

View from the House: End of 2016

A View from the House: 2016 in review

Welcome to the latest edition of my View from the House e-newsletter.

2016 has been momentous, and in this edition I want to give my round up on how the year's events turned out - and what they mean for Tamworth.

EU referendum

On 23rd June after a long campaign, 67.5% of Tamworth residents voted to leave the European Union.

Tamworth and the country's vote to leave the EU means that we will now have the freedom to explore the world economy and forge new paths and deals. Whether you voted to leave or to remain I hope you will agree that now the decision has been taken (and it would be as true if the decision had gone the other way) we must come together as a country to help ensure we get the best and cleanest deal for Britain. Brexit has been decided upon so we must make it work.

Locally, I believe the chance of lightening some EU regulations will help even the smallest business in Tamworth. Nationally, it will encourage investment and trade which we have already seen with companies such as Facebook, Google, GlaxoSmithKline and Nissan continuing to invest heavily in the United Kingdom. But fundamentally that will be for Parliament to decide in our best interests.

I believe that the triggering of Article 50, coupled with continued devolution of power, will aid the development of the West Midlands as an economic and cultural powerhouse, fueling the British economy.

If you'd like me to know your views or would like me to pass any particular message to ministers then please get in touch.

New Prime Minister Theresa May

Shortly after the referendum result we saw David Cameron step down and Theresa May anointed as the Prime Minister.

Mrs May has pledged that her Government will focus on those 'just about managing', and will continue to raise income tax thresholds and the living wage, help entrepreneurs and small business, provide further hours of free childcare, and freeze fuel duty for a seventh year.

The "JAMs" covers around six million working households and ten million adults. And according to a respected think-tank, despite five-in-six of these families having at least one member in full time work, nearly four-fifths of these individuals earn less than Â£21,000.

My personal opinion is that the Government's focus should be on groups such as these as we need not just to reduce unemployment in Tamworth (which is pretty low) but increase skills and better skilled job opportunities as that is the best way of improving people's living standards. Governments, of whatever colour, must always remember to stand up for hard working people and families and not be seen to only favour the elites (trades unions, big business, etc.).

United States Presidential Election

Following his remarkable victory, Donald Trump was quick to reassure the British people that the US-UK "special relationship" is still firmly intact, and that Britain would be at the forefront of trading deals and partnerships. It is of course in the United Kingdom's interest to work with the president-elect Donald Trump, and his team have so far made some positive signals of a close trading relationship as we depart the EU.

Mr Trump's trade adviser Dan Dimicco has said that he wants to establish a trade agreement with the United Kingdom immediately following Brexit. The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Paul Ryan, has further emphasised the solidarity of our 'special' relationship, and wishes to demonstrate to the world that the United States and United Kingdom are indispensable allies.

Mr Trump has stated that one of his main policies will be to reassess the United States' position in NATO, and that every country involved should contribute evenly. This is something which has been supported by the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, and that it is only right that all NATO members pull their weight.

The British government will continue to work alongside the United States government on an international prosperity agenda to ensure that the British people are given the best possible economic outlook from overseas trade.

Autumn Statement

Last month the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, presented his Autumn Statement which focused on continuing to reduce the economic deficit and building an economy that works for all.

Figures showed that the United Kingdom economy is set to be the fastest growing major economy in 2016, with half a million more people forecast to be in work by 2021. The Chancellor also committed to cracking down on pensions scams, banning lettings agent's fees and has allotted Â£23 billion for new infrastructure.

I used to work for Philip and I will continue to press him and other ministers to ensure that Tamworth sees some of that funding and that infrastructure of the town will continue to be improved as well as in our rural areas.

BACK IN TAMWORTH

Locally it has been a month of remembrance for our fallen and thanks to our currently serving members of the Armed Forces and their families. This is important to Tamworth given our long standing history with the Staffordshire Regiment, now Mercians, who we are proud to have on our doorstep.

I have also recently met a number of businesses in the town centre who told me of their

concerns over the cost of business rates paid in the town and what can be done to rev up the local economy. One of the key areas which I am promoting is getting behind the creation of the Business Improvement District (BID) which, when fully formed, will see all business rate payers within a defined area contribute a small levy which the BID will have control to spend as they please; which could mean free parking in the town should the BID members decide.

2017

The New Year will see Article 50 invoked by the end of March, which will trigger our exit from the EU by April 2019.

A number of other interesting policies and direction will also be announced, such as the Government's Industrial Strategy which will seek to address inequalities in areas and industries that have seen a decline over the last few decades.

This strategy will have a direct effect on businesses in Tamworth and the wider West Midlands, so if you own a business I urge you to have your say whilst the consultation is live. If you need any assistance with a response please do not hesitate to contact me.

On 4th May Staffordshire County Council elections will take place. These are crucial elections that take place every four years and offer you a chance to vote in your preferred candidate that shares your priorities on roads, schools, libraries and buses. So please do remember to register and to vote.

As always, if you would like to discuss anything with me then please do not hesitate to contact me by return of this email or calling 01827 312778.