

Brighton & Hove Liberal Democrats

Annual General Meeting 2021

Held at Community Base Conference Room, 113 Queens Road, Brighton, BN1 3XG

on 23rd November 2021 at 7:30 pm.

Minutes.

Attendees:

Stephen O’Kane, Hilary Ellis, Simon Jardine, Stewart Stone, Ben Thomas, Hyder Khalil, Neil Sheppeck, Martin Kersch, Trevor Freeman, Peter Denyer, Caroline Brown, Frances Lindsay-Hills, Paul Chandler, Marjorie Leeds, David Sears, Andrew England, Joseph Fond, Owen Sharp, Richard Bates, and Jim May.

The meeting opened at 7:40 pm.

1. The Chair (Hilary Ellis) opened the meeting and welcomed everybody
2. GUEST SPEAKER
As our guest speaker had to return to London and was pressed for time Hilary then introduced Neil Sheppeck of Extinction Rebellion, who went on to give his presentation.
3. Neil told us that he started Rising Tides a group that puts on Arts events relating to climate matters. He then also became involved with Lambeth Extinction Rebellion which is based on non-violent direct action protesting climate change. In Lambeth they have co-operated with others to set up community initiatives to bring in local politicians. He has helped to drive forward a Citizens Assembly in Lambeth on climate change called ‘Beyond Politics’. By working together, they have produced 13 recommendations on climate change for the area. He is now with others putting together a climate change action plan for Lambeth, which Extinction Rebellion will then campaign on to make sure those actions are carried out. Neil finished by answering a few questions from the audience.
4. Hilary thanked Neil for his presentation after which he departed to further applause from the audience.
5. Hilary then declared the AGM formally re-opened.
6. APOLOGIES
Hilary read out the list of apologies. Caroline Ellis, Marti Jones, Eileen Fierheller, Elizabeth Craig, Billy Tipping, Jane Hedley, Geoff Date, Ken Rist, Toby Keynes, Beatrice Bass, Andrew Woolmer, Elizabeth Counihan, and Keith Jago
7. MINUTES
The minutes of the AGM held on 4th November 2020 were then taken as read and formally accepted by the meeting.
8. ELECTIONS
Nominations were read out and there being no contested roles the meeting formally accepted the nominations as elected.
The elected officers are:
Chair – Stewart Stone
Vice Chairs: Hove – Martin Kersh
Secretary – Caroline Brown
Treasurer – Paul Chandler
Data Officer – Simon Jardine

Membership Development Officer – Trevor Freeman

Ordinary Committee Members elected were – Frances Lindsey-Hills, Beatrice Bass, David Sears, Andrew England, Ben Thomas, Peter Denyer, and Hyder Khalil.

9. CHAIR'S REPORT

Hilary delivered the Chair's report. She gave a power point reading of membership for the year, which showed that membership had fallen over the year but explained that this was normal and could be expected to improve as elections approached. She also, at this time, thanked Caroline for her work over Europe. Hilary then went on to record the activity regarding the Party's emphasis on Diversity & Inclusion. Hannah Perkin from region ran an online training session for the Executive Committee, resulting in certain changes being introduced. At Committee level inclusive venues for meetings were introduced and come the next general election the Committee will ensure a place in each constituency for diversity candidates.

Hilary then went on to report that the branch had co-operated with other local branches to run online events. In February with Lewes when Dr Maggie Wearmouth, one of their members, spoke about the NHS and the impact of Covid-19 and the work to combat it. In March Professor Stephen Riecher spoke about the effective Covid-19 responses. In April Dr. Stephen Lee, who had crossed from the Conservatives to the Lib Dems in Parliament shared his insights on the government's failures in its response to the pandemic. Hilary then mentioned events held concerning the Environment. In November 2020 there was a meeting about local transport and the needs of residents, business, and visitors. In March we held a debate on protecting our local environment in which Baroness Kate Parminter participated. On Politics & Democracy we held four meetings. The first in March featured Lewes FC player and Make Votes Matter ambassador David Wheeler. The second in April featured Mark Pack, the Party President focusing on the forthcoming Police & Crime Commissioner elections in May. The third was joined by Paul Noblet, Chair of the Party's Universal Basic Income Committee where UBI was discussed. The final event was in September and was an online Q&A with Wendy Chamberlain, MP for North East Fife, Chief Whip and Spokesperson for Scotland, Wales and Work & Pensions.

Our Social events included a Quiz night in February, the Annual Goldsmid Ward summer picnic in June and an informal get-together with our Picnic in Preston Park in September. Also, in September we held the postponed Supper by the Sea fundraiser where we were again joined by Baroness Kate Parminter. This event raised £800 for our local party campaign funds. She completed her summary of the events with a mention of the monthly coffee mornings held in each constituency and her thanks to Events Committee with a particular mention of Jo Baldwin-Trott, who had to step back during the year, for her work as the original driving force of the committee.

Hilary then went on to give a local campaigns update. She started by thanking all those volunteers who delivered leaflets in the run up to the local by-elections. She also thanked the candidates who stood in those elections, Madelaine Hunter-Taylor in Patcham, and Alex Hargreaves in Hollingdean & Stanmer. Also mentioned was the support we gave in the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner election where the Lib Dem candidate secured 63,271 votes to come a creditable 3rd. The local party has already started campaigning for the 2023 local elections with attention being paid to Rottingdean Coastal where Ben Thomas is our main candidate and Goldsmid where Andrew England leads the campaign team. As part of their campaign work the Goldsmid team raised funds for the Friends of Dyke Road Park where they were able to install new park benches as a result. Hilary encouraged members to speak to Ben and Andrew if they were interested in helping the two campaign teams.

Hilary closed her report with a mention of the Media coverage we have continued to receive in the Argus and online, and the great interview Madelaine gave on Latest TV.

10. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer, Paul Chandler, spoke around the slide presentation about the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020. He mentioned that income and expenditure were lower than the previous year when we had elections. The income had shown a decrease but had been satisfactory at £4,3362.76 and with total expenditure only being £2,091.94 this had resulted in a surplus for that year of £2,272.82. The balance of funds held at 31 December 2020 was £4,143.36. It was proposed that Geoff Date be re-elected as Accounts Inspector for 2021. He was unanimously re-elected. Paul emphasised in closing that funds were not the problem for us but finding candidates was.

11. CLOSING

In closing Hilary thanked Simon, Paul and Frances for their work this evening. Finally reminding everyone about the forthcoming events:

The Xmas Social on 16th December, Tom Brake in January, Wine Tasting in February, and James McCleary in February'

12. As the meeting closed Paul offered thanks, on behalf of the local Party and the Executive Committee, to Hilary for the way she had Chaired the branch over the years as she was now stepping back.