

RIPON BRANCH LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

Minutes of AGM, 1st November 2018

Present :-

David Aldous, Tom Cavell-Taylor, Richard Coppack, Simon Crosfield, Andy de Hutiray, Gerry Johnson, Malcolm Lawrenson, Margaret Lawrenson, Karen Mayo, Andrew Murday, Ursula Osman, Penny Riley-Smith, Richard Sadler, Sara Trehwitt, Bill Wade,.

1. *Apologies*

Received from: Sue Ackroyd, Margaret Crosfield, Ruth Grenfell, Simon Grenfell, Susan Hockey, Judith Hooper, Angela Hosie, Nick Simpson, Richard Taylor, Tom Watson.

2. *Minutes of previous meeting*

Accepted

3. *Matters arising*

There were none

4. *Reports from:*

4.1. *Chair*

-Ripon swimming pool development: meetings had been held with the HBC cabinet member for culture, tourism and sport (Stan Lumley) and the council officer involved to press for the inclusion of a learner pool within the development. These pleas had been met with a deaf but contemptuous ear. The Ripon Independent councillors had remained silent. Working together with Lib Dem councillors from Harrogate an amendment had been tabled but was not passed by the council.

-10,000 leaflets had been delivered since the elections in May with the intention for another leaflet drop in Spring 2019.

-Members of the executive will attend and observe both Ripon City and Harrogate Borough council meetings.

-We have held several well-attended meetings through the year. Topics have included funding and organisation of the NHS and 'What it is to be a liberal' led by local member and Lib Dem leader in the House of lords, Dick Newby, and briefings on the workings of local councils by Helen Flynn and on Lib Dem economic policy by Dick Newby.

-The parliamentary constituency (Skipton and Ripon) is the second largest in the country and presents a number of unique issues apart from the geography. The east lies within Harrogate Borough Council and the west within Craven District Council. The journey time from one east to west takes approximately 2 hours by car. The Ripon branch had been in decline until EU membership became a prominent issue, prior to which the Skipton branch had been the more active partner in the constituency.

-In general comments Gerry made the point that liberalism is not just about Brexit, the NHS or any other particular policy issue. Rather it centres on a set of values which inform policy decisions. Some of this together with the historical context is laid out in a series of essays by Mark Pack. These can be accessed on his website

(www.markpack.org.uk, then click on Lib Dem digital tools and services and go down to: Do you want to learn more about the Lib Dems? Welcome to my 14-part weekly series on Lib Dem philosophy.

- Andrew Murday took over as acting secretary from Angel Hosie after the May elections and Tom Cavell-Taylor took over from Sara Trehwitt as membership secretary.

4.2. *Treasurer*

Bill Wade presented the branch accounts. He reported an excess of income over expenditure of £568.53p. The current balance is £963.90. Bill stated his intention to step down from the post of treasurer after a further year.

4.3. *Membership Secretary*

Tom Cavell-Taylor reported that branch membership had increased from 85 to 102 in the year up to the end of July 2018 and the current membership in the whole constituency was currently 228. It is planned to visit all those who had expressed support for the Lib Dems during the May campaign in the next few months in a recruitment drive. There is a particular need to recruit younger members if possible.

5. *Motions to AGM*

North Yorkshire for Europe

-Richard Sadler (Organiser of North Yorkshire for Europe) spoke about the campaign, in which many members have already been involved, to reverse the process of leaving the European Union. Since April they have visited 10 towns in North Yorkshire and over the course of the campaign support for a Peoples Vote has increased from 20% to 51%. Richard stated that the next 6 weeks is a crucial time for supporters to be contacting their MP, at the end of which it is likely that Mrs May will be presenting her deal to Parliament. He is organising letter writing workshops and encouraged those present to support the campaign as fully as possible. He reminded the meeting that there is People's Vote march in York on the 10th November.

6. *Election of Officers.*

6.1 *Chair*

Gerry Johnson, nominated by Sara Trehwitt, seconded by Simon Crosfield

6.2 *Vice-chair*

Left vacant

6.3 *Secretary*

Andrew Murday, nominated by Gerry Johnson, seconded by Karen Mayo

6.4 *Treasurer*

Bill Wade, nominated by Simon Crosfield, seconded by Ursula Osman
Richard Coppack has agreed to shadow Bill this year and to be put forward as successor next year.

6.5 *Membership Secretary*

Tom Cavell-Taylor, nominated by Gerry Johnson, seconded by David Aldous

6.6 *Communications Officer*

Left vacant

6.7 *Executive Committee*

Angela Hosie, Simon Crosfield, Karen Mayo, Richard Coppack, David Aldous, Judith Hooper, and Andy de Hutiray have all agreed to remain on or join the executive committee.

7. *Lessons from the May elections.*

Gerry reported on the May council elections when Lib Dem candidates had stood in the 4 Ripon wards and 5 rural wards for Harrogate Borough Council (HBC) and the 4 wards for Ripon City Council (RCC). The share of vote had been about 20% in all wards except Nidd Valley, where Tom Watson was elected, and in Pateley Bridge and Nidderdale Moors ward where we won 32% of the vote. Campaigning was concentrated in Ripon although the vote in rural districts was no less for the lack of campaigning. This suggests that the Conservatives are more vulnerable in the rural wards.

He suggested the following strategy:

- we will need to consider carefully where to focus our efforts
- this will depend on how many members we have and how many are prepared to stand
- in Ripon wards we need to have candidates for the RCC if we hope to get candidates elected to HBC since Ripon residents see the PPC as important
- we might consider focussing on the villages where we got a good vote with much less effort than Ripon

The importance of collecting data on voting intentions was emphasized, using Connect. And to be successful it was agreed that we need more active members to be both candidates and canvassers.

8. *Selection of prospective parliamentary candidate*

The selection of the Prospective Parliamentary Candidate is due to take place at the constituency AGM on 17th November. It became apparent that many present had yet to receive information about the election and Andrew Murday undertook to rectify this.

9. *Branch priorities for 2018/19*

Priorities which were agreed for the next year were: a membership drive, regular meetings each dedicated to particular policy areas.

10. *Topics for political discussion meetings*

Favoured topics included a Brexit update (probably in January which Dick Newby has agreed to lead), Ripon- where from here? (to discuss development plans for the city), the environment and climate change, and a suggestion that we might also arrange social meeting(s).

11. *Any other relevant business*

There were none.

12. *Date of future meetings*

The 2019 AGM will be take place a few weeks prior to the constituency AGM.