



# Reports to Conference

Spring Conference 2019

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## Federal Conference Committee

### Introduction

The Federal Conference Committee is responsible for organising conference. It selects the venues, chooses the items for debate, schedules the business in the auditorium and provides the chairs and aides who oversee conference debates. It provides the rooms for the fringe, training sessions and Spokesperson's Question and Answer sessions although it does not have responsibility for the content of those programmes. The committee is subject to the control of the Federal Board in terms of finance and resources.

### York 2019

We hope that you think we have selected an interesting agenda. We have managed to fit in a policy paper on race equality and debates on town centres (likely to be a pressing issue in the Local Elections), unpaid internships, access to justice and road pollution. There will be the usual Question and Answer session with Vince.

Quite a chunk of our agenda is taken up with proposed constitutional amendments. Those familiar with the Party Constitution will know that, when it comes to constitutional amendments, the committee has no discretion but to take them. This conference, we found ourselves with very little time available to allocate after we had selected those things we were required to take.

Items on our agenda are open to amendment. The deadline for amendments is **1pm, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019**. That deadline is slightly earlier than in previous years. The reason is that we have decided to move Spring to the same model as Autumn which means selecting the amendments earlier. That will allow us to produce a *Conference Extra* for Spring, which we have not done before. It will be out shortly before Conference and we hope that it will provide attendees with more notice of what we are to discuss.

Questions can be put to those who are reporting to conference. Instructions on how to do that are listed after each relevant item in the *Conference Agenda*.

As ever, we have a slot for emergency motions. The deadline for submission of such motions is the same as for amendments: **1pm, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019**.

We have also reserved a slot to discuss Europe. As with previous conferences, we are setting a later deadline for motions on that topic; that deadline is **1pm, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019**.

As ever, FCC debate chairs will be selecting a broad range of speakers in the different sessions. The normal way to let the chair know that you wish to speak is to complete a Speaker's Card and submit it. We will also, however, be accepting electronic Speaker's Cards following our successful trial at Autumn Conference.

This year, we are working to significantly reduce the amount that we print. Conference generates a huge amount of paper. In order to reduce our environmental impact, we do not propose to make copies of *Conference Extra* available at the event and we will be reducing the number of paper copies of *Conference Daily* that we produce. We will be putting both publications on the website and linking to them both on our Facebook page.

For some time now, we have provided a drafting advice service. It is an opportunity for those who may be thinking of submitting a particular motion or amendment to seek advice on its drafting from members of the FCC. We do not comment on the merits of any particular text, but we will comment on its structure and drafting.

Widening access to conference as far as we can is very important to the committee. For that reason, we run the Conference Access Scheme under which we make grants available to individuals to assist them in attending conference. If that is something that you are interested in (either by contributing to the fund or by making a claim from it) please do let me know.

We want you to enjoy your time at conference. Please feel free to approach any of us with any questions you may have. We will be happy to help. We can be identified by the giveaway 'FCC' letters on our conference passes.

### **Brighton 2018**

Brighton hosted our Autumn Conference last year.

The Brighton Centre is always a very popular venue and we are pleased with the feedback that we received about it. As ever, we look at comments received in our post-conference survey very carefully and we are grateful to in excess of 600 of you who took the time to respond. Almost 20% of those said that Brighton was their first conference; I do hope that many of that 20% have returned this Spring.

98% of those responding described the Brighton Centre as satisfactory or better; 44% said it was excellent. 92% said that the Metropole was satisfactory or better as a

conference hotel; 4% did not visit it at all. Overall, those are good figures for our main venues.

When asked for their reasons for attending conference, more people cited debating policy as the main reason than anything else, closely followed by networking. 87% of people thought that we had the balance of debate and non-debate items about right; 4% thought we had too many debates; 9% thought we had too few.

87% of those responding attended a fringe meeting; 26% of those responding went to five or more. 81% rated the fringe programme as good or excellent. 94% of those responding visited the exhibition; 56% attended a training session.

Significant concerns were expressed about the conference app. We have taken those on board and several members of FCC have been working on improvements to it. Some of those require resources to be made available and we are doing our best to make that happen.

The overwhelming majority of people said that conference made them feel more proud to be a member of the party, better informed, more likely to campaign, and more involved in the democratic process. 88% of people rated their conference experience as good or excellent; 10% as satisfactory.

### **Autumn Conference 2019**

This Autumn, we will be returning to Bournemouth. The dates of conference will be 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

The conference deadlines are as follows:

Drafting Advice (Motions):	1pm, 12 <sup>th</sup> June
Motions deadline:	1pm, 26 <sup>th</sup> June
Drafting Advice (Amendments/Emergency Motions):	1pm, 20 <sup>th</sup> August
Amendments and Emergency Motions deadline:	1pm, 2 <sup>nd</sup> September

### **Conferences 2020**

We have secured venues for both of our conferences in 2020. We will announce those venues, and the dates of Spring and Autumn Conference, before too much longer.

## Thanks

The Conference Office works incredibly hard to organise such a major event as this one. I would like to express my thanks to the staff who work in that office: Susannah Murray (our newly appointed Head of Conferences), Daiva Kisleraviciute and Emma Price. I would also like to express particular thanks to Sian Waddington and to all the other staff at Party Headquarters.

I must pay particular tribute to Emma Price, who is leaving Headquarters after many years of service. She has contributed a massive amount over those years, both to Conference and to the Party, and I am extremely grateful for that contribution. We will miss her.

A large amount of work goes into the agenda, particularly on the part of 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. We are always on the lookout for new stewards. Please do contact me if you would like to join the team.

Finally, Conference would not be possible without the dedication of the members of the Federal Conference Committee and I would like to express my thanks to all of them too. They are all a pleasure to work with.

**Geoff Payne, Chair**

## 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.

### FPC Work Programme

In accordance with our previously published schedule, we are presenting a policy paper on Race Equality for debate at York and working groups will be holding

<b>Working Group</b>	<b>Consultation Session</b>	<b>Policy Paper</b>
Race Equality	Already done (Autumn 2018)	Spring 2019
Climate Change	Already done (Autumn 2018)	Autumn 2019
Health and Care	Spring 2019	Autumn 2019
Crime and Policing	Spring 2019	Autumn 2019
A Fair Share for All	Spring 2019	Autumn 2019
Nature of Public Debate	Autumn 2019	Spring 2020
Natural Resources and the Natural Environment	Spring 2020	Autumn 2020
Developing Nature of Work	Spring 2020	Autumn 2020
Making Utilities Work Better for the Public	Spring 2020	Autumn 2020

consultation sessions on A Fairer Share for All, Crime and Policing, and Health and Social Care. Comments on the three consultation papers discussed at York can be sent by email to

[policy.consultations@libdems.org.uk](mailto:policy.consultations@libdems.org.uk) by the end of March.

Since the last conference, the FPC has reviewed and updated its work programme. A new working group on the Nature of Public Debate, chaired by Daisy Cooper, has been established to prepare a draft policy paper for the FPC in time to be debated at the Spring Conference 2020. It has also been decided to commission three further groups to report to FPC in time for the Autumn 2020 Conference on: Natural Resources and the Natural Environment; the Developing Nature of Work; and Making Utilities Work Better for the Public. We expect to determine the detailed remits of these groups and recruit the membership in the spring/early summer after this York conference.

The current schedule of consultation and policy papers is therefore as set out above.

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 and/or spokesperson's papers. We hope in this way to be able to develop policy on a swifter timescale than the full process allows. The motion on access to justice on the York agenda is the first outcome of this approach. Other priorities identified include:

Railways; Tourism; Issues of importance to women; Rehabilitation of offenders; Housing and Planning; Arts and culture and International Development.

### **Manifesto development**

The FPC has established an Interim Manifesto Group who would be responsible for swiftly drafting a manifesto if a general election were to be called in 2019. This group consists 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)

This group has already produced a contingency draft based on last year's themes paper, which FPC will be keeping under review.

FPC will revisit this and set out a fuller programme of manifesto development work and consultation next year, assuming there is not an election in the meantime.

### **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, and we have a Membership Engagement group to take this work forward. So far, this group has:

- Run sessions introducing the party's policy, policy-making and how members can contribute to it.



- Produced summaries and introductions to motions being debated at conference.
- Produced short summary pocket guides to Party policy and our philosophy, available from [www.libdemimage.co.uk](http://www.libdemimage.co.uk)
- Updated and improved information available on the party’s website about the FPC and current policy working groups and their progress, at [www.libdems.org.uk/federal\\_policy\\_committee](http://www.libdems.org.uk/federal_policy_committee) and [www.libdems.org.uk/policy-working-groups](http://www.libdems.org.uk/policy-working-groups) respectively.

We will continue many of these initiatives and 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](mailto:policy.consultations@libdems.org.uk)

To make it more affordable for members to participate in working groups, we are currently piloting a ‘travel pool’ with the Climate Change Working Group. This seems to be working well at the moment and we will report back to the Autumn Conference.

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

If you would like to suggest ways of improving how we make policy, please feel free to email on [policy.consultations@libdems.org.uk](mailto: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](mailto:policy.consultations@libdems.org.uk) with “FPC Contact” in the header.

Region	FPC contact
Devon & Cornwall	Jim Williams
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:

<b>SAO</b>	<b>FPC contact</b>
ALDES	Richard Cole
ALDC	Chris White
LGBT+	Alisdair McGregor
WLD	Belinda Brooks-Gordon
PCA	To be confirmed
Liberal Democrat Lawyers	Anthony 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 Elisha Ron and Sarah Dixon. 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 is charged with overseeing the implementation of the Party strategy passed at Southport Spring Conference last year, working with the Federal Committees and other key party stakeholders.

### **Registered Supporter Scheme**

Following the consultations at conference in Brighton by the Federal People Development Committee and the Leader, as well as the large number of responses to those, the Federal Board agreed to widen the consultation by holding a number of consultation sessions around the country, as well as running consultative webinars for members. We said at those consultation sessions, that members would be able to vote on the proposals at York Federal Conference, and a business motion and constitutional amendment are on the agenda, with a helpful booklet from the FPDC to explain the detail.

### **Improving Race Equality in the Liberal Democrats**

At Autumn Conference members overwhelmingly passed the proposals to follow up the Alderdice Report into race equality within our party.

The first of two specific proposals was to form the **Racial Diversity Campaign** (RDC) which will train, mentor and support those ethnic minority members seeking to stand for public office (in the same way that the Campaign for Gender Balance works for women candidates). This has now been set up, with the Federal Board electing the officers in January.

The RDC Chair is Sarah Yong and the two vice-chairs are Annood Al-Samerai and Arfan Bhatti. The Board is very happy to have such an excellent team to launch the RDC which will lead it and support the party in getting more and more ethnically diverse candidates selected and elected to public office at all levels.

During February, the Federal Board will elect the **Vice-President BaME**, following advertisements for the role in January. We will provide an update for members at Conference.

### **2018 finances and 2019 Budget**

A number of difficulties emerged in the second half of 2018 which meant that there needed to be a root and branch review of party finances. As part of this Lib Dem HQ has had to make a number of redundancies. The Federal Board want to put on record their thanks to all staff who have left, thanking them for their dedicated contribution during a very difficult period. There are more details in the FFRC report below.

The Federal Board has taken a very firm grip on the finances for 2019, passing a budget at our December Away Day following a lengthy discussion with a robust interrogation of the figures to ensure that the Federal Party has finances for the 2019 calendar year which are resilient and which are budgeted to reduce our accumulated deficit.

## **Strategy**

The Federal Board has revamped the way that we manage the implementation of the Party Strategy as voted for by you at Spring Conference in Southport. It will now have four separate stand-alone strategy meetings a year to track the implementation of the strategy. We will be using the key performance indicators that have been pulled out of the strategy document agreed last year, RAG rated (red, amber, green) to allow us to clearly see how the party is doing, and asking committees to provide updates for the Board.

## **Antisemitism**

The International Holocaust Remembrance Association (IHRA) definition of anti-semitism was passed by the Federal Board in September. Whilst it had been used by the party for a number of years in disciplinary cases, the Board felt that it was important to discuss and debate it. The Federal Board is clear that anti-semitism is completely unacceptable both within our party and in wider society and we will continue to do all we can to combat it.

## **Adjudicators**

Under the new arrangements for the disciplinary processes reforms which were passed at Autumn Conference in Brighton, the names of the proposed Lead Adjudicator as well as the Senior adjudicator for each state party is presented to you below for ratification by conference.

Recruitment of other adjudicators and investigators is underway, and names will be presented to Conference in due course.

Lead Adjudicator – Fred Mackintosh

Senior Adjudicator (Wales) – Carole O’Toole

Senior Adjudicator (England) – Neil Christian

Senior Adjudicator (Scotland) – Alison McInnes

## **Harassment of candidates - report of Committee for Standards in Public Life**

Following its Report in December 2017 on the harassment of candidates in elections, the Committee for Standards in Public Life is asking political parties to work together on a common statement of values and conduct, so that if members of a party harass and intimidate candidates of another party, swift action can be taken. Discussions continue with political parties to agree this, and we are working closely with them to make this happen.

Finally, I want to thank Adam Hanrahan, the party's Governance Officer and President's Chief of Staff, for his help and support in a busy few months.

**Sal Brinton**  
**President**

### **Federal Finance & Resources Committee**

#### **2018 Financial Outturn and 2019 Outlook**

My grateful thanks to my predecessor Peter Dunphy who retired in June of last year but has continued to be a source of encouragement and advice for me over the past six months. I began my tenure as Registered Party Treasurer and Chair of FFRC (an unremunerated volunteer role) at the beginning of July 2018.

The latter part of 2018 proved to be a challenging time for the Federal Party. It became clear in Autumn of last year that membership income for the party's core services would be significantly less than had been originally forecast. This was due to a range of factors, not helped by the lack of political events, such as elections or referenda, which traditionally boost membership significantly. Membership retention was largely in line with forecasts, but it was then discovered that there had been technical problems collecting annual subscriptions via Salesforce from a large group of existing members. Also, an existing accumulated deficit meant that there was no financial buffer to help see the Federal Party through a tough patch.

These factors contributed to a financial 'perfect storm' which made it necessary to reduce staffing levels at Party HQ, to control expenses more tightly, and to implement additional cost cutting measures. We now intend to maintain HQ staff numbers at the current level and are replacing vacant posts where necessary as they occur from time to time at equal or lower salaries as appropriate to the role offered.

Subsequent to this, the Federal Board has now approved a revised budget which we feel is more achievable and the FFRC, the Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive,

their team, and I continue to keep a close eye on federal income and expenses in order to try and prevent a similar situation occurring again.

Our financial forecasting, financial reporting, business expense controls, and purchasing mechanisms have either been overhauled or we are in the process of doing so. As a result, I hope that we are now better able to control our finances and to spot upcoming problems much earlier than had previously been the case. After these events, it became clear to the FFRC that it was necessary to hire a Financial Controller to assist the Chief Executive with financial planning and control. I am pleased to report that this initiative was approved by the Federal Board and we have now hired an experienced chartered account and local party member to fulfil this role on an interim basis while we search for a full-time replacement (which latter process is actively underway). My thanks to members and the Federal Board for their continuing patience as we have worked through these challenges as we continue to implement and enforce measures to improve the party's financial position for 2019 and beyond.

### **Compliance**

We are grateful to all our local party treasurers who continue to assist us with complying with the PPERA regulations. Local Party compliance has improved significantly since 2015 but the Electoral Commission continues to identify various problems with reporting at local level which indicates that there is still much work to be done.

I would ask treasurers and chairs to be particularly vigilant in establishing audited monitoring processes for registering, recording, and reporting local donations as well as for monitoring expenditure during regulated periods and short and long campaigns for general and local elections. The Electoral Commission has established an ongoing programme of monitoring and spot-checking local Treasurer reports against Agent returns and any discrepancies will be detected, and fines (or other penalties) will be imposed as appropriate.

Local parties will note that the Electoral Commission is now investigating local parties directly (rather than through HQ) with fines currently going to the Federal Party. In the past the Federal Party has absorbed these fines but, given the financial situation described earlier, it is no longer able or prepared to do so. As a result, fines will now be recovered from local parties after affordability tests, and any exceptional circumstances have been considered.

At Federal level all donations are 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 at

<https://pefonline.electoralcommission.org.uk/search/searchintro.aspx>

### **GDPR**

GDPR has now been fully implemented at Federal level and the compliance department continues to monitor our compliance. Local parties are asked to ensure that they are familiar with GDPR and have procedures and systems in place to comply with the regulations. Support and advice on GDPR can always be obtained from the compliance department in HQ.

### **Accounts**

An abbreviated set of audited 2017 accounts are included as part of this report and I commend them to the membership. The frequency of reporting the accounts will once again revert to annually at Autumn conference so the 2018 audited accounts will be included with the 2019 Autumn conference report.

**Anthony Harris, Chair**

The Liberal Democrats (The Federal Party)  
Income and Expenditure Account  
For the year ended 31 December 2017

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**General Fund**

	2017	2016
	£	£
<b>Income</b>		
Donations	6,135,605	5,293,721
Membership and subscription fees	1,278,819	971,519
Newspaper income	29,184	64,903
Affinity income	42,859	4,684
Policy Development grant	432,568	413,885
Conference income	545,871	484,690
Interest receivable	34	353
Notional income	138,649	126,294
Recharges to party bodies	991,655	867,108
Other income	115,063	296,874
	<u>9,710,307</u>	<u>8,524,031</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Conference expenditure - direct	370,543	363,984
Newspaper expenditure	41,416	104,589
Fundraising expenditure	65,367	52,667
Depreciation and amortisation	64,849	88,091
Campaign expenditure	4,913,718	2,522,284
Staff costs	2,933,177	2,710,312
Premises & office costs	1,236,369	1,156,856
Interest payable and similar charges	115,422	59,665
Notional expenditure	138,649	126,294
Grants to party bodies	343,449	342,531
Expenditure recharged from other party bodies	150,709	34,709
Audit fees	35,595	38,419
Bad debt provision	-	21,994
Other expenditure	45,159	99,306
	<u>10,454,422</u>	<u>7,721,701</u>
<b>General Fund (deficit)/surplus before taxation</b>	<b>(744,115)</b>	<b>802,330</b>
Taxation	<u>(49)</u>	<u>(21)</u>
<b>General Fund (deficit)/surplus for the year</b>	<b><u>(744,164)</u></b>	<b><u>802,309</u></b>





The Liberal Democrats (The Federal Party)  
Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2017



	2017	2017	2016	2016
	£	£	£	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>				
Tangible assets		147,523		212,372
<b>Current assets</b>				
Debtors	261,519		296,161	
Cash at bank and in hand	33,514		399,568	
	<u>295,033</u>		<u>695,729</u>	
<b>within one year</b>	<u>(1,087,149)</u>		<u>(851,413)</u>	
<b>Net current liabilities</b>		<u>(792,116)</u>		<u>(155,684)</u>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		(644,593)		56,688
<b>after more than one year</b>		(100,000)		(100,000)
<b>Net liabilities</b>		<u>(744,593)</u>		<u>(43,312)</u>
<b>Reserves</b>				
General Fund		(1,159,147)		(414,984)
Reserve Fund		45,000		45,000
Legacy Fund		369,554		326,672
<b>Total deficit</b>		<u>(744,593)</u>		<u>(43,312)</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Federal Finance & Resources Committee on 29 June 2018

Peter Dunphy  
Registered Treasurer

The Liberal Democrats (The Federal Party)  
 Cash Flow Statement  
 For the year ended 31 December 2017

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	2017	2016
	£	£
<b>Net cash (outflow) from operating activities</b>	<b>(852,778)</b>	<b>(1,209,947)</b>
<b>Returns on investment and servicing of finance</b>		
Interest received	34	353
<b>UK Tax paid</b>	<b>(71)</b>	<b>(21)</b>
<b>Capital expenditure and financial investment</b>		
Payment to acquire tangible fixed assets	-	-
<b>(Decrease)/Increase in cash</b>	<b><u>(852,815)</u></b>	<b><u>1,210,279</u></b>

## Federal Communications and Elections Committee

FCEC priority remains the forthcoming local elections. On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, just under 10,000 seats will be contested and FCEC, ALDC and Party spokespeople have been actively encouraging members to stand as candidates whatever the immediate prospect, and to support the nearest active campaign if there are no elections due in the immediate vicinity. Commencing campaigns as early as possible is key to success and it should be noted that ALDC's 'Kickstart' weekend in late November last year was the largest Kickstart ever with over 300 participants. 'Kickstart' is continually adapting to the campaigning needs of the Party and this time it included sessions serving needs of Scottish campaigners, the 'Future Campaign Leaders' group, and a full weekend of sessions dedicated to those who wanted to undergo Agents Training.

FCEC were delighted to see that over 240 applications for the main G8 grants round were submitted from 84 local authority areas. Out of this, 160 grants to 58 local party areas were offered. ALDC and HQ campaigns team work closely to ensure that the best campaigning outcomes are achieved from what is a relatively small fund. We continue to monitor the difference this makes to our campaigning capacity and electoral outcomes.

Our Exit from Brexit Campaign has been going strength from strength despite the political volatility in parliament. In 2018 alone, 530,000 letters were sent to target voters with 3 million target voters reached online. We've raised over £1million for the campaign and defeated the government 20 times on Brexit in Parliament. Rhiannon Leaman continues to lead on the campaign from HQ and we recently welcomed Claire Halliwell and Henry McMorrow to the team.

FCEC continues to cooperate closely with other Party Committees and bodies.

At Autumn conference in Brighton, we met with Regional Chairs and the Joint States Candidates Committee (JSCC), and amongst other things, reviewed preparations for the local elections in 2019 and 2020, but also agreed the principles for the fast-track mechanism for candidate selections at European elections which will be required when Article 50 be suspended, or Brexit ended.

FCEC also works closely with a sub group of the FPC under the stewardship of Lord Newby and Jeremy Hargreaves to develop a draft Manifesto. This is a new system, driven by FPC, and is working well. At time of writing, a manifesto sufficient to meet the needs of a further 'snap' election is well under way. The FCEC representatives on this group are Victoria Marsom and myself.

Our general election plans have been steadily progressing and we receive regular reports from the Federal Communications and Campaigns team at HQ with whom we work closely. Our committee work plan has been ably set out by FCEC members Neil Fawcett and Victoria Marsom and we will have reported our overview to the Federal Board by the time the Party meets at Spring conference.

Candidate selections are progressing despite losing Jill Hope, Head of the Candidates Office. 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 representation of BAME and Women candidates.

The media office has ensured we have received coverage in the national media for our campaigning efforts and work in parliament, whilst the digital communications teams have continued to enhance our online advertising and communications with a wide range of content

FCEC has been regularly consulted by the FFRC and the CEO on the twists and turns of the budget setting negotiations. We are hugely appreciative of the dedication of staff throughout the campaigning and communications related functions during what has undoubtedly been a stressful time.

FCEC continues to be represented on the FCC and are pleased to play a small role supporting Geoff Payne and his committee's diligent work in preparing this Spring conference.

The English Party has selected a new representative to the FCEC and we welcome Iain Donaldson. We would like to thank Gavin Grant for all his hard work and invaluable contributions on behalf of the English Party to helping improve the Party's campaigning capability over his term with FCEC.

We would also like to wish Rachel Palma-Randle who left her role as Director of People before Christmas. Rachel has been a campaigning member of staff for many years and served with distinction on of the HQ management team during the 2017 snap election. As with so many of our HQ staff, she constantly went beyond the confines of duty to help our Party campaign better and her work to join up communications with members with campaign communications has been significant. We wish her every success in her future endeavors.

Finally, it would not be possible to complete this report without reference to the passing to one of the Party's most significant campaigning phenomena. Paddy Ashdown forged this Party as a campaigning entity as its first leader. In chairing the 2015 General Election, through force of personality and will power, he ensured its

survival. Far better and fuller tributes will be made elsewhere, but this committee joins you all in stating simply, we will miss him.

**James Gurling, Chair**

## **Federal People Development Committee**

### **Diversity**

There are a lot of exciting developments in the diversity agenda right now. The welcome elections of the new Vice President BaME, and the Racial Diversity Campaign Chair and Vice Chairs join some other excellent work from LDCRE, CGB and others. FPDC has launched a new Facebook group for Diversity activists, to try to help diversity project teams to more easily connect with volunteers. We are also working with Baroness Lorely Burt on her “Kitemark” project and Candy Piercy on her Unconscious Bias training project. We have rewritten the job descriptions for the Regional Diversity Champions and Local Party Diversity Officers, to try to give more clarity and support to the excellent people in those positions. FPDC is trying to ensure that as new initiatives move forward, and the Alderdice Agenda develops, that we engage with all the SAO’s so that this is truly a culture change across the Party, and not seen as only being relevant to people of diverse characteristics.

We are also working with the Compliance team in HQ to try to address the difficult development of discriminatory language and behaviour in Lib Dem branded online groups. There is currently no control over groups that call themselves Liberal Democrat – some are not even run by Party members and are acting against our values. We are looking at how to encourage online activity but safeguard people with diverse characteristics from abuse and mistreatment.

We have also started to draft a new policy that has long been discussed by other Party bodies, to protect volunteer campaigners (like PPCs) who need to take parental leave. We hope this will be agreed this summer.

### **Membership**

Since September, work in this area has mostly been focused on the design of the new supporter scheme. This is being debated on the conference floor in York, so I won’t say too much here, other than to say that FPDC put a lot of thought into this. Our recommendations ended up being some way from our start point, as our understanding developed and the data led us to the decisions we made. I hope the constitutional amendments to agree the scheme will pass, as we believe that having this stepping stone toward membership will be very helpful for member recruitment.

Our secondary focus has been supporting the Membership team in the catastrophic failures of Salesforce this autumn. If you don't know, our database suffered a series of technical problems that led to HQ having to remove access for local parties for a time, while the data was restored. There is now a Salesforce developer in the team working to ensure these issues cannot be repeated, and the team are working with groups of stakeholders that include FPDC to explore how to safeguard the Party's data from such risks in future.

This summer we hope to release our long overdue Member engagement guide, with updates to include supporters (if the scheme is agreed by conference).

### **Training**

We have managed to successfully reconstruct the database of accredited trainers (it had been lost). This is now in the final stages of preparation before it will be advertised and shared with local parties. Thank you to all who have helped the reconstruction and agreed to be listed as willing volunteer trainers. The list is already being used to help the Campaigns and Elections HQ Team roll out their successful "Pathway" training project.

As well as providing the normal conference training in York, we have also been working with the staff team to try to develop training access outside of conferences. This includes Lib Dem Learning, the online platform in the Member's Area of the Federal Website. Due to a staff redundancy there is currently a change in how our training resources are managed, but a new Co-ordinator is being recruited, and once in post will hopefully continue to develop this work. We also continue to increase our use of webinars to increase access to training. We are particularly focused on the lack of Agents' training, with the demise of the Agents' Association. We are working with the Compliance and Campaign teams in HQ as well as with FCEC to try to find a new way to meet this training need.

### **Miranda Roberts, Chair**

#### **Federal International Relations Committee**

FIRC has continued to work closely with sister liberal parties both in Europe through the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) and Liberal International, which is headquartered in London and on whose Bureau we are represented.

Many such parties have UK chapters and we work with them to ensure that their members vote LibDem where they are allowed to, and to help in our local and national campaigns.

We also cooperate with other Party bodies to interact with the many diasporas resident in our cities for the same purposes.

There is considerable international expertise within FIRC's membership and the Parliamentary Parties and Federal Policy Committee have been provided with details.

LibDems Abroad is now functioning, divided into 3 local parties: Liberal Democrats in Europe, Liberal Democrats in France, and Liberal Democrats Overseas. They are campaigning for the rights of UK citizens living abroad to ensure that they regain the right to vote in UK elections and are no longer suffering from frozen pensions (now deemed illegal by the European Court of Human Rights).

The funding from the Westminster Foundation for Democracy for work done by the International Office, notably its supervision of the African Liberal Network, has been cut back sharply. The Office will work much more closely with ALDE and others to ensure that the European message continues to be spread throughout the UK whatever the outcome of BREXIT.

**Robert Woodthorpe Browne MBE, Chair**

### **Federal Audit and Scrutiny Committee**

The past year has been busy for the Federal Audit and Scrutiny Committee which meets monthly to examine how various parts of the Liberal Democrats are working and whether they are working well or not. The committee has a wide remit which obviously includes the financial audit of the party, but also the risk register and the disaster recovery plan. However, we can look at any area we feel might be of concern and ask for a report to come to the committee on what happened.

Over the last year we have overseen a successful financial audit, each year the Liberal Democrats have fewer and fewer points raised as controls are being tightened and we expect that trend to continue when the 2018 accounts are audited in April.

You will have seen that despite increased controls and a good audit the Liberal Democrats have faced some financial challenges over the last year and the Federal Audit and Scrutiny Committee was heavily involved in these discussions. We have also scrutinised the budget for this financial year to ensure that everything possible is done so that issues do not occur in the future.



During the year we have looked at the databases the Liberal Democrats have used, investigated the issues with Salesforce and received a report on changes which can be made. We have received presentations from a number of LDHQ staff on how things work from GDPR to HR Strategy and have proposed some areas for improvement.

The committee has spent some time towards the end of the year examining the setting up of the supporters scheme to ensure that the process was open and transparent and that members views were consulted.

**Helena Cole, Chair**

### **Commons Parliamentary Party**

If the last six months have showcased anything in the Commons, it is that events here remain entirely unpredictable. I could not have imagined the sheer scale of the defeat the Government would suffer in the vote on the Brexit Deal. Likewise I cannot hope to predict what the next six months will hold.

What I can guarantee is that Liberal Democrat MPs, with Vince at the helm, will continue to fight tooth-and-nail to retain our membership of the European Union and to give UK citizens a real choice on Brexit through a People's Vote. Without this, it is hard to imagine a return to effective Government in the UK. I would like to thank Vince for his courageous resistance to the Tory's Brexit agenda. He stands in stark contrast to Jeremy Corbyn, who seems content to watch the UK traipse over the Brexit cliff-edge.

Since September, Liberal Democrats have continued to work with remain-backing MPs across all parties to meet this goal. We have led the charge in tabling amendments demanding a Peoples' Vote, with the option to retain our membership of the European Union. Our votes were vital in securing victory for an amendment to the Finance Bill, which significantly undermines the Government's capacity to finance itself in the event of a 'no-deal' Brexit. Tom Brake, our Brexit Spokesperson, was at the forefront of the recent legal challenge in the European Court of Justice, which ruled that the UK can unilaterally revoke Article 50. This ruling is essential in keeping the door to EU membership open, and gives us all something to keep fighting for. With so much at stake, Lib Dem MPs will continue to use every means at our disposal to secure an exit from Brexit.

Although all-too-often drowned out beneath the Brexit maelstrom, we have also seen noteworthy legislative victories elsewhere. In January, Ed Davey forced a Government concession on his amendment to the Finance Bill on the issue of loan charges.

Congratulations to Ed for leading the charge on this issue. Meanwhile, off the back of Wera Hobhouse's campaign to make 'upskirting' illegal, the Voyeurism Offences Bill recently completed its journey to the statute book. We should celebrate the fact that there is now legal recourse to hold perpetrators of this abhorrent crime to account.

Our MPs have worked with real dedication to make headway on a range of Lib Dem manifesto pledges. Following the scandal around access to medicinal cannabis, Norman Lamb has furthered our campaign for complete legalisation of this drug. In December, he tabled a Ten Minute Rule Bill with this purpose, which received cross-party support in the Commons. Ultimately, Norman's Bill was defeated by just 14 votes; this has only increased the Party's determination to secure this much-needed reform. In January, Christine tabled a Presentation Bill on the right to work of asylum seekers. Should this progress, it will provide a vital opportunity for one of the most vulnerable groups in our society to find their footing in the UK.

Alongside introducing legislation on key issues, our MPs have led debate on national matters: Layla Moran, the Party's Education Spokesperson, secured time for a Westminster Hall debate on the issue of mental health and wellbeing in schools. For my part, I served on Fisheries Bill Committee, shaping legislation which will be central to governing our fisheries in the event of the UK's exit from the EU.

As Members will recognise, our MPs are deeply committed to their constituents and make every effort to campaign on vital local issues in Westminster. In the last few months alone, Vince Cable sponsored a debate on South West Rail franchise, Tim Farron on second home ownership in Cumbria and Layla Moran on the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway. Meanwhile, Jamie Stone has spoken on the topics of Crown Post Office Franchises, ATM closures and community hospitals in addition to his work as Defence Spokesperson. It would be impossible to capture the full range of concerns our MPs have raised in recent weeks, but I hope this gives you a flavour of our locally-focused Parliamentary activity.

This report would be incomplete without reference to Stephen Lloyd's decision to resign the whip last December, ahead of crunch votes on the Prime Minister's Brexit deal. Though we were sorry to hear of Stephen's decision, we recognise the reasons which guided his choice.

By contrast, I am delighted to welcome back our Deputy Leader, Jo Swinson, from Shared Parental Leave. Jo's energy is undimmed: within a week of returning, she not only enjoyed a superb showing on Question Time but also found time to deliver an inspiring speech in the historic debate on the Withdrawal Deal. Future generations of MPs from all parties will benefit from Jo's work in forcing the Government to

introduce a pilot scheme for proxy voting by MPs on maternity, paternity and adoption leave. We are certainly fortunate to have Jo on our bench once again.

I would like to conclude by thanking Vince, Jo and all of my colleagues in the Commons for their efforts since September. I would also like to thank you – our members – for your ongoing support.

## POLD Report

I am pleased to report that Mel Gordon has joined our Parliamentary Support Team, following the departure of Vicky Nevin. Mel is now advising Parliamentarians on matters relating to Health and Social Care, the Environment, Energy and Climate Change amongst other issues. Meanwhile Andrew Burrell and Jameela Khan continue in role in the PST, covering a wide range of portfolios from Work and Pensions to Brexit.

New members to the Parliamentary Adviser Unit, Ed Molyneux and Jonathan Jones, are now well-established, advising on environmental and social issues respectively. We continue to benefit from the expertise of Sophie Lyddon on Brexit and foreign affairs, Meadhbh Keating Fitzpatrick on health and Max von Thun on the economy. Rosie Shimell continues to lead this PAU, in addition to advising on education.

Jack Fletcher continues to keep things in check as Head of the Whips Office, with Lucy Kay as Deputy.

I would like to thank colleagues across the PST, PAU and Whips Office for their hard work since September.

**Alistair Carmichael, Chief Whip**  
**House of Commons**

## **Lords Parliamentary Party**

### **Leadership and party whips**

**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** and **Barbara Janke** and **Angie Harris**. We were delighted to add **Dorothy Thornhill** to our ranks in autumn of last year.

### **Brexit**

We continue to provide real scrutiny of the Government in the House of Lords. We have taken the lead in challenging the Conservative Government, resulting in the Liberal Democrats providing effective opposition to the Government's legislative programme. Since the Autumn Conference, a lot of time has been spent on Brexit. The focus has been on the **Withdrawal Agreement** and, at the time of writing, the House of Lords has had two long debates on both versions of the Government's deal. The Liberal Democrats, with cross-party support from all sides of the House, ensured motions have been passed rejecting a No Deal scenario and committing to the efficient passage of legislation connected with any proposition on Exit Day that might be sent to the House of Lords from the House of Commons.

(Note: this is being written at the end of January!)

I am so grateful to every single member of the group who has showed discipline and fortitude in demonstrating so clear our party's Brexit position.

### **Liberal Democrat victories**

#### **Counter Terrorism and Border Security Bill**

- Supported successful amendment for a review of Prevent
- Government concessions as a result of Lib Dem pressure:
  - o Clarification of the law around the definition of a 'hostile act'
  - o Indicative list of reasonable excuses for travelling to a designated areas
  - o Sunsets on designated areas
  - o Statement required from SoS regarding reasons for designating an area
  - o Indicative list of reasonable excuses for viewing material over the internet
  - o Provisions restricting private consultation with a solicitor removed, and removed from Schedule 7.

#### **Tenant Fees Bill**

- Government Concessions as a result of lengthy negotiations between the Lib Dems and the Government:
  - o Maximum security deposit reduced from 6 weeks to 5 weeks rent
  - o List of default fees on the face of the Bill
  - o Increased transparency around holding deposits

#### **Mental Capacity (Amendment) Bill**

- Government concessions following Lib Dem pressure and extensive cross party negotiations:

- Including 16 & 17 year olds in the provisions of the Bill
- Removing references in the bill to outdated “unsound mind” and replacing them with “mental disorder”
- Changes to the role of the care-home manager:
  - Improving oversight of the responsible body and giving it the power to refuse authorisations
  - Removing direct conflict of interest – care home manager not allowed to undertake assessments in these cases
  - Improve oversight of Local Authorities
- Assessments must be undertaken by a person with appropriate experience and knowledge
- Successful Lib Dem amendment led by Liz Barker that would ensure arrangements under the Bill are necessary and proportionate in relation to preventing harm to the cared-for person.

### Campaigns and visits

The group continues to be very active around the country. The last few months have seen scores of Peers travel all over the country to speak at AGMs, ‘Pizza and politics’ and Christmas events. The Peers remain active local campaigners, and like the rest of the Party are gearing up for local elections in May.

### Peers

In January, **Trevor Smith** retired from the group after 21 years as a peer. Party owes him a huge debt of gratitude and he goes with our good wishes for a happy and long retirement.

We were very pleased and honoured to be able to celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> birthdays of both **Bill Rodgers** and **Dick Taverne**. A very happy evening was held in the Lords and some brilliant speeches, not least from Bill and Dick.

Along with the rest of the party, and the country, we were devastated by the death of **Paddy Ashdown** in December. He was a giant, and we will miss his leadership, his wisdom and his energy immensely.

### 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, Enya Evans** and **Jess Clayton**.

I am very grateful to the staff in the Parliamentary Adviser Unit – **Rosie Shimell, Max von Thun, Sophie Lyddon, Meadhbh Keating Fitzpatrick, Ed Molyneux** and **Jonathan Jones** – for all their work in advising and supporting our group in the Lords.

I also want to place on record my thanks to the Parliamentary Support Team – **Mel Gordon, Andrew Burrell** and **Jameela Kahn** for their continually excellent work and support.

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

**Ben Stoneham, Chief Whip**  
**House of Lords**

### **Parliamentary Report (Europe)**

As ever, I am working hard for you in the European Parliament. Whilst my focus is mainly on environmental protection and the fight against human trafficking I am also very involved with trying to get us a people’s vote and to stop the catastrophe which is Brexit.

Over 100 MEPs from most of the 27 member countries and across parliamentary groups had a letter in the Independent recently calling on the Brits to reconsider our minds. Since then I have seen a gradual change towards the realisation that Brexit may not happen at all. But there is still a long way to go.

Whatever happens I will keep up the fight and ensure that, even if we get to no-deal, citizens’ rights will be protected separately from the Brexit negotiations.

### **Cross-party work**

As the only Lib Dem MEP it could feel lonely at times despite sitting with the ALDE group of nearly 70 MEPs. However I convene a cross-party group of MEPs from Labour, the Conservatives, the Green Party, SNP and Plaid Cymru. We have written cross-party letters and press stories in UK media, been for high-level briefings at the Ports of Ghent, Rotterdam and London and updated each other on each party’s Brexit policy.

In the European Parliament we have really cemented these cross-party bonds. I despair at the tribal nature of UK politics, which is so alien to European politics. The Lib Dems must renew our commitment to get the electoral reform we need to encourage a progressive, European style of politics and leave behind the legacy of Corbyn's Labour and the Brexit fuelled Tory Party.

## **Environment**

As you may be aware, I joined this party for its environmental credentials and I have long since pursued the highest level of European environmental protection in my work as an MEP.

While writing this in January, the Parliament has just agreed with the EU Governments an ambitious agreement on reducing single use plastics. The agreement will introduce wide reaching bans on fast food containers, cotton bud sticks, plastic cutlery and plates, beverage stirrers and balloon sticks. This is a huge piece of legislation and I sincerely hope the UK government cooperates with other Member States in reducing plastic waste.

Also we will soon vote on a resolution on medicinal cannabis and the importance of increasing the availability of medicines containing certain pain-reducing cannabinoids for doctors to prescribe. It is the case that in some EU Member States there are already nationally regulated medicines containing cannabinoids, for example in the Netherlands. But it is illegal for a German doctor to buy those medicines and prescribe to a patient in Germany. I am working hard to break down barriers to ensure that regulated medicines containing cannabinoids are getting to the patients who desperately need them.

Perhaps the biggest threat to the UK environment though is Brexit. We are jumping into the unknown when we leave the EU. Environmental protection and enforcement that has existed for over 30 years is at risk. The UK must introduce an Office of Environmental Responsibility on a statutory footing, which can hold Ministers to account and ensure the Government is meeting targets for national environmental legislation. I believe the EU side will make a level-playing field on environmental standards a prerequisite for future talks about trade with the UK.

## **ACP work**

In December, the African Caribbean Pacific-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly convened in Cotonou, Benin. As matters of urgency, we debated the fight against terrorism in the Sahel and the political situation in Cameroon. We also had a rich exchange of views on young people with disabilities in the context of sustainable

development, a topic that I hold dear and was responsible for in my first term in the European Parliament.

The negotiations on the future African Caribbean Pacific/EU Partnership post 2020 having now started, the Assembly reiterated its support for maintaining the ACP group while having regional pillars, moving away from a donor recipient relationship and for the new agreement to focus on the delivery of common interests and challenges.

There is great concern from ACP Countries about their trading relationship with the UK if we leave the EU and, as looks likely leave all the WTO quotas with the EU. Belize for example exports 100% of its sugar to the UK, but all its quotas will be with the EU. Nearly 80% of our cocoa imports come from Belgium where the raw cocoa is refined, any disruption to this will impact badly on Ivory Coast. The examples go on and on, yet are barely discussed in the UK. The damage to these most vulnerable countries will be immense.

As an MEP, I am still a very active Member of the Assembly. In the Social and Environment Committee we finalised my Report on the destabilising effects of wildlife trafficking in ACP countries and the promotion of the external dimension of the EU Action Plan against wildlife trafficking. My co-author from Botswana and I were very pleased it was adopted unanimously. It is a clear step towards more coordinated ACP-EU action against environmental crime and wildlife trafficking, addressing not only demand and supply sides but calling for more efficient data-gathering methods, increased aid to rangers, farther reaching sanctions and for local communities to be involved in the conservation of biodiversity.

### **Quaestor**

Since my re-election as one of five Quaestors of the European Parliament in 2017, I continue to be the only British MEP to sit on the Bureau of the Parliament. In this role, I represent the interests of fellow MEPs.

In July 2018, I took over as Chair of the College of Quaestors, focusing on several issues including: improving the working conditions for MEPs in Strasbourg and the digitalisation of the Parliament's art collection to bring it to closer to the citizens. We are nearly ready to launch the app that will use virtual and interactive technologies to take in the art works and include a virtual tour of the parliament.

I also organised an art exhibition by Members and staff, with the theme "Visions of Europe" to be displayed in the European Parliament in Brussels. Sometimes we need to take time out show how artistic we can all be when we relax away from work!



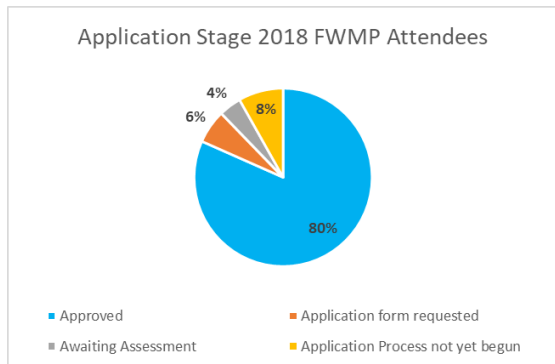
In addition, I continue with the same portfolio as Quaestor of overseeing artworks (many of them from Britain) and exhibitions, and I am member of the Bureau's ICT Working Group and the High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity for the parliament and its staff. I am a board member of the Former Members Association and the Pension Fund.

I am also a member of the Advisory Committee dealing with harassment cases between MEPs and their assistants, where I have been active in helping to shape the EP's rules towards handling these cases that properly addresses the sensitivities and stress involved when harassment occurs. Prevention and support of victims is also an incredibly important aspect of this Committee, and something in which has my full support.

### Catherine Bearder MEP

#### CGB report to Spring Conf 2019

CGB had an intense and busy 2018. Following on from Spring Conference we were mentoring women candidates for selection and candidate approval. Many of these women had attended our Future Women MPs Weekends in spring 2018. Thanks to our donors and the support we received from the Diversity Team at LDHQ, we were able to run two of these flagship workshops last year. Our participants were inspired to put themselves forward for both election and selection for Westminster, the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly during 2018. Please see the attached detailed breakdown chart for more information.



Particular thanks are due to the LDHQ Candidates Team for putting on a special all woman Assessment Day to prevent a backlog of aspiring women candidates building

up when awaiting approval. During the summer a new model of engagement with women was piloted with considerable success. Our Chair Candy Piercy was contacted by Lib Dem GLA member Caroline Pidgeon and asked to help set up a new style of meeting to encourage women to stand for election to the GLA and in local elections across London. Working with Caroline, CGB ran two extremely successful 'Inspiring Women in London' evenings. Then first was at the LGA in July, and the second at the National Liberal Club in early September. These events showcased women speakers who shared their stories about how they had developed successful political careers in local and national government. Among our excellent speakers were Caroline Pidgeon herself; Liz Green, the Leader of Kingston Council; Sarah Olney winner of the Richmond Park By-election; Siobhan Benita our candidate for London Mayor; Lucy Salek, the candidate for the Lewisham By-election; and three fantastic newly elected women councillors, Hina Bokhari, Humaira Ali and Luisa Porritt.

CGB Chair Candy Piercy, Vice Chair Julia Cambridge and Diversity & Talent Support Manager at LDHQ, Natalie Chindipha gave an in depth briefing about the training and support provided by CGB to aspiring women politicians. Feedback tells us that a number of women who attended found these sessions immensely encouraging. Attendees have gone on to stand for office in the GLA, to apply to stand for Westminster and to stand for election to local government in many different parts of London. Of course, this also triggered more women to come forward to begin their own journey towards a parliamentary career and to engage with CGB coaching and mentoring. We are planning to roll out this model to Scotland, Wales and the regions across England in 2019. Our Autumn Conference was super busy as it coincided with the beginning of the GLA selection campaign and a number of target seat selections. We ran a strong programme of CGB training at Brighton. Throughout the Autumn, our approval and selection mentors were working at full stretch. Indeed we would welcome more volunteers to get involved with both of these aspects of CGB work. Early 2019 looks to be following a similar hectic pattern. We are looking forward to running more of our flagship training and a new event 'Inspiring Diverse Women in Business and Politics' will rollout in the Spring. Watch this space!

The financial issues that affected the Party in the Autumn, resulted in the loss of a number of key staff members who will be sadly missed. In particular, we would like to pay tribute to Rachel Palma Randle. Rachel was extremely supportive of CGB and we shall miss her drive, her commitment to helping promote women in the Party and her abundant good sense, a great deal. The financial issues delayed a number of decisions such as the date of the next FWMP weekend. We hope to be able to confirm a date in the very near future.


Without our donors we would be very limited in what we are able to achieve. If you would like to support our work to get more women elected to Parliament, in any way, please contact our Chair Candy Piercy to discuss how you could support us most effectively.

In conclusion, we welcome the creation of our sister organisation, the Racial Diversity Campaign. We can assure Conference that CGB will do everything possible to support the RDC. We intend to share our understanding and experience of engaging, inspiring and supporting members of underrepresented and diverse groups to help them develop successful political careers. Best of all, we will do our best to help them to win elections and represent the Liberal Democrats as Members of Parliament. The chart below gives a breakdown of the application stage of the attendees in 2018:

**80%** of 2018 attendees are now approved candidates and **20%** have now been selected for seats.

Following the success of the all-female assessment day last year, there has now been an agreement on ECC to have an all-female assessment day following a Future Women MPs Weekend. This will not only encourage more women to be approved but will also help to address the gender balance on the awaiting assessment list.

**Candy Piercy, Chair**



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