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Monday, 28th March 2011

Dear XXXX,

Conservative Party Membership: XXXXX

I am writing to follow up my letter about Conservative Party Membership from earlier this year. I am grateful to those colleagues who replied to my letter about the use of MERLIN in their Associations, and I am pleased that we have been able to address the problems you raised.

We are now in a position where the vast majority of Associations are using MERLIN to run their Membership – so our next step is to establish a clear picture of the Membership situation across the country.

At the moment, we have the following information from MERLIN about the strength of your local Association:

Number of current members:

XXX

Number of lapsing members:

XXX

The first thing that I would ask is for you to confirm whether the information we have on MERLIN is accurate? If not, please contact our new Head of Membership, Damian Jensen (damian.jensen@conservatives.com) to provide him with what you consider to be accurate information.

Next, we want to work with you to increase your Membership. As I explained in my previous letter, David Cameron has made developing our Membership base a priority for the Party, and in order to deliver on this priority, we are setting targets for every Association in the country.

- For those with Conservative MPs, the target for Membership is 5% of the local Conservative vote at the 2010 General Election.
- For those without Conservative MPs, the target is 3% of the local Conservative vote at the 2010 General Election.

At the moment, in your Constituency, the proportion of Members to Conservative voters is XXX% - so we need to work together to increase your Membership to reach the target of 5% or XXX members.

We really need you to help push through our Membership drive this year and to motivate your Association to do the same. The work we do now in building our Membership will be the bedrock of our campaigning success in future elections.

We very much appreciate that Associations will need support in this Membership drive from CCHQ. We are more than willing and able to help with this, and we have already been working to provide a strong infrastructure for Membership renewal in CCHQ.

This includes:

- Launching a **new Membership toolkit** that is available on-line or in booklet form and which will be sent out to all local Associations very shortly.
- Sharing the latest ideas and techniques on Membership growth through our **best practice team** led by Stuart Hand at CCHQ (stuart.hand@conservatives.com).
- Helping to **improve Membership retention** with an online facility through Conservatives.com where new members can sign up for direct debit by October.
- Providing **excellent customer service** through the MERLIN helpdesk (helpdesk@conservatives.com) and supporting MERLIN training for key people in your Association.
- Improving **communication with Members** with a new Members First newsletter sent every two months exclusively to Members for whom we have an email address.
- **Meeting members and answering their questions** in our new national series of “Meet the Chairmen” events.
- **Putting the Voluntary Party at the heart of our Party** through our new Office of the Voluntary Party in CCHQ.
- **Giving our Members a stronger voice on Conservative Policy**, by re-launching the Conservative Policy Forum and giving Members the opportunity to feed into policy development ahead of the next General Election.

Finally, we plan to introduce new awards for Membership in next year’s Annual Excellence Awards. These will include awards for the Association with the highest number of Members; the highest percentage increase in Membership; and the highest percentage of members as a proportion of the Conservative vote in the 2010 General Election.

As I know you will agree, Conservative Party Membership is of vital importance to the future of our Party. David Cameron has asked to be sent regular reports on Membership across the country by constituency from MERLIN. With that in mind, please make this a central part of your work over the coming months.

With thanks and best wishes,

Andrew Feldman

Co-Chairman of the Conservative Party

