



Milton Keynes Liberal Democrats Minutes of the 2019 AGM

*Annual General Meeting held at 7:00pm on Thursday 24th October 2019 at
The Stacey Bushes Meeting Place, 2 Briar Hill, Stacey Bushes, Milton Keynes, MK12 6HX*

Present: Irene Henderson (Honorary President, chairing meeting), Richard Greenwood (LP Chair), Steve Hills (LP Secretary, minute taker), Cec Tallack (Treasurer), Lyndsay Hills, John Chandler, Edis Bevan, Vanessa McPake, Rebecca Cave, Sam Crooks, Paul Trendall, Marie Bradburn, Robin Bradburn, Paul Alexander, Jenni Ferrans, Amanda Reynolds, Garrath Green, David Buckley, Martins Kreicis, Jane Carr, Andy Carr, Cliff Peat, Matt Hinton, Douglas McCall, Mary Pring, Colin Lund.

1. Welcome by Chair, Irene Henderson (Honorary President)
 - Irene warmly welcomed all members, particularly the new – and young – joiners.
2. Apologies:
 - Douglas Campbell, Malcolm Harper, Phil Winn, Pauline Winn, Mike Newman, Albert Clark, Rex Exon, Kerrie Barratt, Aisha Mir (PPC, MK North), Saleyha Ahsan (PPC MK South).
3. Minutes from 2018 AGM
 - Proposed by Paul Trendall, seconded by Rebecca Cave; approved *nem con*.
4. Reports on Milton Keynes Liberal Democrats Activity Since 2018 AGM
 - Chair's Report (Richard Greenwood)
 - 2019 was a good year for Lib Dems nationally, gaining some 700 seats and 16 MEPs, and winning the by-election in Brecon and Radnorshire. The national party membership reached 120k, and our local membership a high point of over 400.
 - Eight of the Local Party (LP) attended the excellent Kickstart Training in November 2018. Members wanting to “up their game” should consider attending – please contact Richard as Chair of the LP. Some training is also available at conferences. We believe Kickstart made a significant contribution to our election successes, which were as follows.
 - Amongst the successful defences in the MK council elections, we won two with very substantial majorities of over 800. These were Newport Pagnell South and Bradwell. We gained three Council seats. We had hoped for four. In Monkston we gained a seat also with a majority over 800. In Broughton our majority was almost 500, due to the care taken by Kerrie Barrat and Sam Crooks in giving new voters a warm welcome and “getting the vote out”. In CPOW Paul Trendall won by 12 votes. There were five nerve-racking recounts. It was a very creditable victory over a well-known incumbent. Unfortunately we lost Shenley Brook End by a small margin.
 - We are now expanding our scope and are working in *Newport Pagnell North and Hanslope*. We came second in May 2019 despite not having campaigned there for some years.
 - Almost immediately after the local elections we plunged into the European Elections. We delivered some 12k leaflets, Broughton leading the way. SBE was 17th in the table of doors knocked in the campaign. The party elected three MEPs across the South Central Region and 16 nationally.

- Members have also been taking part in the cross-party European Movement campaign, and many attended the People's Vote March on 19th October. Lib Dems are committed to defending our membership of the EU.
 - We have two excellent candidates for our parliamentary seats, selected by the LibDem Region. We will support them vigorously. We will be delivering an addressed mailing to every registered elector in MK. This will cost £7,500 for both constituencies. A full colour leaflet for one ward, about 6,000 houses, costs about £160. Anything you can give to the party to support this campaign is greatly welcome and much appreciated. It is possible, however, may be told to concentrate our efforts where the party centrally believes the best chance of success lies.
 - We have two fundraising evenings coming up, both costing £10: Race Night on 7 December (contact Jane Carr), and the famous annual Punch and Chilli evening on 18th January (contact Richard Greenwood or Steve Hills).
 - Thanks to Flo Montague who has been our Membership Development Officer for several years, but is now on "maternity leave".
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- Treasurer's Report (Cec Tallack)
 - Financial figures were given out to all members present. They showed the historical movement of our actual income and expenditure figures over five years including 2018, and estimates of the final results for 2019. (The financial year is the same as the calendar year, so the 2019 figures cannot yet be complete.) The 2020 budget included no provision for a general election in 2019-20. This was because the GE was normally self-funding. This meant either that we were able to build up a fund over the period between elections (normally now five years), or that members and supporters would contribute at the time of the election, recognising the need. We will need an absolute minimum of c £7,000 which will cover addressed letters to all registered electors in the two constituencies. The appeal has already started and we have raised some £2,000 towards it (we already have roughly the same amount in hand). If we do not raise the full amount the party will have to find the cash from reserves.
 - We continue to rely mainly on the councillors' tithe to fund most of the campaigning during a normal year. The main expenditure is the cost of leaflets and other literature delivered through electors' doors.
 - Questions: CT was asked if we prioritised the GE over local elections. He said not. Both had to be fought. Jane Carr asked if we were fighting 6 or 7 wards in 2020. The answer was 7. Amanda Reynolds asked if we planned to spend more in 2020 than in 2019; the answer was yes. Cliff Peat asked if we were moving toward social media campaigning. CT said we were spending more on it, though research showed paper was more effective in getting individuals to act. Social media were however cheaper. Jenni Ferrans said knocking on doors was the most effective form of campaigning. Marie Bradburn drew attention to the fact there were no local elections in MK in 2021. CT said this implied a build-up of resources.
 - Marie Bradburn proposed that the budget be adopted. Douglas McCall seconded it. The meeting approved the budget *nem con*.

- Milton Keynes Liberal Democrats Council Group Report (Douglas McCall)
 - We won three additional seats in 2019 giving us 15 to the Tories' 19 and Labour's 23. While the council has been NOC for some years, Lib Dems have been working with the Labour party on the council, now in an "enhanced partnership agreement". Effectively the whole of the Lib Dem manifesto is agreed Council policy. Our councillors "punch above their weight" in terms of chairing Committees; we have five chairs, and, this year, the Mayor (Sam Crooks).
 - In particular we had success with pothole repairs. The policy of repairing clusters rather than single holes has reduced complaints to the Council from 348 in 2018 to 69 so far this year.
 - There are now far fewer rough sleepers than recently, and there were fewer tents to be seen. However, there were still 900 families – not individuals, but whole families – in temporary accommodation. (Very few were in B&Bs.) This is unacceptable. The problem is that the private housing market prices people out of homes. Moreover, if the council does build accommodation it becomes available under the right to buy scheme, and so vanishes. The Council has spent £2.5 million over budget on this issue this year.
 - Child Poverty in Milton Keynes is the next big issue. We have promoted the Child Poverty Commission, chaired by a QC, which will recommend practical ways the Council can address this problem (as opposed to identifying changes to policy at national level).
 - The Council is fighting a decision by a Planning Inspector. This effectively removes the power of the council to organise development. This risks it being dominated by the interests of private property developers, without proper regard for infrastructure such as schools and medical facilities. The issue concerns the amount of land available to be developed over a five year period. The MK Futures plan was believed to have covered this issue. This is an ongoing dispute.
 - Many needed decisions are not being taken by central government as a result of Brexit. Examples are the proposed bridge across the M1, housing, and the MK university. Money is also being wasted directly on Brexit.
 - The Council has declared a Climate Change Emergency and is looking for as many ways as it can to reduce the negative impact of its activities on the environment.
 - If a General Election takes place in 2019 the Council may encounter significant difficulties in finding polling stations which may be booked for other activities such as Christmas Parties. The Council has a rolling booking on the MK Arena where the count takes place.
 - Questions: Amanda Reynolds asked about the reserves the Council was said to have and which Tories argued should be used to reduce Council Tax. Robin Blackburn (Council Finance Chair) said there was a general fund of about £13million which could be available for use in this way, but the vast majority of the £83 million in reserves was already earmarked for specific use. Some was legally ring fenced, eg the Housing Revenue Account and money for regeneration. In particular, much was to be spent on items such as bridge improvements. Substantial capital expenditure was on the horizon. Even with the reserves this is overspent. DMCC added that Northamptonshire County Council, which had gone bankrupt under Tory mismanagement, was a conclusive answer to the Tories point about reserves. He also mentioned their mismanagement of the Buckinghamshire Fire Authority finances.

- Federal Conference Report
 - Rebecca Cave said it was fun. Eight members went. The conference was packed, "heaving", with new members. Training, main conference events, and fringe meetings, ran in parallel. There were many special interest meetings with outside

speakers too. In particular there was extra training for election agents, mandatory for those taking part in the next GE (she and Richard Greenwood attended). The next Federal Conference is in York in the spring of 2020, and there are cheaper “early bird” prices.

5. Executive Committee Election Results

- The following positions were filled unopposed:
 - Chair Richard Greenwood
 - Vice-chair Rebecca Cave
 - Secretary Steve Hills
 - Treasurer Cec Tallack
 - Data Officer Jenni Ferrans
 - Honorary President Irene Henderson
- Ordinary Members (four positions out of six filled):
 - Douglas McCall
 - Vanessa McPake
 - John Chandler
 - Colin Lund
- The following positions were not filled
 - Membership Development Officer
 - Press Officer
 - Diversity Officer
 - Fundraising Officer
 - Under 26 Rep
- Douglas McCall proposed, and the meeting agreed, that filling the vacancies should be delegated to the Executive Committee.

There being no other business, the Honorary President declared the meeting closed at 20.45.

