



BRAINTREE CONSTITUENCY CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION
Suite 11, The Centre, Lakes Industrial Park, Lower Chapel Hill, Braintree, Essex, CM7 3RU
Tel: 01376 512386
Email: theoffice@braintreeconservatives.co.uk

Braintree Constituency Conservative Association Chairman's Report to Members January 2019

Members, Colleagues and Friends

I thought that as we moved into the new year it was time to review the key events of last year and look forward to the new year and report to you all.

First let me wish you all a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year and as we approach the 29th March deadline for the UK leaving the European Union, I believe all of us will find it hard to remember that we are members of the same party and as such we will need to remain friends and colleagues even though we don't all agree with the route that the UK Government is taking to secure the future of our country.

Early in January 2018, James Cleverly was promoted to Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party which has meant he has been busy with Party modernisation and organisational change. Following the election results in 2017 he has been involved with recruitment of new members, reviewing and resetting the way CCHQ manages campaigns, but he stays firmly engaged and involved in the Braintree District. I am sure that the changes that James is working on will lead to more professional capability to fight future general elections.

Last year was busy for the Association Executive with a change of Chairman, Nigel McCrea handing over the role to your new chairman, and I would like to thank Nigel for the great work in keeping the Association finances in good shape and handing over an Association that has resources and reserves. He has also been a great help and coach to me to ensure that we continue in the same direction of travel, whilst taking up the Treasurer role on the Executive. At the AGM in March, Wendy Schmitt, Philip Rawlinson and the President Nigel Harley were confirmed in their positions until the 2019 AGM.

Several of our members attended this years National Conference in October in Birmingham. Nigel McCrea presented the Prime Minister with a cheque to become a member of the Blue League of leading Conservative Associations which support the Party's national campaigns. Iona Parker received a certificate from George Freeman, the chair of the National Policy Forum, for the excellent contributions from our own policy forum discussions (see below).



The Executive has been active throughout the year in finding and selecting the best candidates to stand at the District Council Elections to be held on May 2nd, 2019. This year the Party changed the process of selection, which has meant interviewing all applicants including sitting councillors, which unfortunately led to a small number of sitting councillors not being selected to stand and a significant increased work load to arrive at a final list, however we have now a full candidate list agreed for all wards.

On the political front the membership has been playing and will continue to play in 2019, an active part in forming the Conservative Party policies by holding quarterly Conservative Policy Forum meetings that take one area of government policy e.g. The NHS funding and debate the issues in order that the Association is able make constructive critical comments back to CCHQ policy group. This is led by Cllr. Iona Parker (see earlier) who chairs the meetings and writes the reports for inclusion into policy thinking, however as these are held in a different local hostelry across the district, they are most enjoyable social events and if any member wants to join in please contact Karen in the Office.

Social Events

There were few social events this year across the Association, and the traditional Annual Dinner was not able to be arranged due to difficulties securing a notable speaker for the annual dinner, however this is now back on track with a dinner on March 8th with George Freeman as speaker. Another dinner is scheduled for later in the year when Penny Mordant has agreed to attend as guest speaker.

However, the branches have been active during 2018 with Halstead Branch holding a Garden Party on Saturday 2nd June in Lamarsh which was a beautiful day in a beautiful setting, and on 26th October the Hedingham Branch held a successful Italian Evening at Baythorne End Vinery, which was well attended by members. James Cleverly attended both of these and gave an update on Westminster.

George Courtauld organised a clay pigeon shoot in May which was well attended and raised about £1000.

The 999Club is still going but more participants are needed. This club is open to non-BCCA and BCCA members alike.

2019 and the May 2nd District Council Elections

This year will be one of the most difficult in living memory for the Conservative Party, with talk of the Conservative Party splitting, the Prime Minister being replaced in a leadership contest, a general election being forced by the Labour Party. Of course, whatever happens we will be dealing with the Referendum Result as the governing party; I can only assure you all that whatever the Westminster Parliament or Conservative Party decides we are ready and willing to support. The finances are stable and we have sufficient funds to be able to undertake the current District Elections. If an unplanned General Election is called, we will need to undertake further fundraising if we are to effectively fight a very difficult campaign.

There are now just over 100 days until polling day for the District Council Elections and the next few months are going to be incredibly busy for us all. We have been active during the last quarter 2018 in our key target wards with surveys to communicate and discover the issues that worry the residents. Now we are significantly ramping campaigning activity across the key wards in February and we will be campaigning across all wards starting in early March. The campaign is planned and adequately funded and the candidates have been briefed on the successful record of the Braintree District Council and the campaign strategy so we are ready to maintain control of the District Council

Yours



John McKee

Chairman