

Mr Philip Seccombe
Chairman
Stratford on Avon Conservative Association

08 January 2010

After a great deal of thought I have decided to retire from the House of Commons at the next election. This has not been an easy decision, but having gone over it with Jane and the family I have come to the conclusion that this is the right time. As you know, we have made our home as a family very happily in south Warwickshire and we will continue to live here.

It is a great honour to be elected to represent one's fellow citizens in Parliament and particularly to be the Member of Parliament for such a famous place as Stratford. It is a wonderful constituency and I have been fortunate to have the backing of such a strong Association. I am particularly grateful for your support as Chairman and for that of your predecessors Don Rushton, Joyce Chadwick, Les Topham and Sheila Allan. Having James Holloway, and previously Peter Smith, as agents has made my job much easier and more productive. There are many others in the Association to whom I owe a vote of thanks too.

By the time of the election I will have been an MP for most of the last twenty seven years. During that time I have been fortunate to be a Treasury Minister in the governments of both Margaret Thatcher and John Major and to be part of William Hague's shadow cabinet, as Shadow Health, Defence and Foreign Secretaries. I served the Party as Deputy Chairman twice. I served for six years on the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, at a time of great international problems in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. As a constituency MP, I have been able to help many people with personal problems and to be in the forefront of many local campaigns, most recently the eco town and flooding.

When I became the candidate for Stratford in 1995, we had a Labour MP, a Labour controlled County Council and a Liberal controlled District Council. After great efforts, all three are now in our hands. The Association is very strong financially, socially and as a campaigning force.

As you know, I am an enthusiastic supporter of David Cameron as leader and believe that we are on the verge of an historic election victory. I expect great things of a Cameron administration and I will continue to give him and the party my complete

support. We will face daunting tasks in government and it will once again fall to the Conservatives to sort out the awful mess in which Labour have left us. The economy and public finances are in the worst condition in living memory and we will have to reform a bloated, inefficient and interfering state. We will inherit an even worse situation that we did in 1979.

I look forward to working closely with whoever the Association chooses as my successor and to continuing as the MP until the election is called.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,