

**DAVENTRY CONSTITUENCY CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

7.30pm Friday 17<sup>TH</sup> March 2017  
The Abbey Centre, Daventry, NN11 4XG

**Minutes and Reports**

**1. President's opening remarks**

Gina King welcomed the room and Chris Heaton-Harris MP in particular who she congratulated on his recent promotion to Assistant Whip. She also thanked out new Police and Crime Commissioner, Stephen Mold, for his attendance.

Michael then held a minute of silence to remember the members we had lost last year and extended thoughts to Linda Carter-Hirst who is currently recovering from a stroke in Hospital.

**2. Apologies for absence:**

A list of Apologies was read by Daisy as follows: Nick Bunting, Trevor Sherman, Mary Sewell, Terry Sewell, Mr and Mrs Mayes, Anne Ford, Lady Lowther, Wendy Amos, Alan Chantler, Ann Carter, Sally and Graham Smith, Joan and Alex Kirkbride, John and Judy Shephard, Jane Melling, Scott Brown, Kevin Parker, Sir Bruce and Lady MacPhail, Jane Russell-Parsons, Peter and Pat McAlister, Gladys Jeyes, Dennis Tidmarsh, Carole Moore, Fred Howard, Christopher Greenwood, Ann Spicer, Daniel Lister, Chris Edon, Colin Morgan, Carol Brown.

**3. Minutes of the last AGM 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016**

These were accepted as a true record. Proposed by David James and seconded by Keith Mason. From a show of hands all members were in favour.

**4. To receive and adopt a report on the work of the Association for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016, from the Constituency Chairman, Mr Michael Orton-Jones**

Michael Orton-Jones presented the report included in Annex A. The report was proposed by Ann Donaldson and seconded by Chris Millar. From a show of hands all members were in favour.

**5. To receive and adopt the Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016, presented by the Treasurer, Mr John Stephenson**

John Stephenson presented the accounts included in Annex B. The accounts were proposed by Robin Brown and seconded by Ian Robertson. From a show of hands all members were in favour.

**5.b (Addition) To receive a report from the Police and Crime Commissioner, Mr Stephen Mold.**

Stephen provided members with an update on what he had achieved in his first 9 months as Northamptonshire's Police and Crime Commissioner.

**6. To elect the officers for the ensuing year:**

Daisy Peck reported that there had only been one nominee for four of the statutory roles these were:

**President** – Mrs Gina King

**Chairman** – Mr Michael Orton-Jones

**Deputy Chairman (Political)** – Mr Robin Brown

**Deputy Chairman (Membership & Fundraising)** – Mrs Wendy Amos

As there had been no other nominations for these four posts they were duly declared elected.

**Honorary Treasurer** - Only one nomination was received, from the current Treasurer John Stephenson, because this was received after the allotted deadline Daisy put the nomination to the floor. There were no further nominations and John was proposed by Keith Mason and seconded by Catherine Morton. From a show of hands all members were in favour.

**Additional Officers** - The following nominations were received; Continuing members: Anne Donaldson, Jo Gilford, John Shephard New Additions: Adam Brown, Ann Carter, David James, Colin Morgan. As there is no limit to the number of additional officers who can support the management team it was put to the members that all seven are adopted en bloc. This was proposed by Colin Poole and seconded by Shirley Frost. From a show of hands all members were in favour.

**7. To appoint auditors or such other persons who may be qualified to certify the accounts**

John Stephenson reported that Aileen Major had kindly volunteer to certify the accounts for us this year. She has helped John with the accounts over the last couple of years and is suitably qualified. This was proposed by Robin Brown and seconded by David James. From a show of hands all members were in favour.

**8. To elect Vice Presidents for the ensuing year**

Daisy reported there had been two new nominations for Vice Presidents this year these were Cllr Alan Hills and Cllr Cecile Irving-Swift. The current Vice Presidents are Lord Boswell of Aynho, Lady Morton, Mrs Gina King, Mr Robin Brown and Mr Brian Price. The members were asked to vote to approve all 7 as Vice Presidents en bloc. This was proposed by Adam Brown and seconded by Malcolm Longley. From a show of hands all members were in favour.

**9. To receive a report from the MP, Mr Chris Heaton-Harris**

Chris updated the members on his Parliamentary work over the last year, a written report for which is included in Annex D. He also thanked Michael and the Association Officers for all their hard work over the last year. Chris then took 10 minutes of questions from the members.

**10. Party Chairman Award**

Michael Orton-Jones reported that this year the Party is taking the time to recognise the unsung hero's among our members. The 2017 award was presented to Joan Kirkbride. Joan was unable to attend the AGM but the following speech was given:

Joan has been a member of Daventry Conservatives ever since she moved into the Constituency in 1968. Over the last 50 years she had become a dependable member of the team. She has been a leading member of the Nether Heyford Branch during which she served two terms as Chairman and was active in fundraising and political work. Joan has also been a member of the Association Executive Council in both Daventry and Northampton South as her village moved with the boundary changes. Most notably Joan has served as a Conservative Councillor, she earned a strong reputation as a South Northants District Councillor for 8 years up to 1983. This year she is retiring as a Northamptonshire County Councillor after 20 years' service, the majority of which have been spent in the Cabinet, where she was responsible for Education, then Youth Services, and served as deputy leader. She will finish her term of office as a member of the adoption panel in May this year. Held in high regard by her colleagues she has also served two terms as Chairman as the County Council. Joan has been a huge asset to the Daventry and Northampton South Conservative Teams for the last 50 years and we are extremely grateful for all her work. She is a classic example of a community campaigner who through her many years of making small differences has undoubtedly had a enormous impact on our County and has been a suburb ambassador for the Conservative Party. Joan is unfortunately unable to be here this evening due to attending a civic dinner in South Northants but we will ensure that she receives her certificate shortly.

**11. Closure of the meeting**

Michael thanked everyone for attending, and Rose Freeman in particular for her help in the office over the last year.

- END -

Annex A.

**Chairman's Annual Report for Daventry Constituency Conservative Association for  
the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016**

**Background**

The Chairman's Annual Report 2016 on the work of the Constituency is combined with our Financial Statement 2016, as required by the PPER Act 2000. This Act requires the Association to collect and declare all financial information and results from branches (and anyone else) within this constituency that raises funds in the name of the Conservative Party.

The Constituency is referred to by the Electoral Commission as the Accounting Unit. This report will be submitted to the Party Compliance Officer at Conservative Central Office, who will in turn submit the report to the Electoral Commission along with those from all other constituencies. For the purposes of the Act, the Constituency Chairman is the "Treasurer" or Constituency Compliance Officer, and is responsible in law for ensuring that the Act is complied with.

This Annual Report contains all the information sent to the Electoral Commission, but has been expanded to include the more usual information given in an Annual Report.

This statement of Accounts provides a report on the political and financial activities of the Daventry Constituency Conservative Association. The Association's registered address is:

78 St. George's Avenue  
Northampton  
NN2 6JF  
Tel: 01604 859721  
Email: [agent@wnc.uk.com](mailto:agent@wnc.uk.com)

For the purposes of the Political Parties Elections Referendums Act 2000 Mr Michael Orton-Jones is deemed to be Treasurer of the Association.

## **DCCA Chairman's Report year ending 2016**

It has been a roller coaster year politically with some extraordinary election results overseas and the referendum in the United Kingdom. Although there were and are of course differing views on the merits of Brexit we have all managed to remain friends in the Daventry Constituency and determined to achieve a successful outcome. Our Member Chris Heaton-Harris is in the thick of things in the Whips' Office and is no doubt playing a crucial role when there is such a thin Conservative majority.

### **Finances**

Many thanks to John Stephenson our treasurer for controlling our finances which are in better shape than before. We are still struggling financially so need to encourage ever more fundraising activity.

### **West Northamptonshire Conservative Association**

We share our offices and our Agent, Daisy Peck, with South Northamptonshire Conservative Association. This allows us to split the costs of running an active campaign office and enables us to support our activities financially.

The offices are located at 78 St Georges Avenue Northampton and are convenient and well enough appointed. We are in close touch with the trustees of the building which is owned equally between Northampton North and South and believe we shall be able to remain there for the reasonably foreseeable future.

I have met the various chairmen of South Northants regularly and relations between the two constituencies are most harmonious, as they are with the Associations of Northampton North and South.

### **Staff**

Our agent Daisy Peck has been heavily stretched with an enormous workload and arrangements are in hand to give her more help. We are most grateful to Daisy for her enthusiasm and devotion to the cause. We have been most fortunate to have Rose Freeman, an experienced former agent, helping Daisy one day a week.

### **Elections**

It seems a long time ago now but we were delighted that Stephen Mold was elected Police and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire. I have attended various meetings of the Northamptonshire Area which brings together all seven constituency organisations and have been given the dubious privilege of taking the minutes. The PCC election was run on a county wide basis and our then agent Lydia Smith played a major part.

There were also Daventry District elections for twelve seats. We successfully won eight of them thanks to the hard work of our former agent Lydia Smith and our dedicated candidates.

### **Fundraising and Social Events**

Highlights of the year apart from numerous excellent branch events were:

Dinner with Boris at Derngate where around 400 of us dined in style. It was a critical moment in the Conservative leadership campaign and both Boris Johnson and Andrea

Leadsom spoke. Congratulations to Sally Smith, Wendy Amos and their organising committee who put on a spectacularly good show.

Malcolm Longley's Summer Hog Roast. This was well attended on a fine summer's day in an ideal location. Just the sort of event to attract new and old supporters.

Evening at Guilsborough Court. Gavin Williamson, Chief Whip gave us a splendidly amusing and engaging speech in a large marquee kindly provided by Hugh Lowther.

Christmas Drinks at Flore Fields. Again well attended and Lord Saachi the famous author of the "Labour Isn't Working" slogan spoke to us about his experiences in a most charming manner. Events at Flore Fields are always a big success and we are very grateful for all the work that Lady Morton puts into making them so.

### **Branch activity**

My hearty thanks must go to the officers and committee members of our branches who run very enjoyable events and raise essential funds. I have tried to attend as many of these as possible. Our current most active branches are Flore, Kislingbury, Knightley Villages, Nether Heyford, Staverton, Hellidon and Catesby. Some say that younger people are not interested in boring formal meetings with minutes but are happy to discuss political issues and of course to take part in good social events. We need to work out how best to attract them to the cause and to cover the constituency effectively.

### **Business Breakfast Club**

Meetings have moved to the lovely new location of Whilton Mill kindly hosted by Mr Roger Ashby. It is a golden opportunity for business people to have direct access to our Member of Parliament Chris Heaton-Harris and bend his ear. We could do with more members.

### **Patron's Club**

Many thanks to Michael Savage who is the star promoter and organiser of the Patrons' Club which has proved to be such a useful fundraiser and is much enjoyed by members. His efforts are gratefully appreciated.

### **Ladies Luncheon Club**

Well done to the Ladies Luncheon Club. In 2016 speakers included the man behind Warner Edwards Gin and David Fletcher from Flog It. They have a tour of Parliament planned for June 2017. Again new members will be made very welcome.

**Boundary Review.** We know that our constituency boundaries are going to change. Some of us including Daventry town will be joining forces with the Lutterworth area and some of us will probably go into South Northants or even Northampton South constituencies. Further clarification is awaited from the Boundary Commission.

**Finally!** I was asked to take on the constituency chairmanship on a temporary basis and must admit that I have very much enjoyed the company and friendship of all involved. We face serious challenges in all directions but we do live in one of the finest areas of the United Kingdom. We must not be complacent. Best wishes to everyone and many thanks for all your efforts.

**Michael Orton-Jones**

**Daventry Constituency Conservative Association Chairman**

Annex B.

**DAVENTRY CONSTITUENCY CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION  
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT  
AND  
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2016**

**DAVENTRY CONSTITUENCY CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION  
ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2016**

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**Introduction**

These accounts provide a report on the political and financial activities of the Daventry Constituency Conservative Association Accounting Unit.

**Registered address**

The Daventry Constituency Conservative Association Accounting Unit's registered address is:

4 Matthew Parker Street,  
London,  
SW1H 9HQ

**Elected Representatives**

Christopher Heaton-Harris MP

**Responsible Officers**

Michael Orton Jones Chairman and Registered Treasurer  
John Stephenson Treasurer

**Political activities**

The main election this year was for the Police and Crime Commissioner held on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

**Branches**

The unit has eighteen branches under its direct control and all income received and expenditure incurred by those branches have been included in the Unit's accounts:

Boughton & Pitsford	Heyfords
Bramptons	Kislingbury
Braunston	Knightley
Brixworth	Long Buckby
Cracks Hill	Milton Malsor
Daventry Town	Moulton
East Haddon	Staverton
Flore and Brockhall	Weedon
Guilsborough and West Haddon	Welford

**Financial activities**

**Income overview**

The Association had a surplus for the year of £13,278 compared with a surplus of £13,125 for the previous year

**Expenditure overview**

**Continuing expenditure**

The Association's expenditure is anticipated at the current level in 2017.

**DAVENTRY CONSTITUENCY CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION  
ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2016  
(CONTINUED)**

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**Balance sheet overview**

The credit of £10,125 was in respect of donations made to meet specific future projects and funds collected on behalf of the Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commissioner election campaign and not yet distributed.

**Accounting notes**

These accounts have been prepared using the accruals accounting method, the same as last year.



**DAVENTRY CONSTITUENCY CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION  
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2016**

	Note	2016		2015	
		£	£	£	£
<b>Income</b>					
Membership	1	11,631		12,784	
Patrons' Club		3,728		4,388	
Donations		2,123		1,872	
Branch income	3	9,238		9,448	
Raffles	5	821		1,272	
Fighting fund		465		27,211	
Boris Johnson dinner		10,914		-	
Christmas Party Flore Fields		2,448		-	
Long Buckby dinner	3	2,175		2,722	
Guilsborough reception		825		-	
Hog Roast		439		-	
Braunston Marina supper		-		1,445	
Flore Fields - Priti Patel		-		1,470	
Parliament visit		-		1,180	
Members' Handbook		423		590	
Breakfast Club		190		570	
Ladies Luncheon Club		-		500	
Miscellaneous income		<u>619</u>		<u>1,571</u>	
<b>Total income</b>			<b>46,039</b>		<b>67,023</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
<b>Staff costs</b>					
Salaries	6	17,741		24,586	
<b>Office costs</b>					
Telephone		1,626		1,941	
Printing		582		2,054	
Stationery		1,886		1,183	
Postage		1,580		2,991	
Insurance		298		289	
Equipment lease		317		527	
Website costs		300		300	
Staff expenses		2,121		2,432	
Campaigning costs		1,605		15,202	
Fundraising costs		-		1,670	
<b>Financing charges</b>					
Bank charges		767		670	
Refund of overpaid donation		2,250		-	
Contributions to Conservative Central Office		1,243		-	
Miscellaneous costs		<u>445</u>		<u>53</u>	
<b>Total expenditure</b>			<b><u>32,761</u></b>		<b><u>53,898</u></b>

**Surplus of income over expenditure** £13,278 £13,125  
**DAVENTRY CONSTITUENCY CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION**  
**BALANCE SHEET**  
**AS AT**  
**31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2016**

	Note	2016		2015	
		£	£	£	£
Current assets					
Cash at bank		23,121		2,341	
West Northamptonshire Conservatives		<u>5,639</u>		<u>3,016</u>	
		28,760		5,357	
Current liabilities					
Accruals		<u>(10,125)</u>		-	
Net assets			<u>£18,635</u>		<u>£5,357</u>
Financed by:					
Reserves brought forward		5,357		(7,768)	
Surplus for the period		<u>13,278</u>		<u>13,125</u>	
			<u>£18,635</u>		<u>£5,357</u>

**DAVENTRY CONSTITUENCY CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION  
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2016**

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**1. Membership**

	2016 £	2015 £
Membership fees received directly by the accounting unit	11,372	12,696
Membership fees received centrally by the central party on behalf of the accounting unit	<u>259</u>	<u>88</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£11,631</u></b>	<b><u>£12,784</u></b>

**2. Donations**

	2016 <u>£7,651</u>	2015 <u>£6,261</u>
Cash donations		

In total, the Association had 2 donations over £1,500 (including cash and non-cash donations), totalling £30,000. £20,000 of these donations was sponsorship of a fundraising event held jointly with the South Northamptonshire Conservative Association and the surplus on that event has been shared with that Association and reflected in that Association's accounts. £10,000 was given to fund a specific project which has not yet started and consequently the funds have been accrued in these accounts.

**3. Branch income and expenditure**

	2016		2015	
	Income £	Expenditure £	Income £	Expenditure £
Daventry Town			1,224	
Flore and Brockhall	708	48	1,699	314
Heyfords	1,468		1,706	307
Kislingbury	2,005	225	6,479	3,149
Knightly	1,930			
Long Buckby	4,523	2,348	5,147	2,425
Staverton	1,600		2,589	479
	<u>£12,234</u>	<u>£2,621</u>	<u>£18,844</u>	<u>£6,674</u>

**5. Miscellaneous income**

	2016 <u>£821</u>	2015 <u>£1,272</u>
Raffles		

**6. Staff costs**

	2016 £	2015 £
Salary costs	16,576	22,612
Social security costs	<u>1,165</u>	<u>1,971</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£17,741</u></b>	<b><u>£24,583</u></b>

Number of staff	1.25	1.5
Average cost	£14,192	£16,388

**DAVENTRY CONSTITUENCY CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION**  
**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED**  
**31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2016**  
**(Continued)**

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I confirm that the above the Income and Expenditure Account on page 3, the Balance Sheet on page 4 and the notes on pages 5 to 6 have been prepared in accordance with guidance issued by the Electoral Commission and are correct to the best of my knowledge. In addition I confirm that these accounts have been approved by the members in general meeting.

M. Orton Jones  
Chairman and Registered Treasurer  
17<sup>th</sup> March 2017

I have examined the Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet for the year ending 31st December 2016 together with the underlying accounting records and confirm that the accounts are in accordance therewith.

Annex C.

**DAVENTRY CONSTITUENCY CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION  
ELECTION RESULTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2016**

**Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commissioner Elections - Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

Candidate	Party	Number of votes	
Kevin McKeever	Labour	49,161	Elected
Stephen Mold	Conservative	58,452	
Sam Watts	UKIP	27,708	

**Daventry District Council Thirds - Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

**Abbey North (1 seat)**

Name of candidate	Description (if any)	Votes	Status
BUTLIN	Liberal Democrats	64	
LONG	The Conservative Party Candidate	484	
MACANNDRAIS	UK Independence Party (UKIP)	300	
RITCHIE	Labour and Co-operative Party	510	Elected

**Electors:** 5174

**Ballot papers:** 1367

**Turnout:** 26.42%

**Rejected papers:** 9

**Abbey South (1 seat)**

Name of candidate	Description (if any)	Votes	Status
BOWLES	Liberal Democrats	117	
EDDON	The Conservative Party Candidate	779	Elected
RAMSEY	Labour Party	625	

**Electors:** 4810

**Ballot papers:** 1540

**Turnout:** 32.02%

**Rejected papers:** 19

**Barby & Kilsby (1 seat)**

Name of candidate	Description (if any)	Votes	Status
CHAMBERLAIN	The Conservative Party Candidate	620	
LOMAX	Liberal Democrats	1053	Elected

**Electors:** 3678

**Ballot papers:** 1690

**Turnout:** 45.95%

**Rejected papers:** 17

**Braunston & Welton (1 seat)**

Name of candidate	Description (if any)	Votes	Status
PRITCHARD	Labour Party	489	Elected
SIMPSON	Liberal Democrats	80	
WILSON	The Conservative Party Candidate	404	

**Braunston & Welton Continued...****Electors:** 1960**Ballot papers:** 991**Turnout:** 50.56%**Rejected papers:** 18**Brixworth (1 seat)**

Name of candidate	Description (if any)	Votes	Status
BOOKER	UK Independence Party (UKIP)	306	
COE	Labour Party	317	
FRASER-ALLEN	The Conservative Party Candidate	928	Elected
HALL	Liberal Democrats	137	
WHIFFEN	Green Party	123	

**Electors:** 5319**Ballot papers:** 1819**Turnout:** 34.2%**Rejected papers:** 7**Drayton (1 seat)**

Name of candidate	Description (if any)	Votes	Status
DUNN	The Conservative Party Candidate	374	
FREUDENREICH	Liberal Democrats	43	
RANDALL	Labour Party	848	Elected
SCRIVEN		124	

**Electors:** 4514**Ballot papers:** 1400**Turnout:** 31.01%**Rejected papers:** 11**Hill (1 seat)**

Name of candidate	Description (if any)	Votes	Status
DABBS	Labour Party	493	
HILLS	The Conservative Party Candidate	601	Elected
PARSONS	Liberal Democrats	38	
SIMPSON		77	

**Electors:** 4269**Ballot papers:** 1219**Turnout:** 28.55%**Rejected papers:** 10**Long Buckby (1 seat)**

Name of candidate	Description (if any)	Votes	Status
FARMER	Liberal Democrats	245	
MILLAR	The Conservative Party Candidate	1070	Elected
MYERS	Labour Party	555	

**Electors:** 5147

**Ballot papers:**1893

**Turnout:** 36.78%

**Long Buckby continued...**

**Rejected papers:** 23

#### **Ravensthorpe (1 seat)**

<b>Name of candidate</b>	<b>Description (if any)</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Status</b>
COBBE	Liberal Democrats	225	
MICKLEWRIGHT	The Conservative Party Candidate	463	Elected
MYERS	Labour Party	108	

**Electors:** 1917

**Ballot papers:** 802

**Turnout:** 41.84%

**Rejected papers:** 6

#### **Spratton (1 seat)**

<b>Name of candidate</b>	<b>Description (if any)</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Status</b>
KNOWLES	Liberal Democrats	125	
MCDONALD-WALKER	Labour Party	238	
SHEPHARD	The Conservative Party Candidate	808	Elected
SPENCE	Green Party	69	

**Electors:** 3400

**Ballot papers:** 1249

**Turnout:** 36.74%

**Rejected papers:** 9

#### **Weedon (1 seat)**

<b>Name of candidate</b>	<b>Description (if any)</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Status</b>
BACHELOR	Labour Party	419	
BROWN	The Conservative Party Candidate	1276	Elected
SALAMAN	Liberal Democrats	227	

**Electors:** 5029

**Ballot papers:** 1965

**Turnout:** 39.07%

**Rejected papers:** 43

#### **Woodford (1 seat)**

<b>Name of candidate</b>	<b>Description (if any)</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Status</b>
DENBY	UK Independence Party (UKIP)	412	
GRIFFIN	The Conservative Party Candidate	918	Elected
LYTTON	Liberal Democrats	127	
RITCHIE	Labour Party	310	

Annex D.

## **Chris Heaton-Harris MP – Parliamentary Work DCCA Annual General Meeting**

March 2017

Please find below my report for the Annual General Meeting on Friday the 17<sup>th</sup> March, which details some of the work I have been doing over the last few months.

### Assistant Government Whip

At the last DCCA meeting I had just been appointed Assistant Government Whip following Theresa May's first reshuffle. Having been Chief Whip in the European Parliament during my time as a MEP, you might imagine I would know exactly what this role had in store for me, but it has been a steep learning curve!

Not only has Parliament been extraordinarily busy due to the Article 50 Bill, which I am delighted this week achieved Royal Assent to become an official Act of Parliament, but my role has changed again! You may remember my original duties as Whip meant covering Cabinet Office business, as well as Fridays in the House of Commons and Private Members' Bills. However as of January this year I'm also now in charge of Education, a hugely exciting Department, and a big addition to my work load!

Education policy over the last few months has been at the centre of Government business, with the 'Schools that work for everyone' consultation responses currently being considered. This includes the Prime Minister's plan to lift the ban on new grammar schools, as well as several other policy changes which would affect faith schools, private education and universities, in a bid to increase school places and to improve overall standards. Not only this, but the proposed new National Funding Formula to even out the spread of funding across the country has its consultation open now, and I have written to every local school on the topic, encouraging them to consider the Formula's implications and to make a contribution to the consultation.

### VAT Evasion

As I've mentioned at previous meetings, right at the start of 2016 I secured a debate in Westminster Hall on online VAT evasion and the effects this has on UK based internet retailers.

Because of this debate and the pressure I put on HMRC, the Rt. Hon George Osborne MP, the then Chancellor, announced a series of measures in the Budget 2016 to try and tackle this issue head on. Whilst his motives were genuine, sadly the legislation did not go far enough and we only saw moderate improvement in this area. I was not prepared to put this issue to bed and continued to apply pressure on the Chancellor, the Indirect Tax Team at HMRC and Jane Ellison, the Financial Secretary at the Treasury in the hope that the policy framework could be improved.

I was therefore delighted to hear the Chancellor announce a series of tougher measures in the recent Budget 2017. These measures would strengthen existing legislation and transfer responsibility onto the online market place who host these fraudulent sellers, as opposed to the sellers themselves. The so-called 'split payment' model uses technology that allows the Exchequer to charge VAT on online sales as soon as a UK consumer makes a purchase, instead of just 'hoping' these companies submit these VAT payments at a later date. This shift in obligation will undoubtedly force the likes of Amazon and eBay to change their terms of service. Not only will this help British business compete on an even playing field, it will generate an estimated £325 million a year in tax receipts by the year 2021-2022.

Writing these reports is certainly an easy task these days – politics has not been a dull place of late! Historical changes are happening before our eyes, and as ever, I am so grateful to be your Member of Parliament and represent Daventry as we navigate through these interesting times! If I can ever be of any assistance to you, please do get in touch, I am always happy to help.



Yours,

Chris

Chris Heaton- Harris MP

House of Commons  
LONDON, SW1A 0AA

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