

In order to attend conference you must register in advance. Use the registration link at EastLibDems.org.uk/Conference.

We will use the Zoom video conference service with which many people are familiar. Click on the link in your confirmation email after 9.15am to join the conference. You will be placed in a waiting room and admitted to conference shortly before the formal start at 9.30am.

0930 Welcome to conference

Victor Scrivens (Chair of Conference Committee) will welcome members to conference.

Please keep your device on mute unless you are speaking.

Please use the chat box if you wish to ask a question. The chair or chair's aide may invite you to unmute and ask your question, or may read out your question on your behalf. In some sessions you may also be used to use the Raise Hand function to indicate you wish to speak.

Interpretation of Standing Orders

Session chair: Victor Scrivens (Chair of Conference Committee)

Session Aide: Lorraine Flawn (Secretary, East of England Lib Dem)

Standing Orders (www.EastLibDems.org.uk/standing-orders) are the rules which govern the conduct of conference. They are written on the assumption that conferences will take place in person.

Conference is requested to approve the following interpretations of Standing Orders for its current meeting, and for any future conferences that take place online using Zoom.



CONFERENCE TIMETABLE

Voting (Standing Order 7)

Members will vote using Zoom's polling function. Zoom keeps a record of each vote, which may be accessed and examined subsequently in the event of any dispute about the correct result.

The decision of the Conference Chair is final on whether the displayed result is so close that there is genuine doubt, and on the action to be taken.

Suspension of Standing Orders (Standing Order 8)

If a Member wishes to request a suspension of Standing Orders, they should type SUSPEND in the Zoom chat. The Chair will then call for a Zoom poll. The request will be debated if at least 35 people vote in the poll for it to take place.

Points of Order (Standing Order 4)

If a Member wishes to raise a point of order, they should type POINT OF ORDER in the Zoom chat, with the reason.

0935 Opening remarks



Daisy Cooper MP

Daisy Cooper is MP for St Albans, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats and Liberal Spokesperson on Education. She was elected in to Parliament in December 2019, overturning an 11 per cent Tory lead to win by 6,000 votes.

0940 Parliamentary reports

Daisy will be joined by Don Foster to report on the work of Liberal Democrats in the House of Commons and House of Lords and take questions.



Don Foster

Don Foster (Lord Foster of Bath) is President of the East of England Liberal Democrats. He served as MP for Bath from 1992 until 2015. Don is a former minister and Liberal Democrat Chief Whip. He joined the House of Lords in October 2015 and lives in Suffolk.



1030 Regional Officers' reports

Jo Hayes (Chair, East of England Liberal Democrats)

Sally Symington (Treasurer, East of England Liberal Democrats)

Every two years members elect regional officers and an executive committee to oversee and carry out the functions of the regional party.

Jo Hayes will report to members on the activities of the regional party and the regional executive. Sally Symington will report on financial affairs.

Members will be asked to vote to receive these reports and the 2019 accounts.

Regional Chair's report



I wrote my last report on 31st January, just a few hours before the UK left the EU, for our conference at Cambridge Regional College last February.

Brexit means that the Regional Party no longer has responsibility for European Parliamentary elections every five years. It need not save for a European election campaign. That has significant implications for the Regional Party's future planning and spending.

31st January was the day after the World Health Organisation declared "a public health emergency of international concern". Since then the pandemic has confounded our expectations of what 2020 would be like. The Spring Federal Conference was cancelled. On 23rd March the UK went into lockdown. The May local elections were cancelled, with all by-elections.

As a result of the cancellation we are anticipating the biggest set of local elections we can remember next May, unless they are cancelled. Our aim, as ever, is to stand candidates in all seats. Please don't leave this to others: be prepared to stand, helping to ensure the Lib Dem name and logo is on every ballot paper in the Region.

In 2019 the Party as a whole and this Region enjoyed our highest ever number of members, because so many people joined us enthused by our stance against Brexit and our success in the 2019 local and European Parliamentary elections. Those new members came up for renewal in the third and fourth quarters of this year and as we expected, significant numbers of members have lapsed. The Regional Party's main source of income is a share of membership fees and is dropping. We are endeavouring to build this into our spending plans.



CHAIR'S REPORT

We have assembled a team of staff who represent our main expenditure item. Their purpose is to help Region and local parties to be as effective as they can be. Region now has by way of staff:

- A regional development officer, line managed and co-funded by HQ.
- A campaign officer line managed and co-funded by HQ.
- A part-time field organiser line managed by the Regional Secretary and currently mainly funded by the English Party.
- A part-time administrator, line managed by the Regional Secretary.

We are in discussions with the Federal Party about a second co-funded campaign officer, within the scope of projected membership fee income.

We have continued to implement the strategic plan to promote campaigning activity in all 58 parliamentary constituencies. Our officers have been working with ALDC to deliver capacity-building training by virtual means.

Our aim is to be more organised, cohesive, capable and prepared for whatever the next political challenge may be.

The Regional Executive and other committees have been meeting via Zoom video-conference. The Executive has:

- Revived its brainstorming and contingency planning working group under the name Phoenix Rising.
- Extended grants for young local authority candidates to other protected categories under the Equality Act and created an Inclusion Fund for discretionary grants, administered by the Campaigns Committee plus the Diversity Officer.
- Set up a working group on the behavioural culture within the organisation across the Region; the group aims to produce a guidance document for new Local Party executives in January.
- Arranged for the creation of a video on the theme of diversity which was shown during the virtual Federal Conference and well received.

After plans made early in the year were frustrated by cancellation of the local elections, the Campaigns Committee has had a quiet year.

The Candidates Committee has conducted the post-election review of approved parliamentary candidates.

The Conference Committee has organised this AGM in difficult circumstances and is preparing a conference in February.

The Policy Committee approved, and I signed on Region's behalf, draft amendments to the motion from Scotland on federalism which was on the agenda for the virtual Autumn Federal Conference in September. The Federal Conference Committee rejected these amendments for debate and the



motion was passed without any reference to England. However, the Federal Policy Committee has set up a working group to look at England in a federal UK: highly topical in view of the nationalist threat in Scotland.

Region has liaised with the County Co-ordinating Committees who are engaged in targeting and candidate approval decisions for the county elections, as well as getting Police and Crime Commissioner candidates into place.

Region held a virtual leadership hustings on 19th July which went almost without a hitch.

I would like to thank everyone who works for the Party's aims across the Region, especially colleagues who serve on the Regional Executive and its Committees, helping to run the Party behind the scenes.

This is my fourth and final year as Regional Chair. I have chaired the Region during two unexpected general elections, one unexpected European one and a pandemic. Despite the defeats and disappointments our organisation is still here, still striving to be the effective opposition the country needs. Unity of purpose is key. We must continue our contingency planning to anticipate the next opportunity and build the organisation's campaigning capacity to seize it. I wish my successor all the best.



Treasurer's report

The 2019 Statement of Accounts was signed and submitted to LDHQ's Compliance Department in March 2020 as required by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA).

2019 FIGURES

The income received by the region rose to £150,006 in 2019, nearly double the level in 2018. This was driven by a strong increase in the membership; successful appeals and significant contributions raised by levy on local parties to finance the campaign for the European Elections in May 2019. The membership rebate received from LDHQ increased 43% to £69,726; donations and appeals amounted to just over £42,000 and the local party levy raised a further £22,000.

Expenditure at £214,182 was primarily directed at the campaign for the European elections with campaigning amounting to £142,194; increased investment in staff for both the European and general elections; and significant grants given out for the local and general elections. The deficit of £64,176 reduced reserves from £107,823 to £53,565 at the end of 2019.



TREASURER'S REPORT

2020

This year has seen a much quieter year due to the absence of elections and constraints on campaigning due to the pandemic. There has been a commensurate drop off in income with the membership rebate forecast to fall by 20% this year and donations falling back to more normal levels and the absence of any major appeals for funds. The current forecast is to make a small surplus this year.

The ongoing activities comprise administration and development support to local parties; grant funding for election campaigning; the production of a quarterly newsletter and the Regional Conference. Region currently employs three part-time staff and contracts with an editor to support these activities. The regional executive has agreed with the federal party to move to a model based on co-funding two campaign manager roles and part-time regional development and field officers. Additional financial support for the field officer is being provided by the English Party.

Income and expenditure account

	2019	2018
Income	£	£
Membership	69,726	48,868
Donations	42,498	8,471
Fundraising	6,385	1,459
Investments	22	24
Transfers in	25,882	2,027
Miscellaneous	5,493	16,128
	150,006	76,977
Expenditure	£	£
Premises	280	-
Office costs	3,121	280
Staff costs	19,517	11,528
Transfers out	29,389	-
Campaigning	142,194	245
Fundraising	1,744	996
Financing	370	57
Miscellaneous	17,567	15,760
	214,182	28,866
(Deficit) / Surplus	(64,176)	48,110

Balance sheet

	2019	2018
Fixed assets	£	£
	-	-
Current assets		
Cash in hand and at bank	53,565	112,027
Total assets	53,565	112,027
Liabilities	£	£
Creditors and accruals	-	4,204
	-	4,204
Total (net) assets	53,565	107,823
Reserves		
Accumulated fund at the start of the year	107,823	59,713
(Deficit) / Surplus	(64,176)	48,110
Accumulated fund at the end of the year	43,647	107,823
Asset revaluation reserve	5,711	-
Other funds	4,207	-
Total reserves	53,565	107,823



2021 BUDGET

The membership rebate is forecast to fall further next year as the drop off in membership renewals feeds through to lower income; and donations continuing to see a modest decline. However, the region is well financed and the 2021 budget sees continued investment in staff to support the huge local election program scheduled for May 2021 and longer-term electoral growth. The co-funded campaign managers, and regional development and field officers will support local parties with campaigning, training and administration, investing in our longer-term capacity and building for future election success.

Outline budget

	2019 to end Oct	2021 budget
Income	£	£
Donations and appeals	6,896	7,000
Fundraising	583	1,000
Membership rebate	42,646	53,879
Newsletter income	12,003	19,760
Regional conference	2,667	3,000
English party staff allowance	4,500	10,800
	69,295	95,439
Expenditure	£	£
Campaigning	122	2,000
Fundraising	-	500
Grants to local parties	1,200	17,000
Miscellaneous	-	2,000
Newsletter costs	27,455	24,300
Office and admin	458	2,000
Regional conference	2,849	3,000
Staff costs	20,074	6,000
Federal party staff cost sharing	-	52,440
Training	-	1,000
Contingency / local parties loans	3,500	2,000
Financing costs	84	400
	55,742	112,640
Surplus / (Deficit)	13,553	(17,201)

The executive has agreed a budget to support candidates from diverse backgrounds and younger candidates, as well as disability grants and training grants. The proposed 2021 budget (see left) sees a deficit of around £17,000 before appeals or fundraising activities and will leave the region well placed for future investment in campaigning.

FINALLY

Thank you to the many volunteer treasurers in local parties and branches. The Electoral Commission reporting requirements are onerous and a big debt of gratitude goes to those who facilitate the smooth running of the finances and ensure the essential compliance requirements are met.

Conference is requested to

1. Receive the Treasurer's Report and 2019 accounts.
2. Approve the 2021 outline budget



CONFERENCE TIMETABLE

1100 BREAK

Members may use the chat function in Zoom to network with other members.

1115 President's speech

Mark Pack



Mark Pack is President of the Liberal Democrats. As such he chairs the party's Federal Board. His books include *101 Ways To Win An Election* and *Bad News* and he also hosts the Never Mind The Bar Charts podcast.

Mark also helped found and was co-editor of Liberal Democrat Voice and now edits Liberal Democrat Newswire, the monthly email newsletter.

1130 Party Strategy consultation

Mark Pack

Elaine Bagshaw



Elaine is a member of the party's Federal Board and works as Senior Programme Manager at a leading not-for-profit. She has been a Parliamentary and GLA candidate in East London and is an Honorary Vice President of Young Liberals, the party's Youth & Student wing.

The Liberal Democrats are reviewing our party strategy. You can download and read a consultation document at www.libdems.org.uk/a20-strategy-paper. Mark Pack and Elaine Bagshaw will encourage members to respond to the questions in the consultation paper.

Q1 What is our purpose?

Q2 What does success look like?

Q3 How can we secure competitive advantages?

Q4 What are our key risks and how should we deal with them?

Q5 What are our electoral objectives?

Q6 How much should our electoral appeal be based on liberals?

Q7 What should our attitudes be towards other parties?

Q8 What organisational priorities are needed for this plan?

Q9 How do we make a success of adopting a strategy?

Additional responses can be submitted to president@libdems.org.uk.



1130 Breakout session

1130-1215: Your membership questions answered

For local party officers and others interested in how the party works.

Find out more about the support the membership team gives to local parties, what information HQ needs from local parties and what Lighthouse (the party's membership system) is for. Share good practice and raise any queries you have including on running AGMs online.

1215 BREAK

Members may use the chat function in Zoom to network with other members.

If you have not already done so, please use the chat to indicate which breakout session you would like to join.

Main Zoom session	Breakout 1 <i>ALDC training</i>	Breakout 2 <i>Compliance training</i>	Breakout 3
<p>How to make party policy</p> <p>Learn more about how party policy is made and how you can contribute and influence what the party decides</p> <p><i>With Rob Harrison, member of the Federal Policy Committee</i></p>	<p>Recruiting volunteers</p> <p>We all need more volunteers to help us campaign and run our local parties. Find out where to find them and how to ask for help.</p> <p><i>With Cllr Zöe Franklin, ALDC Development officer</i></p>	<p>Compliance - the basics</p> <p>Learn more about what local party officers and campaigners need to do to say on the right side of the law</p> <p><i>With Lloyd Harris, Compliance Officer, Lib Dem HQ</i></p>	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>Safeguarding goes hand in hand with well-being and is an area which is paramount in an effective political party which cares about each and every person. Join the party pastoral officer for a session on safeguarding and pastoral care.</p> <p><i>Amanda Curtin, Wellbeing & Pastoral Officer, Lib Dem HQ</i></p>

1230 Breakout and workshops

Decide which session you would like to join



CONFERENCE TIMETABLE

1315 BREAK

Members may use the chat function in Zoom to network with other members. If you have not already done so, please indicate which breakout session you would like to join next.

1330 Breakout and workshops

Decide which session you would like to join

Main Zoom session	Breakout 1 <i>ALDC training</i>	Breakout 2 <i>Compliance training</i>
Setting up and running a Young Liberals branch Covering everything from establishing your branch, to running events and maximising your membership's potential, this session will provide a comprehensive guide to building a branch from the ground up. <i>With Callum Robertson, Chair, Young Liberals.</i>	Developing your local message The next set of elections is approaching fast. Good campaigns rely on effective messages. Join this interactive session to learn how to draw up your local message. <i>With Cllr Zöe Franklin, ALDC Development officer</i>	Election agenting - the basics Learn more about what local party officers and campaigners need to do to say on the right side of the law <i>With Kerry Buist, Head of Compliance, Lib Dem HQ</i>

1415 Regional election announcement

The Returning Officer, John Macrory, will update members on the regional elections following the 2pm close of nominations.

He will inform members which positions will be contested and which candidates have been elected unopposed.

For more information see www.eastlibdems.org.uk/elections.

Closing remarks

Victor Scrivens, Chair of Conference Committee

