

POLITICAL LIFE

Issue 84
Corby & East Northants
Conservative Association



March 2026



Dear Members,

As we move further into 2026, I would like to thank you once again for your continued commitment and contribution to our Association. Your ongoing support whether through previously campaigning, attending events, or engaging with residents remains vital to our shared success across Corby and East Northamptonshire.

I am pleased to report that an Executive Committee meeting took place on 25 February, where we reviewed our current position, agreed key priorities for the months ahead, and discussed how best to strengthen our local organisation. These discussions were constructive and forward-looking, with a clear focus on building momentum and ensuring we are well prepared for the opportunities and challenges ahead.

Following that meeting, I am also delighted to confirm that a local Association event is now planned for March. This will provide an important opportunity for members to come together, exchange views, and continue shaping our local activity. I strongly encourage you to attend and bring fellow supporters with you.

As we look ahead through 2026, our strength continues to come from you our members. Your time, your energy, and your belief in what we stand for remain central to everything we do. Thank you for your steadfast support and dedication.

Warm regards,

Brett McKenna

Chair - Corby & East Northamptonshire Conservative Association

01/07

Promoted by Brett McKenna on behalf of Corby and East Northants Conservative Association, both of Cottingham Road, Corby, Northamptonshire NN17 1SZ.

Chairs Update

Brett Mckenna

Hello all,

I am pleased to provide an update on what has already been a busy and productive start to 2026 for our Association.

Area Meeting February 2026:

Our Area Meeting in February was extremely well attended, with our longstanding local Conservative stalwarts Andy and Gill Mercer present, alongside Area Chair Pamela Goodman. There was a palpable sense of energy and purpose in the room. Importantly, firm agreements were reached to strengthen our collaborative approach across neighbouring Associations.

This includes coordinated support for local events, structured membership recruitment, and crucially the creation of a more joined-up Conservative Policy Forum. I will be taking this forward in partnership with Cllr Ash Davies of Kettering Association and our CPF Chair, Kevin Watt. A coherent and active CPF is central to ensuring members have a direct voice in shaping policy and strengthening our intellectual foundations locally.

Local Elections 2026:

As you will be aware, the 2026 Local Elections are now back on. While Northamptonshire does not have elections this cycle, it is expected that active Conservatives will lend their support to adjoining regions. This is how we demonstrate solidarity and organisational strength as a Party.

I will be leading by example, supporting colleagues in Warwickshire and Cambridgeshire during their upcoming campaigns. Our ability to mobilise across boundaries remains one of our core strengths

Executive Meeting Update February 2026:

Following our Executive Committee meeting on 25 February, approval has been granted for the production of a new Association leaflet and an increase in targeted social media investment for our Facebook page. This work will be delivered by our Deputy Campaigns Co-ordinator, Cllr Jon Humberstone. These measures are designed to enhance our visibility, sharpen our messaging, and ensure we maintain consistent engagement with residents across Corby and East Northamptonshire.

Parliamentary Candidate Selection:

Members have asked for an update regarding the selection of our Prospective Parliamentary Candidate.

At present, the timetable and process remain under review by CCHQ. We are awaiting further national guidance, with a formal update expected in May 2026. Until that direction is issued, Associations are required to pause any localised selection activity to ensure consistency with the national framework.

It is important to stress that this is procedural rather than political. Candidate approval processes continue nationally, and we are maintaining close contact with regional officers to ensure that, once clearance is given, we are in a position to proceed without delay.

Should a General Election be called in 2027 or earlier the Association will be prepared to move at pace.

Political Round Up: A Local Conservative Take on This Labour Governments Activities

As the political landscape continues to shift at pace, we take a look at some of the biggest stories dominating Westminster this month, through a distinctly Conservative lens.

Starmer, Mandelson – Leadership Under Examination

Sir Keir Starmer came into government promising discipline and decisiveness. Yet the growing prominence of figures such as Lord Mandelson emblematic of the Blair-era project inevitably fuels questions about whether Labour is charting a genuinely new course or reverting to managerial triangulation.... Lets all try and figure that out!

Kemi Badenoch has been explicit in challenging what she describes as Labour's "politics of presentation over principle." In Parliament and nationally, she has pressed the Prime Minister on clarity of economic direction, long-term fiscal planning and whether Labour's programme is rooted in conviction or convenience. Her argument is straightforward: leadership requires firm ideological grounding, not constant recalibration to maintain coalition unity.

Why does this matter locally? Because when national direction lacks clarity, business confidence suffers. Northamptonshire's economy with its strong logistics sector along the A14 corridor, advanced manufacturing base and growing SME community depends on stable signals from government. Investment decisions are not made on rhetoric; they are made on certainty. A government needs to support prosperity not kill it.

If the Government appears internally pulled in different directions, that uncertainty filters directly down to areas like Corby and East Northamptonshire.

Immigration – Enforcement and Fairness

Immigration remains one of the most pressing national debates. Kemi Badenoch has consistently argued that border control is fundamentally about fairness, fairness to taxpayers, fairness to legal migrants who follow the rules, and fairness to communities managing rapid population change. Her commitment to withdrawing from the ECHR will be the first step in our fight back against the instates that hinder us for delivering tangible immigration change.

While Labour has outlined intentions to strengthen cooperation and enforcement, Badenoch has pressed them on delivery metrics: illegal crossings, asylum backlog reduction, removals of failed applicants and enforcement against illegal working. Her position is that operational outcomes, not positioning statements, are the only credible measure of seriousness.

Northamptonshire has experienced rapid population growth over the past decade. Growth can be positive when aligned with housing, GP capacity, school places and infrastructure. But when numbers outpace services, pressure is felt locally, in waiting lists, housing demand and congestion.

Controlled, skills-based migration aligned with economic need is one thing. Unmanaged flow is another. Communities in market towns and growing urban centres alike feel the difference.

Manchester Gorton & Denton – The Rise of the Greens

The Manchester Gorton and Denton by-election result was disappointing for us, and we must acknowledge that openly. However, it also illustrated the fragmentation of the left-of-centre vote, particularly the continued advance of the Green Party in urban constituencies.

Political Round Up: A Local Conservative Take on This Labour Governments Activities

Manchester Gorton & Denton – The Rise of the Greens - Cont

Kemi Badenoch has warned that the Greens' economic platform often advocating higher borrowing, expanded public spending and aggressive regulatory intervention carries significant fiscal risk. While positioned as idealistic, many of their proposals would have material consequences for taxation and growth.

This fragmentation has implications beyond Manchester. In parts of Northamptonshire particularly among younger voters and university-connected communities, the Greens are increasingly active, Kettering area has already demonstrated their impact. Conservatives must be alert not only to Labour, but to a multi-party contest.

Where votes split, organisation wins. Grounded campaigning, voter identification and local visibility matter more than ever.

Economic Growth – Beyond Stabilisation

Inflation has eased, but growth remains subdued and productivity sluggish. Kemi Badenoch has repeatedly argued that the UK's long-term prosperity depends on supply-side reform: reducing regulatory burdens, incentivising entrepreneurship, supporting energy security and maintaining competitive taxation.

Her critique of Labour's approach centres on caution that over-regulation, uncertain energy policy signals and expanded state intervention risk dampening private investment.

As a party we need to remain committed to reducing the 'nanny state', industry needs to grow by market dictated factors not government derived forces.

For Northamptonshire, this debate is highly practical. Our county's economic strengths warehousing and distribution along strategic road networks, advanced manufacturing, construction and a vibrant SME base are deeply sensitive to energy costs, planning rules and business taxation.

If policy uncertainty discourages warehouse expansion, manufacturing capital investment or housing development, the ripple effects are felt locally in employment and wages.

Growth must be visible in Corby town centre, in rural enterprises across East Northamptonshire, and in expanding business estates not merely in national statistics.

The Conservative Response – Discipline and Delivery

Across each of these themes leadership, fiscal credibility, immigration control, electoral fragmentation and economic growth Kemi Badenoch's central message has been one of discipline and clarity.

For our Association, that translates into three priorities:

- Staying organised and election-ready, even where we are not on the ballot.
- Supporting neighbouring campaigns to demonstrate Party unity.
- Building membership and policy engagement locally so that we remain a credible, energetic force in Northamptonshire.

National debates shape local outcomes. It is our role to ensure that Northamptonshire's voice is heard clearly and that Conservative principles of responsibility, enterprise and controlled growth remain at the forefront of that conversation.

NNC Councillors Update Cllr Jon Humberstone Oundle Ward



Recent discussions are dominated by the annual budget. Council tax will rise by 4.99%. This is despite various promises by Reform locally that they would not increase our taxes. On his election leaflet last year, Leader of the Council Martin Griffiths wrote 'Vote Reform UK on 1st May to smash tax hikes.' In a social media post around the same time, Deputy Leader of the Council Eddie McDonald said 'Only Reform UK can be trusted to keep council tax low.' Not only have they increased council tax by the maximum amount, they have doubled taxi licences and second home tax, but they've also increased the green bin charges.

It is clear Reform cannot be trusted and we need to show people that a Reform government would not deliver real change. Only the Conservatives will deal with immigration, reform the welfare state and fix the economy to deliver aspirational policies and support both working people and business.

You may have seen three Conservative councillors on NNC leave the party. Only one of these was a defection, and your five elected councillors in this constituency remain loyal and committed to the party. We will continue to be a strong and effective opposition to this Reform administration.

Cllr Jon Humberstone

Conservative Party Forum Update Kevin Watt

Our recent Area meeting has confirmed that CCHQ has been taking its time in developing a coherent approach to the CPF. However, they will now be sending out guidance on future topics to be debated. In the meantime, we will be working with neighbouring associations to develop an approach that includes all members from Kettering, Wellingborough and Corby.

Association Activity and Updates

Social Media Presence:

Encouragingly, our social media presence continues to gain traction. Our Facebook page is seeing increased reach and a growing follower base, and the link is now embedded directly on our Association homepage to streamline access and improve engagement.

Local Candidate Approvals:

I am also delighted to report that we have recently held approval boards for three prospective candidates, all of whom were successful. This gives us a strong and ready pool of individuals should any by-elections arise. If you are interested in putting yourself forward for approval, I would strongly encourage you to get in touch.

CCHQ Member Services:

CCHQ member services has reached out to the association, asking us to send a reminder email to our membership to ensure their local association has the correct email address and home address for them. Please contact CCHQ member services directly via the Conservative Party website. Do not email the association directly, as CCHQ will update a centrally held members list.

Association Activity and Updates

Membership Increase!

Our membership continues to grow. We have welcomed 15 new members in recent weeks—an excellent achievement. This demonstrates that we are building momentum, re-energising our base, and bringing people back into the fold. Growth in membership is a key indicator of organisational health, and this trajectory is extremely positive.

Email account server:

Members will be pleased to note that the association has been in contact with our internet services provider, Bluetree, which supports our website and email account. We have asked them to transition our email account to a more modern provider. We are acting on feedback after it was reported that some Outlook accounts are blocking our emails.

Local Events:

Association Coffee Morning :

Hosted by none our chair Brett McKenna with a Sarah Bool MP, attending as a special Guest !

Coffee will be followed by a small raffle.



Location and Time:

This event will take place on the 21st of March 2026 from 10am to 12pm.

This will be held in Oundle. Parking is limited so please review the local car parks available in Oundle centre.

If you are interested in attending please RSVP to **office@cenca.co.uk**

The venue will be confirmed one week before the event due to security protocols for the MP.