

The biz club in 2009 – ‘biz blog’

Welcome to the start of the biz blog for 2009 which will continue build on the New Years Resolution that “we will all communicate more.”

January 16th 2009 – Informal Political Luncheon (IPL)

The first IPL of the year started with a marvellous turn out and unfortunately was so popular that we reached maximum capacity and had to turn some supporters down – remember places are issued on a ‘first come first served basis’ so get in early to secure your attendance.

The President welcomed everybody to the first lunch of the year and discussed the merits of the lunches and their growing popularity. We were all pleased to see a number of new faces at the lunch and hope that they will return to attend other events throughout the year.

Geoffrey Pointon then introduced one of the new attendees Caroline Ryan who was given the opportunity to present to the room a précis of her new business – she is currently working as a Thinking Partner, but is setting up ‘The People Link to Profit’. A service to help business owners increase their profitability by creating an environment where people want to come to work and be more productive i.e. maximising their current resources. Caroline works with business owners and managers who want to become more profitable by creating stronger, more productive relationships with their staff.

A small debate then mused over the reoccurring question ‘Do we have the ability to influence our politicians?’

Caroline Ryan said ‘the Conservative party is making a valuable effort but we need to have more corroboration i.e. need to see evidence to back up their claims.’

Peter Boddington said ‘the Conservatives are not saying the right things. The general public do not see them as electable.’

Michael Blank said ‘Why are the opposition politicians not making any real noise.’

David Radford said ‘the PR machine behind the Labour party is very good and the Conservatives do not seem to have the same strength.’

Geoffrey Pointon said ‘Mandelson is back because the media are interested in him. Conservative PR is lacking in comparison to Labour. Maybe Ken Clark should come back to face him in the Lords’

Bill Ginns referred to the last luncheon when it was discussed that there may be a February election.

Phillip King said ‘I believe it still could be a possible election date but what we should remember is we can debate if we should be hearing louder noises from the Conservatives and if they should be more of a driving force but if they do not get elected to government then it won’t really matter.’

Tim Wright said 'Maggie got in on a ticket of change but if the electorate had realised the changes they probably would not have voted for her. We should be shouting we are a party of change.'

Phillip King said 'we are saying we will change things.'

Bill Adderley said 'do you think that in reality that maybe we are not going to win but Labour is going to lose.'

David Radford said 'the danger with that is it can make us complacent. The public could perceive Cameron as a light weight and Gordon Brown as doing a good job.'

Geoffrey Pointon said 'it was an interesting idea that we are doing the right thing by saying little but went on to quote "Where there is no vision, the people perish" Proverbs 29:18.'

Tim Wright agreed and said 'the danger is we will have a hung parliament due to complacency.'

The debate ended with a final comment from the President Geoffrey Pointon who said 'we still have an enormous uphill task to persuade the people that the Conservatives should be the next government.'

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Submission from biz club member – Bernard Howard

Mr Tony McNulty MP
Employment Minister
House of Commons
Westminster
London
SW1A 2AA

27 January 2009

Minister

**Re: Deep Recession 2008 / 2009
And its deep impact on British Businesses in the UK**

I and British businesses all over the country are very concerned in relation to your recent comments that you stated publicly there was "light at the end of the tunnel" for the economy. Last week your colleague, Business Minister Baroness Vadera, claimed she could see the 'green shoots of recovery', on the horizon and Housing Minister Margaret Beckett sees a boom in the housing market – which country are they living in? He is totally out of touch with businesses. Today Perkins Engines of Peterborough shed 450 workers and other companies in the surrounding towns are doing the same.

Today Prime Minister Gordon Brown thinks he has saved the world – what pedigree has our Prime Minister as since he has been in office he has sold the country's gold reserves at a loss (4 billion) messed up the country's pension schemes causing hardship to many pensioners today and many closures of

businesses from his mismanagement of Government imported Red Tape Laws from the EU Government causing much unemployment, today reaching 4 million and destroyed the National Savers Movement. When history is written it will prove we have the worst Chancellor of the Exchequer in the country's history. The National Debt rose to £697.5 billion in December, the highest level for three decades, figures from the Office for National Statistics just published showed. That amounts to 47.5% of British gross domestic products – the highest level since the end of 1970's.

It has just been revealed by City Minister Paul Mynere disclosed that on Friday the 10th of October 2008 the country was very close to a complete banking collapse after "major depositors attempted to withdraw their monies en masse". He also confirmed the Treasury was preparing for the banks to shut their doors to customers and terminating electronic cash transfers and even blocking the 'hole in the wall' cash withdrawals. Only frantic efforts behind the scenes averted financial meltdown. If the moves had failed Mr Brown would have been forced to announce that the Government was nationalising the country's banks' financial system and guaranteeing all deposits and another large loan from the IMF to bail out UK Ltd.

Lord Mynere was accused of telling the truth. Please press the Right Honourable Alister Darling, the Chancellor of the Exchequer to make a Public Statement for this incompetence – he is one of the major players who has brought this about by his mismanagement of the country's financial system bringing it down to its knees.

Once London was called the financial centre of the world today the correct rate of inflation is a Top secret, in my time I believe the true rate of inflation will be nearer 20% which is causing much unemployment today. At this time the major banks were selling their shareholdings accelerating the Stock Market falls and destroying the British banking system – what a field day with the speculators.

Would you as the Employment Minister please confirm the country's unemployment numbers and how we are going to pay for all of these people drawing benefit? Today reports are reaching me of many lay-offs and companies closures.

Please ensure a copy of this letter goes to the Prime Minister Gordon Brown for a reply to the many international reports who state the "Financial Centre of London is finished" we need a National Government to sort it out and bring back reality in businesses and employing British workers.

I look forward to receiving your comments.

Yours sincerely

B C Howard
Businessman of Many Years Standing
PC Howard Ltd

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February 20th 2009 – Informal Political Luncheon (IPL)

Again we had an excellent turn out of members for our friendly informal political luncheon. Geoffrey Pointon welcomed and introduced Michael Rook to the fellow diners.

The debate opened on the topic of Europe and should the UK be part of the EU.

Les Breathwick who had produced to the chairman a circular produced by a Labour Party faction, suggesting that our financial burden was very heavy, wondered whether our membership of the EU should be reconsidered.

Derick Horsfall said 'he was pro Europe but not in its present form.' He had a high regard for Europe and had been involved in business for many years within Europe. He felt that the UK should be leaders in Europe and that we should be able to produce statesmen that can lead in Europe.

Les Breathwick said 'he did not want to be buried by Europe and its legislation.'

Freddie de Lisle said 'no-one has actually come up with a serious critique of Europe and how it has damaged us. If we exclude petty issues i.e. curved bananas how has being part of the EU damaged us?'

Martin Lewis said 'he was in favour of the EU.'

David Radford said 'it has cost us millions.'

Freddie de Lisle 'it has cost us significantly less than other countries.'

Michael Rook said 'the minor directives are put through parliament by us and they do damage us.'

The debate then considered if the UK as a country more than other EU members followed and adopted the EU laws as it was something that was 'British' by nature to do. This point was agreed by those present that the UK does seem to adopt and follow to the letter the EU regulations more than some member states.

As the debate progressed another topic that has been debated previously at other lunches came back to the gathered forum and that was 'career politicians.'

Jane Reynolds said 'we have career politicians with no business experience. They have power to bring change but fear losing their jobs if they make too much noise. As career politicians they don't want to orchestrate change.'

Freddie de Lisle said 'he did not feel that this was necessarily the case as there were other avenues for politicians to enter if they were no longer an MP i.e. lobbying etc.'

David Radford said 'that only 7% of labour MP's had come from an environment of a business working for profit.'

It was agreed by all that it was a concerning thought that many MP's have no business experience and yet are influencing directly what happens to businesses.

Tim Wright said 'that politics was just the pursuit of power and no longer about doing right for people or businesses.'

The last topic debated at lunch was the ever deepening economic crisis. Although it was considered that it did seem that the politicians were trying to say the worst was over and recovery will start at the end of the year. This level of optimism was not supported by the room. They felt we should plan for the worst and hope for the best.

Tim Wright said 'in the USA they have a new President and all in the country no matter what their political view was are rallying round behind him. He felt that as a culture we seem to need to hold someone accountable for things that have gone wrong. If we were able to blame Gordon Brown then maybe we would be able to move on with new blood.'

Again the room debated the lack of policies and manifesto's within the Conservative party and felt that the voters were not able to get behind the party as they could not see any direction for it.

Tim Wright said 'if the government can't provide us with sound money how can we go forward. This is a regulation failure as the FSA etc should have been there.' He went onto ask 'Is Ireland the new Iceland?'

Geoffrey Pointon said 'This is a test for the Euro, everywhere you look it has problems I believe it may collapse and be re-constituted. In Ireland 80% of all its exports come to the UK and Ireland has had it easy at our expense. This could have the same consequences as the potato famine to Irish society if it does go wrong.'

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March 20th 2009 – Informal Political Luncheon (IPL)

Again the lunches are proving to be very popular and a maximum turnout sat down for a delicious luncheon at The Garden Hotel.

Four new attendees were present at the lunch and so as an icebreaker all those in the room were asked to stand up and speak for a minute about themselves and their political opinion. The consensus opinion indicated that the Conservative party are missing an opportunity to promote their values and policies and make a stand against Labour.

The debate opened with some ideas from the room on how the current problems could be resolved and things improved.

Jane Reynolds said 'if the Whip was eliminated it would increase peoples representation. She also felt that improvements could be made by removing Hereditary Peers and no appointment to the Lords by the PM'. Another idea of hers was to replace VAT with a Sales Tax.

David Heys said 'if politicians came out from Westminster to visit more often at a local level then they may understand the needs of businesses'.

Frank Simms said 'he felt the economy was not as bad as it is currently portrayed by the media. He believed we are at the edge of change and that society is going to develop into one where possibly half the working population are self employed. He also said we can't build an economy on financial services we need to build it around industry.'

The debate focussed on the possible changes to society and the implications that it could bring.

James Lee said 'if half the population were self employed then the other half would probably work for the state. The later is not sustainable however hard they work.'

Frank Simms said '68% of the North east is on the government payroll now. MP's are worried about their seats and not interested in politics – they are career politicians.'

The debate focussed on the idea that MP's did not have backgrounds from business anymore and entered politics as a career and so were more worried about negative publicity than speaking out about issues they had empathy with.

Tim Whorton said 'Vince Cable has shown that speaking out about what is happening with the economy has caused him to rise in public opinion.'

Rupert Matthews said 'entering politics after university as a career means many MP's have no breath of business experience and decision making is impacted by this lack of knowledge.'

Geoffrey Pointon said 'the job of politicians is to raise their heads above the parapet and to risk it being shot off but it seems that no one wants to make stands anymore.' He felt the conservative party needs to focus on private business in the UK as this is the only engine that generates wealth. He went on to say 'they dare not raise the issue of the Public Sector as it employs 50% of the voting population. Any suggestion that it may be streamlined could lose those votes.'

Tim Wright said 'Labour would focus on any suggestion of cutting public spending as negative PR and say that it would impact on hospitals and schools etc.'

David Heys said 'isn't this what we should expect of our politicians, integrity and not self interest. They should be prepared to make a stand and say that the cuts would be administrative etc and not impact frontline resources.'

The debate ended with James Lee who said 'he who pays the piper plays the tune. We are in business and are wealth creators why doesn't the business community start taking the future under our own belt.'

April 17th 2009 – Supper Evening with Nigel Farage

A very warm welcome was extended to Nigel Farage MEP – United Kingdom



Independence Party (UKIP) Leader by the biz club when he accepted the invitation to be the guest speaker at the supper evening held at Uppingham School on April 17th 2009. The evening followed a traditional 'old school' dinner's theme. Guests were served by 'dinner ladies' a menu of local sausage and mash followed by apple

crumble and custard. Plenty of red or white wine was available not something normally served in the school dining room!

Nigel spoke about how UKIP would leave the political EU and trade globally and freely. He said "We will re-embrace today's fast-growing Commonwealth and we will encourage UK manufacturing so that we make things again." We support what is called globalisation in its true sense – that is, the growing inter-dependence of developed, developing and undeveloped economies on the basis of free co-operation and competition."

In regard to the June 4th European Elections he felt that more than half of British voters now want to leave the European Union and that they could give UKIP their vote. He said: "We go into these elections knowing that for the first time the UKIP position is now a majority view."



He spoke briefly about other UKIP policies and said "We will have a grammar school in every town and restore standards of education and improve skills training." On the topic of energy he said "more use should be made of nuclear power and clean coal to provide secure and affordable energy supplies and safeguard the British economy."



After his speech Nigel took questions from the floor. Not all his inquisitors shared his views and some questions were treated to robust retaliation. His passion for politics was respectfully received by all those who attended the event. Over all an extremely enjoyable evening was had by all those who attended.

May 22nd 2009 – Informal Political Luncheon (IPL)

Jill Brough Regional Chair of the European Union of Women opened up the discussion explaining her organisation, how it was set up after World War 2 to promote friendship and understanding across European women. Its aims were to support women into positions of power and influence and to get more women parliamentarians. The organisation also arranges political, social cultural visits and seminars. They support MEPs and raise funds for the European Fighting Fund.

Though a supporter of the Conservatives Jill thought UKIP had a good chance in the forthcoming European Union (EU) elections.

Jane Reynolds thought that the Conservatives still had to have an honest debate on Europe. She commented that Europe had just evolved and was long way from the trading block which we had first voted for.

Derek Horsfall thought the EU had ensured peace between countries which had previously gone to war and had therefore achieved part of its objectives and that UK should take more of a lead in EU instead of debating in or out.

Nick Grindley thought that this constitutional crisis which we are in at the moment was partly due to situation with EU, that systems, rules, procedures; convention made and encouraged corruption in the system. This latest situation presented a threat and opportunity to drive through constitutional reform but that strong leadership would be required to do it. Most people agreed that referendum is required to ask British people for their view.

Phil King said he was 9 years old when we had referendum on Common Market and most people working now had never had the debate on EU. If EU makes 70% of our laws what are MPs for?

James Lee, who had been on a selection panel for EU candidates said it had been 'a mirage of democracy'. This was because to win the General election it was thought we could not talk about EU therefore only certain types of candidates who would conform to this made the shortlist.

Geoffrey Pointon thought we are sleepwalking to a solution we don't want. Our best link is to the USA and he is not sure we know what we are doing. During the recent credit crunch it had been most advantageous to not be part of Euro and able to influence our own currency.

Some people agreed that the Conservatives cannot afford the EU debate at moment although some thought that if David Cameron (DC) were to offer guarantee of a EU referendum – in or out at General election he would win on this alone. DC however wants the election to be about Gordon Brown so this not going to happen. DC in government will have to cut huge swathes of bureaucracy to allow us to be enterprising and prosper. One view was that there was danger of the party system breaking up due to recent events and MPs being discredited.

DC thought to have grown in past few months, but doubts about how many of his front bench will survive recent expenses scandals. DC should be encouraged to 'not be so vanilla' –more robust. Conservatives now got

fantastic opportunity to develop policies that matter to small businesses and ordinary people.

Debate continued on the quality of our MPs – generally thought to be not good or in touch with the world most of us inhabit. Suggestions ranged from 'we get what we deserve' (i.e. not very good because of our lack of interest) to DC should sack all who have been involved in expenses scam. Some wondered how they had got past HMRC until it was pointed out they had their own department there and got special treatment. Many suggested that if their small businesses transgressed Tax authorities there was always price to pay, why MPs different?

Whips system part of problem making MPs lobby fodder that hide behind 'fog of mindless corruption'. Comments on local MP Alan Duncan ranged from 'can we borrow his mower? Smug bastard, arrogant, pathetic on Have I got news for you – he is laughing stock'. One person said he was a good constituency MP.

Geoffrey Pointon suggested that in his view you can't steal a little bit.

Generally agreed that the court of public opinion should judge MPs and that Alan Duncan would be wise to go before a re-selection committee. Message was 'If these MPs are any good they will go before the people and get re-selected before the General election'

Information

Geoff extended our warmest congratulations to Beccie who is getting married this week.

Future dates

Friday 26th June – Informal Political lunch
4th September - Golf day Luffenham Heath
Friday 25th September - Clarrisa Dickson Wright lunch

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June 26th 2009 – Informal Political Luncheon (IPL)

Dr David Lewis gave a short address explaining some of the achievements of his organisation. He explained that Rutland Telecom is recognised in the industry as being the first in the UK to develop Fibre to the Cabinet combined with symmetrical broadband services, which is taking place in the test bed rural village of Lyddington before being rolled out to a number of isolated villages in Rutland. This will enable the villagers in Lyddington to benefit from faster broadband, telephone and TV services. It entails installing their equipment in a street cabinet in the village, next to the existing green BT passive cabinet. This means the current long runs of copper from premises in Lyddington back to Uppingham BT exchange (Stockerston Road) will be reduced dramatically to the distance from the village cabinet to each house. By reducing the copper distance, speeds up to 55Mbps (100x faster than most Lyddington residents are getting now) and greater reliability should be expected. Dr Lewis explained that it had been quite an arduous task to get permission to put their equipment in the BT exchanges.

The latter point then became the opening point for debate – that being that large companies especially Utilities are often biased against small to medium enterprises. BT were technically capable of putting the same service in Lyddington but were not that interested as the project is quite small and not considered to be economically viable.

Terry Forsey said 'this is typical of a small company trying to enter the marketplace where big business dominates.'

Geoffrey Pointon added 'that large utility companies are currently accused of overcharging small to medium sized businesses. The utility industry are often monopolies and increasingly non-competitive.'

Tim Wright concurred 'our largest business expense is communication but often companies are not interested in taking on our business as we are considered too small to be of benefit.'

Freddie de Lisle said 'that recently he had required the connection of utilities to two factories that were no more that 200 yards from a substation yet the connection bill was around £150,000 and it took four months. Again when connecting the utility companies it was all down to administration and no-one wanted to help'.

Nick Grindley said 'it is administrative tyranny – major organisations are favoured by government and it gives them greater control.'

Philip King congratulated David and agreed that there was a lack of competition he felt when the conservatives were last in power they did not deregulate enough.

All at the luncheon agreed that this was a fundamental issue as Politicians do not seem to understand small businesses and prefer to deal with larger organisations. This meant that the needs of small business and the priorities are not recognised as governmental level.

Geoffrey Pointon went on to add 'the Conservative Party needs to support and recognise the contribution of small businesses and bring forward legislation to support them.'

Tim Whorton pointed out that if you exclude the people employed in the public sector most people are employed within small businesses.

David Heys said 'does the government really understand the issues of small businesses? I think they don't want to understand and it needs people Like Alan Duncan to become interested in small business and how they face oppression from larger organisations i.e. Farmers v Tesco's etc.'

Geoffrey Pointon concluded the luncheon with 'what we have to do is get our politicians to give legislative guidance and greater powers to small businesses.'

August 28th 2009 – Informal Political Luncheon (IPL)

It was again another impressive turnout of members who joined together for luncheon at the Garden Hotel, Uppingham. It was also pleasing to see four new faces within the assembled diners.

Geoffrey Pointon welcomed the new faces and specifically asked Paul Bramford who described himself as political with a small 'p'. 'What would the Conservative party have to do to get his membership?' he asked.

Paul responded 'he was a member of the young conservatives many years ago but had not become a main party member'. He had run his own business in the past and so understood the needs of small businesses but felt the party did not. He felt 'the party needed vision and politicians needed passion to make that vision happen.' Maggie was the last person whom he regarded had real vision and belief within the current party he could not see anyone in that category. He said 'the party needs to have someone with passion and the determination to follow the vision through and who is honest with the public.' He continued 'the current situation hanging over parliament shows how the public need to feel politicians can be trusted.' As a conclusion he reiterated the need for vision, passion and integrity. This perspective seemed to be welcomed by all those present who agreed with his thoughts.

The debate was opened to the room and moved onto the current situation regarding Alan Duncan's recent press coverage. Views ranged from feelings of extreme unhappiness with the situation and some felt that their confidence in our local MP had diminished greatly to those who felt he had made a mistake but not a 'hanging' one. This debate led the assembled group to consider what the electorate want from an MP.

Terry Forsey said referring to Maggie 'when she got elected to leader of the party no-one had any idea of her plans and the current leadership is also keeping their hand hidden.'

David Radford agreed but recognised that they, party leadership, also come out with certain statements that are ridiculous.

Paul Bramford said 'it seems if someone puts their head above the parapet then they are shot down. The electorate would find it refreshing to have someone represent them who would be prepared to take a stand.'

Geoffrey Pointon expanded on this point and asked 'should we vote for a party who are not prepared to show their hand?'

Andrew Smeaton recalled David Cameron's speech at conference a few years ago and thought he should do more of the same as he was talking to the people who listened to his words.

Bill Ginns felt 'that the Civil Service had expanded far too much and it needed to be rationalised to bring better order to its purpose and that politicians needed to voice this.'

David Radford agreed and felt that this was something that was important for the Conservative party to indicate to the public that they would do.

Tim Wright said 'when Maggie came to power our tax free day moved from June back to May and it is again in June. We need to roll back the economy and the public sector. There is a huge void between The City of London and Westminster and the rest of the country. The Conservative party should be focusing on small businesses but it seems that no-one in politics or the general public understands the needs of small business or wants to represent them.'

Andrew Smeaton said 'we can have conservative values generalised until nearer the election to keep ideas secure but then it needs to become specific.'

Mike Morrison said 'Maggie followed a conservative leader and her position was different to that of David Cameron's today. Also there are a lot of grey people at the head of the party. Maggie was grey before taking power but was radical within days.' He felt 'cometh the hour cometh the man' and we should have more faith in the party's choice of David Cameron.

The luncheon ended with a review of forthcoming events:

4th September - Golf day Luffenham Heath

Friday 25th September - Clarrisa Dickson Wright lunch

Friday 30th October – Luncheon with Tim Montgomerie at Uppingham School

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September 4th 2009 – Golf day



This is the fifth consecutive year this important competition has been held but must go down on record for being the most windy day on which we have held the event. We were pleased that Peter Wheeler managed to spare some time from his busy day to come along for breakfast to wish all the golfer's good luck.

Although Rachel Marvin and Nick Whiting bravely defended the trophy this year's congratulations go to Mike Eary and Chris Palmer 'The Hockey Boys' followed closely by runners up Gareth Dyer and David Snape 'Positive Solutions'.



In honour of the exceptional weather conditions a prize for the number of balls lost during the day was included. The dubious honour went to Johnathon Wilkinson who lost 10 balls during his round.



In a break from previous years the golfers were sustained by a rolling buffet instead of the usual luncheon enabling them to eat once they returned to the security of the clubhouse. An enjoyable day was had by all who attended. We must thank all our sponsors who helped to support the day –

Pointon York SIPP Solutions, Hettle Andrews, Hill Dickinson, SSP and QUBE Software.

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October 30th 2009 – Luncheon with Tim Montgomerie



Continuing with the successful formulae of 'school dinners' at Uppingham School the biz club welcomed Tim Montgomerie editor of Conservative Home to our Autumn luncheon. The website was launched on Easter Monday, 2005, with the aims of championing grassroots party members and advocating a balanced, authentic conservatism.

We were also pleased that our local MP Alan Duncan was able to spare the time to attend and hear what Tim had to say.

Tim is a regular media pundit. His broadcast experience includes Radio 4's *Today*, *The Week in Westminster*, *The World at One*, *PM*, *The World Tonight*, *Any Questions?*, BBC1's *Daily Politics* and *Ten o'clock News*, BBC2's *Newsnight*, *Channel 4 News*, *Sky News*, *Fox News* and Bill Bennett's *Morning in America* radio programme. Tim has written for *The Spectator* and a number of national newspapers including *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph*, *The Independent* and *the Financial Times*.



Tim spoke about how the Conservatives were in favour of greater transparency. He said 'David Cameron is embracing transparency and the honesty that it will bring.' He discussed how many of the ludicrous expenses claims would have been made if MPs knew that, one day, they would have all been published? Transparency he felt would increase

accountability and the involvement of the people.

Tim also discussed society and values by saying that 'David Cameron's pledge to scrap the penalty in the benefits system that encourages couples to live apart he felt is a very good policy. More proactively, the taxpayer should be investing serious money in relationship and fatherhood education. Millions of children are growing up without positive role models. Many couples are getting together without discussing their expectations of how the household income will be shared or whether they want children. That's storing up trouble for the future.'



After his speech Tim took questions from the floor. All felt it was a very interesting and enjoyable luncheon.

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November 13th 2009 – Informal Political Luncheon (IPL)

Friday the thirteenth did not deter the biz club supporters from attending our November luncheon although the turnout was slightly down on previous months. As has become a familiar pattern throughout the year we were pleased to welcome two new faces to the luncheon Tony Pearce-Smith and John Neesham.

After lunch Geoffrey Pointon welcomed all and introduced Tony Pearce-Smith to the room and asked why he was a Conservative supporter.

Tony said 'He was a Conservative as any alternative was not tenable. He grew up in a Conservative household through the war and his parents were true blue.' He felt 'that politics 60 years ago was more clearly defined as 'us and them' than it is now. The Libdems he felt are a more radical opposition to the Conservatives than Labour is.' He supports the Conservatives as he believes in them economically, socially and in regard to foreign affairs. He had a paternalistic view on foreign policy and was in support of Afghanistan and the Iraq war. He believed strongly in Private/Free enterprise and was in favour of reducing the state with a firm belief in Law and Order. He hoped that if the Conservatives formed the next government that they would restrict immigration into the UK in a profound way.

John Neesham was also in favour of a radical approach to immigration and would vote for any party that took a firm line in this area. He felt that illegal immigrants should be removed from the UK and this included those that were put in prison for committing crimes whilst in the UK.

Geoffrey then asked the room 'why do we keep immigrants in jail in the UK is they have committed crimes rather than repatriating them?'

Bill Ginns asked 'why do they still have human rights in these instances?'

David Radford replied 'that bureaucracy has no common sense and that we have become too politically correct.' He explained that the system is tied up in its own red tape and that a person who was potentially illegal could be questioned for up to three years before a decision was made on their status. During this time they could not work as they were considered illegal and so often resorted to crime to feed themselves thus resulting in incarceration at our expense. He said 'he saw more and more people in prison under these circumstances.'

John Neesham asked 'are more people in prison as they have turned to crime because of drug dependency?'

David Radford 'yes, but they would benefit from drug rehabilitation much more than incarceration.'

The debate moved on to discuss the recent decision on Lisbon and answer the question 'would the Conservatives announce real policies before the election?'

Geoffrey said that he felt 'we should hold a simple in/out referendum and let the people decide. We can do anything on Europe provided we have a referendum and have an adequate mandate.'

Martin Lewis went further and said 'we should repeal the Human Rights Act and Bill of Law and make English laws supreme.'

Tony Pearce-Smith agreed 'that the French do not change when Europe pushes but we do.'

David Radford concurred 'that it was because we have a Civil Service that will follow directives to the letter.'

Martin Lewis stated 'that Europe was a project that has been running for fifty years and needs to run its course.'

The talk then turned to the economic crisis and Geoffrey Pointon asked 'will we have another crash before we see light at the end of the tunnel?'

Martin Lewis said 'yes or we will come very close to sterling being devalued.'

Geoffrey asked 'what will happen to the country if there is another crash?'

Terry Forsey felt 'it could bankrupt the country.'

David Radford added 'that the media talk about us coming out of recession but it is not a reality.'

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December 11th 2009 – Luncheon at Normanton Park Hotel



Nearly fifty biz club supporters gathered to attend the final luncheon of 2009. Held at the stunning venue of Normanton Park Hotel on the south shore of Rutland Water this was a luncheon not to be missed.

As the festive season was upon us crackers and party hats were enjoyed by many attendees. After a delicious three course meal Geoffrey Pointon the biz club President briefly detailed a new initiative that the biz club is running in 2010 that being the biz club business of the year award. This award will be open to nominations from all small to medium sized businesses within a 25 mile radius of Uppingham.





Alan Duncan presented David Lewis of Rutland Telecom with the business of the year trophy in recognition of his ground breaking achievement in bringing high speed broadband to Lyddington and to mark the launch of this exciting project. Rutland Telecom has kindly announced that they will be the award sponsor for the next five years.

After the presentation Roger Nightingale, economist and strategist, reviewed developments in the world of politics, economics and finances. Roger is a frequent guest on TV networks, such as Bloomberg, CNBC, Fox News and CNN and is a leading speaker at conferences for institutional traders, fund managers, pension providers and hedge funds. The assembled diners listened with interest to Roger's views.



December 15th 2009 – Carols and Drinks, Uppingham



The year closed with the annual carols and drinks evening held at The Royal Oak in Uppingham. Gretton Silver Band provided accompaniment to the carollers. A glass or two of festive cheer, canapés and mince pies were enjoyed by all those who braved the cold to attend.

Free admission to this event was agreed by the committee earlier in the year by way of a thank you to all members for their continued support of the biz club during 2009. It gave the opportunity for members, supporters and their families to come together and celebrate the end of another successful year for the biz club. All those who attended were in fine voice and appreciated the relaxed atmosphere of this event. Our thanks must go to our hosts Peter and Linda Fricker for their kind use of The Royal Oak.

