

# Newsletter

**You are invited...**



## **Conservative Party Conference 2024**

**Briefing for members at our Castle Street HQ hosted by  
Sir Gavin Williamson**

**Hear all the news from the recent Party Conference.**

**Keep an eye on your email inbox for further details.**

Member of Parliament for Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge:

**The Rt Hon Sir Gavin Williamson, CBE MP**

For news and other information visit: [www.gavinwilliamson.org/](http://www.gavinwilliamson.org/)

20th September 2024

### **Gavin Champions Staffordshire Heritage**

Sir Gavin Williamson met with Margaret George, the Chair of Staffordshire Heritage Group, to discuss the work of the organisation.

Sir Gavin was keen to learn more about the group's role in protecting Staffordshire's history, as well as connecting local history, genealogy, archive and archaeology groups across the county. They discussed the group's campaign to protect the reading rooms in the William Salt Library, an historic library that contains an extensive collection of rare prints and historic manuscripts.



Sir Gavin also purchased two Staffordshire flags from Margaret after learning about the group's involvement in developing the official Staffordshire County Flag. The design of the flag was suggested by Staffordshire Heritage Group and incorporates a gold background and a red chevron from the de Stafford family coat-of-arms, alongside the knot, a symbol of Staffordshire used by many of Staffordshire's public bodies.

Sir Gavin said: "It was a pleasure meeting with Margaret to discuss Staffordshire's rich and unique history, along with the important work being done by the Staffordshire Heritage Group to preserve it. The design of the Staffordshire County Flag and the ongoing campaign to save the reading rooms at the William Salt Library are just a few examples of the dedication shown by a passionate team of volunteers. Their efforts to protect our collections, buildings, and heritage are invaluable, and I am deeply grateful for their work. I will continue to support them in any way I can."

Margaret George, Chair of the Staffordshire Heritage Group, said: "Sir Gavin was very enthusiastic to hear details of the role of the Staffordshire Heritage Group providing a central hub for historically based groups countywide and especially our part in the development of the official Staffordshire County Flag. He expressed concern regarding our campaign to retain the Reading Rooms within the historic William Salt Library building in Stafford and also offered to make enquiries for a local pony rescue project. I appreciate Sir Gavin giving up his valuable time and offering support for our activities."

### Gavin Supports Walton Priory School in Stone



**Sir Gavin Williamson visited Walton Priory School in Stone, where he met with the headteacher, Sara Houlton.**

Sir Gavin toured the premises, speaking with pupils and teachers about the facilities available. The pupils enjoyed discussing their reading and asked Sir Gavin questions about his experience as a Member of Parliament.

Sir Gavin was impressed with the school's teaching of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) and was intrigued to hear about how the school is integrating these subjects into courses such as Art, Design and Technology as well as Food Technology. He was pleased to look around their new DT room which has recently been renovated.

Sir Gavin said: "It was fantastic to visit Walton Priory School to meet with Sara and her students. The schools' focus on blending traditional subjects alongside the teaching of technological knowledge is commendable and prepares students for a range of different careers. It's always a pleasure to witness the hard work of our teachers and to meet with students, and I'd be delighted to offer my support where I can."

Sara Houlton, Headteacher of Walton Priory School, said: "It was a pleasure to welcome Sir Gavin Williamson to Walton Priory. We were pleased Sir Gavin, the new MP for Stone, found time to visit us. We discussed ways we can partner to support our young people. During his visit we discussed initiatives he might be able to support, such as visiting Walton Priory during our careers week to speak about his journey to becoming an MP. We hope this visit is the first of many."

**Gavin Supports New Childcare Hub in Penkridge**

**Sir Gavin Williamson joined founders of Mini Tots, Jill and Kate, who have created a stay and play experience in Penkridge for young children to explore.**

Sir Gavin was pleased to meet Jill and Kate, who opened their business in Dunston Business Village earlier this year. He learned more about their mission to create a more personalised childcare experience in Penkridge. Since their opening, they've also set up socialising networks for mothers as well as supporting new parents. Mini Tots now have over 100 children registered from across Staffordshire.

Sir Gavin said: "It was a pleasure to meet with Jill and Kate, two mums who have a passion to create a friendly space for young children to play and for parents to feel supported. At Mini Tots, the space is set up to encourage a child's curiosity, which is so important for their early development. It was great to see what Jill and Kate have achieved so far and I wish them every success as they build their business further."

Kate and Jill, founders of Mini Tots, said: "It was so lovely to meet Gavin and show him what we have created and our passion that is Mini Tots.

One of the key parts of our Mini Tots story is that myself and Jill are Moms and we created it from our own personal experiences and perspective... often days can be lonely and isolating and we felt there was such a lack of friendly, clean and welcoming spaces to visit with your little ones. So although our focus is very much on the children having fun and developing their early development skills, it is also on maternal mental health and wellbeing.

We have met so many lovely moms, dads and grandparents so far and we are so glad we can offer the community a space to form friendships with other care-givers."

**Gavin Visits Family-Run Ceramics Factory in Stone**

**Sir Gavin visited the Dunoon factory in Stone to learn about how they manufacture high-quality mugs and about the history behind this family-run company.**

Sir Gavin met with Production Manager Harriet Smith and Directors Peter and Alan Smith to witness the whole mug-making process. He was fascinated by the traditional methods still used today, like using a traditional slip hand-casting method to guarantee a fine, lightweight mug.

The family's work within the pottery industry, spanning over 100 years, has now led them to expand, exporting not only to continental Europe, but also to North America, Asia, and Australia. Sir Gavin was impressed that the family business now supplies up to 60 countries, all while preserving the traditions and methods it was founded on.

Sir Gavin said, "It was wonderful to visit Dunoon's mug factory in Stone, witnessing the whole process of making a mug, and learning about the preservation of this family's footing in the industry."

Production Manager, Harriet Smith, said: "Dunoon Ceramics were very happy to welcome Sir Gavin to our factory in Stone, Staffordshire, where he was able to witness the dedication of the many staff and skills on show on what goes into the making of a Dunoon Mug.

The company raised the importance of improving ties on trade with other countries, in particular Europe where the company has a very strong market. Since Brexit, costs and barriers to trade have increased which has been most unhelpful.

The rising costs of energy were discussed which are proving an ongoing challenge. Sir Gavin was able to see a newly purchased more efficient kiln, which should reduce firing emissions by 30% and will help our progression towards Net Zero."

## Thousands of little heroes assemble in Staffordshire this September

Staffordshire County Council has officially launched a brand-new 'Little Heroes' campaign to encourage and support regular school attendance in primary schools across the county.

Across the UK, there has been a drop in attendance rates, and school attendance in Staffordshire is down 2.3 per cent, compared to previous years. The main reasons school absences are due to mild illnesses and anxiety barriers. This September, the county council has officially launched the 'Little Heroes' campaign across Staffordshire primary schools to boost attendance and support students.



The campaign focuses on the 'HERO' theme and creative 'pixar' style characters to encourage the message 'Here Every day Ready and On time.' Schools that have signed-up to the campaign have received their starter kits, packed full of creative resources to encourage and engage key stage one and two children, to attend school every day.

For pupils struggling with their emotional health, the county council has also created a 'Helpful Heroes' workbook to support children's barriers to school avoidance and to help manage anxiety through a book full of mindfulness activities, suitable for their age group.

St. Leonard's Primary School in Stafford is one of the 138 primary schools who have signed up to the campaign and have already seen an increase in attendance rates and time keeping. Councillor Jonathan Price visited the school to officially launch the campaign and presented awards to some of Staffordshire's little heroes. Councillor Jonathan Price, Cabinet Member for Education at Staffordshire County Council said:

"We are so pleased to be officially rolling out our Little Heroes campaign across the county. Our Little Heroes campaign has been carefully designed to encourage and engage with children about the importance of attending school and to support children that may be avoiding school due to emotional barriers. I would like to say a huge thank you to our schools that had taken part in the trial campaign earlier this year, as they have helped us make the campaign bigger and better to support the children as best as we can.

"I'm very proud to see so many schools taking part in this fantastic initiative and I hope together, we can support children in attending school every day and enjoying some of the best days of their lives."

Claire Callaghan, Inclusion Lead at St Leonard's Primary School said:

"We are so proud to be part of the Little Heroes campaign. We joined the trial earlier this year and when we heard about the official launch, we jumped at the chance to continue.

"Little Heroes has had such a positive impact supporting children and parents to be 'Here Every Day Ready and On time, and we are already seeing a difference. The Helpful Heroes workbooks are full of lovely activities, learning all about worries and we encourage the children to practice mindfulness activities at home and in the classroom. Children who were anxious now seem calmer and ready to start the day when they arrive.

"Of course, the children absolutely love the characters and are very keen to collect their stickers and receive their certificates to reward and celebrate their attendance."

To find out more about the Little Heroes campaign visit: [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/littleheroes](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/littleheroes)

## SUPPER CLUB

The last Conservative Supper Club of the 2024 season will be held at Moat House,  
Acton Trussell on  
Thursday 31st October 2024 (7PM for 7:30PM start)

TICKETS: £20 per person

**BOOKINGS CLOSE MONDAY 28th October 2024**

To book: please contact the Federation office on 01785 252 273 or by email to  
[contact@centralstaffsconservatives.org.uk](mailto:contact@centralstaffsconservatives.org.uk)

## PENKRIDGE SUPPER CLUB

Our friends at the Penkridge Supper Club are launching their first supper club of the  
2024/2025 season on **Friday 11th October 2024**.

Peace Memorial Hall, Penkridge  
Doors open 6:30pm for 7:00pm

Tickets: £20 per person for members and £22.50 per person for visitors.

To book: please email [penkridgesupperclub@gmail.com](mailto:penkridgesupperclub@gmail.com)

## CHRISTMAS AT CASTLE STREET

**IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN!**

Bookings are now open for our Christmas Luncheon at Castle Street.

**Sunday 15th December 2024 (1:30PM for a 2PM start)**

TICKETS: £30 per person

**BOOKINGS CLOSE MONDAY 9th December 2024**

To book: please go to: <https://buytickets.at/centralstaffsconservatives/1421752>  
contact the Federation office on 01785 252 273 or by email to  
[contact@centralstaffsconservatives.org.uk](mailto:contact@centralstaffsconservatives.org.uk)

### 100 Club

#### SEPTEMBER'S WINNERS ANNOUNCED

1st Prize: **ROY WHALLEY**

2nd Prize: **ANN FOSTER**

3rd Prize: **COLIN KITTLE**

#### Congratulations!

Our 100 Club helps raise funds to keep the Federation running.

If you can spare £4.34 a month or £52 a year, you could help us with keeping our Federation going...and you might win one of our prizes!

## PLEASE JOIN TODAY

If you'd like to join, request an application form by calling 01785 252 273 or via email to [contact@centralstaffsconservatives.org.uk](mailto:contact@centralstaffsconservatives.org.uk)

Help support the Federation and have a bit of a flutter at the same time! Subscriptions are just £4.34 a month or £52 a year for each number entered.

**Join our 100 Club today and you could be our next winner.**

Full details (application forms and other information including the terms and conditions) can be found on our website:

<https://www.centralstaffsconservatives.org.uk/100-club>



## Contacting the Federation

Your Federation is staffed by volunteers, the office is not permanently staffed. The telephone line is diverted to a mobile number and calls are answered if someone is available to take your call. But please remember that the volunteers who manage your Federation work full-time, so sometimes it's not possible to answer your calls and in these circumstances you are able to leave a voicemail and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

Please note that members can also contact the Federation by email (which is often a quicker way of getting a response) at [contact@centralstaffsconservatives.org.uk](mailto:contact@centralstaffsconservatives.org.uk)

## Car Parking at our Castle Street HQ

The Federation generates important revenue towards the upkeep of our Castle Street HQ by renting car parking spaces to both members and non-members.

Occasional parking at our HQ remains free for members, but we would ask that members inform the office if you will be parking at HQ at least 24-hours in advance, with details of the car registration number so that you do not receive penalty notices. You can get in touch with the office to notify your intention to use our car park, by telephone to **01785 252 273** or by email to [contact@centralstaffsconservatives.org.uk](mailto:contact@centralstaffsconservatives.org.uk)

We would also ask that members please park with consideration for other car park users.

Parking is at the owner's risk. The Federation does not accept any responsibility for theft or any damage, intentional or otherwise, to vehicles or vehicle contents.

## Upcoming events

31st October 2024- Supper Club at the Moat House, Acton Trussell - 7:00PM

15th December 2024 - Christmas at Castle Street - 1:30pm

## Key Contacts

Central Staffordshire Conservative Federation  
Castle Street  
Stafford ST16 2ED

Telephone: **01785 252 273**

Email: [contact@centralstaffsconservatives.org.uk](mailto:contact@centralstaffsconservatives.org.uk)