

Diary for Conservative Home – Andrea Leadsom,
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Monday 1st June:

What a week! Countdown to the County and European Elections and also exam week for my sons.

Made a vast breakfast for my three kids then rushed through the school run so I could get to Moreton Pinkney in time for a coffee morning with one of our five East Midlands MEP candidates, Fiona Bulmer. I was her host for the day - our job was to knock up our Conservative supporters and to make sure they turn out on Thursday.

After an hour at the coffee morning with local supporters, we set off to canvass the village in glorious sunshine. The expenses scandal is the biggest topic on the doorsteps, but we were also asked by a lady farmer what Conservatives would do about bovine TB....

A quick lunch in Towcester followed by an afternoon of canvassing in West Hunsbury that left us sun burned and footsore. We certainly found a lot of Conservatives who were considering voting UKIP in frustration at European red tape as much as the MP's expenses scandal.

Time to nip home and kiss my 5 year old, Charlotte, 'good night' before going out to the opening of the new Towcester Medical Centre. Had a good chat with the senior GP partner about our recent campaign to stop the government from taking away GP's right to dispense from their surgeries. He told me that the dispensing income is essential in order to cover the costs of the surgery.



Then it was time to pick my sons up from tennis at school and hear about the first exams, before a snatched meal with my husband, Ben, and onto the computer to write this diary and to blog my fury about the D-Day celebrations – how can France hold a commemoration of the Normandy landings without inviting the one Head of State who actually served in WW2? (see www.andrealeadsom.com for the blog).

Tuesday 2nd June:

Dropped my remarkably relaxed kids at school for day 2 of exams then joined a parents' association meeting to talk about the Christmas Bazaar. I've been asked to organise the local publicity as (in theory!) I have a good relationship with local press.

Home to make a cup of tea for my builders and check emails, then off to deliver a last minute election leaflet in West Hunsbury with the campaign team. We are feeling pretty tired but cheered on by the sunshine and by Brian's 2 year old granddaughter Mia....



Back home for lunch and to write an article for our new South Northants Members' Newsletter going out immediately after the elections.

At 3pm George Osborne visited Northampton All Saints Church and answered questions from local Council and MEP candidates and activists. One of the big topics we talked about was how to deal with the impossible costs of final salary pension schemes for public sector employees.

Brian Binley MP thanked George for coming and begged him to urge David Cameron to make every effort to keep the British Grand Prix – although the contract from 2010 has gone from Silverstone (in my patch) to Donnington Park, we are very worried that they may not be ready in time and the Grand Prix might be lost altogether. The East Midlands is a centre of high tech and motorsport expertise and the Grand Prix is the centrepiece. Upwards of 50,000 local jobs depend on our high tech industries.



Home again to play in the garden with the kids and hear the latest instalment on the exams.... before tucking into roast chicken with Ben. Spent the evening checking emails and speculating on whether a General Election is imminent....

Wednesday 3rd June:

A weary start to the day – the exam and election pressure is getting to us all. Sent Charlotte to school with a party dress as our Nanny is taking her to see Angelina Ballerina tonight while I do some last minute election work!

I must be mad, but played tennis for an hour at school from 8.30 before going to meet Emma McLarkin, MEP candidate (second on E. Midlands list) and the team in Towcester. We spent the morning delivering a last minute leaflet and canvassing for Cllr Rosemary Bromwich who is defending her seat from the same Lib Dem who is also standing against me in the General Election.



No sunburn today – in fact we were shivering in the photo....luckily Brian in West Hunsbury kept us running around the streets on our final canvass in the afternoon.

Met some interesting people – one man talking to me about why he wants a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty told me he had been ‘spending a penny’ for years and had no wish to start ‘euro-nating’ instead..... well I laughed, anyway.....

I managed to catch the end of my son’s cricket match for the school and we went home with a takeaway curry.

Thursday 4th June:

Visited loads of polling stations with the County candidates. The candidates were all nervous – even those in ‘safe’ seats beginning to doubt themselves. We had some great chats with the staff in the polling stations.....lots of them wear black and white on polling day so that they can’t be accused of favouring one or other party!



I spent lunchtime ‘telling’ in Towcester and had a weird experience. A man I met when I was giving out leaflets in Towcester a fortnight ago and met again when I was canvassing yesterday (he happened to be at home when I knocked on his door) turned up at the polling station while I was there.... We both laughed to meet yet a third time in the space of two weeks and it struck me how gratifying it is to have a witness to the weeks of work I have put in! Too often as a candidate you feel no one has ever heard of you and it is so hard to reach your voters.....this man proved an exception, and in a funny sort of way it made my day....

Picked Charlotte up from school then drove to West Hunsbury for some last minute ‘megaphone’ work. I drove round the ward with Brian shouting ‘Vote Conservative, don’t waste your vote!’ through the megaphone. Charlotte had drunk a large cup of tea after school (my fault) so needed to stop twice for the loo at the homes of Conservative supporters.....people are very kind to little girls!

Fred and Harry (my boys) stayed overnight at school for an almighty 'end of exams' party, so Ben and I took Charlotte to the Slapton polling station to vote for Ben Smith in Greens Norton division and for our Conservative Euro candidates.



At 10pm I was off again for the verification at Towcester Leisure Centre. Fell into bed around 1am.

Friday 5th June:

A lie in! Charlotte watched kids TV and I dozed until 8am. Took her to school then came home to catch up on admin. I'm trying to set up a Towcester Job Club and made various calls to local business people who are really keen to help those who have lost their jobs in the recession. I'm also doing a coffee morning at my house next week in aid of Leonard Cheshire Disability so needed to check on the guest list and invite more people along.

At 2pm I drove to Kettering for the Count. And what an afternoon it was! All the South Northants County Councillors were returned with increased majorities. The results for W Hunsbury and Towcester were fantastic news, as both had been aggressively targeted by the Lib Dems.

Abington division was won by a good friend, Rebecca Harding, who beat the leader of the Lib Dem group by 9 votes. All in all, the Conservatives won 12 new seats and held 44.

I was chatting with the reporter from the Northampton Chronicle and we agreed it's a tough time when you lose.....there were many losers on both the Labour and Lib Dem teams and although it's fantastic to beat them, it's hard not to feel sympathetic to their disappointment.

In the evening I had the huge fun of watching my second son, Harry, play Robin Hood's Dad in the school summer play. We all went along as a family, including my two nieces who have come to stay for the weekend.

Saturday 6th June:

Happy pandemonium at home with my three plus their cousins having a disco at 8 in the morning! I enjoyed a very noisy breakfast and then set off with Fred (my eldest son) to a constituency coffee morning, leaving Ben to deal with the mess, the noise, the chaos.....

The coffee morning is an annual event in a beautiful old house in the lovely village of Chipping Warden. There is always a wonderful stall with home made cakes and jam to buy. We couldn't decide between the coffee cake and the ginger cake so bought both. Fred was asked to draw the first ticket for the raffle and drew his own number! Bless him – he hasn't yet learnt to say 'Oh, please put it back in....' so he happily grabbed a large box of chocolates to go with our cakes.

When we got home I could finally go 'off duty' and we had a real family afternoon and a lazy evening.

Sunday 7th June:

A huge cooked breakfast followed by me taking the 5 kids to Towcester swimming pool to enjoy the waves and floats for a couple of hours.

The afternoon was spent in the garden with the kids on the climbing frame, having water fights, playing cricket and then my nieces left at 5.30pm, giving me just enough time to get dressed up again ready for the European Count, back at Towcester swimming pool!