



Brighton & Hove Liberal Democrats

Winter 2022 Newsletter

For Members & Supporters

Editor & MDO: Trevor Freeman

Editorial

The current turmoil forced on the country by the Tory Party only reinforces the damage they have inflicted by their actions prior to it. It is an article of faith with them that austerity is the answer to just about everything. And yet, all austerity has spawned is an economy unable to cope as it faced crisis after crisis. The Tories classify austerity as competent financial management. They are wrong. Austerity is a short term response to economic dislocation caused by excessive spending given current circumstances. The main circumstance that prevailed when austerity was introduced was the crisis induced by the excessive use of financial derivatives that enabled poor quality debt management. That debt existed in the private sector and not the public sector. To combat that imbalance required extreme measures which was how quantitative easing came into being. However all that achieved was to transfer the debt from private hands into public hands and thus austerity 2010 came into being. Twelve years later we still have austerity and we still have the debt only now it has been compounded by the additional debt introduced with the pandemic. The Tories answer is more austerity and more taxation but offers no solutions to the problems that the failing societal fabric austerity induces. Things need to change. Austerity induces contraction in an economy. It suggests therefore that an increase in things like infrastructure investment to increase capacity should be a partial solution as from it expansion of the economy is made possible. This is the exact opposite of Tory actions and yet is in accordance with their growth objectives. Tory economic policy makes no sense.

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Fascinating History - Hollingbury Hill Fort

Back in the 1950s and 60s this was scene of many epic battles as children recreated their stories of ancient Rome. Unfortunately for them it was not a Roman Fort but an Iron Age Fort. Archaeology has established that it consisted of five huts surrounded by raised earthworks and a ditch. It dates to between 450 to 250 BCE with some evidence that it was also occupied during the Bronze Age. On top of the raised earthworks post holes have been found suggesting that there was a timber barricade to help in the defensive works. It sits at the top of Wild Park in the golf course.



2022 Executive Committee

Chair: Stewart Stone

Vice Chair: Martin Kersh

Secretary: Caroline Brown

Treasurer: Paul Chandler

Data Officer: Simon Jardine

Membership Development Officer (MDO): Trevor Freeman

Ordinary Members: Frances Lindsay-Hills, Beatrice Bass, David Sears, Andrew England, Ben Thomas, Peter Denyer, Hyder Khalil

Liberal Democrats
The Listening Party



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A Liberal Voice for a Liberal City

Local Councils

These come in various forms and various sizes but they all have one thing in common. Local citizens have a chance to have a say on what goes on in the government of their local community through them. The election to them usually happens once every four years when voters elect representatives from amongst their number to represent them on their local council.

The smallest councils are Parish Councils, next up are Village and Town Councils. The largest and generally the most powerful are the City and County Councils. The current design of local government came about as a result of the Local Government Act of 1972, which partly implemented the reforms recommended by the Royal Commission on Local Government in England (1966-69), known as the Redcliffe-Maud Report, after its Chair. Parts of the recommendation caused great upset in that they broke down some centuries held identities. One of the identities broken was that of Sussex as a unified County. It became split into two counties, East Sussex and West Sussex. Whilst West Sussex had a city, Chichester, East Sussex was left with a county town, Lewes, and a Metropolitan Area, Brighton. This situation remained with the tensions that it created between the East Sussex County area and the Metropolitan area of Brighton until the unification of Brighton & Hove and its elevation to city status in the year 2000. Since that year the city has been autonomous except where practicalities have informed joint working with other councils, examples are the Sussex Police Force, the Greater Brighton Economic Area etc.

The Redcliffe-Maude report recognised that there were natural boundaries in how government worked and that local government was necessary because it was more closely involved with local people and events and was thus more fitted to the solutions necessary to manage local affairs. It sought to design councils to be more economically efficient, more fitted to local life and work and to more equitably define responsibility and technical expertise.

Of course what we now understand is that all of this depended on a viable financing algorithm. The current dilemma of underfunded councils shows that this aspect was not addressed properly. Also the

responsibilities that local councils have been allocated have changed as central government has sought to shift some its tasks to local government without providing the means for them to be adequately administered.



The Redcliffe-Maud report also recognised that central government was too bureaucratic to enable effective management of local affairs and that democracy required that local government was needed to make overall government possible. But what the report failed to understand and take into account was the extent to which central government politics could interfere with local government. This again is something we are now experiencing as the tensions build between local councils and government.

Local Government has many responsibilities towards the populace that it serves and has great economic significance within local communities. As such it has proved to be a tempting target for Central Government. The modern tendency to centralise power means that politicians in Westminster view local politics as part of their prerogative as they seek to extend their reach into control of local councils. The way they do that is via fiscal and regulatory means. Examples of fiscal means are through the allocation of central government funding allocations from the levy of business rates which go directly to central government, after deduction of a collection fee, and by imposing caps on local government's ability to raise general rates by imposing percentage increases limits.

In future issues we will explore how these tensions between central and local government translate into impacts on the delivery and quality of the services local government are responsible for and the role that local politics and politicians play in it.

Ward Watch

The Boundary Commission have finally announced their changes to the ward boundaries for the City of Brighton & Hove. In the end the changes were less drastic than initially intimated, although they have been radical in some areas. The number of wards has increased by 2 to 23, whilst the number of councillors remains the same at 54. For the first time a ward crosses a constituency boundary in the West and so includes voters from two constituencies, Hove and Pavilion. The new boundary recommendations should receive Parliamentary consent and be ready for the local elections in May 2023.

The surprising changes mooted for Brunswick & Adelaide and Regency Wards have been reversed and those wards revert to as they were except for some minor alterations. This is most probably for the better as the proposed ward of Seven Dials, St. Peter's & North Laine was a clunky ward with little going for it. London Road is the traditional shopping area for St. Peter's and North Laine, whereas Western Road tends to be the main shopping area for Seven Dials area. Community loyalties also do not tend towards the London Road area for Seven Dials residents.

A big change has taken place around the central area of Preston Road and Ditchling Road with two new wards created and one ward ditched. The new wards are Round Hill, and Hollingdean & Fiveways. The ward that

has disappeared is Withdean. Some of the other wards have changed their boundaries and names as a result. Hollingdean & Stanmer become Coldean & Stanmer, St Peter's & North Laine becomes West Hill & North Laine, and Patcham become Patcham & Hollingbury.

In Hove the changes are Hove Park becomes Westdean & Hove Park, and Westbourne becomes Westbourne & Poet's Corner. Westdean & Hove Park now includes parts of Hove and Pavilion Constituencies.

The changes in Kemptown Constituency have thrown up some sensible changes and one that appears quite strange as it includes communities that would not normally be associated with each other. Coastal Rottingdean has shrunk to just include Rottingdean & West Saltdean, which with the proposed constituency change leaves the remainder of Saltdean hanging in mid air. The Brighton Marina has left Rottingdean and joined up with Whitehawk to form Whitehawk & Marina. East Brighton disappears to become part of Queen's Park and a new ward called Kemptown.. Moulscroomb alters as it loses parts to Coldean & Stanmer but gains some of the area between the Brighton to Lewes train line and Lewes Road.

Once these changes are approved by Parliament they become operational.



The New Ward Boundaries

Local Election Watch

With new wards coming into existence from the Boundary Commission review we are reforming our teams to prepare for and campaign in the elections to be held on 4th May 2023. The first three wards that are organising and have candidates ready to stand are Goldsmid, Hollingdean & Fiveways, and Kemptown. Two of them Hollingdean & Fiveways, and Kemptown are new wards.

There is interest being shown in forming teams for the wards in Whitehawk & Marina, and in Regency and so their ward organisers will be in touch with the membership as they have more to report.

If you are interested in standing as a candidate in your ward or in another ward, or in joining the team for any of the wards then to find out more do contact the MDO (trevor.freeman@liberalbrighton.org) for his help. Now is the time when interest is starting to increase in what the Lib Dems have to offer and this time there is no doubt that at least one of the major parties is suffering a severe backlash against their performance to date, so there is an increasing awareness of us as an alternative.

Goldsmid Ward.

The Goldsmid team, lead by Andrew England and Paul Chandler, is looking for another candidate to complete the team to stand in the May elections. Andrew and Paul have been building the profile of the Lib Dems in the ward for a few years now and have a high profile with the electorate. Could you be the member to join them as a candidate in this ward? They are also looking for members to join the team to help out in delivering and/or canvassing or assisting behind the scenes. Contact Paul at his email address shown on the front page to find out more or with your offers of help.

Hollingdean & Fiveways Ward

This is a new ward and Ash Ridley has already started work in raising our profile in this ward. He is forming a new team and is looking for someone to join him and stand with him as a fellow candidate in the May elections. If you feel you would like to become involved with him and his team in

delivering Focuses and canvassing for support he can be contacted through the MDO.

Kemptown Ward.

Kemptown is a new ward formed out of the old Queen's Park ward. Robert Brown is our local ward organiser and is looking for another candidate to stand with him in the forthcoming May elections. If you feel you are that person or would like to join his ward team then he can be contacted via the MDO.

Other Wards

With elections due in May 2023 your committee is looking to identify candidates to stand for election in other wards. Realistically they understand that success in winning every ward will not be achieved but want to give voters the opportunity to register a preference for the Lib Dems in each of the wards. Could you be one of those individuals that make that possible. In standing you would give voters a choice and make the Lib Dem profile in the city a force for better local government.

BY-ELECTION 8th DECEMBER 2022.

Wish Ward

A vacancy has occurred for a new councillor to represent the people of the ward. Whoever wins will only serve until the elections that are due next year. Your committee have selected Stewart Stone as our candidate for the election. Stewart is a seasoned campaigner who has stood previously in council elections as well as a candidate for the Liberal Democrats in the last General Election.



Fuel Crisis.

As we approach the colder months of Winter the gas crisis caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine emphasises the chaotic state of the UK's readiness for substituting fossil fuels by sustainable energy generation. For the UK the crisis has mainly been caused by two failures, both of which find their roots in long term government planning. These failures can be found in the decision to close the offshore gas storage facility by refusing maintenance financing, and the decision to fail to plan for the long term need to replace gas as a fuel for electricity generation and household energy consumption.

Both of these failures have their source in poor strategic thinking. No single government can be blamed for this lack of strategic planning as it requires long term thinking and action and the results would not be felt within the life term of any single government administration. Action should have been taken to first address these issues way back in the 1970s when we became aware of the impact of global warming on our climate. Unfortunately politicians in the UK and elsewhere are not renowned for long term thinking and so the issues raised were and have continued to be put on the back shelf so that we have now reached the current crisis. There are many solutions available, from insulating properties to reduce energy needs to replacing energy generation with renewable resources.

We are now in the year of Cop27, the UK hosted Cop26, so that implies that governments have had at least 26 years to address the issues raised by climate warming. The fact that they have not addressed the issues raised by previous Cop agendas shows just how dis-functional modern governments are and is a comment on their general incompetence in tackling our future generations welfare and in protecting the environment we live in.

The Price Tag of Austerity

The City of Brighton & Hove is lucky to have a National Park on its doorstep, The South Downs National Park. But in common with other national parks it is finding it tough going. The reason? Reduced funding to

protect the habitat of the parks and make them available to the people they are there to serve. The fact that they welcome over 100 million visits a year is testament to their importance to the nation. A recent report in the Guardian newspaper drew attention to the impact that funding reductions are having on our national parks. Over the last ten years their funding has been reduced by 40% and they are having to find £16 million in cuts over the next 3 years. To do this they are going to have to reduce staffing, habitat maintenance, sell buildings and close facilities. Not a good sell for the health and well being of the nation.



Pollution

Our environment is protected by agencies, within government, whose job is to ensure that environmental aspects that affect our health are not compromised. A look at the failings from river pollution to flood damage shows that things are not working. Of course there are some successes and they have often been achieved against the odds, but they are exceptions and do not compensate for the overall failures. The common problem for the regulators is that they are under funded and therefore cannot employ the people required or give them the skills needed to tackle the problems caused by polluters.

Pollution is not a new problem. The high number of deaths in cities from smog pollution in the early to mid twentieth century was the driver behind the introduction of smokeless zones. Their success in reducing the death toll showed how by tackling the issue at source positive results can be achieved. The important lesson is that pollution kills and we have to tackle it.

Events

Courtesy of the Events Committee.

Branch AGM - Wed. 23rd Nov. 2022, 7:30 pm at Community Base, 113 Queen's Road, Brighton, BN1 3XG. A guest speaker will attend, there will be a raffle and a chance to meet up with other members. To find out more go to www.liberalbrighton.org/en/page/agm-2022

Xmas Party - Tues. 6th Dec 2022, 7:00 pm at The Bath Arms. Cost £25. For further details go to the events page on our website, where they will be published as they become available. The address of the events page is www.liberalbrighton.org/en/event/month.

For both pages you will need to sign in.

Coffee mornings are held every month, one in each constituency.

Locations and timings are;

Hove: 10:00 am on the first Wednesday of the month at Big Beach Cafe, Hove Lagoon, BN3 4AX. It is hosted by Martin Kersh and Jo Baldwin-Trott.

Kemp Town: 10:00 am on the first Saturday of the month at Open Art Cafe, 6 Nevill Road, Rottingdean, BN2 7HG. It is hosted by Stewart Stone and Simon Jardine.

Pavilion: 11:00 on the second Friday of the month at Muse Café, 37 Queens Road, BN1 3XB. It is hosted by Hyder Khalil and Frances Lindsay-Hills.

All are welcome and it is quite OK to attend those outside your constituency. **Note change in times for Hove and Kemptown.**

Brighton & Hove Liberal Democrats

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, 23 November 2022 at 7:30 pm.

At Community Base, 113 Queen's Road, Brighton, BN1 3XG.

Doors open at 7:00 pm.

WE NEED YOU

CAN YOU STAND AS A CANDIDATE?



CAN YOU JOIN ONE OF OUR WARD TEAMS?

Do you want to make a difference?

With elections coming up on 4th May 2023 we need all hands on deck to prepare ourselves for the fray. We need deliverers, canvassers, envelope stuffers, backroom support workers. You name it and we have a need for it.

Do you have skills that could help us?

Are you good at social media, copy-writing, photography, information technology, and design. Or soft skills sets such as talking to people, listening to them, and helping them.

Contact our MDO, trevor.freeman@liberalbrighton.org .

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