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# Chairman's Christmas Newsletter

December 2020



Dear Members

My apologies in advance for the length of this newsletter! However, I have much to tell you about and I do hope you will find the time to read all the way through.

In writing this Christmas Newsletter this year, I began by looking back at what I wrote this time last year. In the main, I talked about the fantastic general election result and remarked on how hard our members had worked during the campaign. I finished by wishing you all a very merry Christmas and wishing you all the best for 2020.

And who was to know back then just how 2020 would turn out?

I won't go over the year, as we have all experienced it first-hand in all its oscillating restrictions, misery, isolation and frustrations. Not being able to see family and friends, the desolation of livelihoods, businesses and jobs; the wearing of masks removing the most obvious form of human contact and the deep and damaging impact on this great country and the economy.

My guess is that most of us would rather say goodbye to 2020 as soon as we can and, with the positive news about vaccine development, look forward to an eventual return to normality as soon as possible in 2021.

So let me move on from all that and try and bring a little seasonal cheer concerning your Association to finish the year off.

You may recall how this Association finished in top position in the south-east for the Incentive Scheme run by the Party for 2019/20. Indeed, we were in the top 5% across the whole country, having finished in the bottom 5% in 2018/19.

I am pleased to report that for the current Incentive Scheme for 2020/21, the interim results show us maintaining our position at the top of the leaderboard across the south-east. There is no better performing Association anywhere across the whole of Sussex or Kent!

Now please read on to find out more about what has been happening in your Association and how, if you wish, you can be more involved.

## Gough House



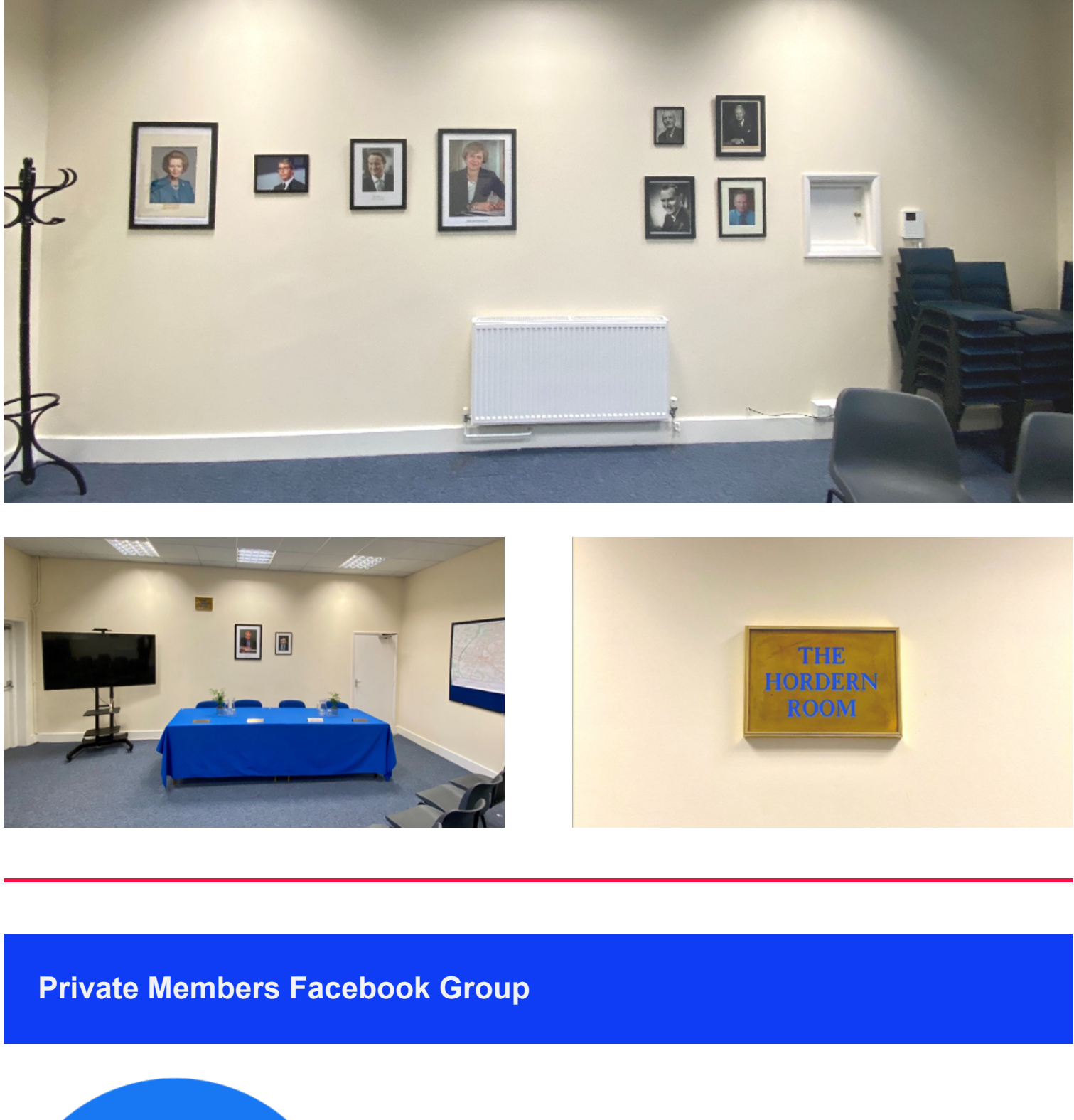
We have used the lockdowns of 2020 to continue bringing Gough House up to date in terms of decor, infrastructure and functionality. I am pleased to be able to report that we have redecorated the Admin Office and Print Room for the first time in 30 years. We have replaced the long worn out carpet and given the place a fresh lick of paint. We have replaced the IT infrastructure so that we now have ultra high speed internet, VOIP phones which double our capacity to make calls and we have upgraded the oldest of our computers so that it is able to do for us the things we need it to do. We have also replaced our old, slow, expensive Fiso machine with a faster, newer model for half the cost.

We have changed the layout and look of the Hordern Room within Gough House so that it now looks like a more contemporary meeting space and I look forward to seeing you in there once we can again meet in person. I am including some photographs to try and give you a flavour of what we have done.

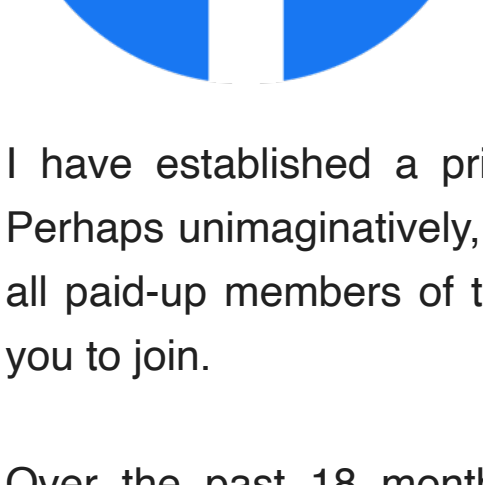
Outside, we have replaced old and tired signage and we have encouraged our neighbour to replace the fence adjacent to our car park. We have also renewed the car park lines. The overall look of the building is now contemporary, dynamic and welcoming.

These much needed improvements had been planned for some time and the emptiness of our offices this year made it an opportune time to get on with them with the minimum of inconvenience and disruption. And I would like to thank our Trustees for their fantastic support in enabling many of these upgrades to take place this year.

We hope to carry out other improvements during the course of 2021.



## Private Members Facebook Group



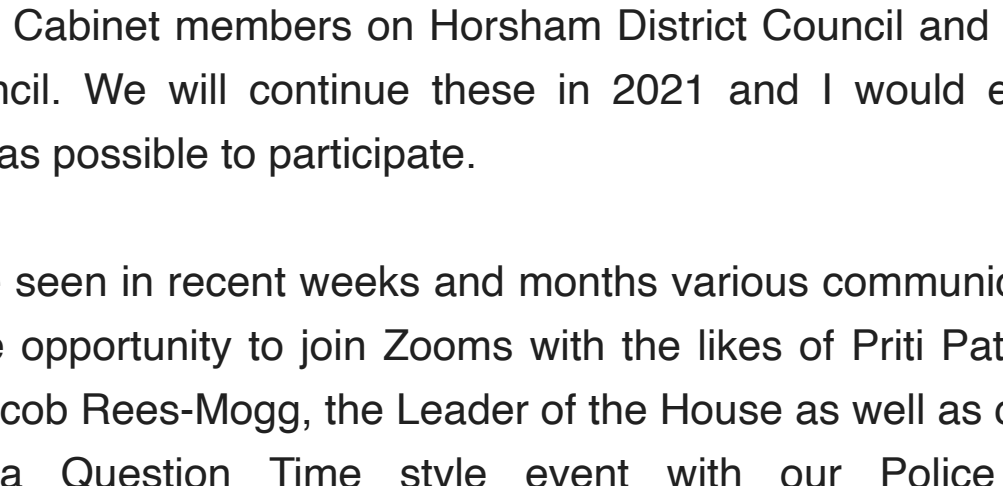
I have established a private members Facebook group for HCA members. Perhaps unimaginatively, it is called HCA Private Members Group. It is open to all paid-up members of this Association with a Facebook account and I invite you to join.

Over the past 18 months, we have assiduously collected as many of our members email addresses as we can and we now hold these details for around 95% of our members. This means we are able to communicate with you all without having to resort to the post office. This has the added benefit of saving us several hundred pounds per year in postal charges.

This private Facebook group is intended to augment this so that we can readily communicate with our members and, more importantly, you can all interact with your Association much more freely and directly than has previously been the case.

[Join HCA Private Members Group](#)

## Member Involvement



I am very keen to increase membership participation as much as possible. One way of doing this has been through the establishment of Councillor Question Times via Zoom. This year already, members have had opportunity to hear from and question Cabinet members on Horsham District Council and West Sussex County Council. We will continue these in 2021 and I would encourage as many of you as possible to participate.

You will have seen in recent weeks and months various communications giving members the opportunity to join Zooms with the likes of Priti Patel, the Home Secretary, Jacob Rees-Mogg, the Leader of the House as well as question local leaders in a Question Time style event with our Police and Crime Commissioner, Katy Bourne OBE, Mims Davies MP, Andrew Griffith MP and Keith Glazier, Leader of East Sussex County Council.

### Conservative Policy Forum

The Conservative Policy Forum (CPF) group within our Association, ably chaired by Mr Ross Dye gives members opportunity to interact on questions of Party policy, to contribute to national debate and to provide feedback directly to the centre of Government. These meetings now take place via the Zoom platform from the comfort of your own home. If policy is your thing and you want an opportunity to debate the key issues of the day, then come along to our CPF meetings. They are always looking for new perspectives from a broader cross-section of members.

The next meeting takes place via Zoom on Tuesday 15 December at 1030. More details are given below.

### Conservative Women's Organisation and Conservative Young Women

We have advertised opportunities for members to participate in online public speaking seminars via the Conservative Women's Organisation (CWO) and, indeed, we now have a new Chairman here in Horsham, Ms Holly Goacher. Read about the CWO in Horsham and Holly [here](#). Holly is keen to hear from any members wishing to get involved and help organise events to encourage more female participation. This is also true for Conservative Young Women (18 to 35). This is a key target for 2021 and I would like all our members to reach out to their family and friends and persuade them of the benefits and advantages of joining us!

### Young Conservatives

Another key target is increasing involvement from our younger members. This Association has a thriving Young Conservative (YC) group under the chairmanship of Miles Jordan. Any member of the Association under the age of 26 is automatically a member of YCs but we need more! So again as above, please reach out to younger family members and friends and see if you can persuade them to join us and get involved. Membership for YCs is just £5 per annum which represents tremendous value!

I will be writing in more detail to all members in the new year on the specific subject of increasing female membership and also the membership of young people and I would be grateful for your support and assistance in rising to the challenge of improving representation from these key constituencies.

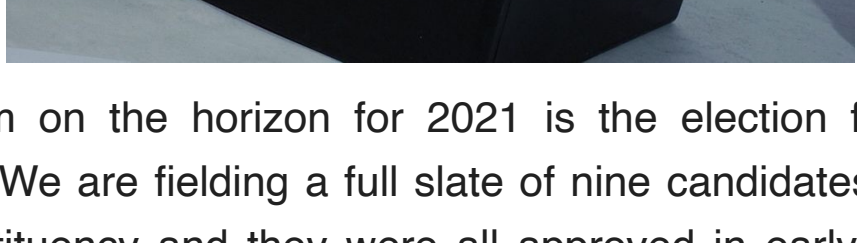
## Becoming a Councillor

For those who wish to be considered as potential Council candidates, in mid-2021 we will be starting our selection process for candidates to stand in the District Council elections due in May 2023. Elections are being held for Horsham District Council and for Mid Sussex District Council.

If you have ever thought about serving your local community as a Councillor then this could be the opportunity for you! Read [here](#) to learn more and contact us via the link below to register your interest. We want as many applicants as possible - we have a lot of vacancies to fill!

[I'm Interested in Becoming a Councillor](#)

## County Council Elections - May 2021



The biggest item on the horizon for 2021 is the election for West Sussex County Council. We are fielding a full slate of nine candidates in the Divisions across our constituency and they were all approved in early 2020 before we went into Lockdown. Of the nine Divisions we will be fighting, we currently hold seven. With work, we expect to retain those seven Divisions. In addition, we would like to win the two Divisions currently held by the Lib Dems - these are both in Horsham town; Horsham Hurst and Horsham Riverside.

In Horsham Hurst our candidate is Alex Shine and in Horsham Riverside our candidate is Tony Hogben. In the new year (subject to Covid restrictions), we will be delivering leaflets, calling our supporters and speaking to voters right across the constituency but especially in these two Divisions. I ask you all to please do whatever you can to help us get our candidates returned.

We need leaflet deliverers, people to make phone calls, people to put posters in their windows, people to stuff envelopes in Gough House, people who are prepared to help get out the vote on the day and people who are prepared to knock on the doors with our candidates and really work hard to get them elected. On the same day will be the postponed Police and Crime Commissioner election from 2020 and we will have much to do.

If you think you can help us then please click on the link below and help us to win big in May!

[Yes, I Can Help!](#)

## Forthcoming Events

Before I end, I would like to draw your attention to a few events you may find to be of interest.

### In Conversation with Nigel Adams MP - Thursday 10 December at 6:00pm

Firstly, there is opportunity to hear from Nigel Adams MP. Nigel will speak about his experiences over recent months and the challenges ahead especially the uneven impact Covid is having on women.

This is a [free](#) online event organised by the CWO starting at 6:00pm.

Nigel Adams is the Minister for Asia at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). Nigel was first appointed as a Minister of State at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development on 13 February 2020. He was first elected the Conservative MP for Selby and Ainsty in May 2010.

### CPF Discussion via Zoom (Public Services: Health and Social Care; Education) - Tuesday 15 December at 10:30am

Take part in the debate and join fellow members for a discussion of policy and ideas. This very topical discussion will focus on health and social care and the mental health of our young people. It will consider ways the government can improve outcomes. Given the well-reported consequences of Lockdown, this is highly relevant discussion for the times.

### The Thatcher Years: Behind The Scenes - Wednesday 16 December at 7:30pm

Join the Rt Hon John Whittingdale OBE MP for an evening full of stories about his time working as the Political Secretary for Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. John worked for Baroness Thatcher from 1988 until he was elected as an MP in 1992, covering her time in office, her resignation and subsequent years.

Since becoming an MP, John has held numerous roles of his own including, Shadow Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and Minister of State for Media and Data.

### Horsham Conservative Association AGM 2021

This will be held on Friday 19 March 2021 at 7:00pm. Whether this is online via Zoom or in a traditional venue remains to be seen, but please keep this date in your diaries.

Details on all events can be reached following the link below.

[Events](#)

## Christmas Arrangements

Finally, please note that Gough House will close at 1400 on Friday 18 December 2020. It will reopen at 1000 on Monday 4 January 2021.

Let me conclude by wishing each of you a very Merry Christmas and express the hope that you all get to enjoy it as much as possible with friends and family. And I also wish you all a very happy new year for 2021.

Let us look forward to once again being able to see one another and enjoy all the things we used to enjoy before this awful virus.

Stay safe and well this Christmas, wherever you may be.

Best regards

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