

Ladies & Gentlemen, thank you for joining us this morning at the James Duddridge General Election launch.

I'm sure you will also join me in saying thanks to Lucy Cox for putting on such an excellent campaign launch today.

I have been asked by Lucy to say a few words in the absence of Blaine Robin as his wife gave birth last week to the latest edition of their family. Our congratulations and thoughts are with him at this time.

I am also pleased to welcome the next MP for South Basildon & East Thurrock – Stephen Metcalfe.

As you may be aware we are linked with South Basildon & East Thurrock in campaign mutual support. I know some members of Rochford & Southend East have already lent their support to Stephen's campaign, but Stephen we wish you all the best and look forward to supporting you on the campaign trail in the New Year.

Whilst doing some research for today the 6th December seemed to be the most appropriate date to launch a General Election campaign.

It may have escaped the notice of some but exactly four years ago, on this very day, David Cameron was elected as leader of the Conservative Party.

In these four years David Cameron and his One Nation Conservatism has delivered:

- Nearly two thousand extra local councillors
- Opinion poll leads of between 6% - 13%
- Two extra MEP's
- Crucial by-election victories over Labour in Crewe & Nantwich and Norwich North

But more importantly, he has brought back into the centre ground of politics and electable once again.

I believe that we are coming towards the fag end of this Government. A government up to its necks in sleaze and scandal, tired, discredited and in total disarray.

Was there ever a more hubristic statement by Tony Blair in 1997 than his Government "will be whiter than white".

It provokes a hollow laugh now. Can there ever have been a sleazier government in British political history?

The record of this government makes any misdemeanours which occurred during the Major years look rank amateur in comparison.

Since 1997 there have been over 100 instances of New Labour sleaze. To name a few we have had

- Bernie Ecclestone donation in November 97
- In October 99 we had Ron Davies going badger watching
- You may even recall the Hindujah Brothers loan for passports scandal in July 2001
- What about the way Labour spin doctors set about trashing the reputation of Rose Addis in January
- Or the Cash for peerages scandal in October 2005

The list is endless. No wonder people think all politicians are either having it away or on the make.

A work colleague this week jokingly said to me that our logo should read
Conservatives: Clearing up Labour's mess since 1924

Worryingly there is some truth in that. In 1979 Margaret Thatcher and her Government had to do just that and I believe we poised and ready to do the same again.

Where I believe Labour will be beaten will be on its record.

Just this week alone, Labour's record on Education was ruthlessly exposed. Education spending has doubled to £63.9 billion a year under Labour yet 4 in 10 pupils leave primary school without basic grounding in the 3R's and a third of schools teaching 2.3 million pupils are rated as mediocre or worse.

So much for Labour's top three priorities being Education, Education, Education

This government is void of new ideas for modern Britain. I mean, our education system is in crisis, our economy is juddering on the edge of bankruptcy, our hospitals are filthy, the MP's expenses are still unreformed yet this government thinks it is a priority to change the law to allow the first born child of the monarch to succeed to the throne.

Labour's Jeremy Corbin once told me that there is no such thing as a safe seat or guaranteed electoral success.

Lets be clear, to win the election with even just a small working majority will take a swing bigger than Margaret Thatcher achieved in 1979.

I believe it can be done, for the sake of the country it needs to be done

We need to go back to our wards and eek out every vote possible.

We need to pound the streets delivering the leaflets

We need to be sick and tired of saying our message on the doorsteps

We need to persuade the un-persuaded that David Cameron is the right man to lead this country

Because, this country needs a Conservative government