**Minutes of the Meeting between Heidi Allen MP and constituents**

**at South Cambs Hall in Cambourne held on**

**Saturday, 2 July 2016 at 4.00 p.m.**

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| 1. **introduction** | |
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|  | Heidi Allen thanked people for coming and explained that unfortunately there had not been enough room for all constituents wishing to attend. No larger venues had been available at such short notice. Another meeting had been arranged, pending confirmation, at Duxford for Saturday 16 July.  This meeting had been prompted by the huge number of e-mails from constituents expressing concern regarding the result of the referendum.  **Election of new Prime Minister**  Heidi stated that a new Prime Minister would be elected by 2 September. She supported a short election period to allow a new leader to address the current political uncertainty as soon as possible. Conservative MPs were to be given the opportunity to question the five candidates shortly and Heidi pledged to put a review of these “hustings” on her website. Later in the meeting Heidi stated that Theresa May should be the next Prime Minister.  **Accepting the result**  Heidi explained that it was important to accept the validity of the outcome of the referendum and that it could not be dismissed in terms of the narrowness of the result nor by the size of turnout, as such matters were not included in the legislation. The referendum had been a hugely divisive issue and it was important to start the healing process. This could not be done by ignoring it. Heidi understood the strength of feeling of her constituents on this issue, but she urged that any future decision making must be based on calm, rational thought.  **Business as usual**  Heidi stated that nothing had changed yet: all funding currently being received from EU would continue, freedom of movement within the EU was still permitted as was free trade. She argued that all EU funding should be continued by the Government in the event that the country left the EU.  **Constitutional issues**  There were many constitutional matters that have received much speculation. For example it was unclear whether the triggering of Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty to allow UK to leave the EU was a matter for the Prime Minister or for parliament to decide. Whilst motions were being considered by MPs this could not affect the referendum result. A second referendum would require an Act of Parliament.  **Negotiation with the EU**  Negotiation over the terms of leaving the EU were likely to be long and difficult. Heidi suggested that it would be unwise for the British negotiators to publicly reveal their terms before negotiations had begun. In the current climate it appeared that relationships with European leaders would need to be rebuilt. It was also apparent that other countries within the EU would be interested to see what terms Britain secured.  **Stakeholder group set up**  Heidi stated that following the referendum result she had met with stakeholders in the constituency, including representatives from Cambridge University, Anglia Ruskin University, Addenbrookes, the Local Enterprise Partnership, small businesses and large businesses. All representatives had agreed that the main aim must be to deal with the uncertainty. She would continue to meet regularly with this group.  **Increase in racist incidents**  Heidi condemned the increase in hate crimes since the result, but stated that she was not aware of any incidents in South Cambridgeshire. She suggested that people start wearing safety pins as an expression of solidarity with all foreign born residents residing in this country.  **All European nationals should be allowed to remain in UK**  Heidi pledged to seek a guarantee from the new Prime Minister that all European born nationals would be allowed to stay in the UK. |
|  | **Importance of businesses in South Cambridgeshire**  Heidi stated that membership of the EU had greatly benefited local businesses and that South Cambridgeshire must remain “open for business”. The wealth generated by the region was essential for the country and it was vital that our voices are heard. Economic changes often fell hardest on the most vulnerable and this must also be addressed. |

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| 1. **question and answer session** | |
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|  | All 120 or so of those present were invited to ask questions. Heidi’s responses to these answers are given below.  **EU Citizenship**  Heidi recognised that under the terms of Article 20 of an EU treaty all British citizens were also considered European citizens and that this citizenship was important to some people. Heidi pledged to seek more information about this Article and its’ implications.  **Parliament voting on the referendum**  Heidi reiterated that whilst she had argued for remain, the result of the referendum could not be ignored by Parliament. She suggested that a second referendum seemed a more plausible alternative to simply ignoring the result of the first. It was suggested that a second referendum should be held as it was clear that many who had voted leave now regretted their decision. In response to concerns about the narrowness of the result and the suggestion that the 28% who did not vote supported the status quo, Heidi reiterated that neither the result of the referendum nor the votes of the 52% of those who supported leaving the EU could be disregarded.  It was suggested that Heidi Allen should vote against any Act of Parliament that seeks to take the UK out of the EU as this was the will of her constituents. Heidi explained that an MP had to vote on local and national issues and had to take a number of factors into account, including constituents. Negotiations on the terms of leaving the EU had not yet started and so it was too early to give a definitive voting intention; nor is it constitutionally guaranteed that MPs will even get to vote for a transitionary period.  **Next Prime Minister**  Heidi stated that David Cameron should have remained as Prime Minister, but she now supported Theresa May for this position. She agreed that someone who had supported the leave campaign should not be the next Prime Minister and had made it clear that Boris Johnson was unsuitable for the position on a recent edition of Newsnight.  **Negotiations**  Heidi hoped that negotiations should precede the triggering of Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty and she would bring this up with next Prime Minister. Heidi stated that it was imperative that Britain sent the right representatives to carry out the negotiations. Their first task would be to repair relationships, which had been damaged by the vote. Heidi acknowledged that the free market and freedom of movement were two vital topics to be negotiated on.  **Deciding whether to call a General Election**  In response to questioning Heidi explained that it would be up to the new Prime Minister to decide whether or not to call a General Election, but she considered it unlikely that any Prime Minister with a small majority would call an election in the current circumstances.  **Importance of the single market**  Heidi agreed that the single market was of vital importance to the country and she would raise this with the new Prime Minister.  **Liaising with Cambridge University**  Heidi expressed agreement with the recent statement by the Vice Chancellor of Cambridge University: that there would be no immediate changes following the vote. She reiterated that both Cambridge University and Anglia Ruskin University were part of the group of stakeholders that she had set up to consult with following the result of the referendum.  **Ireland and Scotland**  Heidi recognised the grave concerns regarding the effect of leaving the EU could have on the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic and on the peace process. She also recognised the increase in demands for Scottish independence following the vote.  **European nationals living in the UK**  In response to concerns about the uncertainty facing European nationals currently working in the District, Heidi Allen reiterated that it was a fundamental aim of hers to get assurances that they would be allowed to remain in the UK.  **Positive contribution from immigrants**  In response to concerns about xenophobic statements made by the leave campaign and the increase in hate crimes following the result, Heidi stated that immigrants had enriched the country. She supported the assertion that we needed innovators and many of these came from the EU. Heidi reiterated her condemnation of the racist incidents since the result. Later in the meeting Heidi stated that she had heard anecdotally that a retrospective decision to ask current EU nationals to re-define their status in the UK would be a huge administrative task and not one which the Government would look to enact.  **Setting up an independent body for accuracy in politics**  It was suggested that an independent body should be set up to scrutinise the accuracy of statements made by politicians. Heidi stated that this was worth considering, but it must not impinge on freedom of speech.  **Building a connection between politicians and the people**  In response to concerns about the calibre of our current politicians Heidi exhorted everyone to get more involved politically and that could make a real difference. She added that achieving political stability should be the most important aim of the country’s political leaders. Heidi agreed that many people had voted to leave the EU for reasons unrelated to Europe. She suggested that many of the electorate felt unrepresented by politicians and this needed to be addressed.  Heidi did not believe that the country should change its voting system in order to get the electorate to engage in politics. She suggested that it was an MP’s job to inspire the public to get involved, including those who were not supporters.  Heidi explained that she was a conviction politician who was prepared to work with opposition MPs and if necessary defy the party whips.  Heidi agreed that setting up workshops to explain how the political system works and how the EU affects people in this country was a good idea.  **European Court of Human Rights**  Heidi stated that Britain should continue to come under the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights. |
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| 1. **CONCLUSION** | |
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|  | Heidi Allen thanked everyone for their attendance and questions. Anyone who had been unable to ask their question was invited to take a question sheet and submit it to Heidi Allen’s office. All those present were encouraged to visit Heidi Allen’s website: <http://www.heidisouthcambs.co.uk/> or follow her on Twitter: @heidiallen75 for more information. |

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