



Brighton & Hove Liberal Democrats

Newsletter

Autumn 2022

For Members & Supporters

Editor & MDO: Trevor Freeman

Editorial

Pragmatism was always the watchword of the old Tory Party. However, they abandoned that attitude when Margaret Thatcher came to power. She introduced an idealism that found its roots from her mentor, Keith Joseph's, interest in the new economic ideas emanating from the USA. That these might be flawed never entered into anyone's thinking until it was too late to alter the direction that policies had set the Tories on. To this date the role that Thatcher still plays in Tory thinking is slowly destroying their ability to understand how they should adapt to a world that demands new thinking.

As we undergo crisis after crisis in our everyday lives new thinking is what is now required. Unfortunately, because of their adherence to outdated economic ideas the Tories are not fit to understand or confront the many problems now confronting us. Their entrenchment in power, the manner in which they enable a prime minister that the country has not voted for and their complete paralysis as a government in the face of so much adversity shows how unfit they are to lead the country in these difficult times.

With their commitment to Europe, proportional representation and strong local government the Liberal Democrats are showing that their belief in what for many is new thinking but in fact are long held values that they are the best political party equipped to take the country forward.

Table of Contents.

Editorial	1
Executive Committee	1
Contacts	1
Fascinating History	1
Constituencies	2
Ward Focus	3
Events	4
Coffee Mornings	4
Conference Autumn 2022	4
Website	4
Energy Crisis	4

Fascinating History.

If you have ever visited Hove Museum you will be greeted by a strange looking edifice as you enter the museum grounds. It is known as the Jaipur Gate and was donated to the museum in 1926. It was originally commissioned by the Maharaja of Jaipur for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition held in South Kensington from 1886-1889. You can see from the picture on the right that it was very ornate as befitting a grand entrance to the Rajputana section of the exhibition. It underwent extensive renovation and protection in 2004 to ensure that it could continue to serve as a spectacular gateway to the exhibits in the museum.



2022 Executive Committee

Chair: Stewart Stone

Vice Chair: Martin Kersh

Secretary: Caroline Brown

Treasurer: Paul Chandler

Data Officer: Simon Jardine

Membership Development Officer (MDO): Trevor Freeman

Ordinary Members: Frances Lindsay-Hills, Beatrice Bass, David Sears, Andrew England, Ben Thomas, Peter Denyer, Hyder Khalil

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Constituencies.

In this article we review what constituencies are and their place and importance in our system of government.

Constituencies are similar to wards as we reviewed in the previous edition of our newsletter in that they allow voters within a defined area to elect a representative to vote on their behalf on matters that affect the country. That is unlike wards where the voters' representative (councillor) votes on matter affecting their local parish, county, town or city.

The representative we elect is known as our member of parliament (MP) and votes on matters of importance on national issues such as new laws, the country's finances, defence, foreign relationships etc.

Constituencies like wards are designed to represent a given number of people to ensure as far as possible that each MP's constituency is equal in size by voter. When we look at the area of each constituency we find that their geographical sizes can be very different. This reflects population density. The population of a city is far more densely concentrated than is a rural one.

This can throw up anomalies in representation when trying to compare voting areas. To manage these anomalies the Boundary Commission carries out regular reviews to see if constituency boundaries need changing. One is currently in progress as they are required by law to be carried out every 5 years.

In the current review the Boundary Commission has divided up the number of voters between the 650 constituencies to ensure that the number of voters is between the ranges of 69,724 and 77,062 subject of course to ensuring protected constituencies retain their status. An example of a protected constituency would be the Isle of Wight.



Organising ourselves in Constituencies.

The branch of a political party is usually based on the constituency or a number of them. In our case we have three constituencies, Brighton Kemptown, Brighton, Pavilion and Hove. That means that branch resources have to be split. How this happens is of course down to the branch and its

aspirations. A decision not to stand a candidate at an election frees up resources for the other candidates. We experienced this at the elections in 2017 and 2019 when Brighton Pavilion did not stand a candidate.

Candidates have to first be assessed and authorised by the Party before the branch can go through the process of selecting them. This ensures that the candidate meets the requirements to fulfil their parliamentary duties on behalf of the Party as well as their constituency. This is necessary because they will be carrying out their duties in a national forum as opposed to a local one. They become the national voice for the Party and the constituency they represent. Outside of parliament the job of an MP is to represent their constituents. They seek to act for the citizen in their dealings with government, where failures and injustices in the system need scrutiny and encouragement to address their failing. For constituents this is most probably the most important part of an MP's duties. It is also where the branch party can play an important role in support of their MP.



Campaigning in Constituencies.

Direct management of election campaigns in constituencies belongs to the candidate for parliamentary elections and their agent. The branch party provide the funds and the boots on the ground. This might seem unfair but the branch is the one who controls the purse strings at all other times and will have control of everything else outside of parliamentary elections.

Many branches will call on their MP to offer support with any local campaigns that they may carry out, examples being more funding for local schools, improved hospital facilities, better funding for GP surgeries etc. The way this is done copies the way we campaign in wards except on a constituency basis.

Fund raising is very important for constituencies as the branch is generally the most important fund source of an MP's election campaign. For the Lib Dems this is especially important as we do not have major financial sponsors as some others do.

Ward Focus

Central Hove Ward

Central Hove lies from the shoreline to Eaton Road in the north and Second Avenue in the east to Sackville Road in the west. It is the home of Hove Town Hall and the old Kings House Council offices. It might be described as the shopping heart of Hove as it contains Church Road, George Street and Eaton Road. Hove public library and the King Alfred Leisure Centre are also located within its confines.

Politically it returns 2 councillors (currently 2 Labour). It is in the Hove Constituency and is represented by a Labour MP. In 2021 it had an electorate of 7,257 according to the Boundary Commission. They have proposed that some small parts of Goldsmid be absorbed into Central Hove and that it should remain a 2 councillor ward.

Historically, this was for many years Tory territory but this started to change in 2007 when the Lib Dems made a strong showing and ended up in second place. We slipped back in 2011 when it was the Greens who made the breakthrough to win one of the seats. In 2015 the Greens lost their seat to Labour, who then went on to make a clean sweep in the 2019 elections. This should be strong territory for the Lib Dems as the 2007 results illustrated.

Woodingdean Ward

Woodingdean lies to the North East of Brighton astride the South Downs and to the North of Ovingdean. It is home to the Nuffield Hospital and Woodingdean Lawn Memorial Park. The views from this ward must be described as spectacular as the height offers magnificent vistas across the Downs and towards the sea. In times past it was regularly cut off from the rest of the city by snow, in the days when we still had the white stuff in this part of the world.



Politically it returns 2 councillors (currently 2 Tories). It is in the Brighton Kempton Constituency and is represented by a Labour MP. In 2021 it had an electorate of 7,457 according to the Boundary Commission. They do not propose any changes for this ward and so it will remain as it is.

This ward has returned Tory Councillors for seemingly time immemorial but that position could change as Labour ran them a close second at the last local elections.

Moulescoomb & Bevendean Ward

Moulescoomb & Bevendean lie to the North of Brighton and to the East of Lewes Road. They are home to some of the University of Brighton complex and the American Express Community Stadium and also the Keep. Although not renowned as being amongst the affluent parts of the city they are known for their very strong community spirit and are an apt home for the location of the Amex Community Stadium because of it. They nestle in the valleys in the Downs and on their Eastern side look directly onto the South Downs National Park.

Politically they return 3 councillors (currently 2 Labour and 1 Independent). They are in the Kemp Town Constituency and are represented by a Labour MP. In 2021 they had an electorate of 12,348 according to the Boundary Commission. Under the proposed changes this ward looks as though it will undergo radical change and lose its Northern part but to compensate will take in part of the Western side of Lewes Road up to the rail track.

This has traditionally been Labour territory and the proposed changes will most probably not alter that outlook, although given the possible increase in its student population it might become fertile ground for the Greens and dare we say us.

Withdean Ward

Withdean ward lies to the North of Preston Park and extends all the way out to Pyecombe. It includes Westdean and Waterhall. Local landmark Coney Hill also lies within its confines. Withdean Park holds the world's second largest collection of lilacs and up until 2009 was designated as the country's National Reference Collection. It lost the designation because of the council's failure, due to funding restrictions, to maintain the collection to a suitable standard.



Politically it returns 3 councillors (currently 3 Greens). It is in the Brighton Pavilion Constituency and is represented by a Green MP. In 2021 it had an electorate of 11,324 according to the Boundary Commission.

This ward will cease to exist in their proposals and will be subsumed into surrounding wards. The new ward of Fiveways will partially reflect these changes as will the new ward of Westdean and Hove Park and the existing ward of Preston Park.

Events

Courtesy of the Events Committee.

No events were scheduled for the month of August as most of us were on our holidays at some point.

Forthcoming events scheduled for September onward are Pint & Politics, Pizza & Politics and training events to prepare us for local elections next year. Details of these events will appear on the website as they are announced and invitations will be emailed out to members and supporters.

We hope to be able to run an event during conference but conference itself will be our main event for the month of September. If you have not signed up for conference, now is a good time to do so. You can go as a day visitor just to experience the atmosphere.

Coffee mornings are held every month, one in each constituency.

Locations and timings are;

Hove: 10:00 am on the first Wednesday of the month at Big Beach Cafe, Hove Lagoon, BN3 4AX. It is hosted by Martin Kersh and Jo Baldwin-Trott.

Kemp Town: 10:00 am on the first Saturday of the month at Open Art Cafe, 6 Nevill Road, Rottingdean, BN2 7HG. It is hosted by Stewart Stone and Simon Jardine.

Pavilion: 11:00 on the second Friday of the month at Muse Café, 37 Queens Road, BN1 3XB. It is hosted by Hyder Khalil and Frances Lindsay-Hills.

All are welcome and it is quite OK to attend those outside your constituency. **Note change in times for Hove and Kempton.**

Autumn Conference

17 - 19 September 2022 - Brighton

Venue: The Brighton Centre, Kings Road, BN1 2GR.

To register, go to

<https://www.libdems.org.uk/conference>

Website.

The website is there to serve you and cannot do a good job unless it has content and that is where you as a member can play your part. Each ward has its own page and we are in the process of setting up ward blogs. If you have something that you think would interest your fellow ward members then to contribute it, email it to the MDO at the email address shown on page 1. We are also setting up pages to cover the special interests of our members. This again could do with contributions from you. Again, email contributions to the MDO. Website Address: www.liberalbrighton.org

Energy Crisis.

No doubt many of you will be viewing the increase in the energy price cap and the threat of future increases with alarm, and with good cause. Price increases of the scale projected will cause severe hardship and in some cases carry a threat to life. That the government has been on holiday whilst it has happened and parliament will not get up to speed until after the conference finishes is a poor commentary on both our government and our governance systems. By the time October arrives it will possibly be too late to decide what action to take without compounding the problem.

This is where you as local activists and neighbours can make a difference. By talking to those around you it is possible to find out who in your local community may be at risk and alert the appropriate authorities or help organisations where action may be necessary. Of course you should only divulge personal details where you have permission. If permission, for whatever reason, is not given then help by keeping a watchful eye and be ready to leap into action if circumstances warrant it. Older people and children are at especial risk and so may need help as winter descends into its coldest period.

We hope government will step up but judging from past performance it appears very unlikely.