

Aldershot Parliamentary Constituency Profile

The Constituency

Aldershot Constituency is in the north eastern corner of Hampshire and is bordered by Berkshire and Surrey. It comprises the two large towns of Aldershot and Farnborough, which make up the Borough of Rushmoor (named after the Rushmoor Arena, which historically was used for large scale Military Tattoos), and two wards in the neighbouring, more rural, Hart District Council area - Blackwater & Hawley and Frogmore & Darby Green. It has an electorate of approximately 79,000 (2011).

Aldershot has long been known as the Home of the British Army and there is still a strong presence, despite the ongoing, large-scale redevelopment of a major part of the military town for residential use in the Aldershot Urban Extension.

Farnborough is famous as the birthplace of British aviation in 1908, and there are many reminders of this heritage, including the FAST Museum. Farnborough Airfield is now an operational high-end general aviation airport, still hosting the biennial Farnborough International Airshow. BAE Systems is a multi-national defence, security and aerospace company occupying a site on the Farnborough Aerospace Centre and QinetiQ is another defence technology company, with its headquarters in Farnborough, on the Cody Technology Park.

Transport

The Constituency has excellent transport links, with railway lines serving Waterloo and Southampton, Portsmouth and the South West, with further links to Reading and Guildford. The M3 is easily accessed, providing a link to the M25. The A331 Blackwater Valley Relief Road connects via the A31 to the A3 for London and Portsmouth.

Electoral wards

The electoral wards within the Aldershot Constituency are:

- The entire Borough of Rushmoor (which is the Lib Dem Rushmoor Local Party)
- Blackwater & Hawley and Frogmore & Darby Green, which are in the Hart District Council area (in the Lib Dem Hart and North East Hampshire Local Partly).

Local elections

In the early years of the Coalition, between 2010 and 2012, a number of good Lib Dem councillors lost their seats in Rushmoor. In the all-up Rushmoor Borough Council elections in 2012, the results were: Conservative - 25, Labour - 11, UKIP - 3. Since then 1 UKIP councillor has become an Independent. There are currently no Lib Dem seats held in Rushmoor, but there is only one ward in the Borough that has never had a Liberal/Lib Dem councillor in the past 30 years (North Town).

In the Hart wards of the constituency, Frogmore & Darby Green has four seats on Lib Dem run Yateley Town Council, all of which are held by us. Blackwater & Hawley is a Town Council and all of the eight seats have Lib Dem councillors. On Hart District Council the two wards elected four Lib Dem councillors to the four seats, although one has recently defected to the Tories. The Hampshire County Council Division covering the two wards is also held by a Lib Dem councillor.

General Elections

Since the first of the 1974 General Elections, when we overtook Labour, we have been in second place in Aldershot.

2010 Result:

Conservative	Gerald Howarth	21,203	46.7%	+ 2.7%
Liberal Democrat	Adrian Collett	15,617	34.4%	+ 5.5%
Labour	Jonathan Slater	5,489	12.1%	- 9.6%
UKIP	Robert Snare	2,041	4.5%	+ 2.1%
English Independence Party	Gary Cowd	803	1.8%	n/a
Christian	Juliana Brimicombe	231	0.5%	n/a
	<i>Majority</i>	<i>5,586</i>		

In 1992 the incumbent Tory MP, Julian Critchley, stood for the last time, gaining 36,974 votes, a majority of 19,188 over the Lib Dems in second place. Gerald Howarth stood for the first time in 1997.

The majority has been reduced from 19,188 in 1992 to 5,586 in 2010. The Lib Dem candidate from 1992 to 2010 has decided not to stand again.

Current MP

The current MP is right wing Conservative Gerald Howarth. He has been a Defence Minister in the Coalition Government and was given a Knighthood on leaving the post. He is 66 years old and has recently moved from his constituency house (second home) to a small apartment in Farnborough. There has been a suggestion that he is likely to step down at the end of the next Parliament (i.e. the Parliament elected at the 2015 General Election).

Membership

Like other local parties, the membership has reduced as a result of the coalition. In 2010 it was 123 and is currently at 80.

The Future

Liberal Democrats across Aldershot Constituency have been ambitious about winning the Parliamentary seat and look forward to getting back on track with a new PPC, putting behind them the difficult early years of the Coalition.