

BRIGHTON & HOVE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 21st NOVEMBER 2023 ON ZOOM

Attendees: Stewart Stone, Martin Kersh, Simon Jardine, Trevor Freeman, Hyder Khalil, Paul Chandler, Beatrice Bass, Frances Lindsay-Hills, Peter Denyer, Andrew Woolmer, Andrew England, Marjorie Leeds, Stephen O’Kane, Toby Keynes, Geoff Date, Robert Brown, James May, Ian Newman, Isabel Austeria , Alex Miller, Simon Gamble, Ashley Ridley, Claire Lachlan, Claudia Malallah, Ben Thomas, Owen Sharp, David Sears, Stephen O’Kane, Michael Wang, Dominique Hall and Caroline Brown

Apologies for absence were received from Hilary Ellis, Ken Rist, Alex Miller, Caroline Ellis, Billy Tipping and Tony Seymour.

The Chair, Stewart Stone, welcomed everyone to the AGM.

The minutes of the previous AGM held on 23rd November 2022 were formally adopted.

Chair’s Report

Membership Numbers

The local party membership stands at 283 members, compared with 316 last year. SS observed that membership numbers do tend to increase around the time of a General Election or other major political event.

Events

SS reviewed the many social events that the local party held over the course of the past year. This was accompanied by showing many photographs taken at them.

- Christmas Party (December 2022)
- Curry Club
- Lib Dem Pints
- Pride
- Politics and Prosecco
- Monthly Coffee Mornings

Similarly, SS reviewed the local party’s other activities. There was a by-election in Wish ward in December 2022 at which SS stood representing the Lib Dems. The main political activity of 2023 was the Brighton & Hove local elections. We stood 30 candidates at the elections and this was a significant increase on recent elections. Our candidates also took an active part in hustings across the city.

Campaigns and Other Local Party Activities

Press coverage has increased dramatically in recent months. This is due, mainly, to the party’s new Press Officer, Caroline Ellis, assisted by regular contributors: Robert Brown, Trevor Freeman, Paul Chandler and Ashley Ridley. We have managed to get many more letters published in the Argus on

topics as varied as waste management and parking issues and we have managed to secure some BBC Radio appearances. In Caroline's own words,

"Working with Rob Brown, we have had a number of letters published in the Argus on subjects as diverse as parking apps to the Horizon programme. We have had Argus articles about the selection of Stewart and Ashley, as well as one challenging Peter Kyle's comments on Lib Dems in Mid Bedfordshire.

In other media, Ash Ridley will be interviewed by Geoffrey Bowden on Radio Reverb soon, which will include his own selection of music and Paul Chandler was interviewed on Latest TV following publicity of our members on the National Rejoin the EU March. It's all a promising start as we go into the general election campaigns."

Trevor Freeman masterminded our re-launch of the www.liberalbrighton.uk website during the summer. This was triggered by the national party making the decision to re-platform all of its web sites, including all local parties. This was a major piece of work involving the recreation of all our content and SS complemented Trevor Freeman on the layout and content of the new site.

SS concluded his report with an invitation to all members to join him at this year's Christmas party to be held at the Bath Arms on the evening of 6th December.

Treasurer's Report

Paul Chandler presented the local party accounts. See attached report.

Paul Chandler presented the accounts for the Calendar Year 2022 and a prediction for the end-of-year 2023. He pointed out that we would end 2023 with lower reserves mostly because of election expenses incurred during the local elections in May and a £1,000 donation made to the Eastbourne Lib Dems' GE campaign.

As 2024 is highly likely to be an election year, we will be able to transfer £1,500 from the Supporters' Club account to the main account in accordance with the rules of the Supporters' Club.

In practice, General Election years are usually good for both donations and membership and so a similar deficit budget for 2024 is envisaged, enabling us to make another £1,000 donation to the Lib Dem campaign in Lewes Constituency.

Paul proposed a new Independent Scrutineer for the 2023 accounts. His name is Guy Earl and he is a member of Lewes local Party. He has relevant experience having worked in the banking sector. The meeting voted and approved Guy's appointment.

Paul thanked Geoff Date who had undertaken the scrutineer's role for the last five years. Geoff has decided it is time to step back.

Election of Officers and Ordinary Members of the Executive Committee for 2024

The election was overseen by Martin Kersh. Martin is not standing for the Exec in 2024 and is, therefore, a disinterested individual for the purposes of this election and can act as returning officer.

There were no contested nominations. Therefore, a simple confirmatory vote is sufficient in order to confirm the appointments. The following nominations were received by the deadline of 14th November.

Nominee	Position
Simon Jardine	Chair
Stewart Stone	Vice Chair - Kemptown & PPC Kemptown
Trevor Freeman	Vice Chair - Pavilion
Owen Sharp	Treasurer
Caroline Ellis	Secretary & Press Officer
Stamati Crook	Data Officer
Dominique Hall	Membership Development Officer
Ben Thomas	Elections Officer
Jack Moxley	Social Media Officer
Claire Lachlan	Fundraising Officer
Michael Wang	Diversity Officer & Youth Coordinator
Ashley Ridley	PPC Pavilion
Caroline Brown	Minutes Secretary
Paul Chandler	Executive Member
Robert Brown	Executive Member
David Sears	Executive Member
Simon Gamble	Executive Member
Hyder Khalil	Executive Member
Peter Denyer	Executive Member
Claudia Malallah	Executive Member
Ian Newman	Executive Member
Toby Keynes	Executive Member

The votes were conducted online using Zoom voting. The positions were voted on in 4 tranches: 1. Chair, Treasurer and Secretary, 2. Vice Chairs, Membership and Diversity, 3. Data, Social Media, Fundraising and PPC Pavilion, and, 4. Executive members. All votes were unanimously in favour of the nominated person for each position.

Introductions and Statements from the new Officers

Simon Jardine (Chair)

Simon expressed his thanks to those people standing down from the Exec or from their positions on the Exec. He thanked Stewart Stone for his two years' service as Chair, including his great event organizing skills. He also noted Stewart's standing in two by-elections during that time. Simon thanked Paul Chandler for his outstanding contribution as Treasurer over many years and especially for his commitment to remain on the Exec in order to ensure a smooth handover to the new

Treasurer, Owen Sharp. Andrew England has run Goldsmid ward for over 5 years and become the master of Focus leaflet distribution. Martin Kersh joined the Exec 2 years ago and brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to bear. Simon wanted to particularly thank Frances for all of her hard work on the Exec over many years. She was a founder member of the Liberal Democrats in 1988 and a member of the Liberal Party before that. She was a councillor in Brighton for many years in the 1990's. The local party is extremely grateful for her hard work and generosity.

Simon rejoined the Lib Dems in 2017 in protest against Brexit. He had previously been a member in the 80s having joined via the SDP. Simon has been the local party's Data Officer since 2019. Simon has been an active campaigner in Brighton & Hove, including his acting as Agent for the local party in the 2023 local elections, supporting Lewes in the 2019 GE and volunteering at several by-elections e.g. Somerton & Frome. He is currently retired, but before that he worked in IT across many areas, predominantly in Finance in the City.

Simon described some of his aims for the local party for 2024. It will be a General Election year and this provides the party with opportunities. People will be interested in politics and past elections have resulted in an increase in membership. We will have three parliamentary candidates taking part in hustings and media appearances. Simon pointed out that the B&H seats are not targets for the Lib Dems and we need to be mindful that our top priority must be to do everything we can to support our candidates in Lewes and Eastbourne. Nevertheless, we need to strengthen our local party and use the activity around the GE to help our prospects for the local elections in 2027.

Simon announced that we would be holding a planning day in the new year. He encouraged all members to take part and to help create the development plan for the local party.

Owen Sharp (Treasurer)

Owen works as the Head of Compliance and Money Laundering Reporting Officer for a Financial Services firm based in Worthing which has branches across the country.

He first joined the Lib Dems back when he was at University, but allowed his membership to lapse.

He rejoined the Lib Dems in the mid-2010s, prior to Brexit, when he was living in Littlehampton. He carried on when he moved up to South London and subsequently returned to Brighton.

Owen noted that he has not previously been a treasurer although, in his day-to-day work, he has constant access to financial accounts and financial information.

He will work with Paul Chandler for a smooth transition period to ensure that everything works to plan.

Caroline Ellis (Secretary)

Caroline was unable to attend the AGM due to illness.

Trevor Freeman (Vice Chair - Pavilion)

Trevor has previously been the Membership Development Officer with the remit to recruit and enhance members' experience of Brighton & Hove Liberal Democrats.

Trevor originally belonged to the Liberals and became one of the founding members of the Liberal Democrats on their formation (1988). He has represented the Liberal Democrats in countless local elections in various wards but mainly in Regency, his home ward. Although never elected, Trevor has nearly always managed to improve the party's showing over previous results.

Trevor has served on several city partnerships, the chief ones being the Strategic, the Economic, and the Regeneration Partnerships. Many of the improvements that took place in the 00's can be attributed to the Regeneration Partnership.

In his role as Membership Development Officer, Trevor has aimed to improve the local party's communications with the membership and the electorate. To achieve this, he produces a quarterly newsletter and enhanced the website. Earlier this year, the party's website was transferred to a new hosting platform, which meant that the website had to be completely rewritten. A long and time-consuming process.

Trevor's aim for the website is that it should become our main platform for members, for the public to find out what Brighton & Hove Liberal Democrats stand for, the ways that they interact with the community, and how they can become part of that interaction. The only way that can happen is if we have the support of our members. Trevor asked members to look out for items that they think would interest other members, their ward, or the city as a whole. These should be fed back to Trevor.

Trevor is also seeking to build a team to look after the website, and asked anyone interested to get in touch with him.

Dominique Hall (Membership Development Officer)

Dominique thanked the local party for the opportunity to work as the Membership Development Officer. She will be working especially hard through the general election year. The election will generate more increased interest in the party. We need to convert that interest into increased membership numbers. We need to encourage all members to actively participate in their areas, or in target seats.

**Brighton and Hove Liberal Democrats
Accounts for 2022 and 2023**

	2022 Actual	2023 Y/E estimate
Opening balance	£5,576	£6,558
Income		
Donations	£2,226	£4,300
Transfer from Supporters Club	£0	£0
Membership	£394	£325
Fundraising	£1,369	£400
Misc. Income	£610	£0
Total Income	£4,599	£5,025
Expenditure		
Campaigning expenses	£971	£500
Donations to Lewes and Eastbourne	£0	£1,000
Fund-raising Expenses	£704	£0
Room Hire	£282	£200
Pride Registration	£0	£500
Misc Expenditure	£460	£150
Web Site Rental & Development	£245	£200
Marked Registers	£35	£275
Election Expenses	£806	£3,300
Office expenses	£71	£65
Bank Charges	£44	£50
Total Expenditure	£3,617	£6,125
Net Gain / Loss over the year	£982	-£1,100
Closing Balance	£6,558	£5,458

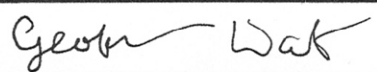
Brighton and Hove Liberal Democrats
Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December 2022

Independent Examiner's Report

I have examined the Income and Expenditure and Balance Sheet for the year ending 31st December 2022 together with the underlying accounting records and confirm that the accounts are in accordance therewith.

I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that the accounting records were not kept as required, the accounts are in accordance with the accounting records, the accounts comply with the requirements of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

Signature:



Name: Geoff Date

Position: Independent Examiner

Date: 03/03/2023