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Message from Chairman - Cllr John Lamb



Cllr John Lamb

Dear Member

It is with great sadness that I write this letter, as you will all be aware of the demise of our splendid Member of Parliament, Sir David Amess who was cruelly murdered at his surgery in Belfairs on 15th October. As you can imagine, everyone is obviously devastated by this tragic news and his family are still trying to recover from this terrible incident. I would ask you to please be mindful and respectful of their situation at this time so that they can grieve and mourn in private. All our thoughts and prayers are with them at this time.

Because of this tragic loss to us as an association and to Southend as a whole, your Association Officers are now in the process of having to select a new candidate to replace Sir David, which will not be an easy job. The process is already underway, but we insisted to Central Office that nothing would occur until Sir David had been laid to rest. You will, therefore, find that the Officers are very involved in dealing with this matter with Central Office, and we will be calling upon you to attend a Special General Meeting on the 11th December when we hope to have the candidates that we have been able to support to come forward for final selection.

As the process moves forward, we will give more information, but at this time it is still early. We have, however, made it clear that we prefer to have someone who lives locally within the South East Essex area.

We will keep you informed as much as we can, but please do not share this information with other people, as we do not want rumours circulating and going back to other Parties albeit, on this occasion, some are not putting up candidates unless you are a UKIP person, who declare they are going to stand even though UKIP have nothing to offer as with David Amess's help, we have already left Europe!

This is a sad time for all of us, but I take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and, hopefully, we will move forward with our new Member of Parliament. I hope you will all be able to give that person your full support to ensure they feel welcomed into Southend West Constituency and successful in maintaining the seat for the Conservatives.



Sir David Amess (1952 - 2021)

Member of Parliament for Southend West

(1997 - 2021)

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



Words cannot begin to describe the devastating effects we all still feel by the brutal loss of Sir David Amess. I for one, am still feeling the effects of mourning for the loss of such a nice and kind man. He was a remarkable and unique person, as well as an outstanding MP for Southend West and I am quite confident when I say we shall not see another Sir David Amess anytime soon. With a heavy heart, we must though, turn our attention to the bye election this tragic loss has brought about.

The successor will have many challenges when elected, not least learning to live with the emotional legacy of this tragic event. Whoever that person may be, in respect of the great legacy Sir David has left, we must all give full support to our new MP. As David himself would say to me on more than one occasion, "the first duty of a Conservative Association is to ensure that it's MP and Councillors are elected to office". That message is never more poignant than now. Whilst we will all have personal favourites for the job, if your preferred candidate is not successful, it will be personally disappointing for you, but we must think of the Conservative Association and the Party and make sure our new MP succeeds.

Success in this by-election is not in question, it will be more akin to a coronation rather than an election. That said, we must have one eye on the next General Election, whenever that may be. We cannot take anything for granted these days and we should certainly not underestimate the 'David Amess' factor in what is currently considered a 'Conservative Safe Seat'.

Let's do David proud and work 'as one' to ensure local and national Conservative success!

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

Membership

The membership has stayed steady at 322, with 8 Armed Forces and 26 Under 26 year olds.

I had to cancel our Annual Dinner at 3-4 hours' notice on 15th October due to the tragic murder of Sir David Amess MP. Much of my time since then has been spent talking to visitors, of whom there were many, bringing floral tributes, cards, letters, signing the Condolence Book. I was responsible for drawing up lists of people wishing to attend the Funeral Service at either St. Mary's Church or Westminster Cathedral. Both services were moving and memorable. After the St. Mary's service we came back to Iveagh Hall to see the cortege pass by and the street outside was lined by residents five or six deep who all clapped as it passed. Attending the Requiem Mass at Westminster Cathedral was an honour and a privilege.



Fundraising

We have been able to resume some fundraising activities over the past few weeks. At the end of lockdown Jean Joel, who had run the 1955 Supper Club for some years, decided to resign and asked Sally Hayes and myself to take it over as a Luncheon Club. We asked Judith Canham and Joyce Lambert to help and we have had three very successful lunches at Chalkwell Park Rooms since. People enjoy going to that venue, they like meeting at lunchtime, and we have had 45 people book each time.

We have had two lunches of the Marlborough Club where Committee members take it in turn to cook a course. The team there are Jackie Davidson, Jenny Snoch, Joyce Lambert and Judith Canham, ably assisted by Joyce's relations Lorna and Carol. We provide a good home cooked meal for £14 and average about 20 people each time with a speaker. Next month we are holding a Christmas buffet with entertainment by a U3A Ukulele Club and will be able to take more guests.

I am happy to say we work together well as a team and in all our events we aim to make a profit for the Association funds, but mainly we try to get people together and enjoying company.

Our annual Chairman's Christmas Tea Party will be held on Sunday 5th December at 2.30 – 4.30. The usual team as above will be on duty to provide the food!

News from Southend Council - Cllr Meg Davidson - Deputy Group Leader

Sir David Amess

In the aftermath of the tragic death of Sir David Amess, normal life at Southend Council was put on hold. A Special meeting of the full Council was held on 21st October dedicated to paying tribute to Sir David. There was music performed by the Southend Boys' and Girls' Choirs prior to the start of the meeting and every councillor who wished to make a personal tribute was given the opportunity to do so. Councillors of all political persuasions were united in honouring the memory of our much loved MP.



Normal politics will resume soon. The Conservative Group is increasingly concerned about the direction taken by the Labour/Independent/Lib Dem coalition currently running the Council. We will continue to question, challenge and oppose policies which we believe to be wrong.

Better Queensway investigation report

The long awaited Investigation report into the plan to close the Queensway underpass was published and discussed in September. The report, undertaken by the Council's Head of Internal Audit, has vindicated the Conservative Group's position. The report confirms, firstly, that the previous Conservative administration did not approve any plan to close the Queensway underpass (as has been repeatedly claimed) and secondly, that there were significant shortcomings in the Better Queensway procurement process.

SEND Investigation

Thanks to the prompt and determined efforts by Cllr James Courtenay, Shadow Cabinet member for Children & Learning, we have been successful in securing an independent investigation into the Council's provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). On top of this came the disastrous start to the new arrangements for Home to School Transport for SEND children and adults with learning disabilities, so we are challenging hard on this too.

Seaway development scheme

The latest horror is the Labour-led coalition's decision to hand over £10m of taxpayers' money to the developers of the £50m Seaway scheme which entails building a cinema and leisure complex on the Seaway car park adjacent to Lucy Road. The Conservative Group believes that this would not be a good use of taxpayers' money and that it is time to abandon the proposed scheme. It is no longer financially viable, and we believe that it would be far better to retain the Seaway car park as it is and focus on securing investment elsewhere on Southend High Street.

A Word from Southend West Young Conservatives Chairman - Andy Wilkins

Most recently, as a youth wing, we've received a vast amount of emails and messages from the wider Conservative community following the untimely passing of Sir David which we massively appreciated.

More recently, I laid a wreath at Southend Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday on behalf of both Southend YC groups and we are now in the process of finalising an induction booklet for our members, alongside a plan of events for 2022, which should be action packed with the core principals of learning and enjoying at the same time.

2021 has very much been a year of cleaning out the old wood and bringing in new ideas of innovations and stability, which will be implemented in the coming weeks, so stay tuned!

Wishing you all a very good festive period alongside a good end to 2021 and hopefully we will see some of you attending our events in 2022.



CWO

The CWO meets monthly for lunches at La Sirena restaurant on Leigh Road, near to Iveagh Hall.

We have a Christmas lunch on Monday 13th December (just a few places left) and a lunch on Monday 17th January, both at the time of 12.00 for 12.30.

Our lunches are lots of fun and a good chance to catch up with your friends.

Booking is essential with either Mo Butler (01702 510061) or with the SWCA OFFICE. New members are always welcome.



If you give Jackie (in the office) your email address, we will add you to our invitation list.

Look forward to seeing you there!

Georgina Phillips, Deputy Chair

BLLENHEIM PARK

In Blenheim Park, we are all still saddened by the unnecessary and horrible murder of Sir David. Many residents have approached me in the streets to express their shock and reminisce about how David helped them. Walking through the Ward, I can't help but recall all the campaigning and interaction we shared over the years.

The two funeral services were both incredibly moving and fitting in their own way, and they were a worthy tribute to such a splendid servant to Southend. David would have wanted us all to carry on and we have, of course, to work to elect his successor.

The ward business is ongoing too. Our Ward candidate, Bernard Arcscott and I are working on a few planning matters. We were unsuccessful in delaying the Juniper Road homeless pods, but had good publicity as the only political group speaking out against them, with coverage in the Echo and Leigh Times.



Westminster Cathedral



The latest Full Council saw some victories for the Conservatives, and some of the Administration looked uncomfortable, to say the least! We shall keep pressure going until May elections when, with hard work and sense, we shall hopefully regain control of Southend City Council.

Councillor Helen Boyd, Blenheim Park Ward

NEWS FROM WARDS cont'd

CHALKWELL

ESTUARY 2021

Estuary 2021 festival: the lives, landscapes and histories of the spectacular Thames Estuary

Across 23 days and along 107 miles of estuary coastline, the hugely ambitious Estuary 2021 festival took place in May and June this year, welcoming over 208k people to explore 94 artworks in the landscape and in Covid-safe venues. New audiences from the region and beyond visited estuary sites for the very first time - attracted to explore the installations, films, events and discussions presented in response to the region's industrial heartland, nationally important heritage, protected marshes, wildlife and seaside towns. The festival supported 248 student placements from 8 universities, and opportunities for 68 local people to join the festival as volunteers. 107,854 people joined the online programme of films, talks and discussions enabling access to the estuary to a global audience.

The festival was organised by arts organisation Metal for South Essex working in partnership with arts organisation Cement Fields based in North Kent. You can look back at the archive of artworks, events and artists on the website www.estuaryfestival.com

'Love that it's here in the park on the estuary, not in gallery, so you get an idea of the land they're talking about' - Audience feedback



Artwork: *Waiting for Climate Change* by Isaac Cordal. Photographed: Mark Massey



Artwork: *In The End Is The Beginning. Towards The Thames Estuary* by Nadav Kander. Photographed: Jack Perkin



Artwork: *The Water Replies*
Photographed: Mark Massey

EASTWOOD PARK



You would have thought that obtaining a Christmas tree for Rochford Corner would be a simple affair, but far from it, as we and the Eastwood Lions discovered to our dismay; 20ft trees are in short supply and over £1000 each! The Lions wisely settled for a smaller one, but still costing nearly £200. The Eastwood Councillors agreed to use our small amount of community funding to provide a fixed power supply for the lights, which will be available for future years. However, we have learnt that 'Scrooge' is alive and well in the form of DEFRA a Government Dept, who are proposing to charge nearly £200 a tree to inspect them! Cllr Chris Walker and I have asked the Parks Department to look into

planting a real tree at Rochford Corner that can be decorated each year, avoiding the need to buy one – we have also asked why they do not plant a group of fir trees in Edwards Hall park for future use – we could even make some money out of selling them.



Edwards Hall Park

Happy Christmas from Eastwood Park Ward.

Councillor Andrew Moring - Eastwood Park Ward

ST LAURENCE

RUMOURED RELIEF ROAD

We all know that all governments want more housing but it must be up to local people to tell councillors whether any such developments are welcome or not. Equally, wanting Highway builds to make traffic movement easier and quicker are understandable but like a Stonehenge proposal, the Court ruled against it and declared government to have acted beyond its jurisdiction.

The relief road is still rumoured but not denied by Southend Borough Council officials. A local councillor from Thorpe is often saying what you should have in St Laurence Ward and the relief road latest rumours are traceable to the Independent/Labour/LibDem Council who are careful to protect their wards, but you, in St Laurence Ward, are subject to their whims and frankly dangerous overgrowth in St Laurence Ward.



Cllrs Buckley & McGlone

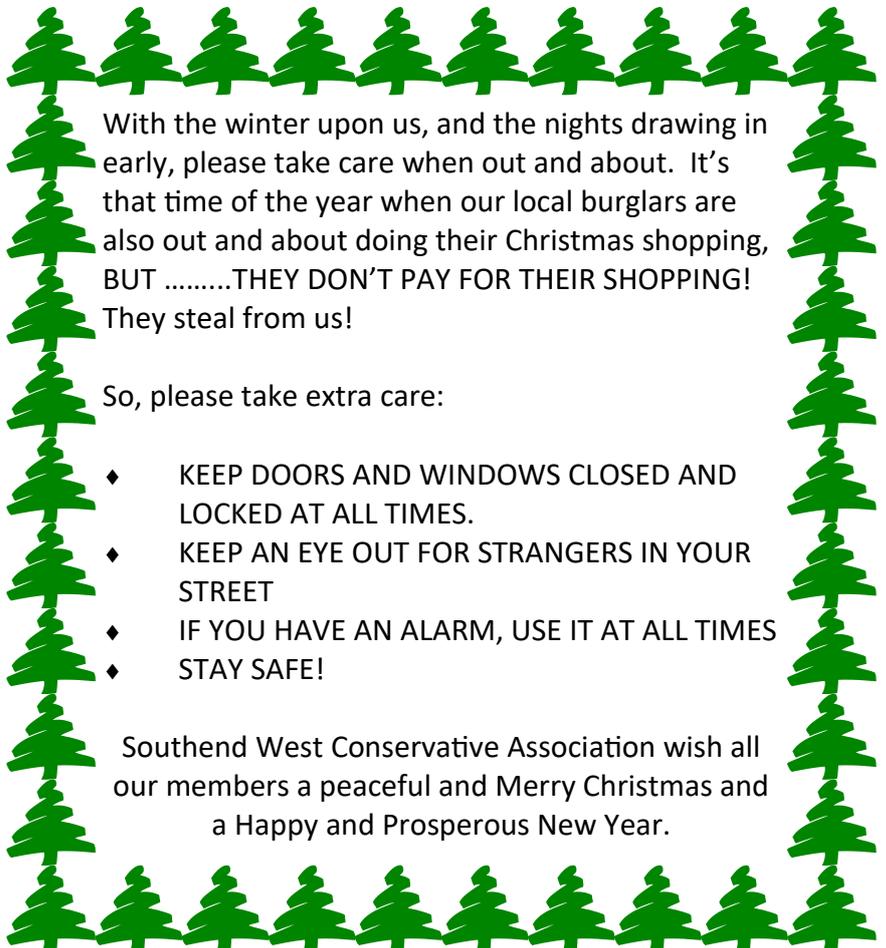
In evidence, Lundy Close has an innocent piece of long used leisure land, that a Labour councillor in St Laurence Ward has singularly failed to vote against, housing, being built upon it. What will happen now, abstentions or politics being put before protecting any spare land we happen to have in St Laurence Ward?

This issue of more housing and any relief road, will involve a protracted effort to either stop these developments or get them shrunk to cause less damage to our environment and personal health.

We thank a number of you who have already been in touch about these significant and important issues.

STOP PRESS - Since issuing this article in the St Laurence Ward newsletter recently, we have been made aware of the existence of a map containing the details of the "relief road" across agricultural land near to St Laurence park. Despite a Freedom of Information request and other enquiries to the Council we have been denied access to this information which in our opinion is disappointing and smacks of secrecy. So much for the open and transparent governance from the current Labour/Lib Dem/Independent coalition we were promised .

CHRISTMAS IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER!



With the winter upon us, and the nights drawing in early, please take care when out and about. It's that time of the year when our local burglars are also out and about doing their Christmas shopping, BUTTHEY DON'T PAY FOR THEIR SHOPPING! They steal from us!

So, please take extra care:

- ◆ KEEP DOORS AND WINDOWS CLOSED AND LOCKED AT ALL TIMES.
- ◆ KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR STRANGERS IN YOUR STREET
- ◆ IF YOU HAVE AN ALARM, USE IT AT ALL TIMES
- ◆ STAY SAFE!

Southend West Conservative Association wish all our members a peaceful and Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.