

News You Can Use on the Doorstep

Leader's Monthly E-Newsletter for September

Brexit Means Brexit – and Together We'll Make it a Success



Brexit means Brexit and we are going to make a success of it here in Staffordshire and elsewhere in the UK. Theresa May as our new Prime Minister and the Conservative Government will provide strong and proven leadership as Britain begins its negotiations to leave the EU and forge a new role for ourselves in the world.

We will work hard to get the best deal for Britain while speaking up for Staffordshire and our economy—one of the fastest growing in the UK with continued good news on falling unemployment (See Below). As we conduct our negotiations, it must be a priority to regain much more control of the numbers of people who come here from Europe – but also to allow British companies to trade with the single market in goods and services as well as the wider world including the Commonwealth. At the same time, we are going to make the most of the opportunities that our departure presents – getting out into the world and doing business right across the globe free of EU red tape.

A country that works for everyone – not just the privileged

But we cannot become defined exclusively by the process of our withdrawal from the EU. We also need a Conservative Government that delivers serious reform and makes ours a country that works for everyone – not just the privileged.

Over the past seven years, we have made progress towards bringing our county together. With our One Nation Conservative Government we have stabilised the economy, reduced the budget deficit, helped more people into work than ever before - and have taken people on the lowest wages out of income tax altogether.



But there is much more to do in the run up to the next general election in 2020. If you're from a hard working family in Staffordshire, life is harder than many people in politics realise. You have a job but you don't always have job security. You may have your own home, but you worry about paying the mortgage. You can just

about manage, but you fret about the cost of living and getting your children into a good school.

That's why with Theresa May as our Prime Minister we will build:

- **An economy that works for everyone**, so we don't just maintain economic confidence and steer the country through challenging times - but we make sure that everyone can share in the country's and our county's wealth.
- **A society that works for everyone**, so we can bring people together - rich and poor, north and south, urban and rural, young and old, male and female, sick and healthy, public sector, private sector, those with skills and those without.
- **A democracy that works for everyone**, so we can restore trust and confidence in our most important institutions – and the political process itself.

We will do all this while keeping our country safe in these turbulent times with a number of threats to our national security. And we will keep our country together as one United Kingdom: the precious bond between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland that has endured for centuries.



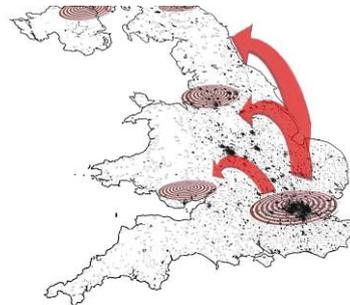
That is the mission of this Government, Staffordshire Conservatives and our County Council. Together, we will build a Better Britain.

Council Leader Outlines Next Devolution Steps

Councillor Philip Atkins OBE writes: "Since 23 June and the result of the EU Referendum, I believe Staffordshire County Council and the wider public sector have a real opportunity to engage in a conversation about devolution with Government. It will be about public sector reform, and the decentralisation of powers and funding to Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

"Following on from the enactment of Article 50, there will be return to Westminster government of powers currently exercised by Brussels. This additional workload at a national level affords us with what I believe to be a real opportunity. It is to explore locally new ways of working, while continuing to work together in partnership with our shared aim of improving the lives and aspirations of those we serve in Staffordshire.

"At our full County Council meeting on 21 July, we considered this issue and as Leader of the County Council; I would like to share with you the motion I proposed that was debated and unanimously agreed:-



"Following the referendum on June 23 this Council looks forward to the opportunity to have a conversation with Government, alongside all its local authority and other partners in Staffordshire and Stoke, about public sector reform and the devolution of powers and funding in Stoke and Staffordshire based around the following principles:

- That it should be about creating a strong economy based on a skilled and well educated workforce;
- That it should be about resolving the longstanding problems in the local health economy and driving forward the integration of health and care;
- That it should be about joining up the whole of the public sector in the area and not just local government;
- That it should be outward facing and not just internally focused, building on, rather than replacing, existing relationships and partnerships;
- That it should be based on a long term vision of government and not short term thinking on governance;
- And that governance form should follow function and be both locally determined and genuinely democratic."

Philip Atkins adds: “After months of Referendum debate it is now time to look forward rather than backwards. Regardless of where we marked our “X” on the ballot paper, it is time to come together and focus on the work we have to do. As European funding fades away, the county council has a decisive role to play in ensuring Staffordshire gets its fair share of the money previously sent to Brussels. It is a brave new world, but one we face with confidence, and with no fear.

“As we move to a time when the Council has to generate its own income through business rates and council tax, we need to make sure we have the power and the income streams needed to deliver our long-term growth plans.

“Both the public and private sector already has in place very strong partnerships across the whole of Staffordshire. This is through the Staffordshire Hundred, the Staffordshire Strategic Partnership, the Stoke and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, the Health and Well Being Board and through our regular work together; these are strong foundations upon which we can build.”

Looking Back Over Our Shoulders

Over the past seven years Staffordshire Conservatives have made our county a great place to live, work and invest in and have made us proud again of our history. It offers terrific opportunities for people to enjoy a good quality of life in safer and stronger communities, with low unemployment and higher wages. If control of the council had rested with Labour in 2009 we would still be a “coasting council” facing some of the toughest peace time challenges that the county has faced after 28 years of Labour.



Thanks to the Conservatives our county of Staffordshire is now better placed looking ahead to 2017 and the next county council elections to weather any storm with bright hopes for the future. But Staffordshire Conservatives have a clear vision of an even brighter future—one where everyone has the opportunity to prosper, to be healthy and to enjoy life to the full.

“We want to see more people than ever in work with better paid jobs leading to an ever increasing quality of life for local people, major investment programmes securing future growth and new better jobs. Along with substantial changes to how the council operates, we will ensure we can continue to deliver better outcomes for Staffordshire people, while managing the ongoing financial pressures that we all face.



“We want to see Staffordshire’s residents able to enjoy extended healthy years of life in line with the improvements that medical sciences is making in life expectancy. We can only achieve this with unprecedented partnership working across health, local authorities and the public sector at large.

“In short, we know that we have made great progress in recent years, but we also recognise that there is even more that we can help our residents aspire to and achieve, balancing a growing demand for care support for vulnerable children and older people as well as those with a disability, alongside road maintenance and building new schools.

“Staffordshire Conservatives believe it is essential to work with partners and communities, sharing and supporting each other to live fulfilling lives, with maximum independence and person choice. Only then can we ensure that we also continue have affordable, relevant and sensible public services in the future.



“We want to see a prosperous Staffordshire with a thriving private business sector creating wealth for all which enables us to pay the taxes that the public sector spends on those who really need our help.”

Staffordshire Salutes Two Olympic Gold Medal Heroes



Great Britain won their first medal of the Rio 2016 Olympics as swimmer Adam Peaty from Uttoxeter took gold in the men's 100m breaststroke with a world record. The 21-year-old broke his own world mark by winning in 57.13 seconds, well clear of the field. Peaty was the first British man to win an

Olympic swimming gold medal since Adrian Moorhouse, who won the same event in Seoul in 1988.

Staffordshire's Joe Clarke from Stone won Great Britain's second gold medal in the final of the Canoe Slalom K1. The 23 year-old not only won Britain's first Olympic medal in the men's K1 since Campbell Walsh at Athens in 2004, but also secured gold in a time of 88.53 seconds. The



second big win for Team GB led many to take to Twitter congratulating Joe, and suggesting Staffordshire is in a league of its own—at one point in the Games Staffordshire had more medals than Germany.

Tackling the Scourge of Potholes with New Machines

News that the highways team has taken on three pothole repair machines was widely reported on the broadcast media in Staffordshire. Earlier this year, the county council was awarded just over £1 million from the Department for Transport to help manage the challenge of repairing potholes and defects in the roads.



The 18-tonne machines fill and seal potholes remotely without refilling through the day - rather than send crews out to locations to carry out repairs. The 'pothole zappers' also create no waste, meaning they are more environmentally friendly than traditional filling methods.

Jobless Levels in Staffordshire are Lowest in West Midlands

The latest unemployment figures for July have been released and show our Conservative number one priority of having a productive economy is working.



People in work are healthier, safer, and happier, and they reduce the need for the services a county council provides which in turn means we can keep council tax low.

In Staffordshire there are 4,960 people claiming out of work Universal Credit benefits including Job Seekers Allowance, this equates to a rate of 0.9 per cent, which is the same as the previous month.

Staffordshire County continues to have the lowest rate in this measure of all West Midlands Strategic Authorities. There are 3,310 people claiming Job Seekers Allowance in Staffordshire, this equates to a rate of 0.6 per cent, which is also the same as the previous month.

The growth in employment over the past four years has meant that last February there were 329,574 in employment across Staffordshire with an increase over the past year of 14,731. The picture looks even better when you remember self-employed, voluntary workers and those working their own business are not included in these figures.



With so many employed and such a small number of people claiming JSA across Staffordshire, this is good news for everyone in the county and means people are making the most of the opportunities on offer and our long term economic plan is working.

The job now is to build on this success story so that everybody can benefit from the opportunities that are being created regardless of their background and attract better paid skilled jobs to Staffordshire, not just jobs for the sake of employment. Other areas still have that challenge.

GCSE Students Exam Results Show a Rising Success Pattern

Early indications for the results collated from 40 schools in Staffordshire showed that 59.5 per cent of students achieved 5 A* - C including English and Mathematics. This is compared to 56.1 per cent last year. Total GCSE passes at A* - C is above the national average (66.9 per cent) at 68 per cent, up from 65.5 per cent in 2015. The county council's support for students was extensively covered in the local media.



General Electric Moves More Operations to Stafford Business Park

American-based manufacturing giant General Electric (GE) has announced it will move more operations currently based in the town to a new state-of-the-art 180,000 sq ft factory on the Redhill Business Park in Stafford.



It will be the base for its High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) and Systems operations. They will move from their current locations on St Leonard's Avenue. GE currently employs about 2,000 staff in Stafford.

GE Grid Solutions' North Europe commercial solution leader Neil Beardsmore says: "We have been a major employer in Stafford for decades and this investment demonstrates our ongoing commitment to the local area.

"From this site, we design, engineer and manufacture technology that is shipped all around the world, forming an integral part of our customer's transmission and distribution networks and bringing value to their supply chain. It's a competitive market requiring advanced manufacturing skills and infrastructure. This investment will secure our position as a leading supplier to our customers worldwide and at the forefront of technology in the energy market."

The company's general manager Ted Amare adds: "This is excellent news for Stafford, our employees, our customers and home for GE's HVDC activity for over 50 years."



"This investment will provide us with the space and facilities to accommodate the expected growth of the HVDC business."

"The purpose-built office and facilities that includes state of the art manufacturing and real time digital simulation test set-up is a clear indication of GE's desire to grow the HVDC business."

Staffordshire County Council's economy leader Mark Winnington says: "GE's first facility at Redhill is well on the way to be completed and is looking very impressive."

"Now the funding commitment has been agreed for the second we look forward to that development getting under way soon. It also demonstrates continued investor confidence in Staffordshire. GE has been established in Stafford for many generations; providing job opportunities for local people and is now the town's biggest employer. The company's decision to invest and expand in Stafford was a great boost."

"It also establishes the county council developed Redhill Business Park as a leading investment site." Redevelopment plans for St Leonard's Avenue, which could see 300 homes built on it, were revealed earlier this year.



Legal & General will provide the finance for the most recent project for GE and work will be undertaken by property firm Goodman.

Birmingham-based Trebor Developments has already started work on their 115,000 sq ft building on the Redhill Business Park.

The Creswell area has seen huge development in recent years with Screwfix, Audi and Land Rover all moving on to sites just off the M6.

Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2016



The Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire, Mr Ian Dudson asks for people across the county to nominate outstanding volunteer groups in their area for the 2016 Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, before this year's 16 September 2016 deadline.

This prestigious UK National Honour, which has an equivalent status to the MBE, recognises the exceptional contributions made to local communities by groups voluntarily devoting their time for the benefit of others. Groups can be nominated by friends, family and members of the public or local authorities.

Online nominations can be made at any time during the year by visiting <https://qavs.direct.gov.uk> although for those wishing to be considered for the 2016 Award, completed online forms must be submitted to the Awards Office by Friday 16 September 2016. Read the Guidance Notes before completing the online nomination form <https://qavs.direct.gov.uk/guidance-notes>.

Volunteering groups in Staffordshire make a huge contribution to people's lives, often without praise for the incredible job they do. A prestigious National Honour such as The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service can prove invaluable in so many ways to their ongoing success.

The importance of volunteer groups is all the more apparent in the current climate and we need to do all we can to help recognise those doing outstanding work in their local communities. If you know a group that fits the criteria, please either nominate them yourself or encourage them to complete a form and send the nomination in to the Queen's Award Office.

62 Staffordshire groups around the UK have now received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service since it was created by Her Majesty to mark the occasion of her Golden Jubilee in 2002.

For more information of Queen's Award for Voluntary Services visit www.direct.gov.uk/thequeensawardforvoluntaryservice or contact Alice Pippard, Government Innovation Group, Blue Zone, 4th Floor, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ. E: alice.pippard@cabinetoffice.gov.uk, T: 020 7271 6333

Any help you can give to promote this prestigious award for Staffordshire Voluntary Groups would be most appreciated.