

Minutes of the Skipton & Ripon LibDem Constituency AGM 2018
Saturday 17th November 2018, at 10am
The Memorial Hall, Park Road, Pateley Bridge. HG3 5JS

1. Welcome & apologies

The following members of Skipton branch were present: Lynne Primmer, Lois Lodge, Peter Cummings. The following members of Ripon branch were present: Gerry Johnson, Andy de Hutiray, Lord Dick Newby, David Aldous, Tom Cavell-Taylor, Simon Crosfield, Penny Riley-Smith, Angela Hosie, Andrew Murday. Tom Watson was invited & attended as a non-voting member (being from another constituency).

Apologies were received from: Judith Hooper, John Asher, Susan Hockey, Bill Wade, Eric Jaquin, Liz Hunt, Hugh Nicholas, Margaret Crosfield, Sue Ackroyd, Alex Hornsey, Sarah Trehitt, Gwen Jessop, Malcolm Lawrenson, Margaret Lawrenson

2. Minutes of the AGM 2017

The minutes of the 2017 AGM were approved. It was noted that Gwen Jessop was pleased to have been asked to be Honorary President, and pleased to accept the appointment.

3. Matters arising and not on the agenda – Nil

4. Meet your new Prospective Parliamentary Candidate (PPC)

The selection meeting was held before the AGM, at which Andrew Murday (the only candidate) presented his credentials and was questioned. Alan Luckraft officiated as Returning Officer. He reported to the AGM that there were 210 people on the selection register, that he had received 13 postal votes and 11 votes on the day, a turnout of 11.4%. He announced that Andrew Murday was duly selected as PPC with 100% of the vote (24).

5. Question & Answer session with Lord Dick Newby

Dick Newby brought with him the tome that is the “Draft Agreement on withdrawal from the European Union (EU)...” and proceeded to give us his position/interpretation of the situation, and likely ‘next steps’. The tome is about interim arrangements and one of his concerns was that the document published alongside it, and about the future relations with the EU, is only 7 pages long and extremely short on specifics. Examples of where it is lacking in detail are fisheries policy and the European Arrest Warrant, and it doesn’t even mention some of the agencies that we want to stay in eg GALILEO. A lively discussion ensued in which many questions relating to possible future paths were explored. We thank Dick for his time, clear analysis of the situation, and succinct responses.

6. Reports

- a. Chair. The Chair was unfortunately not present so no report was received.
- b. Treasurer The secretary explained that we had had a change of Treasurer during the year, and the new incumbent had a holiday in Bhutan booked at this time when she took up the

appointment. So there was no report in person by the Treasurer. The secretary further reported that the 2017 accounts (1st Jan – 31st Dec) has been submitted on time to HQ and accepted by them. During the year the Exec had received ‘Skipton & Ripon financial activity to May 2018’ for the May Executive meeting, a ‘Treasurer’s Report’ for the July meeting, and a ‘Skipton & Ripon LibDem Budget statement dated 19th October’ for the AGM. This latter is post handover (1st October) from Roland Wohlrapp to Judith Hooper. Thanks are recorded for Roland’s 7+ years of service as Treasurer.

Concern was expressed that we had money invested that was receiving a poor return. The minutes of the Executive committee meeting 1st October record that Judith, once appointed as Treasurer, was investigating the limitations that are believed to restrict investments by political parties, and Gerry Johnson was sending her general investment advice he had received. The mood of the AGM is to move our investment to a place of better return if/when possible.

Concern was expressed that the new PPC should have access to funds to facilitate his work in the constituency. Gerry Johnson proposed that he should have access to up to 5000 pounds with immediate effect. This was seconded by David Aldous, and carried unanimously.

c. Secretary Could think of nothing to say

d. Membership secretary

Lynne Primmer reported on membership (100 in Ripon; 117 in Skipton) and the recent glitch, as notified 14th November (see attached report). Branches are asked to get out and see those effected (9/10 each).

7. Motions to the AGM

None had been received.

8. Election of officers

a. Honorary President Lynne nominated Gwen Jessop (who was known to be agreeable) and this was seconded by Angela Hosie. Carried unanimously.

b. Chair Alex can no longer continue in the role as he is moving out of the constituency. Lois Lodge was nominated by Gerry Johnson and seconded by Andy de Hutiray. She reluctantly agreed, on the understanding that the role is in support of the PPC and she wouldn’t be leading any charge! Carried unanimously.

c. Treasurer Judith Hooper was nominated by Gerry and seconded by Simon Crosfield. Carried unanimously.

d. Secretary There were no nominations and insufficient people present to find anyone. The appointment is deferred until the January 2019 Executive meeting. The current secretary/future Chair is not willing to do both roles.

9. Election of postholders

- a. Membership development officer Lynne Primmer is willing to continue in the role. Proposed Andrew Murday, seconded David Aldous. Carried unanimously.
- b. GDPR Compliance officer The Executive wish to comply with the legislation, and not to inadvertently stray off course, but they are aware of their lack of expertise. Andy de Hutiray accepted he has expertise and was prepared to be nominated by Gerry Johnson, seconded Andrew Murday. Carried unanimously.
- c. Diversity officer Although we accept the limited diversity of our constituency party, we are not in a position to appoint anyone to this role at present.
- d. Press and social media officer We are aware of the vital importance of social media in today's world, and that our performance in this area could be much improved. It is particularly important to our new PPC. Running websites and social media require technical expertise, as well as a supply of content, and someone's dedicated time. There was a question of whether the person running the social media needed to be a party/constituency member, and it was felt not, so long as the Executive had a control mechanism over content. In view of this Andrew Murday was willing to take it on, with help as offered by Alex Hornsey & other willing people. He was proposed by Angela Hosie, seconded by Lynne Primmer. Carried unanimously.

The Executive had been considering the move from Prater Raines as website host, to Nationbuilder, as recommended by the national party. Few on the Executive have responded to the consultation but those who have find Nationbuilder to be more expensive but more capable, so long as someone accepts responsibility for inputting/updating it. The AGM gave Andrew a mandate to explore the situation with Alex, and take the transition from Prater Raines to Nationbuilder forward if appropriate.

- e. The Executive Branches should have had their AGMs before the constituency AGM, and have nominated their representatives to the Executive at their AGMs. It appears that neither branch had nominations to the Executive on the AGM agendas, so we will accept the current nominations for the January 2019 Executive meeting, and make amendments as necessary there.

10. Election of Independent Examiner of the Local Party accounts

Alistair Gregory has examined the local part accounts for some years. Lynne has contacted him & he is willing to continue in this role. Carried unanimously. Our thanks go to Alistair for his diligence.

11. Bentham Liberal Club – update

The trustees of the Bentham Liberal Club wish to relinquish their responsibilities to the constituency party. Members of the Executive have

been up to explore the situation. Progress is slow. Andrew Murday reported to the AGM that he had had contact with Alistair Gregory (one of the trustees) recently. The trustees are in the process of rewriting the constitution, with solicitors, and of negotiating the renewal of the lease on the shop run from the premises. The (rather dilapidated) premises have been valued at 280,000 pounds. Andrew will continue to report to the Executive.

12. Use of membership data/GDPR

We are aware that as officers step down they should take action to remove data they no longer legitimately need from their computers, and that the constituency party needs evidence of this. Alex Hornsey had an action from the 1st October Executive meeting to draft a form to record the request/action but we don't know if this has happened. **Action:** The secretary will contact Alex to find out where he has got to, & liaise with Andy de Hutiray, who will pick this up as necessary.

13. Paper on support for costs of attending Conferences

This has been on agenda after agenda without anyone coming forward with a firm proposal. There are other sources of funding so long as people plan ahead far enough. We are not aware that anyone has been deterred from attending Conferences because of costs. The AGM decided to delete this from the agenda, until such time as it becomes pressing.

14. AOB

Lynne Primmer wished us to record the death in September of Beth Graham, a stalwart of Liberal politics locally for many years. **Action:** Lynne is asked to draft a suitable tribute. Andrew is asked to post it on the website.

Tom Watson, councillor for Nidd Valley, was welcomed. His ward is within our constituency, but he is registered to Harrogate & Knaresborough constituency. He was asked to say a few words and reported on this year's election for Harrogate Borough Council (HBC), where seats had been reduced from 54 to 46. LibDem councillors were returned in 7 of them (10 previously, so the workload had gone up). A LibDem candidate won the bi-election in Knaresborough recently. He outlined a couple of issues in HBC on which they are working. He was thanked for his report and for coming to the AGM.

15. Date of the next AGM/Executive meeting

The date of the AGM in 2019 will be Saturday 16th November.

The next Executive meeting is booked for 7:30pm on Monday 21st January 2019 in The Memorial Hall, Pateley Bridge. There was a request that we set the dates of all the Executive meetings in 2019 at that meeting.

Membership currently stands at 217, 100 in RN, 117 in SK, one of whom joined on 15 Nov. Just one more than a year ago, but numbers dropped from a 225 high over the year. 13 failed to renew at end of Sept – some elderly amongst them. These 13 had repeated contact, especially in light of PPC contest, but no reply. 7 of membership not eligible to vote for PPC as joined on or after 7 Sept, when advert for PPC went out – I contacted these to explain. All new members are contacted by email and/or phone to welcome and encourage them.

RN have made excellent progress in retaining and activating new members. SK have not. Use of social media and meetings in RN. Desperately needed in SK but only 2 or 3 activists, incl. one Cllr, EJ. We need help! Attraction of a PPC may make a difference but we are still suffering from lack of candidate in 2017 GE – some have stated this quite clearly.

Email from Greg Foster, Head of Membership & Engagement, 14 Nov (but I am not sure how he has come to his conclusions...):

“Early this week, we discovered a technical glitch in our membership database. The glitch only affects members who pay by recurring card payment – and whose payments have not been authorised by the bank. **The system failed to update their membership and as a result they were rolled on for an extra year of membership. This meant that they did not appear in lapsing lists.**

We are very sorry that this has happened. We understand the frustration and extra work that this will cause you. The fault has now been corrected – but **there are a group of members who, through no fault of their own, are now at risk of their membership ending.**

We obviously want as many of them to renew as possible – and we’ve put in place some steps to make sure this happens.

Starting today, anyone in this affected group will have their lapse date set to the 14th February and be notified of the error.

Those members will then get 3 months to renew their membership, in line with the constitution. They will get the full retention treatment from Party HQ of letters, emails, calls and adverts.

But to make sure we renew as many of these members as possible, we will need your help.

As you know – local contact is the best way to get many of these members to renew – so if over the next three months you would please call or visit these members and have a conversation about renewing, you will make a massive difference.”