

Newsletter

WEST MIDLANDS CONSERVATIVES INVITE YOU TO

2025 REGIONAL CONFERENCE WITH SPECIAL GUESTS



**Nigel
Huddleston MP**

CHAIRMAN OF THE
CONSERVATIVE
PARTY



**Julian
Ellacott**

CHAIRMAN OF THE
NATIONAL
CONVENTION

Saturday 15th March 2025 10am
Central Birmingham Location

AND MANY MORE

****WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL CONFERENCE****

SATURDAY 15TH MARCH - 10AM START - CENTRAL BIRMINGHAM LOCATION

BOOK YOUR TICKETS [HERE](#)

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/

24th January 2025

Gavin Visits Stafford Grammar School

Sir Gavin Williamson visited Stafford Grammar School to discuss a range of local and national issues as well as to meet with the Headteacher.

Sir Gavin held a question and answer session with pupils from Years 8 through to Sixth Form on a range of topics including reforming the House of Lords, Elon Musk, the proliferation of social media, and the impact of overdevelopment in Staffordshire.



Following this, Sir Gavin held a discussion with the Headteacher Mr Pietrek as concerns were raised regarding the Government's decision to implement VAT on private school fees.

The school was founded in 1982 by a group of local parents. It is based in a Victorian Manor House, originally designed and built for the Whitgreave family by Augustus Pugin. Many of the original design features such as the integrated chapel and the folly are still intact, though neither of these are currently in use. The school currently has 430 pupils on its roll with ages ranging from four to 18.

Headteacher, Mr Pietrek said: "It was wonderful to welcome Sir Gavin to Stafford Grammar School. His enthusiasm and engagement with the pupils was absolutely fantastic and we were all given the opportunity to ask Sir Gavin questions on a range of topics.

"Sir Gavin gave very generously with his time and the pupils were totally engaged – it will be a most memorable visit for our school community."

Sir Gavin said: "It was such a pleasure to visit Stafford Grammar School and I was thoroughly impressed with the facilities as well as the broad curriculum on offer.

"The pupils asked many intriguing questions and were very engaged with local and national topics as well as sharing a deep interest in the communities they live in.

"It is clear that deep concerns remain regarding the imposition of VAT on private school fees. This is simply the politics of envy and is creating such concern for parents and schools alike. I will continue to urge the Government to reverse this damaging decision."

Gavin highlights household energy support

Sir Gavin Williamson has urged those eligible to access household energy support this winter, particularly following Labour’s axing of Winter Fuel Payments which has left many pensioners facing harsh conditions.

Sir Gavin, met with Centrica, owner of British Gas, in Penkridge to discuss how pensioners and vulnerable customers can access energy support.

There are millions of pounds of grants set aside by energy companies which provide energy efficiency measures, fuel vouchers, and advice to all energy customers. Sir Gavin is also encouraging vulnerable groups to sign up to their supplier’s Priority Services Register.

A spokesperson for British Gas said: “As engineers visiting customers homes, we know households are facing tough times. There is help available and people should contact their energy supplier to make sure they are receiving support – whether that is being added to the Priority Services Register or accessing grants, like those available through the British Gas Energy Trust.”

Sir Gavin said: “Labour’s wrecking ball policies are having a disastrous impact on pensioners and vulnerable groups across Staffordshire; with the prime example being the cruel cut to Winter Fuel Payments for millions of patients.

“Sadly, we are having to deal with the extreme consequences of this, such as people literally freezing in their own homes. Therefore, I am very keen to ensure that residents are aware of the support that is available from suppliers, as we combat the Government’s dereliction of duty.

“There are many energy funds and other support available including helpful advice and tips to keep energy costs as low as possible. I would urge those concerned of how they are going to keep warm this winter to contact their supplier to see what support is available.

“Please do also contact my office via 01785 847027 or email me via gavin.williamson.mp@parliament.uk. I would be more than happy to signpost anyone to appropriate support.”

Gavin calls for updated statistics on gas and solvent deaths



Sir Gavin Williamson is calling for the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to publish accurate and up to date information on the deaths and serious injuries caused by inhaling gas and solvents.

Sir Gavin, met with Staffordshire based charity Re-Solv to discuss raising awareness of deaths caused by the direct inhalation of dangerous recreational drugs. The inhalation of gas and solvents kills about 40 people in the UK each year.

Re-Solv, founded in 1984, is a national substance misuse charity, which delivers support and prevention work around the issue of gas and solvent use – such as butane cigarette refills, aerosols, some solvents, and nitrus oxide.

Currently, there is no measure of mortality of deaths associated with the inhalation of gases and solvents. The ONS produced a report in 2022, but has since confirmed it will no longer produce current information.

Stephen Ream, Director of Re-Solv, said: “The intentional inhalation of nitrous oxide has caused serious issues with nerve damage and blood clots with many deaths associated with the practice over the last 40 years.

“Here at Re-Solv we work to help people struggling with this form of substance misuse and to make sure professionals have the information and skills they need to help. We also deliver evidence based awareness education to young people and support to parents as well as others who may be worried about someone they love.”

Sir Gavin said: “It is alarming to learn of the number of people affected by the inhalation of gas and solvents. It is very worrying that the ONS has decided that publishing reports into the problem is no longer a priority – we need accurate information in order to understand the scale of this drug use, so Government and medical professional can put the tools in place to support users and their loved ones.

“Solvent abuse affects the lives of thousands of people and many of the products that contain these substances are legal, accessible, and inexpensive. Therefore, I am pleased to be working with Re-Solv in order to raise awareness of the devastating consequences that can occur when these substances are misused.”

Gavin presents Colwich Parish Council Awards

Sir Gavin Williamson presented awards as part of Colwich Parish Council's annual Christmas Lights competition.

The Parish Council received entries from 14 individual dwellings and two streets. The winners were Devereux Gardens (Street Competition) and Mr and Mrs Hildreth from Hawkesmore Drive. Individuals were asked to consider a donation of £5 to enter the competition with money going to the Parish Council's two charities, Little Laura and Troop Aid.

Little Laura is a charity set up in memory of Laura Thomas from Great Haywood – who tragically died aged 20 in 2013 when a lorry collided with her stationary vehicle. Little Laura raises thousands of pounds each year for various community projects.

Troop Aid support injured servicemen and women when they are admitted to a hospital within the UK and across the world by providing essential clothing and toiletries etc.

Chairman of Colwich Parish Council, Cllr Wendy Plant said: "Colwich Parish Council was delighted to welcome our local MP, The Rt Hon Sir Gavin Williamson to our annual Christmas Lights Competition awards event.

"The Parish Council is delighted with the number of entries received this year, helping us raise a further £115 for our two charities Little Laura and Troop Aid. We would encourage more residents to participate next year either individually or by joining with their neighbours as a street entry"

Sir Gavin said: "I was delighted to to present Colwich Parish Council's Christmas lights competition award.

"There were so many fantastic entries and I know that the organisers struggled to nominate the respective winners. I would like to offer my congratulations to residents in Devereux Gardens for winning the street competition, and Mr and Mrs Hildreth for winning the individual prize.

"The competition is a great way of involving the community and also raises money for two fantastic charities – I look forward to seeing who triumphs this year."

Gavin calls for full fibre access in Tixall, Staffordshire

Sir Gavin Williamson has called for full fibre access to be rolled out without delay in the village of Tixall in Staffordshire following repeated outages.

Residents in the village have been without telephone and internet access for prolonged periods over the last few years, due to instances such as vehicles colliding with the communications box that serves the area.

Openreach has stated that the village will not receive access to full fibre until December 2025 or early January 2026 – meaning residents continue to deal with patchy networks and interrupted access.

Ingestre with Tixall Parish Council said: “The Parish Cllrs are grateful for the support shown by Sir Gavin and sincerely hope that, with his intervention, the matter of rolling out full fibre to the village of Tixall can be brought forward. However, we remain concerned that the communication box serving the village remains in a vulnerable position and therefore, wish to call upon Openreach to give due consideration to installing some form of protection for the box to ensure further outages do not occur.”

Sir Gavin said: “In an increasingly digital world, rural areas such as Tixall must have access to full fibre networks so people can work from home, access media, and communicate with friends and family.

“I am deeply concerned that Openreach seem to be dismissing the concerns of residents, by not upgrading infrastructure or not being proactive enough to ensure residents have access to full fibre.

“I welcomed the opportunity meet with members of Ingestre with Tixall Parish Council to hear first-hand the difficulties in accessing vital communication services.

“I have called on the Chief Executive of Openreach to urgently intervene and ensure residents are able to access the services they require to go about their daily lives.”

Gavin speaks out against child sexual exploitation

Sir Gavin Williamson has called for a specialist unit to be set up within the National Crime Agency to tackle child sexual exploitation; as those involved in investigating high-profile cases continue to evade prosecution.

Sir Gavin has joined his Official Opposition colleagues in calling the Government to launch a National Inquiry into grooming gangs following systemic abuse in areas such as Telford, Oldham, and Rochdale.

The Home Secretary recently announced those who cover up or fail to report child sexual abuse “could face professional or criminal sanctions under a new offence to be introduced this year.” However, Sir Gavin has urged the Government to take immediate action with alarming examples of officials covering up sickening abuse.

Sir Gavin said: “The scale of abuse in towns and cities across the country is truly deplorable and I am determined to seek justice for victims of vile abuse who have been failed by those who should have been protecting them.

“It is truly alarming to see the scale of cover-ups by officials, police officers, and other people working in the public sector. It is cowardice on an industrial level and mechanisms must be put in place to prosecute those in influential positions who fail in their duty to protect vulnerable victims.

“In Parliament I called on the Home Secretary to commit setting up a specialist unit within the National Crime Agency. Sadly, the Home Secretary failed to commit to doing so and instead deflected responsibility thus further eroding the public’s confidence in the justice system.

“The time for action is now and I will continue to urge the Government to ensure victims receive the justice they deserve.”

Celebration ceremony marks start of new Stafford primary school build

Work on the new Burleyfields Primary School in Stafford, which is now under way, has been marked by a special sod-cutting ceremony.

The new 420 place primary school, which includes an extra 26 nursery places, is being built by Staffordshire County Council at a cost of around £12 million. The school will provide places for families in the new housing development and is expected to open in 2025. The school will provide places in Reception to Year 6 age groups, plus early years provision and will be opened in a phased approach.



The school is being built by GF Tomlinson and will be operated by The Creative Learning Partnership Trust.

Staffordshire County Council Cabinet Member for Education including SEND, Jonathan Price, said: “It’s great to see the start of work on the new school, which is really important for the area and for the families in the new estate. It’s vital that we have sufficient school places for children from across the county and that our schools are fit for future learners. We know that having good facilities helps improve children’s learning, and once open with its state-of-the-art facilities, I’m sure children will thrive. The new school will also be one of the most sustainable in the County, which will help meet our target of reaching net zero by 2030. I look forward to seeing the school grow over the next few years.”

Sam Compton, CEO of The Creative Learning Partnership Trust said: “We as a trust are delighted to support the local authority, the Department of Education and GF Tomlinson in the opening of Burleyfields Primary School. We are excited that Burleyfields will become part of our family of schools in our trust. As a trust, we have a mission to create transformational educative opportunities, promoting social justice and unlocking individual freedom. Burleyfields Primary School will be part of the Burleyfields community offering a welcoming environment where children can flourish academically, creatively and socially. We look forward to welcoming the first cohort of children who will be walking the Burleyfields way.”

Rebecca Bell, Principal Designate, said: “We have a strong culture of collaboration and look forward to meeting our new children and their families as they embark on their educational adventure.”

Group managing director at GF Tomlinson, Adrian Grocock, said: “It’s an honour to continue our long-standing relationship with Staffordshire County Council, providing much needed educational provision in the region.

Following our ground-breaking ceremony, we are well-positioned to deliver the build for this landmark primary school, ensuring much-needed primary and nursery places in the area.”

Strong budget allows for community investment

More than a decade of good decision-making means Staffordshire County Council is able to invest millions of pounds in the community.

Able to deliver a balanced budget, the authority is spending on libraries, country parks and more on early intervention to support struggling families.



The expenditure is on top of highway maintenance and clearing road gullies, attracting new businesses to create jobs, and investing in building new schools and updating older ones.

Ian Parry, Staffordshire County Council's Cabinet member for Finance and Resources, said: "Supporting our quality of life is just as important as investing in jobs and growth and years of strong financial management mean we are still able to strike the right balance and invest in both for Staffordshire residents."

Planned investment includes:

- an additional £45 million over three years to fix more roads and clear more gulleys to help prevent flooding;
- £18 million to improve Cannock Chase and Chasewater country parks, and improve the 92-mile Staffordshire Way footpath;
- £5 million to invest in the county's 42 libraries;
- more than £50 million to build new schools and upgrade others;
- continued investment in the county's 14 Household Waste Recycling Centres.

Around two-thirds of Staffordshire's £734 million budget for 2025/26 will be spent on supporting vulnerable children and adults – everything else is funded from the remaining third.

Ian Parry said: "The cost of adult social care falls disproportionately on larger, rural counties such as Staffordshire and requires a Governmental response rather than local taxpayers shouldering an ever-increasing burden.

Everyone agrees that there needs to be a national solution to the rising cost of providing adult social care, but the delivery of that solution always seems to be just around the corner."

Funding additional support for children with Special Educational Needs (SEND) also remains a major pressure on the council, with Government funding not keeping pace with demand, while the cost of transporting increasing numbers of SEND pupils has already risen from circa £11 million in 2018/19 to £28 million this year.

The authority is proposing a 4.99 per cent increase in council tax – the figure comprising 2.99 per cent for general purposes and 2 per cent ringfenced for social care.

Staffordshire's council tax is expected to remain one of the lowest for a county authority. For the average home in the county, in Band D, that would mean an additional £1.48 per week.

System to report potholes is revamped

The way people report potholes and other highways issues in Staffordshire has been completely revamped.

The county council's ReportIt system has undergone a transformation to make it easier for residents to report highways issues.

The new system is more user friendly, and gives people the option of having their own account where they can track the progress of their reported issue.

In response to customer feedback, people can also now report the condition of a whole road, and the language has been made much simpler.

The system has taken a year to develop, and although it has been tested extensively, the county council is inviting people to provide feedback that will further shape the system.

Reports made to the previous ReportIt system have been transferred over, so there is no need for people to make a new report.

Staffordshire County Council Cabinet Member for Strategic Highways Mark Deaville said: "This system has taken over a year to develop, and I hope it will make things easier for residents who want to report an issue on Staffordshire's highways. This work is a really important part of our ongoing mission to fix more roads and improve customer satisfaction.

"One of the biggest benefits of the new system is that people can create their own account, so they can see the progress of all their reports in one go. You can also now report the condition of a whole road, which is something many residents have told us they want.

"We're keen to get people's opinions on the new system, which is why when people use it they will see the option to give us some feedback. Their feedback will mean we can continually tweak ReportIt to ensure it's the best that it can be. The system will also be continually developed over the next 12 months to further enhance it for our residents and operational staff."



MIDLANDS CONFERENCE



****WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL CONFERENCE****

**SATURDAY 15TH MARCH - 10AM START - CENTRAL BIRMINGHAM LOCATION
(detail on location has to be kept secret at present due to security)**

The West Midlands Regional Team has put together an amazing Regional Conference for us.

Guest speakers on the main stage, including members of the Shadow Cabinet, there will be MP panels and training sessions for Association Officers, Local Government candidates and volunteers (full list available on the website)

Our three Staffordshire MPs will also be in attendance. Places are limited to 350 so be sure to book early to secure your spot at this fantastic event!

Tickets available [here](#) or contact the Federation office.

COUNTDOWN TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS 1 MAY 2025

The County elections are looming and our members are out and about campaigning to elect our fantastic Conservative Candidates on 1st May 2025!

Our dedicated members have been busy delivering leaflets, knocking on residents' doors, collecting voting intentions and speaking with people to spread the Conservative message.

Party Co-Chairman, Nigel Huddlestone visited recently to support our Conservative Candidate for Stafford North, Mike Newton. If you'd like to get involved, why not get in touch with our Deputy Chairman Political, Jonathan Price. We need people to help deliver leaflets, stuff envelopes and spread the message. And if you can display a poster at election time, please get in touch - email contact@centralstaffsconservatives.org.uk.

Sir Gavin Williamson, our excellent MP for Stone, Great Wyrley & Penkridge has also been helping our local Conservative County Council Candidates and below you will see some pictures of our teams of volunteers braving the chilly weather to support our great band of candidates.



QUIZ NIGHT!

Are you ready to put your knowledge to the test and have a blast? Gather your friends, family, and colleagues for a night of trivia, laughter, and friendly competition!

Date: 28th February 2025

Time: 7PM

Location: Castle Street, Stafford, ST16 2ED

Why You Should Join:

- Fun and Challenging Questions: From pop culture to history, there's something for everyone!
- Prizes and Bragging Rights: Win amazing prizes and earn the title of Quiz Champion!
- Socialize and Network: Meet new people and enjoy a great evening out.
- Food and Drinks: A delicious Chili con Carne (or Cottage Pie for those who don't care for spice plus a vegetarian option) is included in the price and a bar service will be available.

How to Participate:

Form a Team: Gather a group of up to 6 people.

Register: Sign up by **21st February 2025** by email to contact@centralstaffsconservatives.org.uk or call 01785 252 273 or [CLICK HERE](#) to book online.

Show Up and Have Fun: Bring your A-game and enjoy the night!

Tickets: £5 per person (including your meal - a bargain!)

Don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity to showcase your trivia skills and have a memorable time. We can't wait to see you there!



100 Club

THIS MONTH'S WINNERS ANNOUNCED

1st Prize: **BARBARA CARTWRIGHT**

2nd Prize: **PAUL STARTIN**

3rd Prize: **JONATHAN KIDSON**

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

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

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

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

22ND FEBRUARY - Campaign Action Day - Stafford Central Division - contact the office for details

28TH FEBRUARY - QUIZ NIGHT at Castle Street

Key Contacts

Central Staffordshire Conservative Federation
Castle Street
Stafford ST16 2ED

Telephone: **01785 252 273**

Email: contact@centralstaffsconservatives.org.uk