and to the personal friendships he had.

Councillor David Garston.....

When Mike was a Councillor he was usually at the Civic Centre before I arrived. We used to chat before we went into the meeting. He always kept a straight face whilst telling me of his latest observations or grumbles.



I got to know him very well and admired his commitment to his ward, the town, Association and the party. He was so proud of his Rolls Royces and his magnificent train set.

He was a fighter surviving recent illness and I for one will miss him. Rest in peace Mike.

STOP PRESS! As we go to print, we are sad to report that Mr Brian Houssart MBE passed away peacefully on Saturday 28 November.

Brian was a very active, long serving member of the Association for many years. He was also well known for the tireless charity work he, and his wife Heather did to raise money for Southend children, for which he received an MBE. Our heartfelt sympathies go to his family.



Brian and Heather after he received his MBE

# LEST WE FORGET.....



*The Worshipful Mayor Councillor John Lamb and Mrs Patricia Lamb, together with Sir David Amess Member of Parliament for Southend West, and Mr James Duddridge, Member of Parliament for Rochford and Southend East, attended a very different Remembrance Sunday commemoration, due to the pandemic.*



*(L-R) Macebearer, Mr Adam Tregoning JP, Mr James Duddridge MP, Mayor Cllr John Lamb, Mrs Patricia Lamb and Sir David Amess MP*



*A sponsored 'Poppy Run' group were invited to join the Mayor for a photo opportunity*

