**DAVENTRY CONSTITUENCY CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION**

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT 2018**

I present my report for the year ended 31st December 2018.

**Political**

We fought the District Council elections in May and contested 12 seats. We were successful in retaining the 10 seats we already held but did not manage to win the 2 seats held by UKIP which went to Labour. The candidates and their supporters, ably assisted by Daisy Peck, worked hard and ran a good campaign. All in all, it was a satisfactory result.

**Fund raising**

We ran several events on a constituency-wide basis but were rather plagued by speakers who did not show up. Tim Coghlan kindly hosted us at Braunston Marina and did a sterling job entertaining us when the speaker failed to arrive. The Long Buckby dinner also suffered the same fate and on this occasion Chris Heaton-Harris and several district councillors, organised by Daisy, did a turn. Despite these problems both events showed a useful surplus. The speaker failed to arrive at another event, the Christmas party hosted by Lady Morton but in this case Andrea Leadsom stepped into the breach and updated us on Brexit. Hardly a guinea a minute given the circumstances but useful and appreciated by the guests. Financially that was the most successful event that we ran.

One event when the speaker did turn up was the Gala Dinner which we held at the Saints ground in Northampton. Sajid Javid arrived on time wearing a pair of Church’s shoes which got him off to a good start. He gave a well -received speech and the evening was a great success. Although Daisy did the bulk of the organising work, it was an event sponsored by all the Constituency Associations in the county. We shared the profit in proportion to the number of tickets each Association sold and Daventry’s share, having sold more tickets than any other Association, was £1,184.

Chris Heaton-Harris’s Breakfast Club, chaired by Clive Brown, held 4 meetings in the year. These not only give the attendees an insight of the political issues of the day but also raised funds for the Association.

Our branches, as ever, were active and between them raised £7,855 and hopefully enjoyed themselves while doing so. We are very grateful to them all for their efforts. As an Association we are very fortunate to have so many active branches and the management team are very appreciative of their support.

The Patrons’ Club also raised some £2,700 for both Associations in 2018. Sadly, at the end of the year 8th December, we lost Michael Savage, who had run the Club for over 23 years. We have tried to calculate how much the Club raised over the years but the records do not go back far enough. It must have been a small fortune. Michael will be much missed.

We are very grateful to all those who give up their time and homes in this way. It does mean that we have been able to run the office and provide support to candidates at the district, county and parliamentary level and, as our Hon Treasurer will report, we find ourselves in a healthy financial position.

**Future**

Currently Brexit is taking the lion’s share of peoples’ attention but, at a local level, we are preparing for the Unitary Council elections in 2020. We are currently firming up our plans for the recruitment, approval and selection of prospective candidates.

As many of you will be aware, Daisy Peck left us in early February for a position with a London public relations firm and we wish her well in that position. We share the costs of our agent with South Northamptonshire and, after consultation with them, feel that we can no longer justify a full-time agent in view of the fact that we believe that the Unitary Council and Parliament will only hold elections every five years. There is nevertheless a significant amount of administrative work to do although we are currently unsure of the amount of time and complexity involved. Consequently, we have appointed Amy Howard as administrator on a two-month contract and will review the situation in a month’s time when we will have a clearer idea of what is involved.

**Conclusion**

We are very fortunate that Rose Freeman gives us a lot of her time. As a retired agent she knows the ropes, takes Minutes at our meetings, maintains our membership records on Central Office’s database known as VoteSource (no mean task) and generally keeps us on the right track.

I am very grateful to my Management team, especially Michael Orton-Jones who hosts our meetings at his home, and to the members of the Executive for their support.

John Stephenson

13.03.2019