

Reports to Conference Autumn 2019

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FEDERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Federal Conference Committee is responsible for organising conference, selecting venues and choosing the items for debate. It provides the rooms for the fringe, the training sessions and Spokesperson's Question and Answer sessions although it does not have responsibility for those programmes. The committee is made up twelve people elected by party members as well as representatives from other party committees and each of the State Parties, the Chief Whip and the President.

Autumn Conference 2019: Bournemouth

For Autumn Conference, we are back in Bournemouth. It is an old favourite and we are pleased to be here^[BB1]. I would like to welcome our members who have attended, particularly the ones for whom this is their first conference, and to express our gratitude to our exhibitors, fringe organisers and observers. I very much hope you enjoy conference, whether or not you actively participate in the debates, and that you get a lot out of it.

We understand that conference can be costly to attend. To help with that, we administer the Conference Access Fund. It provides a means by which people can attend conference who might otherwise not be able to. We are constantly impressed by the generosity of members in donating to that fund.

The Agenda

As ever, we received a large number of high quality motions from all over the party. We have continued with the practice, started last year, of choosing the motions name blind as to the submitters and prospective movers and summators.

The Federal Policy Committee has put forward a number of policy papers for discussion including on climate change, criminal justice, health policy and ensuring a fairer share for all at work. We have selected all of them for debate.

For the rest of the agenda, we have selected what we think is an interesting and varied field of motions and we look forward to some lively debates. We have covered issues ranging from business taxes to the deprivation of citizenship, from tourism to the rehabilitation of offenders, from young carers to gender equality, and from the railways to investing in Further Education and learning.

We have not, at the stage of writing this report, selected a motion on Europe. Instead, we have decided to repeat what we have done in recent years to reflect the fast-moving pace of events and set a later deadline for motions on Europe. That deadline is **6pm, on 5th September 2019**. There will be an amendments deadline to follow after that.

Every item on the agenda can be amended. The deadline for submitting amendments to the motions listed is **1pm on Monday 2nd September**.

You can ask questions to those who have submitted reports for consideration by conference (including me!). The deadline for the submission of those questions is the same as for amendments.

We have allocated some time for Emergency Motions. Those are short motions on issues that have arisen or where there have been significant developments since the original deadline for motions. Again, the deadline for the submission of Emergency Motions is the same as for amendments.

We continue to provide a drafting advice service. Under that scheme, members of the committee review motions and amendments that are submitted to it and provide comments and suggestions on the drafting. We find that people who have used the service tend to be more successful in having their motions and amendments selected. The deadline for requests for drafting advice on amendments and emergency motions is **1pm on Tuesday 20th August**. Because we receive a large number of requests for advice, and giving advice is time consuming, we set this deadline to manage our workload. Every year, there are some people who seek advice sometimes considerably after the deadline and we regret that, under those circumstances, we are often not able to assist.

The selected amendments, questions and other information about conference will be listed in *Conference Extra*, which will be available online by the Tuesday in the week before conference commences.

You will also be able to access the same information through the Conference App, which can be downloaded from the App Stores relevant to most major devices. We have made some improvements to the app in recent years but we recognise that it is still a work in progress.

Following a successful trial, we will continue to accept Speaker's Cards online before debates.

We are here to help you get the most out of Conference. Please feel free to approach any of us at any time during conference with any questions you may have about the agenda, conference sessions or speaking in debates. You will be able to identify us by the badges

we wear with the letters 'FCC' on them. You can also contact us through the Liberal Democrat Conference Facebook group.

Spring Conference 2019: York

We held our Spring Conference in York earlier this year. The York Barbican was our conference centre and the Novotel acted as conference hotel.

As usual, we invited feedback in the form of an online survey after conference. 14% of those who responded said they were attending their first conference. The remainder had attended before. 76% of those responding rated the conference centre as either 'good' or 'excellent'. 67% rated the Novotel as 'good' or 'excellent'.

Whilst the majority (62%) of people thought that the balance on the agenda between debate and non-debate items was about right, 16% of those responding wanted to see more debates, 10% wanted to see more keynote speeches and 12% more question and answer sessions. I hope that, with those figures, people think we have got it about right.

We were pleased to see that 89% of people rated their conference experience as 'good' or 'excellent'.

Conference Venues

We are finalising the contractual arrangements for our conferences in 2020 and will be in a position to announce when and where they will be very soon.

We are frequently asked how we go about selecting venues. We often also receive suggestions as to where we might take conference in the future. In the interests of transparency, the following is the minimum specification for where we hold conference.

For Spring, we need a venue for a weekend in mid-March that offers:

- Set-up to take place on Thursday and Friday morning;
- At least 1000 m² of exhibition stands including walkways, catering and seating areas;
- Auditorium theatre for 1000-1,500 with wheelchair facilities, induction loop and stage;
- Parking space for at least 4 media lorries with good cabling routes to auditorium;
- At least 6 back of house rooms;
- Conference hotel within 5-10 minutes walk of the main conference centre – with wheelchair access for fringe rooms, accessible bedrooms, large bar area;
- At least 13 fringe rooms across conference venues to seat 30+ theatre style;

- Competitive pricing and subvention if possible to keep the cost of conference to members as low as possible.

For Autumn Conference, we need a venue for mid-September that offers:

- Set-up to take on Thursday and Friday with conference from Saturday – Tuesday;
- At least 2,300 m² of exhibition stands including walkways, catering and seating areas
- Auditorium theatre for 2,000-2,500 with wheelchair facilities, induction loop and stage;
- Parking space for at least 8 media lorries with good cabling routes to auditorium;
- Space for up to 60 workstations for press operations;
- Lounge for 70 theatre style;
- At least 10 back of house rooms;
- Conference hotel within 5-10 minutes walk of main conference centre – with wheelchair access for fringe rooms, accessible bedrooms, large bar area;
- At least 19 fringe rooms across conference venues to seat 40+ theatre style;
- Competitive pricing and subvention if possible to keep the cost of conference to members as low as possible.

We try to select venues with a reasonable geographical spread and we have regard to the conference feedback for places that we have been before.

The Federal Conference Committee

Since the last conference, we have had some changes to the make-up of the committee.

Just before Spring Conference, Sarah Brown was elected as our new representative from Federal People Development Committee. Tahir Maher resigned upon his election as Chair of the English Party and was replaced as English Party representative by Alistair Calder McGregor. Susan Juned resigned as our representative from Federal Policy Committee following her election to Local Government. She has been replaced by Duncan Brack who will not need very much induction to the running of conference!

Thanks

The lion's share of the work that goes into organising Federal Conference over the course of the year is undertaken by the Conference Office. I would like to express my thanks to the staff who work in that office: Susannah Murray, Daiva Buoziene, Wilma Robinson and Hannah Bacchus. I would also like to express my thanks to Nick Harvey, Sian Waddington and to all the staff at Party Headquarters.

I am also grateful for the huge amount of effort put in to the agenda, particularly by the staff in the Policy Unit, Christian Moon and Jonathan Everett, the team of policy researchers and our designer, Mike Cooper.

The Stewards Team do a phenomenal amount of work to keep conference on track and I would like to express my thanks also to them and to Mike Ross and Jodie Frapple, our Chief Steward and Deputy Chief Steward.

Finally, Conference would not be possible without the dedication of the members of the Federal Conference Committee and I would like to express my personal thanks to all of them too. I owe particular thanks to Zoe O'Connell and Nick Da Costa, the two Vice-Chairs of the FCC.

Geoff Payne
Chair, Federal Conference Committee

Federal Policy Committee

The Federal Policy Committee is responsible for researching and developing policy and overseeing the Federal Party's policy-making process. This includes producing policy papers for debate at Conference and drawing up (in consultation with the parliamentary party) the Federal election manifestos for Westminster and European elections. The FPC has 29 voting members: the Party Leader, fifteen members directly elected by party members, six Parliamentarians, the Party President, two councillors, three state party reps and one rep from the Federal Campaigns and Elections Committee. It is chaired by the Leader.

Committee business

The FPC is a key committee – preparing manifestos for elections and ensuring that the Party has a rigorous response to the most important challenges facing the UK. This is my last Federal Policy Committee report as chair of the committee, and I want to put on record my thanks to all its members and staff for the work they have done in the past two years. Particular recognition is owed to Duncan Brack and Jeremy Hargreaves who have undertaken the ‘heavy-lifting’ in chairing the FPC’s meetings in my absence. Likewise, the whole committee owes a debt of gratitude to those who have taken on the task of chairing policy working groups, a backroom but crucial role.

In the past year, there have been a few changes in the membership of the committee of which Conference should be aware:

- Jim Williams has resigned as an elected member of the committee and Catherine Bearder has resigned as an MEP rep.
- Alec Dauncey has joined the committee in place of Jim Williams, Antony Hook now serves on the committee as the MEP rep and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey has replaced him as a directly elected member of the committee.
- Wera Hobhouse and Baroness (Julie) Smith have both joined the committee as representatives of the parliamentary parties in the Commons and Lords respectively.

FPC Work Programme

In accordance with our previously published schedule, we are presenting policy papers on A Fairer Share for All, Climate Change and the Low-Carbon Economy, Crime and Policing, and Health and Social Care at Bournemouth. There will also be a consultation session on the Nature of Public Debate. Comments on the consultation paper discussed at Bournemouth can be sent by email to policy.consultations@libdems.org.uk by the end of September.

Since the last conference, the FPC has reviewed and updated its work programme. New working groups on the Future of Work, Natural Resources and the Natural Environment–

chaired by Sarah Whitebread – and Making Utilities Work Better for the Public – chaired by Neil Stockley – have been established. These groups will prepare draft policy papers for the FPC in time to be debated at the Autumn Conference 2020.

The current schedule of consultation and policy papers is therefore as set out below:

| Working Group | Consultation Session | Policy Paper |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Climate Change | Already done (Autumn 2018) | Autumn 2019 |
| Health and Care | Already done (Spring 2019) | Autumn 2019 |
| Crime and Policing | Already done (Spring 2019) | Autumn 2019 |
| A Fair Share for All | Already done (Spring 2019) | Autumn 2019 |
| Nature of Public Debate | Autumn 2019 | Spring 2020 |
| Natural Resources and the Natural Environment | Spring 2020 | Autumn 2020 |
| Future of Work | Spring 2020 | Autumn 2020 |
| Making Utilities Work Better for the Public | Spring 2020 | Autumn 2020 |

The FPC is very grateful to all those who give up a great deal of time to serve on our working groups. This is not the most glamorous role in the party, but it is absolutely vital to our democratic policy-making process.

In addition to the full policy working groups, the FPC has also decided to undertake policy development in some focussed priority areas through smaller groups producing short papers, and by working with spokespeople and other party stakeholders to bring forward motions to conference sometimes accompanied by spokesperson’s papers: at Bournemouth the debates on railways, tourism and rehabilitation of offenders are the result of this sort of engagement with spokespeople.

Other priorities where we are looking to work with spokespeople and other stakeholders include:

- Issues of importance to women.
- Housing and Planning.
- Arts and culture.
- International Development

Manifesto Development

Since the last Conference, FPC prepared a manifesto for the European Elections. The manifesto was drafted by the manifesto working group that we had established to prepare a manifesto in case of a general election in 2019, with the addition of people with particular European policy expertise. The manifesto working group consisted of:

Myself

Dick Newby (Chair)

Susan Kramer (Treasury Spokesperson)

Duncan Brack (Vice Chair, FPC)

Jeremy Hargreaves (Vice Chair, FPC)

Sarah Ludford (Vice Chair, FPC)

Christine Cheng (FPC)

James Gurling (Chair, FCEC)

Victoria Marsom (FCEC)

Catherine Bearder MEP

Tom Brake MP (spokesperson on Exiting the European Union and International Trade)

Peter Price (FPC)

The FPC were very pleased with the reception of the manifesto and with the Party's success in the election.

Member Engagement

The FPC is always seeking to improve our processes to widen and deepen members' involvement in our policy development, and to improve communication of party policy. At the time of writing, we are updating our short summary pocket guides to Party policy and our philosophy. These updated guides will be available at the Conference in Bournemouth and then will be available from www.libdemimage.co.uk.

To make it more affordable for members^[BB2] to participate in working groups, we have piloted a 'travel pool' system with the Climate Change Working Group. The pilot has shown that a pool can be run manageably and that it makes it more affordable for people from outside of London to attend working group meetings. We hope to expand travel pools by selecting future working groups that will operate on this basis so that we can assess how successful the scheme is in increasing the regional diversity of working groups.

We report on each FPC meeting on Lib Dem Voice and FPC's own Facebook page, www.facebook.com/groups/federalpolicycommittee which is a good mechanism for keeping up with the work of the committee and asking questions to us.

We are exploring further mechanisms for making information about existing Party policy as easily and simply available as possible. If you would like further information about these

initiatives or how to find and use information we have produced, then please contact policy.consultations@libdems.org.uk

If you would like to suggest ways of improving how we make policy, please feel free to email on policy.consultations@libdems.org.uk with “Member Engagement” in the header.

FPC Links

To encourage policy debate across the party FPC representatives take responsibility for promoting policy debate within the regions of England, including attending regional conferences where appropriate. To contact your representative, please email policy.consultations@libdems.org.uk with “FPC Contact” in the header.

| Region | FPC contact |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Devon & Cornwall | To be confirmed |
| East of England | Belinda Brooks-Gordon |
| East Midlands | To be confirmed |
| London | Duncan Brack |
| Northern | To be confirmed |
| North West | Lizzie Jewkes |
| South Central | Catherine Royce |
| South East | Anthony Hook |
| West Midlands | Chris White |
| Western Counties | Richard Cole |
| Yorkshire & the Humber | Kamran Hussein |

The FPC has also appointed representatives to liaise with Party SAOs:

| SAO | FPC contact |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| ALDES | Richard Cole |
| ALDC | Chris White |
| LGBT+ | Alisdair McGregor |
| WLD | Belinda Brooks-Gordon |
| PCA | To be confirmed |
| Liberal Democrat Lawyers | Antony Hook |
| LDDA | Belinda Brooks-Gordon |

In addition, the FPC has decided to co-opt as non-voting members of the committee a representative from Young Liberals and from LDCRE.

Policy Staffing and Volunteers

The Policy Unit currently consists of Christian Moon (Head of Policy) and Dr Jonathan Everett (Deputy Head of Policy). The Policy Unit has also benefitted from the efforts of volunteers including Sophia Weintraub and Hannah Brady. The FPC is grateful for the hard work of all the staff.

Sir Vince Cable MP
Chair, Federal Policy Committee

Federal Board

The Federal Board (FB) is the governing body of the Federal Party. It is responsible for co-ordinating and overseeing the implementation of the Party's strategy and the work of the Federal Party. The Federal Board also has responsibility, at least once per Parliament, for preparing a document outlining the Party's Strategy, for submission for debate and agreement by Conference. The FB has 35 voting members: the Party President (who chairs it); the Leader and three other Parliamentarians; the chairs of the three state parties (who are Vice Presidents of the Federal party); the chairs of each of the Federal Committees including a vice-chair of the Federal Policy Committee; a councillor; a Young Liberals representative; three state party representatives; and 15 members directly elected by party members.

Electoral Success

In the brief few months since Federal Conference met in York in March, the party has celebrated considerable success at the polls, first with a net gain of more than 703 councillors, taking control of 12 new councils in the local elections on 2 May, and going on to win 16 MEP seats in the snap European Elections on 23 May. Our new councillors and parliamentarians are already making their marks, and the party continues to prepare for either a snap election or a referendum in the autumn.

Strategy

The Federal Board has also continued to monitor and encourage progress against the party's strategy, as agreed by party conference. That set out five ways to realise our political vision:

- Creating a much larger base of long-term loyal supporters (a 'core vote') for the party, based on people who share our values;
- Building beyond our growing core vote with successful local campaigning, combined with effective targeting as the electoral systems require it, to win at all levels of local and national government;
- Developing a mass campaigning movement both within and outside the party that is of a scale and effectiveness to match the scale of our ambitions, which supports both elections and issue-led campaigns;
- Working with those on all sides of politics who share goals with us to achieve them;
- Generating political momentum through tangible signs of progress, including membership levels, fundraising totals and council and Parliamentary by-election successes;

The Board urges all parts of the party to keep these in mind when planning their own activities and future work.

Sir Vince Cable

On your behalf, the Federal Board wishes to put on record its thanks to Sir Vince Cable MP, as he stands down as our Leader at the time of writing this report. In the two years of his tenure, the fortunes of the party have been transformed, with us now consistently polling in the mid-20s.

Our new Leader will be announced after this report goes to press, but we have all been impressed with the excellent campaigns of the two candidates to be his successor. We thank both Jo Swinson and Sir Ed Davey who have run quality campaigns in complete contrast to the campaigns for the next Conservative Leader and Prime Minister.

Fourth Vice-President and the Campaign for Racial Diversity

Conference agreed to create a fourth (non-voting) Vice-President role (the State Party Chairs/Convenor are the other three) and Isabelle Parasram has been elected by the Federal Board as our new Vice President responsible for working with Black, Asian and Minority communities.

As well as being a top-class barrister professionally, Isabelle has also been a former PPC, local party exec member, spokesperson on Brexit in the West Midlands and Vice Chair of London Region. She is already making her mark.

Conference also voted to create the Campaign for Racial Diversity (the equivalent to the Campaign for Gender Balance) and Sarah Yong has been elected to chair the RDC with Anood Al Samari and Arfan Bhatti as her two vice chairs. Their role is to increase representation in public office of BaME members.

Definition of Islamophobia

As reported orally to Federal Conference in March the Federal Board adopted the Definition of Islamophobia. In June, Vince Cable and Sal Brinton were asked to give evidence at the Home Affairs Select Committee on the party's discipline process and how we will handle cases of Islamophobia.

New Discipline Procedure launched 1 July

The new discipline procedure was launched on 1 July, with hundreds of you volunteering to undertake the new roles of Adjudicators, Investigators and Mediators, and those already in post ready to deal with complaints. In advance of its implementation, the Federal Board

agreed to amend the procedure in line with input from the state parties. A copy of the changes to the procedure is available for review on the link below. Conference and the three state parties have all voted for the new arrangements, and your Federal Board reviewed arrangements to ensure all was ready in early June. The website lists how the new system will work <https://www.libdems.org.uk/complaints-compliments>

European Election Review

The party constitution states that the party will conduct a review after each European election, and the Federal Board has asked the Federal Audit and Scrutiny Committee to conduct the review. Given that the elections were called at short notice the review is also asked to assess the snap election impact on the local elections.

We were the only party to have planned enough to give our members the chance to vote for their European candidates, even if the timing was truncated. The Review will also address this and the problems faced about zipping and diversity (with a court case exposing the weakness of the current legislation for making diversity arrangements).

As in the past, members will have the opportunity to see the final recommendations once the report is complete.

Leadership Election Review

The Federal Board is also required to conduct a review within six months of a Leadership Election to take account of what worked and any problems.

Given that the same requirement to report is needed for the Presidential Election (due in the Autumn) and with the uncertainties about a snap General Election and/or a Referendum, the Federal Board proposes to conclude both the reviews within six months of the Presidential Election finishing in December 2019. Any proposed changes to the Leadership and/or Presidential Regulations will return to Conference no earlier than Autumn 2020.

Liberal Democrat Friends of Palestine

Conference will remember that at our Spring Conference we reported that the Liberal Democrat Friends of Palestine had been suspended after some problems with their social media content. The Federal Board commissioned a review into their social media practice, conducted by Judith Rogerson, which has resulted in their reviewing their policies and practice. On this basis, the Federal Board withdrew the suspension in June.

Associated Organisations Review Group (AORG)

Toby Keynes and Gordon Lishman have resigned from the AORG, the sub committee of the Federal Board that monitors the Specified Associated Organisations and Associated Organisations. This is a time-consuming group and we thank both of them and the remaining members, Tim Pickstone and Caron Lindsay, for all their hard work. The Federal Board will make new appointments in the autumn.

Staff

We want to thank all our staff across the country, whether Federal, ALDC, or more local. It has been an intensely busy period that they have all given everything they have, well above and beyond the call of duty. We hope they have a refreshing break in August, given the whirlwind we may face in the Autumn!

This is my final report to Conference as President and I want to thank you all - whether members, staff or volunteers, for always going above and beyond the call of duty to help the party. We've had some very difficult times over the last four and a half years but also successes too. Your dedication and commitment to the liberal cause, and especially to stopping Brexit has inspired me. It has been a privilege to be your President, and I wish my successor well.

As President, I particularly want to thank Adam Hanrahan, who as Chief of Staff and Party Governance Officer has been invaluable to me and to the Federal Party. He has been promoted to work for Shaffaq Mohamed MEP, and I hope his new role in Brussels is indefinite! Thanks too, to Anne Sullivan who has come to assist us from former roles in Liberal International and working for Simon Hughes when he was an MP.

Sal Brinton

President and Chair Federal Board

Federal Communications and Elections Committee

The Federal Communications and Elections Committee (FCEC) has the strategic responsibility for candidates at federal level. The committee is made up twelve people, six representatives/ex officio and three elected by the Federal Board. There are two non voting members, namely the Federal Board Chief Executive and the Chief Executive of the ALDC.

Since my last report to Spring Conference this spring, the Party has delivered one of the best rounds of local election success since the merger (and possibly since 1945) followed in quick succession by electing 16 MEPs to the European Parliament. That these European elections took place at all is in no small part due to the tenacious 'Exit to Brexit' campaign – run by Rhiannon Leaman and her team – planned and delivered over many months.

The local election campaign in May built on this and in turn provided the foundation for the phenomenal success in June.

The coordination and cooperation between the HQ field team and the ALDC has perhaps rarely been higher. It helped deliver a projected national vote share of 19%. We made a net gain of 705 councillors defending all six Liberal Democrat controlled councils, with increased majorities in four of these. We re-elected our directly elected Mayor of Bedford, Dave Hodgson, (becoming the largest party on Bedford Borough Council in the process). We gained majority control of 12 councils and made significant increases across the country – in many cases with the Liberal Democrats now becoming the largest party receiving minority or joint control. These things don't happen by themselves. It takes hard work, a lot of planning and it confirms that the earlier we get out on the doors engaging with voters, the greater the chance we can win.

We had also two Westminster Parliamentary by-elections, Newport West and Peterborough, where our excellent candidates Ryan Jones and Beki Sellick both respectively increased our vote share. Particular thanks is due to Beki and her local Party who supported the cross-party attempts to have an independent pro-Remain candidate to the very last.

As I write, we are in the final stages of two further by-elections. The first is in Brecon & Radnorshire - where pro-Remain parties including the Greens and Plaid Cymru have not stood in order to back the Leader of our Welsh Party and experienced local campaigner Jane Dodds – and the second a Holyrood by-election in Shetland with our excellent candidate Beatrice Wishart. I hope the President will be able to report to Conference in person the safe election of both candidates.

Campaigns don't happen overnight and thanks to the hard work on the Brexit Campaign, our message was right and gave us a solid heading for the European election campaign: Stop Brexit.

FCEC met in advance to agree the principles on which the campaign would be fought. Unlike previous European election campaigns, the challenge this year was to ensure that we had candidates in place speedily, electoral addresses ready to go quickly and that we were prepared for the air war. FCEC received updates as to progress on the European manifesto and agreed the theme of it. As chair of FCEC, I was involved with the campaigns group meetings throughout.

I would like to pay particular thanks to Prue Bray and to the Joint States Candidates Committee for organising the most open and democratic candidate selection process possible within a very limited timeframe. As ever, Lord Newby, Jeremy Hargreaves and the FPC – ably assisted by staff members Christian Moon and Jonathan Everett – turned around a winning European manifesto quickly. Rarely has it been required to order a reprint of a Manifesto, but there are those who allege this had more to do with the special edition cover, than purely to its contents.

I would also like to welcome our new Streatham MP, Chuka Umunna, to the family. I look forward to working with him into the future. I would like to commend Helen Thompson, the pre-existing candidate for Streatham at the time for her graciousness in stepping aside and for the warm welcome that she and Doug Buist as Chair of the Lambeth Borough Party and his team have given Chuka.

As we head into the summer, not only will we see a new Prime Minister but we will also be welcoming a new Liberal Democrat leader to replace Sir Vince Cable – without whom so little of our recent momentum would have been possible.

With the political environment as it is, Vince's successor could easily be leading us into a general election or a referendum in the near future. Plans for both have been progressing steadily and we will be ready for whichever happens. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Shaun Roberts, Sam Barratt, Dave McCobb and their hard-pressed Campaigns and Communications teams for getting us this far with such minimal resources. Our Digital Team in the European elections delivered the best campaign of all the parties and it without doubt played a huge part in delivering success.

Candidate selections are progressing. The Pathway Programme being delivered by the HQ Campaigns Team is underway and we continue to be committed to working with the State Parties to help address the position of under-represented groups.

We are now the UK's lead Party of Remain. With this come new responsibilities and some further challenges which the FCEC will continue to find solutions to, so that the cause of Remain continues to receive the Parliamentary recognition voters expect.

There are many people who have played a significant role in the work of the FCEC – some of whom will have been mentioned elsewhere in this report. Thanks are particularly due to the work of Committee members Cllr Neil Fawcett, Victoria Marsom, Iain Donaldson, Cllr Tim Pickstone, Lord Tim Razzall, Alistair Carmichael MP, Cadan ap Tomos, Alan Reid, Alex Davies, Emma Cherniavsky, Sir Nick Harvey, Audrey Eager and Party President Baroness Sal Brinton.

James Gurling
Chair Federal Communications and Elections Committee

Federal People Development Committee

The Federal People Development Committee brings together diversity, training and membership. This enables the party to take a more strategic and holistic view of membership support and activation. The committee comprises of three state party reps, party president, six other representatives/ex officio and six members elected by Federal Board.

Overview

This year completes the first cycle for FPDC as a new committee. It has taken longer than we all wanted to get going, with some things still going too slowly! However, we have made good progress in many areas this year and I am hopeful that when we hand over to a new committee in January, they will be able to continue at a much faster pace than we were able to do. In particular we have identified some changes to our standing orders that should help next year's committee to solve problems faster.

I also want to express my formal thanks to the staff in the HQ teams we work with. The pressure, lack of resource and tight deadlines are a source of continual frustration for us all working in these areas. Very often it is only the assistance, determination and creativity of the staff that help make our committee's ideas come to life. Thank you all.

Diversity

This area has seen huge growth this year. The appointment of Isabelle Parasram as Vice President (responsible for BaME outreach), the new Racial Diversity Campaign led by Sarah Yong, the ongoing resurgence of LDCRE under the formidable Roderick Lynch and the ongoing work of Baroness Lorely Burt has meant that FPDC has a broad range of allies to co-operate with. We have started to re-invigorate the Regional Diversity Champion network, sending an improved job description to them and regular briefings on religious and community festivals. These have been well received and if you would like to get these email briefings, just email your request to diversity@libdems.org.uk Other important projects have included the development of the 'Kitemark' scheme with the Diversity HQ team and Baroness Lorely Burt. This is a scheme we hope to launch at conference to encourage local parties to be more proactively inclusive, particularly regarding ethnicity. The hugely popular Future Women MP weekends are continuing too, with CGB leading and the Diversity team of HQ and FPDC in support. We are also working with State Parties and HQ to try to develop Parental/Carers leave policies for key party volunteers like PPCs and Organisers.

We are trying to break down the silos in the diversity field and take a more co-operative approach, led by FPDC. This has started well and I hope will continue.

Membership

As you will have read in other reports (and in the news), membership of the Party is once again at a record high. The challenge is now to engage and retain the new members. FPDC created a new online Directory that should be growing nicely by September conference, of the many Party groups a member can engage with. We still hope to finish production of our membership engagement “Boost” guide, which has been beset by delays due to external events. And we now have the registered supporter scheme up and running, to supplement helpers and donors – and to provide fertile ground for recruitment. The membership team are working on how best to track the conversion rates on supporters, but hopefully those stats will be available for Spring conference.

Training

Working with HQ’s Training Co-Ordinator, the Party’s training is starting to undergo a time of review and renewal. We have identified a number of needs, including the pressing need for more Agents training, and online access to training. We are also trying to update the resources we have to ensure that modules are current. All accredited Party trainers were contacted at the start of the year, and the list of available trainers is now up to date and being shared with Regions and other training providers. This sounds small, but was a huge task! If you need trainers for an event, email training@libdems.org.uk We are also working to bring in new areas of training, particularly around digital ideas.

Miranda Roberts

Chair, Federal People Development Committee

Federal Finance and Resources Committee

The Federal Finance and Resource Committee (FFRC) manages the finances of the party and proposes strategy and budgets to move the party towards greater financial security. The membership consists of 8 representatives and five non voting members.

Elections and referenda are generally good for the Federal Party's finances because they stimulate donations and other income. Conversely, a lack of political events, such as these, in 2018 meant that donation income was relatively flat, and cash was at a premium. Therefore, the Federal Party entered the last quarter of 2018 with a deficit which left the Party with no alternative but to implement a programme of HQ redundancies.

A subsequent introduction of a programme of cost saving measures, cost controls, improved financial reporting, and enhanced financial analytics in HQ have helped the Party to better manage cash and other financial resources. These and other measures are now in use across the Federal Party and are continuing to have an ongoing and positive financial effect.

Subsequent to the redundancies, the Federal Board reviewed the factors that had led to the deficit and, as a result, the Chief Executive was asked to enhance the financial management function in HQ. Therefore, it was decided to bring a Financial Controller on board who would take charge of the financial operations of the Federal Party and work closely with the Chief Executive and the Chair of the FFRC. This person is now on staff and we are already seeing a positive impact as a result.

The current lease on the offices in Great George Street is due for renewal in 2021 and a working party has been set up within HQ to focus on planning for the negotiations associated with this.

A resurgence in the popularity of the party, and success in local and EU elections in 2019, has led to a significant increase in membership numbers taking it to our largest recorded numbers ever. Improved financial controls, and this increase in membership numbers, have further strengthened our relationship with the Party's banker and our auditors.

PPERA compliance

The Electoral Commission continues to investigate electoral spending across all parties and the Liberal Democrats are no exception. Alongside this, the regulatory environment under both GDPR (personal data) and PPERA (party finances) continues to put higher and higher requirements on us all to ensure Liberal Democrat compliance. There have been significantly higher costs in compliance related costs and legal fees as a result.

Thank you to all local party treasurers and agents for continuing to assist with the requirements of PPERA but the Electoral Commission has requested a more extensive programme of training and certification for agents and treasurers. Therefore, you will see changes during 2019 and early 2020 as we roll out a new programme of training and support.

All donations continue to be checked thoroughly for permissibility, initially by the Party's compliance officers, quarterly by the Chair of FFRC and, depending on the donation size, by the FFRC Chair, the Chair of Liberal Democrats Limited and the Party Leader. These checks become weekly during General Election periods. The declarations of donations made, statement of accounts submitted, and campaign expenditure made by the Party can be viewed on the Electoral Commission's website.

Party business

Conference is asked to adopt the audited accounts for 2018 and to reappoint the Party's auditors, Mazars LLP. Conference is further requested to confirm that:

1. The Federal Levy for 2020 remain at 55% of membership subscription income.
2. That the Federal Party borrowing limit be set at £2.2 million – to include overdraft facilities, commercial and personal loans, but to exclude trade creditors and inter-party balances.
3. The President and Chair of the Federal Finance & Resources Committee for the time being, on behalf of the Party and with the specific prior agreement of the FFRC, may agree the terms of any overdrafts, and that such delegation will also extend to the operation of the Party's bank accounts.
4. The President and Chair of the Federal Finance & Resources Committee are hereby indemnified by the Federal Party of the Liberal Democrats for any personal commitments made to the bank but only insofar as they relate solely to this resolution.

Anthony Harris

Chair, Federal Finance and Resources Committee, and Registered Treasurer

Federal International Relations Committee

The Federal International Relations Committee (FIRC) manages the Party's relationship with sister parties internationally and supervises the organisation and provision of training for sister parties outside of the UK. The FIRC coordinates the work of internationally-minded organisations within the framework of the Party and advises the Party on international policy where appropriate. The membership has nine representatives/ex officio and six directly elected members. There are a number of non voting members as well.

FIRC has continued to meet both regularly and for ad hoc sessions to discuss our own policy resolutions for ALDE Council and Liberal International Executive, as well as to propose amendments to the motions of sister parties.

Members were extremely actively involved in the European Parliamentary Election campaign, some of them participating as candidates. The Party based its Manifesto on the ALDE document, possibly for the first time, and actually campaigned on European issues rather than domestic ones. This was greatly appreciated by candidates and the Committee.

A subcommittee led by former LDEG Chair Nick Hopkinson brought members and Parliamentarians together to discuss the Brexit negotiations and LibDem plans to influence events.

LibDems Abroad and its three subsets, LibDems Overseas, LibDems in Europe and LibDems in France report to FIRC. They have been active in preparing policy papers on the rights of UK Citizens living abroad. They expect to put forward a Constitutional Amendment next Spring to allow LibDems living outside the UK to play a more active part in the Party, including participation in candidate selections.

In the period since the Spring Conference, a strong delegation, including the Party President, attended the Zurich Council Meeting of ALDE where we joined other delegations to make clear that the ALDE Party name which includes the word "Liberal" was not to be changed to that of the European parliamentary group which is a coalition with La République en Marche and other centrist European parties not members of ALDE and operates as "Renew Europe"

The Executive Committee of Liberal International was also held in London and 150 delegates came from 45 countries. LibDems, Liberal International British Group and Alliance Party of Northern Ireland were joint hosts.

The ALDE Congress will be held in Athens at the end of October. We are entitled to 34 delegates and will ensure that once again all parts of the UK are represented, and that there will be gender balance, good BAME representation, and an age mix. We hope to have a LibDem on the ALDE Bureau again after a two year gap.

ALDE is playing a major role in supporting the International programme at this Conference

The Liberal International Executive Committee will be held in Fez, Morocco in late November.

The International Officer's position has been made permanent and Isabelle Pucher works mostly for the Party now that the Westminster Foundation work has greatly reduced in line with our Party's House of Commons representation. She still has a role in the running of events for the highly praised Africa Liberal Network.

Robert Woodthorpe Browne MBE
Chairman Federal International Relations Committee

Federal Audit and Scrutiny Committee

The Federal Audit and Scrutiny Committee (FASC) commissions internal audits to ensure effective governance and scrutinizing the party's conduct. It is the only committee to act entirely independent of the Board to maintain impartiality when required. The committee has six members appointed by Federal Board and five non voting members.

The past few months since Spring have been busy with slightly more elections than first envisaged and our normal May meeting had to be cancelled as it was on Eve of Poll for the Euro elections. The majority of the time since Spring has been taken up with ensuring that the annual audit went smoothly this includes a kick off meeting where the auditor are able to bring up any concerns since the last audit and discuss any changes which the party has made. It is then followed up with a close out meeting. I am pleased to say that the audit went very smoothly this year with no major points being raised and the party being in a slightly better financial position than recently.

In addition the committee has continued to review the risk register which is now in a good state with risks being more regularly reviewed and mitigation actions in place.

Helena Cole

Chair, Federal Audit and Scrutiny Committee

The Liberal Democrats (The Federal Party)
Financial Review
For the year ended 31 December 2018

As expected, and as previously forecast in 2017, the Federal Party entered 2018 in deficit. Also as expected, the lack of any major political events during 2018 (general elections or referenda) caused major donor income to decline and this decline contributed to an increase in the deficit for the year under review. The lack of political events also meant that membership numbers flattened out in the Autumn of 2018 when compared to a forecast growth in membership which had been used to develop and underpin the 2018 Federal Party budget. This, and a software problem associated with the collection of membership subscriptions (only discovered late in the year), significantly impacted 2018 income and led to some restructuring initiatives which were necessary to balance the 2018 budget.

These initiatives have had the desired financial effect and, in conjunction with other financial controls, an increase in donor income, an improvement in the legacy position, and cost saving measures implemented in 2018, will allow the Federal Party to begin to reduce the deficit and net liabilities over the next few years.

The Federal Party ended the year with a deficit of £334,907 which increased our net liabilities at the year end to £1,079,502.

Anthony Harris
Registered Treasurer

General Fund

| | 2018 | 2017 |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Income | | |
| Donations | 2,624,986 | 6,135,605 |
| Membership and subscription fees | 1,312,671 | 1,278,819 |
| Conference income | 467,336 | 545,871 |
| Notional income | 54,301 | 138,649 |
| Grants | 542,277 | 432,568 |
| Interest receivable | 11 | 34 |
| Recharges to party bodies | 1,052,793 | 991,655 |
| Other income | 148,224 | 187,106 |
| | <u>6,202,599</u> | <u>9,710,307</u> |
| Expenditure | | |
| Fundraising expenditure | 76,172 | 65,367 |
| Conference expenditure - direct | 394,506 | 370,543 |
| Notional expenditure | 54,301 | 138,649 |
| Depreciation and amortisation | 48,513 | 64,849 |
| Campaign expenditure | 694,057 | 4,913,718 |
| Staff costs | 3,172,248 | 2,933,177 |
| Premises & office costs | 1,041,610 | 931,290 |
| IT & polling costs | 534,156 | 305,079 |
| Interest payable and similar charges | 62,984 | 115,422 |
| Grants to party bodies | 314,860 | 343,449 |
| Expenditure recharged from other party bodies | 61,567 | 150,709 |
| Audit fees | 16,750 | 35,595 |
| Other expenditure | 65,777 | 86,575 |
| | <u>6,537,501</u> | <u>10,454,422</u> |
| General Fund (deficit) before taxation | (334,902) | (744,115) |
| Taxation | (7) | (49) |
| General Fund (deficit) for the year | <u>(334,909)</u> | <u>(744,164)</u> |

Legacy Fund

| | 2018 | 2017 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Income | | |
| Legacies | - | 112,542 |
| | <u>-</u> | <u>112,542</u> |
| Expenditure | | |
| Grants to party bodies | - | 19,516 |
| Staff costs | - | 43,333 |
| Fundraising expenditure | - | 6,811 |
| Interest payable and similar charges | - | - |
| | <u>-</u> | <u>-</u> |
| | <u>-</u> | <u>69,660</u> |
| Legacy Fund before taxation | <u>-</u> | <u>42,882</u> |
| Taxation | - | - |
| Legacy Fund for the year | <u>-</u> | <u>42,882</u> |
| | <u>-</u> | <u>-</u> |
| Overall (deficit) for the year | <u><u>-</u></u> | <u><u>(701,283)</u></u> |

The Income and Expenditure account has been prepared on the basis that all operations are continuing operations.

There were no recognised gains or losses other than those included in the income and expenditure account.

Following a decision by the Federal Board to combine the Legacy Fund with the General Fund, the balance on the fund was transferred to the General Fund on 1 January 2018.

| | 2018 £ | 2018 £ | 2017 £ | 2017 £ |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Fixed assets | | | | |
| Tangible assets | | 99,010 | | 147,523 |
| Current assets | | | | |
| Debtors | 406,944 | | 261,519 | |
| Cash at bank and in hand | <u>36,667</u> | | <u>33,514</u> | |
| | 443,611 | | 295,033 | |
| Creditors: amounts falling due within one year | <u>(1,374,523)</u> | | <u>(1,087,149)</u> | |
| Net current liabilities | | <u>(930,912)</u> | | <u>(792,116)</u> |
| Total assets less current liabilities | | (831,902) | | (644,593) |
| Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year | | | | |
| Other loans | | (200,000) | | (100,000) |
| Provision | | (47,600) | | - |
| | | <u>(1,079,502)</u> | | <u>(744,593)</u> |
| Net liabilities | | <u>(1,079,502)</u> | | <u>(744,593)</u> |
| Reserves | | | | |
| General Fund | | (1,124,502) | | (1,159,147) |
| Reserve Fund | | 45,000 | | 45,000 |
| Legacy Fund | | - | | 369,554 |
| | | <u>(1,079,502)</u> | | <u>(744,593)</u> |
| Total deficit | | <u>(1,079,502)</u> | | <u>(744,593)</u> |

The financial statements were approved by the Federal Finance & Resources Committee on 28 June 2019.

Anthony Harris
Registered Treasurer

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS LIMITED

The Directors of Liberal Democrats Limited have passed responsibility for oversight of the Legacy Fund to the Federal Finance & Resources Committee. This leaves our residual functions as being to hold the lease for party headquarters, and to monitor donations above a £25,000 threshold as one of the four approval authorities within the agreed party protocol.

Duncan Greenland
Director and Chair Liberal Democrats Limited

House of Commons Parliamentary Party Report

The last six months have been a time of long-awaited renewal for Liberal Democrats. Local elections saw us gain 704 councillors and take control of 18 councils – our best local election results in history. Less than a month later, we celebrated winning 16 seats in the European Parliament, with the election of our most diverse group of Parliamentarians to date. On top of this, we have seen growth in our Parliamentary Party in the Commons, with the addition of Chuka Umunna to the Lib Dem bench. It is by no means easy to move from one political party to another and I admire Chuka's bravery in taking this leap of faith. Welcome to the Lib Dem family! I would like to thank every member, activist and candidate for your efforts in fuelling the current Lib Dem surge – long may it continue. In addition, I would like to thank our outgoing leader, Sir Vince Cable, for his vision in driving our return to major political significance.

There has been no shortage of Brexit-related drama in the Commons since we last met. In April, with the Tory party in chaos, Labour divided on the issue of a Peoples' Vote and the prospect of a 'no deal' Brexit looming, it was left to backbenchers to prevent this catastrophe. Tom Brake, our Brexit Spokesperson, has been central to cross-party initiatives to prevent 'no deal', including efforts to secure indicative votes on Brexit and the passage of the Cooper-Letwin Bill (now the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2019). This Bill passed by a single vote at Third Reading and came in the same week that we saw a tie on the issue of further indicative votes, forcing the Speaker to give the casting vote. It is a curious aside that the last tied vote in the Commons was in 1993, on the issue of the Maastricht Treaty. With such tight margins on Brexit, Liberal Democrat votes are of decisive importance in the Commons. However, as the impasse in Parliament drags on, it is clearer than ever that the only way to move forward will be through a Peoples' Vote. Liberal Democrat MPs will keep fighting to secure this.

Despite a lack of noteworthy Government legislation, our MPs have been making good use of Parliamentary time to hold Government to account on a host of issues. Jo Swinson secured time in the Chamber to question the Minister for the Middle East on escalating tensions in Iran. Norman Lamb brought the Minister for Care to the Despatch Box to answer pressing questions about the abuse of people with learning disabilities and complex needs at Whorlton Hall. My own Urgent Question on the brutal treatment of protestors in Hong Kong, whose rights the late Paddy Ashdown did so much to defend, provided opportunity to interrogate the Minister for Asia and the

Pacific on the UK's response to this crisis. As Liberal Democrats we value the rule of law, both at home and abroad, and are determined to protect vulnerable groups; these principles shape all aspects of our Parliamentary work.

Lib Dem MPs have also demanded radical action in the face of the current climate emergency. Ed Davey's Westminster Hall debate on the risks of pension funds investing in fossil fuel companies focused minds on the pressing need to divest. Wera Hobhouse introduced a Vehicle Emissions (Idling Penalties) Bill – a straightforward change that could make a real difference in reducing pollution near schools and other public spaces. As DEFRA Spokesperson, I recently introduced another Plastic Pollution Bill, adding momentum to the campaign to reduce the amount of single-use plastics entering the marine environment. Steps such as these to protect our planet will remain a central focus for Lib Dem MPs going forward.

As ever, our Parliamentarians have maintained a strong focus on local issues, unfailingly championing the interests of their constituents. Through Prime Minister's Questions, Jamie Stone generated significant interest in the development of a Space Port in his constituency, as well as highlighting economic opportunities in the region. Christine Jardine has spoken on matters ranging from access to medicinal cannabis to TV licences for over-75s, alongside her work as Work and Pensions Spokesperson. Layla Moran and Tim Farron have sponsored debates on the issue of flooding, focusing on Oxford and Cumbria respectively. Our Parliamentary group will continue to demand better of Government, fighting injustice at every level to improve the lives of those they represent.

Now more than ever, I am proud to represent a Party that places openness and tolerance at the heart of everything it does. This has been exemplified in the positive approach of Ed Davey and Jo Swinson to the recent leadership contest. At the time of writing this contest is ongoing, but I can say with absolute certainty that we will be incredibly fortunate to have either of them at the helm as we look towards a brighter political future.

Parliamentary Office of the Liberal Democrats (POLD) Report

We have seen several changes to staff in the Parliamentary Adviser Unit. Rosie Shimell, Head of the PAU, is currently on maternity leave. In Rosie's absence, Jonathan Jones is acting Head of PAU and Andrew Burrell (formerly PST) is

acting Education Adviser. I am pleased to welcome Michael Patrikalakis, who has taken over from Max von Thun as Economic Adviser. We continue to benefit from the expertise of Meadhbh Keating Fitzpatrick, Sophie Lyddon and Ed Molyneux as Health, Cooperation and Environment Advisers respectively.

In the Parliamentary Support Team, Redmond Poley and Sarah Hickey have taken over from Andrew Burrell and Jameela Khan to cover a wide range of topics between them, from foreign affairs to work and pensions. Mel Gordon continues in post advising on matters relating to the environment, local government and women and equalities, amongst others.

After some seven years in the Whips Office, Jack Fletcher has taken on a new role outside of the Liberal Democrats. We have been incredibly fortunate to benefit from his incisive political judgement for many years and he will be greatly missed in this role.

Lucy Kay continues in post as Deputy Head of Office.

I would like to thank all our POLD staff for their hard work and dedication in the months since Spring Conference.

Alistair Carmichael MP
Chief Whip
House of Commons

House of Lords Parliamentary Party Report

Leadership, party whips and the group

Dick Newby and Ben Stoneham continue to serve as the Leader of the Liberal Democrats in the Lords and Lords Chief Whip respectively. Joan Walmsley and Navnit Dholakia continue to provide tireless support as Co-Deputy Leaders. We continue to have a strong team of party whips who support the leadership team – the two Deputy Whips, Diana Maddock and Chris Humphreys and then John Shipley, Mike Storey, Dorothy Thornhill, Barbara Janke and Angie Harris.

The support of our Group members in punching above our weight in the Lords, in voting and in scrutinising every aspect of legislation, as well as holding the Government to account, is remarkable and the whole party owes our parliamentary party in the Lords a great debt of gratitude.

Brexit

We continue to show discipline and fortitude in demonstrating our party's clear Brexit position. Whilst Brexit-related legislation has been limited, when the Cooper-Letwin Bill (aka **the EU Withdrawal (No. 5) Bill**) arrived in the Lords, it immediately came under attack from Brexiters across the House who were determined to stop the bill on procedural grounds rather than on the substance of the bill, which was to seek an extension to Article 50. In order to help the bill pass in a timely fashion our benches were rigorous in limiting their contributions on the bill. Exceptionally, we and other supporters of the bill moved 6 closure motions to prevent filibustering on the bill. Eventually an agreement was reached whereby the government acquiesced to the bill progressing through the House subject to a small technical amendment being made.

At the time of writing, the Lords is about to debate (and very likely pass) a motion that instructs the Government to **appoint a joint committee of MPs and peers to consider and report on the cost and implications of the UK exiting the EU without a withdrawal agreement**. The majority in the House of Lords remains firmly against a no deal scenario.

Legislation

The Census (Return Particulars and Removal of Penalties) Bill allows for questions to be asked on the 2021 census relating to sexual orientation and gender identity. These questions will be voluntary to answer. Liz Barker, William Wallace and Paul Tyler worked constructively with the government to ensure that there is proper consultation on guidance and testing of these questions. In particular we secured firm commitments to ensure that the compulsory sex question and the voluntary gender identity question work properly together so that, as is currently the case, a person may answer the sex question on the basis of their lived identity, regardless of what is on their birth certificate.

Jeremy Purvis, Chris Fox and Susan Kramer formed a formidable team on the Trade Bill. Although we believe the bill is unnecessary, our priorities in the Lords were to make substantial changes to the bill. Our aims were to maintain the UK's membership of the EU Customs Union after Brexit and the benefits of existing trade deals that the UK has as part of the European Union; to give greater Parliamentary scrutiny over trade deals; and to ensure that future trade deals are consistent with the UK's commitments to combat climate change and defend human rights. We worked closely with other parties across the House to make significant changes to the bill.

Following cross-party pressure, the government brought forward concessionary amendments to require that trade deals are consistent with the protection of human, animal or plant life or health; animal welfare; environmental protection; and employment and labour protection. We also passed an amendment to require the government to negotiate participation in a customs union.

Chris Fox moved and won cross-party support for an amendment to secure a trade agreement with the EU that includes reciprocal freedom of movement rights for UK and EU citizens. We further supported an amendment from former Northern Ireland Secretary of State Lord Hain to provide that no international trade agreement between the UK and the EU could be ratified unless it is compatible with the Good Friday Agreement.

As the political situation developed during the course of the bill the threat of the UK leaving the EU without a deal increased. We therefore worked across the House and passed an amendment to ensure that the Trade Bill could only come into effect if the Commons had agreed to a withdrawal agreement, or voted in favour of leaving without a deal.

The bill finished in the Lords at the end of March and was then passed back to the Commons. At the time of writing, the Commons has yet to consider the changes made in the Lords – a sign of the chaos the Government is in over Brexit. Judith Jolly, Jonathan Marks and Sal Brinton fronted a fight on the Healthcare (International Arrangements) Bill to change its jurisdiction, narrowing it to only replicate the healthcare agreements we would lose access to if Brexit did go ahead, rather than potentially opening the NHS to trade deals with countries across the world. This resulted in a seldom seen change in bill name, transforming it into the **Healthcare (European Economic Area and Switzerland Arrangements) Bill**.

The **Mental Capacity (Amendment) Bill** received Royal Assent, which although deeply flawed was greatly improved by Judith Jolly, Liz Barker and Claire Tyler to offer better protection to those vulnerable people who are subject to deprivations of liberty. This included ensuring the code of practice has an appropriate and up-to-date definition of deprivation of liberty, and that vital information is readily available to families and other relevant people, alongside the victories won at earlier stages of the bill which were reported to Spring Conference.

Brian Paddick and Sally Hamwee led on the **Offensive Weapons Bill**, which included a fierce opposition to the introduction of the Government's illiberal Knife Crime Prevention Orders. Thanks to lacklustre support from Labour we were not successful in removing KCPOs from the bill, but we did manage to make the Government see sense on a number of other issues, including the delivery of certain products to residential properties.

At the time of writing, Jonathan Marks and Alan Beith are currently scrutinising the **Courts and Tribunals (Online Procedure) Bill**, and are working to ensure that there is a duty on the Government to provide assistance to those who may have difficulty in accessing online systems of justice.

News of Peers

In June, we received the sad news of Geoff Tordoff's death at the age of 91. Sitting on the Liberal Democrat Benches in the House of Lords between 1981 and 2016, Geoff was a tireless Liberal, who was the first ever Liberal Democrat to speak from the Despatch Box in the House of Lords when he became the House's Chairman of Committees, responsible for the House's administration and smooth running. He was a great politician and a real gentleman whose

warmth and humanity came through no matter what he was doing or who is was speaking to.

A tribute to Paddy Ashdown was contained in our Conference Report in the Spring, but as he is remembered by us all during this conference, it is right to acknowledge here how deeply the Group in the Lords miss his friendship and wisdom.

Staff

I would like to extend my thanks to the staff of the Leader's Office and the Whips' Office in the Lords who support us in all our work – Humphrey Amos, Elizabeth Plummer, Sarah Pughe, Melissa Lynes and Jess Clayton. We were very sad to lose Enya Evans from the office who made a huge impact in her short time with us, and we are very glad that she has gone to another job within the party.

I am very grateful to the staff in the Parliamentary Adviser Unit – Sophie Lyddon, Meadhbh Keating Fitzpatrick, Andrew Burrell, Ed Molyneux, Michael Patrikalakis and Jonathan Jones – for all their work in advising and supporting our group in the Lords. Max von Thun left us in April and I thank him for his hard work.

I also want to place on record my thanks to the Parliamentary Support Team – Mel Gordon, Red Poley and Sarah Hickey for their continually excellent work and support. Jameela Khan left us in May and I thank her for her hard work.

I am also very grateful to the party's press office and communications team – Rosy Cobb, Tim Wild, David Green and Sam Barratt - who give support to so many of the peers who do media work.

Ben Stoneham
Chief Whip
House of Lords

European Parliamentary Party Report

Since the last conference looked like being our last with a member of the European Parliament, the first part of this report back will deal with what was a trying time for all Brits in the European Parliamentary sphere.

Legislatively, work on Environmental protection, the fight against trophy hunting and getting a ban on all ivory sales across Europe took most time, also in the UK campaigning for the People Vote on the final say on Brexit.

In line with my strong beliefs of having a safe working environment, I sat on the important Committee dealing with harassment cases between MEPs and their Assistants. I was very active in helping to shape the EP rules towards handling these cases so that they are properly addressed. I supported prevention measures and victim support for victims, something that the European Parliament has greatly improved upon.

I was also a Member of the High-level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity, which advocates for rights of staff with disabilities and to ensure that each staff member enjoys a working life not just free from discrimination, but of equal opportunity.

Fostering relationships and building trust between British pro-European parties I continued to chair a cross party group of MEPs from Labour, Conservatives, Green Party, SNP and Plaid Cymru to coordinate communication strategies, write cross party letters and media articles and receive expert briefings.

As the two deadlines for exiting our membership of the EU passed and an extension to Article 50 was negotiated, it became clearer that we would need to fight the European Elections.

The speedy selection of candidates and the positive way in which candidates came forward set us up for a great result. The manifesto and the rather rude, but newsworthy slogan said what we all thought about Brexit. This coupled with a stunning campaign and huge activist work delivered the best ever result for the Liberal Democrats in the European Parliament - a delegation 16 strong, talented and enthusiastic MEPs hungry to Stop Brexit.

The tide is turning on Brexit, the Tories are in melt down as their vote collapsed, although Farage's new party had big wins, as did the Green Party the Labour Party lost half their previous MEPs.

So as the 4 returning and 12 new MEPs arrived after the elections the negotiations started. We are the second largest delegation of MEPs in our Group, which now includes the French En Marche Party of Macron and many other new MEPs from across the continent.

One of the first decisions to make was what to name the Group, as it was felt that there were too many parties not from the ALDE family to continue with that name. We are now known as the Renew Europe Group and we are the 3rd largest political group in the parliament with 108 members. The Romanian Ex- Prime Minister and Commissioner Dacian Ciolos was elected as the President of the group and our own Martin Horwood from the Western Region was elected as a Vice President of the Group.

Catherine Bearder was elected as Leader of the Liberal Democrat Delegation; Luisa Porritt as Deputy Leader; Barbara Gibson as Chair & Whip; Caroline Voaden as Westminster Liaison; and Lucy Nethsingha as Treasurer.

Our colleagues in the RENEW Europe Group support our fight to Stop Brexit and we have constructively negotiated places for positions of responsibility as though we are not leaving. There is a much more positive mood in the Parliament towards the Remain British MEPs than at the tail end of the last parliament. All the Liberal Democrat MEPs have approached our term in office assuming we will be here for the full five years.

We have now a very strong team with some very good senior positions within the Parliament.

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| • Vice Chair of the Renew Europe Group | Martin Horwood |
| • Chair of the PECH committee (Fisheries) | Chris Davies |
| • Chair of the JURUI committee (Civil Liberties) | Lucy Nethsingha |
| • Chair of the Indian Delegation | Dinesh Dhamija |
| • 1st Vice President of DROI (Human Rights) | Irina Von Wiese |
| • 2nd Vice President of the Korean delegation | Judith Bunting |
| • 2nd Vice President Arab Peninsular delegation | Caroline Voaden |
| • Joint President of the Political committee of the EU-ACP Parliamentary Assembly | Catherine Bearder |

- Coordinator of Human rights Urgent matters Phil Bennion

The Brexit Party failed to form a political grouping, are now stuck in the back row of the Plenary Chamber and subsequently achieve very little in the way of negotiating any positions of influence.

The Liberal Democrats will become the most powerful UK delegation in real terms. We demonstrated just how big a delegation we are and our message was clear, when at the opening of the new Parliament we arrived in the bright yellow t-shirts with the Exit form Brexit message on the front. This was welcomed by all our colleagues in the chamber.

The work ahead

We now face the next few months with all the continued uncertainty around Brexit; a new enthusiastic team juggling support for our activists and colleagues in our regions, and settling into our parliamentary work delivering for the citizens of Europe.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all the Liberal Democrats for their support over the last five years whilst I was on my own in the European Parliament, and, for the hard work by the party and activists into electing the new MEPs. We now fly the Liberal Democrat flag with such prominence in the European Parliament.

Catherine Bearder MEP
Leader of the Liberal Democrats
European Parliament

Campaign for Gender Balance

The Campaign for Gender Balance (CGB) is tasked by the party to get more women elected to Parliament. We do this by providing training, mentoring and support for any women who is a Lib Dem. The Chair and two Vice Chairs are appointed by the Federal Board.

The Campaign for Gender Balance has had an extremely busy six months since the Spring Conference.

Even whilst the local elections were underway we were providing mentoring support for women waiting for approval and Parliamentary selections. CGB Vice Chair Julia Cambridge led our Candidate Approval team to considerable success helping significant numbers of women get approved. And then with only a few weeks warning, the Euro Election selections were in full swing.

Helena Cole, our other Vice Chair was a tower of strength working with me to support women in Parliamentary selections, at the same time as the Euro selections.

It was fantastic to see women candidates, many of whom had been trained and encouraged by the CGB, winning top places in the Euro selections. This was in spite of the proposed zipping mechanism being dropped. It was wonderful to see those women, who had won their selections, without the application of any mechanism, taking up their places in the European Parliament – in a Lib Dem Group composed of 9 women and 7 men.

On the Westminster front we have had even more good news. Women have been winning selections in iconic seats such as Southwark and Old Bermondsey, where Humaira Ali was selected in an open selection, with a massive vote of confidence from local members.

The iconic Future Woman MPs (FWMP) weekends have continued to pay dividends with our graduates standing for selection for Parliaments across the UK and others now elected to the European Parliament.

All our women MPs are FWMP graduates. And as I write, one of them is even standing for Leadership of this Party!

Our next FWMP is to be held later in July. We have continued to reserve at least 20% places for BAME delegates. As ever we had a superb set of applications – 54 women applied for 24 places.

We intend to begin a new fundraising project at this Conference to allow us to run more training in general, and a second annual FWMP in particular. We would like to congratulate the newly established Racial Diversity Campaign. We have supported them as they have delivered mentoring to BAME candidates and training at this conference.

This report would not be complete without paying tribute to the support and leadership being shown by Natali Chindipha in LDHQ. We are so lucky to have her as the member of staff supporting CGB.

Candy Piercy
Chair Campaign for Gender Balance

Federal Appeals Panel Report

The Federal Appeals Panel is established under Article 21 of the Constitution and adjudicates over a variety of disputes that fall outside the remit of State Appeals Panels. The FAP is made up of 18 members – 9 of whom are elected by the Federal Executive and confirmed by Conference, with 3 being elected by each State Party. The Chair of the FAP is elected by the Panel from amongst the members elected to it by the Federal Executive

1. INTRODUCTION BY ALAN MASTERS

The Panel exists under Article 21 of the Federal Party Constitution to resolve internal conflicts falling within Article 21.3. Its composition is as set out in Article 21.1. The panel was appointed at the York conference for a term ending in December 2020.

I was re-elected chair for a second term in 2016.

The panel's registrars are:

Nora Neeva – Registrar **Natalia Villazan** – Deputy Registrar

This is the Federal Appeals Report to the end of June 2019.

In certain instances, the Chair of the Panel may provide a ruling on his own authority under the Panel's procedures in other instances he will appoint a panel of members to determine the issue. Both of the ruling referred to below were made by the Chair.

2. RULINGS OF THE PANEL

2.1 The Federal Appeals Panel can adjudicate on internal conflicts that fall within the scope of Article 21.3 Constitution.

Disputes concerning constitutional inconsistencies and irregularities between the Federal Constitution and a State Constitution could be determined under Chair's authority.

If there is possibility that one or more parties' rights have been infringed under 21.3(b), the case has to be determined by a Federal Appeals Panel.

The Federal Appeals Panel has not published any recent rulings since the 2018 Conference.

3. RECENT RULINGS OF THE CHAIR OF THE PANEL IN REGARD TO THE INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

3.1 – Yorkshire and Humber Region Ruling 10th August 2018 – the Federal Appeal Panel was requested by the Yorkshire and Humber Region to make a preliminary ruling on the matter as to whether the English Party had the power to refuse admission to membership or to overturn a decision to admit membership already made by an enrolling body.

Because the matter concerned the interpretation of the Constitution, I as Chair of the Federal Appeal Panel made the ruling.

In summary:

- i. Under ART. 3.2 (c) of the Federal Constitution, the English Party is clearly identified as an enrolling body and does have the power to enrol members in the circumstances there set out.
- ii. Furthermore, under ART. 3.3 and more specifically ART. 3.6 of the Federal Constitution, the English Party is entitled to refuse applications made to it for membership, including on the grounds of bringing the Party into disrepute.

ART. 3.6 of the Federal Constitution states as follows:

“Membership may be refused by an enrolling body on one or more of the following grounds:

(a) Material disagreement evidenced by conduct, with the fundamental values and objectives of the party

(b) The admission of the applicant would be likely to bring the Party into disrepute, or

(c) Membership of another political party in Great Britain

Any person aggrieved by such a refusal shall subject to having exhausted the internal procedures of the relevant State Party, have a right of appeal pursuant to ART. 21 on any matter relating to the interpretation of this Constitution.”

It was pointed out in the ruling that there were differences between the ARTs in the Federal Constitution and the English Constitution (hereinafter “English Constitution”) on these issues (as there are on so many other issues), but that ART. 3.6 of the Federal Constitution took precedence and was to be followed. It was hoped that these differences would be addressed in further revisions of the Constitution and Rules so that the situation was clear and consistent. No appeal to a full panel was made against that ruling and in consequence it stands as the correct interpretation of the Constitutional powers enjoyed by the State Party in this situation.

3.2 Appeal against a ruling of the English Appeals Panel made on the 25th March 2019 – On appeal to it, the Federal Appeals Panel was requested to make a ruling as to whether:

- i. The English Party on appeal had the power under the provision of ART. 3.6 of the Federal Constitution to refuse admission to someone who had previously been expelled by the Party on the grounds set out in ART. 3.6 including bringing the party into disrepute.**

- ii. And whether on a correct interpretation of the Constitution, the English Party as an enrolling body had delegated the right to refuse to membership to the Local and or Regional Party and could no longer exercise that right itself.**

All parties agreed that the English Party was an enrolling body as clearly set out under ART. 3.2 (c) of the Federal Constitution despite the fact that ART 2.1 of the English Constitution only referred to the Local Party and Specified Associated Organisations as enrolling bodies. That the Federal Constitution took precedence and that the previous ruling of the Federal Appeals Panel stood. On the issue as to whether the English Panel had correctly interpreted the Constitution in finding that the *State Party had delegated its power as an enrolling body to refuse membership*, the Panel found that it had not: ART. 3.6 of the Federal Constitution was clearly intended to be a safeguarding provision allowing amongst other things for the State Party as an enrolling body to have the right to refuse membership on the ground that the admission of the applicant would be likely to bring the Party into disrepute even in circumstances where the Local Party wished to admit.

Therefore, it was concluded that the State Party did have the power to refuse admission in the circumstances set out in ART. 3.6 of the Federal Constitution.

4. PUBLISHED PROCEDURES UNDER 21.6

The full procedures were last published in the 2016 report and amended in the 2017 report. There have been no further changes in 2019.

5. SUMMATION

As Chair of the Panel I remain committed to making sure that the work of the Panel is accessible, transparent and truly independent. I hope that members will continue to have confidence in the way that matters have been handled and in the independence of the Panel, in the impartiality and fairness of its procedure and rulings, and in the way it exercises its primary role to protect members' rights under the Constitution.

Alan Masters

Barrister at Law, LL.B BL.

Chair of the Federal Appeals Panel