

GILES CHICHESTER MEP

for the South West and Gibraltar

Longridge,

West Hill,

Ottery St. Mary

Devon EX11 1UX

Tel: +44(0) 1404 851106

Fax: +44(0) 1404 850752

Email: Giles@gileschichestermep.org.uk

www.gileschichestermep.org.uk

PRESS RELEASE

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South West Conservatives secure additional seat at the European Parliament Giles Chichester, Julie Girling and Ashley Fox to offer strong voice for the region in Europe

THE South West Conservatives secured a significant result in last night's European Elections, gaining one seat to send three MEPs to Brussels. Giles Chichester, Julie Girling and Ashley Fox have been elected to serve the region after the Conservatives secured 30 per cent of the vote in the South West.

In contrast, Labour polled only eight per cent of the vote – down seven per cent compared to 2004 – ensuring that the Party now has no representation in Brussels, with Glyn Ford losing his seat. The Labour Party came fifth overall in the South West – behind the Conservatives, UKIP, Liberal Democrats and the Green Party. Some of the most significant results came in Cornwall – where the Conservative beat UKIP to top the polls and Labour came sixth behind Merbyn Kernow – and Stroud, where Labour were fifth.

With the Treaty of Nice reducing the number of seats in the UK from 78 seats in 2004 to 72 - owing to the enlargement of the European Union – the South West region's representation in Brussels was reduced from seven to six. As the Conservatives took the seventh seat in 2004, last night's results meant that the Party gained one seat – the best performance across the country. Giles, Julie and Ashley will be joined by two UKIP and one Liberal Democrat MEPs.

Speaking after the results were declared Giles Chichester MEP said:

“This was a significant result for the Conservative Party here in the South West. While Labour is in chaos the Conservatives have secured strong support, from Stroud to West Dorset and Cornwall. What these results indicate is not only that this is clearly time for change but, more significantly that this Government has lost the trust of the people of the South West.

“I'm delighted to have seen the Conservatives do better than five years ago, gaining an additional seat, and look forward to welcoming both Julie Girling and Ashley Fox to the European Parliament.

“I would also like to offer my congratulations to UKIP on retaining their two seats and I would have liked to congratulate Graham Watson on retaining his Lib Dem seat, had he been present at the declaration in Poole. It is clear that an overwhelming majority of people in the South West support parties that demand a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty so Gordon Brown must be rueing the day he decided to renege on his manifesto pledge. What we want now is for him to make up for it by holding a general election immediately.”

In his acceptance speech, Giles Chichester took the opportunity to thank Roger Pratt, Ken Green and the South West Conservative European Election team for the excellent planning and hard work which helped make this a significant victory for the Conservative Party.

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For further information contact Press Officer, Tom Maughan
(Tel: 01803 865175 Email: tommaughan@southdevon.org)

Conservatives in the European Parliament