

Annual Parliamentary Report

This has been quite an extraordinary year.

I would like to thank John, the members of the association executive, our councillors, and members for the continued support I have received throughout the year.

It may seem like a lifetime ago but it was in May of 2019 that Theresa May announced that she would be standing down in the Summer. I explored the possibility of running for our party's leadership, and while I got a huge amount of support both in Braintree and across the country it became clear that the party wasn't willing to take a chance on a relative newbie. I don't regret running, and I was obviously delighted that Boris Johnson was successful.

I was honoured to be appointed as Party Chairman by the new Prime Minister and I immediately set about preparations for party conference and a forthcoming general election.

Parliamentary activity was completely dominated by arguments about Brexit and attempts to break the deadlock. The Summer and Autumn of last year were incredibly difficult, with long standing friends and colleagues split over this issue.

Despite parliament being recalled, party conference went ahead and was well attended by members. I changed the format so there were fewer long speeches and more interactive sessions with party members. The feedback was positive and if you went I hope you enjoyed it.

November and December were taken up with the General Election. I visited Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and every region in England. We fought a focussed and effective campaign and get a fantastic result, getting solid results right across Essex and getting fantastic new MPs in constituencies we have never held before.

Once again I owe you a huge debt of gratitude. The Association organised and delivered a great local campaign and provided financial and campaign support to a number of marginal constituencies. Knowing Braintree was in safe hands allowed me to focus on the national campaign and help deliver our 80 seat majority.

I am now at the Foreign Office & DFID looking after North Africa and the Middle East. It is, in my humble opinion, one of the best jobs in government.

I will of course still be busy but, once COVID-19 has been beaten, I will be able to start visiting schools, businesses, charities and other organisations, and restart my regular advice surgeries.

It has been a tough but rewarding year. I doubt I would have navigated it successfully without your help and support.

Thank you.

James.

Rt Hon James Cleverly MP
Member of Parliament for Braintree.
Minister of State, Foreign & Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development