

# The National Convention



Dear Colleague,

## **Proposal to develop the Voluntary Party**

At the heart of a 'big society' must lie a 'big party'. As the big society agenda gathers pace the Voluntary Party can either be a blockage or a beacon.

This proposal sets out how we develop our Party, help re-establish public confidence in our political system and build an even more effective grass roots machine that can help us win future elections. We now seek the support of the Party Leadership, the Party Board and the National Convention to make these changes a reality – to make the Voluntary Party a beacon for our Party and for the 'big society'.

## **Why Change?**

1. **David Cameron has changed the Party and the volunteers support him, and want change too.** The new Government will initiate change based on personal responsibility, localism and community engagement – 'the big society'. However, sometimes the current processes of the Voluntary Party can be inward looking, and do not sufficiently encourage involvement with local communities, nor welcome new people. We need to align the Party with the direction of a new Government.
2. **Developing the Voluntary Party is necessary to help us win future elections.** In the General Election volunteers were at the heart of every successful campaign where we achieved above average swings for the Party. A vibrant and substantial volunteer force may not be sufficient for election success – but it is necessary. As politics becomes more local, we need to reach further into our communities. The volunteers can show that the Party has changed and become a more effective grass roots campaigning machine.

3. **Doing nothing is not an option.** The status quo – central direction with no roots in the country – will lead to continued decline and increasing unrest. We can no longer ignore the part of the Party that raises and spends most of the money.
4. **Our vision for the Voluntary Party is to develop it to become a more progressive Conservative Party:**
  - a. A Party that is welcoming and outward looking
  - b. A Party committed to political and social activism
  - c. A Party that attracts new people and new leaders
  - d. A Party that leverages all forms of modern technology
5. **What we need to do is clear from our experience with target seats, with Campaign North, and from our history.** We have growing, welcoming, and vibrant volunteer organisations when we have the following:
  - a. Clear objectives
  - b. Strong local leadership
  - c. Aligned and inclusive teams
  - d. Clarity on responsibilities, accountability and transparency
  - e. Professional guidance and support

#### **What we need to do next**

This programme can change the nature of our local parties, **attract new people** interested in getting involved in their communities, and ensure that the change that David Cameron has led is embedded forever into our Party.

To be successful we need the full support of the Party Board to secure the professional resources to make this vision a reality, and we need the enthusiastic support of the National Convention and the grass roots. Such a major programme of change also needs the endorsement of the Party Leadership.

The **following survey** sets out our proposals and asks for that support. I welcome your views.

Yours faithfully



**Jeremy Middleton**  
**Chairman of the National Convention**

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