



## The country is happier

British business is booming and people are getting more happy with life than they were before the global financial crisis. All this contained in two studies published in November.

Businesses in the UK services sector have hired more staff last month and at the fastest pace for more than 15 years as a result of business growth which could well reach 1.3% by the end of the year.

That the recession is being tackled properly can be seen by private sector jobs growth now running at some 100,000 per quarter - higher than the average of 70,000 seen over the past year. Financial data provider Markit said "Business is picking up and firms are recruiting like we've never seen before."

To make the recovery it even better it is suggested that the Bank of England is likely to raise its growth forecasts.

Another survey by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has come up with the finding that British people are more satisfied with their lives than they were five years ago!

November's employment figures are the latest piece of encouraging news for the British economy. Employment has increased by 177,000 in the last quarter, there are now 1.1 million more people in work in the last three months. The number of young people in work increased by 50,000, while the number claiming Jobseeker's Allowance fell by 13,000 - the 17th consecutive monthly fall.

**Some more good news about Conservatives to use on the doorstep!**

## Nelson Mandela

In our small way In Touch pays tribute to Nelson Mandela who died on Friday 6th December aged 95 years.

Mandela will go down as one of the outstanding politicians of the 20th and 21st centuries, responsible, after some 27 years in prison, of uniting a mixed nation of some 53 million, following decades of apartheid, and becoming their first black president. His set an example to be proud of, a political attitude to be admired and the founder of the Rainbow Nation.

## George Osborne's Autumn statement

Chancellor George Osborne has delivered his Autumn Statement, describing it as a plan to deliver a "responsible recovery".

He outlined a brighter economic climate than a year ago, but said "difficult decisions" still needed to be made.

Yet, he took the opportunity to announce eye-catching plans about the state pension and taxes on small businesses.

A number of measures had already been announced, including some during the Budget in March and others at the party conferences.

So what does this latest statement mean for you?

Are people being made to work longer? Not everyone. People in their 20s, 30s and 40s might have to work for longer before they get their state pension, in line with improving life expectancy.

The state pension age is already rising to 66 by 2020 and 67 by 2028. It was then expected to go up to 68 between 2044 and 2046. Now that rise to 68 is going to come in earlier - in the mid-2030s.

There will be a rise of 2.7% in the state pension in April, or £2.95 a week.

Under the government's triple-lock system, the state pension increase is the highest of CPI inflation in September, average wage rises, or 2.5%. This year, CPI inflation was the highest of the trio.

### Welfare spend cap

The chancellor also announced a plan to cap welfare spending overall, excluding the state pension and jobseeker's allowance.

### For families

Mr Osborne confirmed plans for free school meals for infants.

He repeated the plan for a tax break for about four million married couples. Some £1,000 of personal allowance (the amount people earn before paying income tax) could be transferred from one spouse to another, assuming neither is a higher-rate taxpayer and one is earning less than the personal allowance.



He also confirmed that energy bills would not rise as much as expected with a change to green levies.

### For motorists

The chancellor had news for drivers. The next fuel duty rise was scheduled for September 2014, but this will be cancelled, saving drivers two pence a litre.

Tax disc to show motorists have paid vehicle excise duty is to be replaced with an electronic system.

From October next year, drivers will be able to pay by monthly direct debit rather than with a payment every year or six months.

### Small businesses

The chancellor said business rate rises would be limited to 2% in England and Wales next year instead of being linked to inflation. Business rate relief for small firms will be extended until April 2015.

There is also a two-year plan for a discount on business rates for some small traders on the High Street.

Employers will also get a break from National Insurance contributions when employing younger workers. At present it kicks in at the age of 16, but it will now be delayed to 21.

This will be one of the most expensive measures for the Treasury, costing £465m in 2015-16.

**Check the web for the full story - lots of good points for the doorstep**

## Comment

So let's look back on 2013 and see what the year did for us.

Our members of Parliament in the county have represented us well with Rt Hon Kenneth Clark discharging his duties as Minister without Portfolio in his inimitable way. For Broxtowe, Anna Soubry made her mark by being appointed as an Under Secretary in the Ministry of Defence and in Sherwood Mark Spencer has done more than enough to make him both popular at Westminster as well as an ardent constituency representative. All of them have been re-adopted by their constituencies for the 2015 election. And Rowena Holland has been re-adopted by Nottingham South

At Newark there was the misfortune of Patrick Mercer resigning the Party Whip over an alleged "cash for questions" matter and following his stated intention of not standing in the 2015 elections the constituency has selected Robert Jenrick, who is currently a director of the Christie's Auction House as their Prospective Parliamentary Candidate.

So what next? The campaigning starts, if it has not already done so.

There is a marked fear among many that UKIP will make a greater impact on the European elections next year and we must make sure this does not happen in the East Midlands. It cannot be said enough that they are a party of protest rather than of progress and they do not and will not have the capability of forcing through even the most ambitious of their policies.

There is some movement calling for the Referendum on Europe to be held before the 2017 promise and many of our supporters agree. We are the only party that has promised a referendum with the power to see it through but we must have some promise of success before we fight in 2015. To have Europe accede to some of our wishes prior to the election will help us to win back those voters who have deserted us for just empty promise and more promise.

Conservatives have always valued a reputation for doing the right thing and we have to persuade our voters to trust us to deliver.

*Any of the views expressed in this column are not necessarily those of the Conservative Party.*

**The county's Area Team wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and particularly a very successful political New Year**

# Long term planning



We inherited a broken economy from Labour says Nicky Morgan, Economic Secretary to the Treasury and Member of Parliament for Loughborough



But with our long-term economic plan, the Conservatives are working to secure the economy for the future.

We have set out £375 billion of investment in Britain's future. From roads and railways to flood defences and broadband connections, we are investing in infrastructure to make sure Britain can compete in the global race.

This investment will create jobs, help businesses and build an economy that supports those who want to work hard and get on in life. **Conservatives are the future**

## The area team



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## Help to buy is working

Since Labour's financial crisis, hardworking people have been priced off the property ladder because of the large deposits you have to put down. That's why we introduced Help to Buy - to make it easier to get a mortgage by cutting the deposits you need.

And it is delivering. Here are the facts:

1. Over 2,000 people have already been accepted in principle for a Help to Buy mortgage - 75 families every day getting closer to owning their dream home
2. £365 million worth of mortgages are being processed - home sales that may never have happened otherwise
3. There are a third more houses being built now than this time last year

But this isn't really about statistics. This is about people. Most applicants for Help to Buy are first-time buyers, young and have a roughly average household income.

If you support what we're doing to help hardworking people like these, then make a donation today.

Unbelievably, Labour oppose Help to Buy. We want to help people get on in life and own their own homes - Labour want to pull the ladder away.

In the eighties, the Conservatives were the party of Right to Buy. In this decade, we're the party of Help to Buy. This goes right to the heart of the Conservative plan for Britain - and now we've got to keep the momentum up.

**[Some good doorstep stuff here](#)**

Promoted and edited by Philip Ingall on behalf of Nottinghamshire Conservatives, both at King Edward Court, King Edward Street Nottingham NG1 1EW

## David Cameron speaks out on protecting children

Back in July, I said I wanted to do more to protect our children online: a personal mission for me.

In the summer, we took some important steps to help parents. Internet service providers agreed to introduce family filters, which are installed automatically in the home unless a parent chooses otherwise, and stop children from looking at inappropriate material online.

But when it came to stopping people accessing child abuse images and videos through internet searches, the search engine companies said that nothing could be done.

I refused to accept that.

Over the past few months we've worked closely with Google and Microsoft - and we've made important progress.

Today they have set out a number of measures to block child abuse images and videos. No illegal child abuse material will be returned for 100,000 search terms.

This is encouraging - but if the internet companies don't continue to make progress I will not hesitate to take further action. We will do all that's necessary to protect our children.



## Barrie Byford mourned

Barrie Byford who survived the IRA bombing of Brighton's Grand Hotel has died, aged 82. He was past chairman of one of Leicesters best known hosiery companies.



Well known as a Conservative member, he was involved in local and regional politics as chairman and treasurer, his last post being president of Loughborough Conservative Association. Barrie was well known to many party members in Nottinghamshire.

He and his wife, Hazel, Baroness Byford, now a Conservative peer in the House of Lords, were at the Grand Hotel in 1984 when an IRA bomb - planted to kill Margaret Thatcher and her government - exploded. They were uninjured.

He married Hazel in 1962 and they had two children, Elizabeth and Charles, and three grandchildren, Stephanie, Edward and Toby.

He qualified as a stockbroker and joined Hill Osborne as a consultant, where he spent 22 years.

His daughter Elizabeth Green said: "Always a quiet, understated man - he appreciated the lifestyle he was afforded and was always mindful of those less fortunate than himself.

"From the many letters received 'a true gentleman' is the phrase that best sums him up. He always had time for others".

"Father gave so much to so many. When asked to say Grace, he ended it with the words 'may we be ever mindful of the needs of others'. His sense of duty was immense".

## Helping hard workers

£590 income tax cut for the typical taxpayer (HM Treasury, Autumn Statement 2012, December 2012).

£1,000 saving on mortgages because rates have been kept low (Credit Action, UK Debt Statistics, August 2013, link; BoE, Quoted Household Interest Rates, Dataset BV34(a), 31 October 2013).

£360 saved on petrol if you fill up your car once a week (HM Treasury, Budget 2013, 20 March 2013).

£210 saved on council tax because we have given money to councils to freeze it, rather than letting council tax increase by 5 per cent each year - as it did under Labour (DCLG Press Release, 27 March 2013).

Up to £160 a year off energy bills because we are getting people on the lowest tariff (Ofgem, The Retail Market Review - Draft Impact Assessment for the updated domestic proposals, dated 26 October 2012).

£650 increase in the Basic State Pension because of our triple lock (House of Commons Library, State pension uprating - 2010 onwards, 7 February 2013, p. 16).

£400 off childcare bills by increasing free education and care for 3- and 4-year olds (HM Treasury, Spending Review 2010, October 2010; More Affordable Childcare, Department for Education, 22 April 2013).

**[More good points for the doorstep](#)**