

EAST OF ENGLAND LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

2025



**15TH
NOVEMBER
2025**

10AM - 4PM

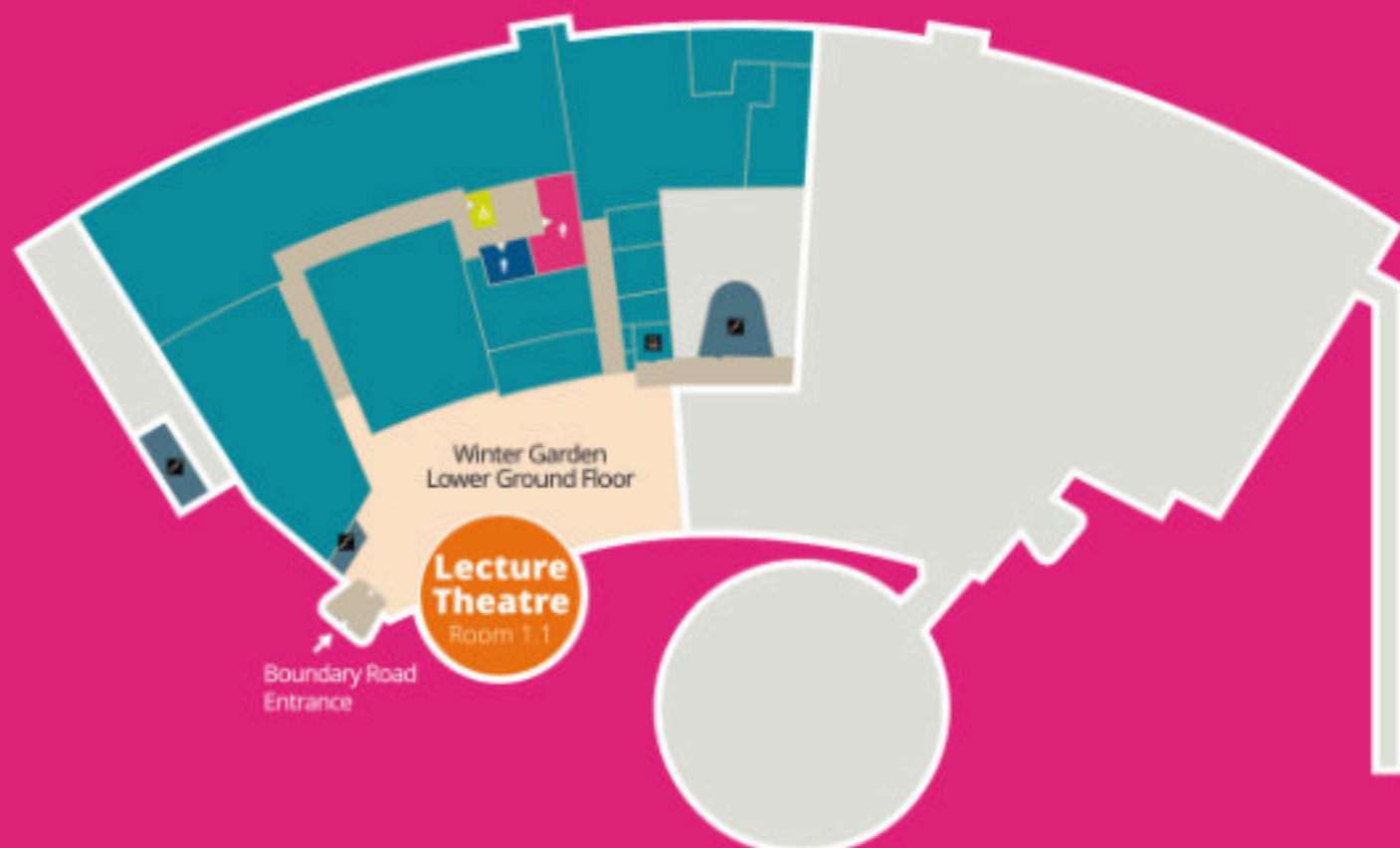
ESSEX BUSINESS SCHOOL

**WIVENHOE PARK,
COLCHESTER, CO4 3SQ**

GROUND FLOOR



LOWER GROUND FLOOR



WELCOME TO THE EAST OF ENGLAND LIBERAL DEMOCRATS CONFERENCE 2025

1	WELCOME TO CONFERENCE	Page 3
2	KEY INFORMATION	Page 5
3	CHAIR'S REPORT	Page 7
4	TREASURER'S REPORT AND ACCOUNTS	Page 9
5	COMMITTEE REPORTS	Page 12
6	PARLIAMENTARY REPORTS	Page 15
7	REPORTS FROM THE COUNTIES	Page 16
8	AGENDA	Page 19
9	REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN	Page 21
10	CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS	Page 25
11	COLCHESTER: BRITAIN'S FIRST CITY	Page 26



**THANK YOU TO TODAY'S SPONSOR FOR HELPING US TO
DELIVER AN AMBITIOUS REGIONAL CONFERENCE**

WELCOME TO CONFERENCE

JACQUI MORLEY

Regional Vice-Chair and
Chair of Conference Committee



It's a real pleasure to welcome you to this year's Regional Conference and AGM – and particularly exciting that we're meeting here in Essex for the first time since 1997, when the conference was also held at the University of Essex.

Our annual conference is always a highlight of the regional calendar: a chance to come together, share ideas, and reflect on the commitment and teamwork that drive our region forward. This year's programme is packed with engaging speakers, lively debates, and interactive fringe sessions that promise to inspire and challenge in equal measure.

We're delighted to be joined by the Young Liberals, and the Policy Committee, who are each running engaging fringe sessions on key issues shaping our party.

You'll also find a great range of training sessions from ALDC, the Compliance Department, and our Campaigns Team, offering practical skills and insights to strengthen your local work.

There will be opportunities throughout the day to consult with committee chairs and compliance staff for tailored advice on local issues, so do take advantage of their expertise. And please don't miss the chance to visit the stalls where you'll find useful resources and representatives on hand to answer questions.

Whether this is your first conference or your fifteenth, I hope you'll take full advantage of everything on offer, connect with friends old and new, and leave feeling inspired for the year ahead.





THE ONLY WAY IS ESSEX!

MARIE GOLDMAN MP

Welcome to Essex!

The Liberal Democrats have made great progress in Essex over the last few years and I'm very excited to celebrate this success with colleagues across the region at this year's Regional Conference.

We are now in the administration of more councils across Essex than the Conservatives - with Lib Dem leaders in Chelmsford, Colchester and Brentwood, as well as being coalition partners in Tendring and Southend-on-Sea. It was this strength in local government that made my win last July possible and I look forward to seeing what else we can achieve in the next few years!

Lib Dem-led councils make a real difference for their communities - whether that's safer high streets through projects run by Chelmsford and Colchester City Councils or cleaner green spaces through the work of our team in Brentwood to tackle fly-tipping. But we can't rest on our laurels!

MP for Chelmsford

Local Government Reorganisation is coming to Essex (and to our friends in Norfolk and Suffolk) quicker than most. It will not be easy but there are opportunities as well.

I encourage you to take part in today's sessions on LGR, as well as the training offer to put you in the best place to make the most of the biggest change to local government in more than 50 years - whether your new councils arrive in 2028 or a little later.

All that is left to say is **thank you for coming** today and I hope you enjoy your time in Essex!

Marie

WHAT I'VE BEEN UP TO AS MP FOR CHELMSFORD

- * Since becoming MP for Chelmsford, I have focused on issues that matter to families and businesses across Essex.
- * I've been actively fighting for a better future for families of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), raising concerns in Parliament about proposed changes to the SEND system.
- * I'm proud to have been recently appointed spokesperson for Women & Equalities.

- * In addition, I have campaigned for improvements to maternity and children's services at Broomfield Hospital after poor Care Quality Commission ratings. I have pushed for faster publication of inspection reports and a national inquiry into maternity services to ensure urgent reform and accountability.
- * Locally, I hosted a roundtable with small business owners who raised concerns about rising costs and limited access to finance. I'm using this feedback to advocate for stronger national support while encouraging residents to back local businesses.

KEY INFORMATION

ACCESSIBILITY

All spaces in the Business School are accessible for wheelchairs and there is a hearing loop available in each of the rooms in use.

If you need any assistance, please ask the front desk or a member of the Conference team and we would be more than happy to help.

Main Space

There is a ramp down the left side of the main auditorium and space for wheelchairs near the front.

ASSISTANCE ANIMALS

We will be following the Federal Conference Committee's policy on Assistance and Emotional Support animals, which can be found at www.libdems.org.uk/conference/animalspolicy.

Please email contact@eastlibdems.org.uk for any further information.

FIRST AID

Please head to the main desk or speak to a member of the Conference team if you are in need of First Aid or other medical attention during the event.

REFRESHMENTS

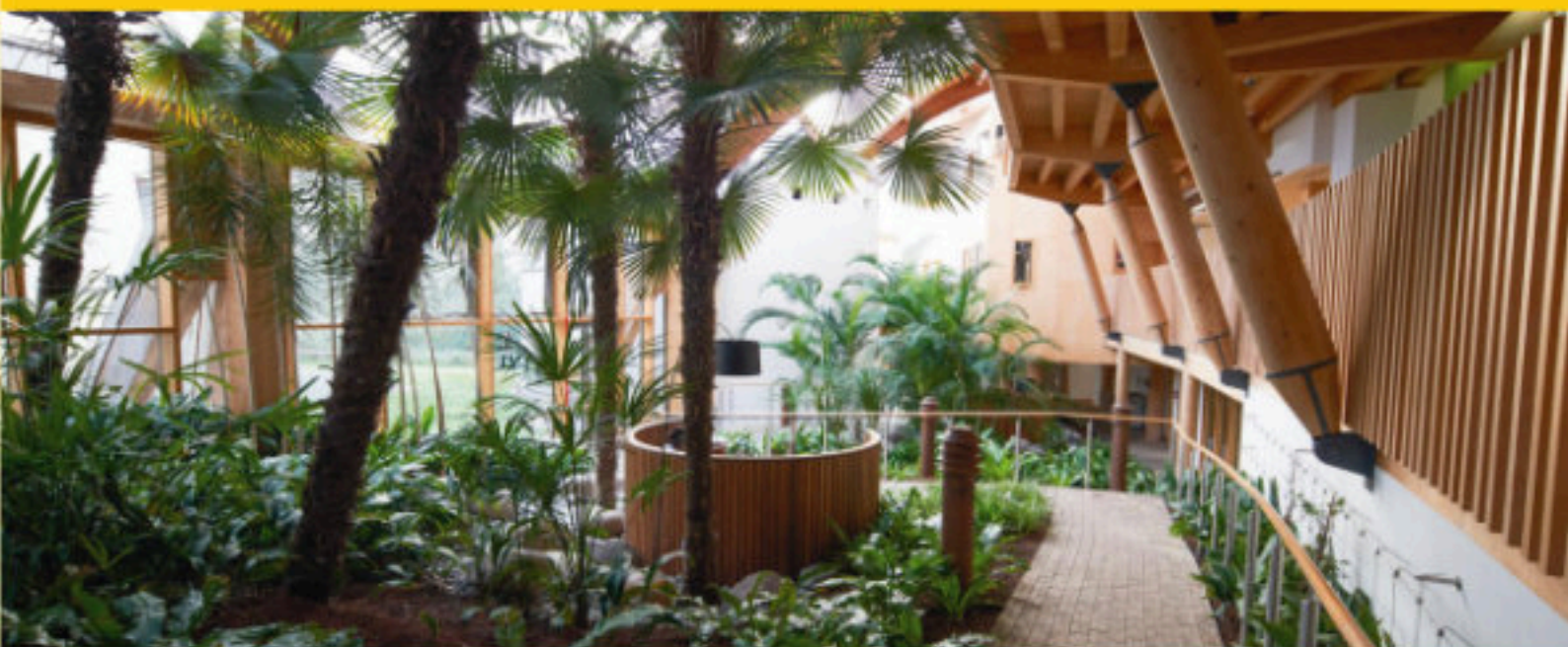
Lunch is provided as part of your ticket price - please advise us of any dietary requirements when purchasing your ticket or email contact@eastlibdems.org.uk.

There will be a refreshment break in the mid-morning with tea, coffee, juice and biscuits. Outside these times, water will be available at a number of points around the venue. Please bring a refillable water bottle if possible to help us reduce energy waste.

DISTRIBUTION OF LITERATURE

Unauthorised distribution of literature is not allowed inside or directly outside the conference venue. Any persons attempting to bring a large number of flyers/literature into the venue may be prohibited from entering and a dilapidation charge will be levied against any organisation or individual responsible for 'fly-posting'.

MORE ABOUT OUR VENUE



Essex Business School

Essex Business School is the UK's first carbon neutral business school! The central garden and living roof acts as a temperature buffer and is an important part of the building's ventilation and heating system. The building also faces south to maximise energy generated by the solar panels on the roof.

The University of Essex

Opening in 1964 as one of the 'Plate Glass' Universities (a group of 7 universities given their charter in the 1960s), it is now a UK Top 25 University, with strong teaching and research credentials and a renowned Department of Government.

The University sits in Wivenhoe Park, a nature park covering 220 acres. The park was painted by John Constable in 1816 and is the only university campus in the UK with a Green Flag award.

INTERNET ACCESS

Free Wi-Fi is available at the venue - just select the EssexGuest network and register with your name and email address. No password is required.

Alternatively, if you are student or member of staff at a university which uses EduRoam, you should connect automatically to the University's internal WiFi.

QUIET ROOM

A number of quiet rooms are available for those needing a quiet space or for prayer, meditation, to express milk or to feed your baby in a more private area.

These can be found on the third floor of the building and are sign-posted at the top of the stairs and lift.

Please be respectful of others using these rooms.

CHAIR'S REPORT

CHRIS WHITE OBE

Regional Chair



The year after a successful general election was always going to be an odd one, but few would have predicted it would be this odd.

Some parts of the region saw local elections in 2025, with Hertfordshire County Council coming under Lib Dem leadership for the first time in history (we were in coalition in the 90s, but that was a while ago!). And in Cambridgeshire we went to outright control. Elsewhere elections were cancelled (or perhaps only postponed?) in order to make way for the reorganisation of local government.

There are new creatures on the horizon in 2026: an Essex Strategic Mayor and a Norfolk-Suffolk Strategic Mayor. Just below the horizon there will be the equivalents for Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire but the precise geography is still unclear.

The Reform UK catastrophe that has hit places like Kent and Northamptonshire has not really impacted this region, except in the odd council by-election. But it is a real threat, especially in areas where we have not been working on the ground.



The solution, as ever, is more door-knocking and regular leaflets. I know there are some who question the latter, partly because people – usually not our supporters – have told them that there are ‘too many’. When local businesses stop delivering their leaflets, we can perhaps think of following suit. But no sign of that!

Although the next General Election is a few years away it is nevertheless time to get selecting. In the new spirit of co-operation between the Party’s campaign function and its candidate approval and selection function, we have now agreed a timetable for which local parties should be selecting and in which year and quarter this should be happening over the next two to three years. It is not set in stone and will be kept under constant review. If you want advice on what you need to do at local level, please get in touch.

The Regional Executive has also produced a development plan for approval at this conference. In simple terms:

- We wish to increase membership numbers and retention
- Make sure there are parliamentary candidates in place for advance and moving forward seats by the end of next year
- Improve Liberal Democrat visibility and diversity.

My thanks to my colleagues on the Regional Executive and its committees. My thanks to all of you who spend your time, sometimes in astonishing quantities, working for the cause. More than ever, it is necessary to have Liberal Democrat councillors, Mayors and MPs. Let’s get back out there and make 2026 a success!

Chris



TREASURER'S REPORT

JOHN SHREEVE

Regional Treasurer



The region's accounts were submitted to the Liberal Democrat compliance department in March 2025 and approved in line with the requirements of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA)

2024 Figures

Income received by the region in 2024 was £70,974.06 compared £65,120.96 an increase of 8.91 %. English Party RDO support grant received amounted to £12000.00

Membership rebate received was £51,856.24 compared with £51,050.96 in 2023 an increase of 1.6%. Donations and funds raised by the region amounted to £2,260.41 as compared to £1,791.68 in 2023.

Regional campaign staff continued to be 50% funded by the Federal Party amounting to a cost of £53,757.41. When all other income and expenditure items are taken into account our net balance increased by £9,292.91, increasing our reserves to £69,332.39 compared to £60,039.48 in 2023.

2025

A support scheme aimed at increasing success in the county elections has been carried out. The plan involved the employment of additional staff until the end of May 2025 with the expectation that the success achieved would generate additional tithe income for the areas concerned. As we now all know the elections were cancelled after the scheme had commenced.



The effect of this support however has been hugely positive as we now prepare for LGR, the Mayoral elections and the possibility of rescheduled county elections.

2026

Our efforts for 2026 will be focused on realising the aspirations set out in the Regional Development Plan. Some small additional allowances for this have been built into the budget for 2026.

Finally, I would like to thank all my treasurer colleagues across the region for their hard work. Can I also ask that local party executives ensure that tithing income is paid and at the rate of 10% for all income received.

This vital source of funding is essential if we are to work more effectively and win elections and the commitment to pay it is normally included in the standard agreements signed by candidates prior to standing. It is therefore unacceptable that post-election it becomes difficult for treasurers to realise that commitment. I appeal then to members of executives to take this issue seriously and work to enforce the agreements signed.

Conference is requested to:

1. Receive the Treasurer's Report and 2024 accounts
2. Approve the 2026 outline budget
3. Appoint an independent examiner

John

Proposed Budget 2026 and year to end of August 2025				
Income	2026	2025 ytd (Aug)	2025 Budget	
Donations and appeals	£2,000.00	£467.44	£2,000.00	
Fundraising	£4,000.00	£308.00	£2,000.00	
Membership Rebate	£50,000.00	£33,333.80	£50,000.00	
C3 Support Project	£0.00	£10,423.00	£3,500.00	
Newsletter	£7,000.00	£3,272.00	£5,000.00	
Regional Conference	£5,000.00	£0.00	£3,000.00	
Miscellaneous	£0.00	£87.50	£1,500.00	
English Party	£12,000.00	£9,000.00	£12,000.00	
	£80,000.00	£56,891.74	£79,000.00	
	Forecast to end of year	£85,337.60		

Expenditure					
Development Committee	£1,500.00		£0.00		£250.00
Policy Committee	£500.00		£0.00		£250.00
Campaigns	£1,500.00		£205.84		£500.00
Fundraising Costs	£500.00		£0.00		£0.00
C3 Supports Project	£0.00		£25,154.17		£28,000.00
Grants to Local Parties	£500.00		£0.00		£2,000.00
Miscellaneous	£500.00		£0.00		£2,000.00
Newsletter Costs	£7,000.00		£3,031.72		£3,000.00
Office Admin	£1,003.80		£669.20		£1,500.00
Regional Conference	£5,000.00		£0.00		£2,000.00
Staff Costs	£50,000.00		£33,333.80		£50,000.00
Bank Charges	£38.25		£25.50		£0.00
	£68,042.05		£62,420.23		£89,500.00
		Forecast to end of year	£93,630.34		
Net Movement	£11,957.95		-£8,292.74		-£10,500.00



COMMITTEE REPORTS

LOCAL PARTIES AND COUNCIL GROUPS COMMITTEE

Chair: Jacqui Morley



The Local Parties and Council Groups Committee helps ensure that every Local Party operates in line with both the English Party Constitution and its own constitution. We review and approve any new or amended Local Party constitutions to make sure they meet Party rules. The Committee also recognises Council Groups under the constitution and, in certain circumstances, helps resolve issues within them.

Much of our work involves reviewing Council Group standing orders to ensure they comply with the constitution, as well as the constitutions and AGM minutes of Local Parties each year. Over the past year, we've provided guidance on councillor group standing orders and supported Local Parties through boundary changes across Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire, as well as providing advice and support to local party Executives.

If you'd like advice or support on any Local Party or Council Group matters, or want to learn more about the Committee's work, please feel free to contact me at Jacqueline.morley4@gmail.com.

CANDIDATES COMMITTEE

Chair: Lori Flawn



As your Regional Candidates Chair, it's my responsibility to work with you to select PPCs across our region. There is a draft timetable for selections which I encourage Local Party executives check so we can get candidates selected in good order.

The RCC will contact you individually to discuss moving it forward. Canvass members at your AGMs and where necessary we'll work together to get candidates approved. Name recognition is crucial, so our candidates need to be given the "air-time" and profile to achieve this.

If we're to achieve our ambitious timetable, we must ramp up our support teams/volunteers too. Every selection needs an (Assistant) Returning Officer, (A)RO, and e-Ballot admin to oversee it. If every Local Party, or constituency recruits an ARO, they would only be asked to support one selection. The maths is simple! Full training will be given and it's all done online these days, including the hustings and the electronic ballot. Please see the Regional newsletter for further information.

CAMPAIGNS COMMITTEE

*Chair: **Stephen Robinson***

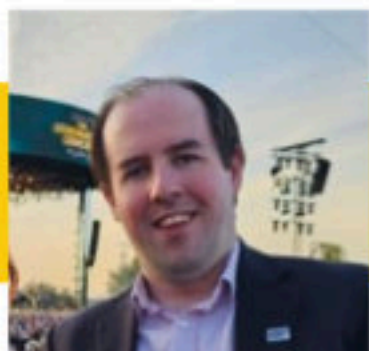


- * A year ago, Campaigns Committee was supporting county election plans and co-opted campaign chairs from each county. We expected to make many gains (after underperforming in 2021 due to the Tory "Covid vaccine bounce"). Then on 5th February, the Government cancelled elections in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex, to prepare for devolution and council reorganisation. As a region, we carried on supporting the other two areas, with Regional Campaigns Manager (RCM) Stephen Lambert in Cambs and RCM Spencer Caminsky in Herts. Of course, we then secured a majority in Cambs and minority control in Herts.

Since then, we've supported by-election campaigns around the region and, as nationally, are establishing ourselves as the alternative to Reform. With Mayoral candidates now chosen in Essex and Norfolk/Suffolk, we are planning how to scale up an appropriate level of campaign, as these are elections where we tend to struggle. We still don't know which council elections we will be fighting in May 2026.

POLICY COMMITTEE

*Chair: **Andy McGowan***



- * This year, our aim has been to get more members from across the region involved in policy. We want you to feel you can get involved in shaping policy, both here in the region but also nationally. So what have we been up to?

Ahead of Spring and Autumn Conference, we ran webinars covering what motions were going to conference and how members could feed thoughts in.

But we haven't stopped at just informing about policy – we've been helping to shape it too, putting together amendments on topics ranging from youth services to support for unpaid carers. Over the coming year we want to provide even more opportunities for you to get involved in policy and that work starts today!

Thank you to everyone who has engaged with our work and do get in touch if you have ideas about what more we can do to bring policy to life – andy.mcgowan@hotmail.co.uk.

MEMBERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Chair: **Mary Regnier-Wilson**



The Membership and Development Committee is determined to support local party officers to communicate with, engage, and most importantly activate their members over these two years. We've re-established the local party newsletter that is posted out on a quarterly basis and more than half our local parties have taken part. Whilst there have been some teething problems in setting this up we now feel we are ready to encourage all local parties to benefit from the ability to easily get a piece of paper through their member's letterboxes with relevant and engaging news about their region, county and local party.

We've also worked to ensure membership data is accurate in our systems and analyse member contact. In the New Year we will be renewing efforts to help ensure every local party is supported to have personal contact with all their members to encourage them to get involved.





PARLIAMENTARY REPORTS

VICTORIA COLLINS

Harpenden and Berkhamsted



Since being elected I've been focused on delivering on my campaign promises to improve our health and social care - focusing on dementia care and mental health provision - stop the sewage in our precious chalk streams and supporting businesses and families through the cost of living crisis.

As Lib Dem Spokesperson for Science, Innovation and Technology I have led the charge in making the online world safer for young people, taking on the social media giants who are profiteering from our children's attention. I have also launched a project called Everyday AI working with industry and civil society to build a trustworthy, innovative approach to AI.

During my first year I had over 300 local meetings and surgery appointments, raised over 500 debates, questions and speeches in Parliament and dealt with over 10,000 pieces of casework for local residents. It was an honour to be named as one of the top 20 most active MPs in Parliament according to PoliMonitor.

STEFF AQUARONE

North Norfolk



My team and I have closed almost 10,000 cases since I was first elected as the MP for North Norfolk. That's 10,000 people whose lives have been made easier with support from my office. From tackling healthcare inequalities, securing dental appointments and calling for more services at our hospitals to making sure that our children get the education they deserve - every fight has been driven by my commitment to put North Norfolk first. Every minute I spend in Westminster is focused on improving the lives of my constituents, and I won't stop until we have a better transport system, cleaner water, more school resources so that teachers don't have to pay for students from their own pockets, better SEND provision and a healthcare system that works.

CHARLOTTE CANE

Ely and East Cambridgeshire



In the past year as the MP for Ely and East Cambridgeshire, I've focused on being a visible, accessible, and effective representative for our communities. I was proud to help open a new SEND unit, giving local children the support they deserve close to home. I've established a Business Roundtable and a network for local publicans, creating spaces for honest discussion about the challenges facing our local economy. I've also held five community meetings across the constituency to listen directly to residents' concerns and ideas. In Parliament, I've spoken up on issues such as NHS waiting times, transport links, and fair funding for our schools, healthcare and roads. It's been a busy and rewarding first year, and I'll continue working tirelessly to make my constituency an even better place to live, work, and thrive.

IAN SOLLUM

St Neots and Mid Cambridgeshire



Over the last 12 months, I've been working hard for St Neots and Mid Cambridgeshire. One of the moments I'm most proud of is helping a resident finally move out of dreadful mouldy conditions after challenging the housing association. These types of interventions aren't grand political gestures, but they matter enormously to people's lives.

Healthcare remains the biggest concern I hear on doorsteps. I've visited GP surgeries across the constituency to understand the pressures they face and made regular representations to the Integrated Care Board. More recently, I have been working with my fellow Cambs Lib Dem MPs on the campaign to protect beds in our brilliant local hospice, delivering a petition of over 15k signatures to Downing Street.

I'm delighted that council seats gained in my constituency helped us take control of Cambridgeshire County Council. I continue supporting campaigns for next year's South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire District Council elections. There's plenty more to do!





REPORTS FROM THE COUNTIES

UPDATES FROM COUNTY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEES

CAMBRIDGESHIRE (C4) *Chair: Cllr Christian Hogg*



Cambridgeshire goes from strength to strength following on from the General Election where we achieved three new MPs out of seven available. This year our hard working teams across the county were able to increase the numbers of County Council councillors at May's elections gaining a majority, from the previous coalition arrangement with Labour and Independents.

Looking to the future we are looking to secure a better deal through the LGR which will see the county being split into unitary authorities. We can't rest on our laurels though with the as yet undetermined threat from Reform previous canvassing data isn't as indicative as it has been and we need more volunteers to step up and help push the Liberal Democrat message across Cambridgeshire.

Anyone interested in helping in whatever form please do contact your local party and get involved, you'd be most welcome.

ESSEX (EC3)

Chair: Cllr Kieron Franks



It's fantastic to welcome you to Colchester and Essex for this year's Regional Conference, particularly to a venue that I know very well as a former student here at the University of Essex!

We are in a better place than ever to succeed in the coming years. EC3 has been hard at work to prepare for county elections - including a series of county conferences and training events. While postponed in 2025, there is still a chance they do happen in 2026 so we need to be prepared!

We have also created a joint approvals process so we can get a head start for the new unitary elections in 2027. We have also selected our candidate for the Greater Essex Mayoralty in May 2026, James Allen - launching his campaign last month in Chelmsford. If you'd like to discuss more about what EC3 is up to and its future plans, do pop me an email at kieronfranksld@gmail.com.

HERTFORDSHIRE (HC3)

Chair: Dr David Davies

- * Hertfordshire County Coordinating Committee (HC3) meets four times a year and attendance is open to chairs and secretaries of local parties and council groups- or their representatives- in the county. Its key tasks include overseeing the selection of candidates and seeking consensus on the formulation of county-wide party policy. This year we have focused on the selection of County Council candidates and the preparation of a County Manifesto for the 2025 Hertfordshire County Council elections. The results of the elections were very positive and resulted in the new Hertfordshire County Council being led by the Liberal Democrats, with HC3's Vice Chair, Steve Jarvis, being elected as Leader of Hertfordshire County Council. As a result of this success, we have been joined by Elin Kingston, who has been appointed as Campaigns Officer for Hertfordshire. She joins Freja Waterhouse, HC3's Organiser, who provides support for the committee on a wide range of issues.

All members of Local Parties in Hertfordshire are welcome to attend our meetings which are held in Council Offices in Stevenage or on Zoom. Do send me an email at davies890@btinternet.com.

NORFOLK (NC3)

Chair: Maurice Leeke

- * This has been a rather frustrating year for NC3. In January we held a successful Norfolk County Conference focused upon producing a manifesto for the 2025 county council elections - only for those elections to be postponed by 12 months.

In addition to contesting a number of by-elections we were able to play a small part in helping our friends across the border to take control of Cambridgeshire County Council in May. Throughout the summer we have been working with our Suffolk colleagues to select a candidate for the 2026 election of a combined Norfolk and Suffolk Mayor.

We, and I suspect the government, have no idea whether the delayed county council elections will go ahead next May, but, again with Suffolk, we have held an ALDC Motivate training day to gear up for them and for unitary council elections in 2027.

SUFFOLK (SC3)

Chair: John Shreeve

- * The last 12 months have obviously been disappointing given the cancellation of county elections that formed a large proportion of the work carried out in the previous months. With candidates selected and preparations under way the damage to morale was considerable when the extreme hard work of the general election is also taken into account in what is a county trying extremely hard to develop itself from a state of near dormancy. However, the future looks much brighter with a sense of unity among us that sees membership development and retention as vital if we are ever to be capable of campaigning to win.

That sense of unity and confidence being demonstrated by Suffolk contributing two out of the five candidates recently competing in the mayoral selection contest. Not forgetting of course that in some parts of Suffolk, the Green Party are seen as an equal challenge to Reform.

AGENDA

Doors open at 9.30am

- 1000 Welcome to Conference** Jacqui Morley Chair, Conference Committee
Marie Goldman MP for Chelmsford
- 1015 Speech** Josh Babarinde MP for Eastbourne
- 1040 Local Government Reorganisation** Cllr Lucy Nethsingha Leader Cambridgeshire CC
What does it mean for people and our party? Justin Griggs National Association of Local Councils
Cllr Liz Leyshan Deputy Leader Somerset (unitary) CC
Cllr Stephen Robinson Leader Chelmsford Council

1120 BREAK

- 1135 Local Government Reorganisation:** 1. Town and parish councils in lecture theatre 2.1
Workshops 2. Setting up a unitary council in lecture theatre 2.34
3. Winning unitary council seats in lecture theatre 1.1
- 1220 Local Government Reorganisation:** Cllr Lucy Nethsingha Cambridgeshire CC
Feedback and summary Justin Griggs National Association of Local Councils
Cllr Stephen Robinson Chelmsford Council
- 1240 Regional Reports** Chris White Chair
See pages 7-11 John Shreeve Treasurer
Graham Whiting Secretary
- 1250 Constitutional Amendments** Mackenzie Gregory (chair)
See page 25

1300 LUNCH – served in the foyer

- 1415 Regional development plan consultation** See pages 21-24 Chris White Chair
- 1435 Parliamentary reports** Andy McGowan (chair)
See pages 15-16 Charlotte Cane MP
Victoria Collins MP
- 1455 Young Liberals Update** Will Tennison Chair, Young Liberals
- 1505 How are we doing?** Richard Cole ALDC
Local by-election analysis
- 1520 Tackling Reform** Sam Oliver Head of Campaigns and Elections

1600 CLOSE OF CONFERENCE



POLICY COMMITTEE CONSULTATION - 3.05PM TO 4PM

The regional policy committee is hosting a brand new session to ask about your policy priorities to guide their upcoming work. Please come and join a consultation session being run by the regional policy committee to discuss all of these topics:

- What are the biggest policy issues coming up on the doorstep, in your areas and in your councils?
- Where should our policy focus be as a region?
- What do you need/want from the regional policy committee and from a national level to support you in your role?

If you just want a chance to meet the regional policy committee or find out more about plans for the coming year - you're more than welcome to attend.

ASK THE EXPERTS

There will be opportunities to drop-in and speak to the Regional Officers, Chairs of Regional Committees, the Regional and Federal Campaigns Staff, LDHQ Compliance, ALDC and Election Workshop.

FRINGES - 1.30PM TO 2.15PM

During lunch, there will be a number of fringes hosted by some of our guests so that you can take the opportunity to discuss elements of their work or learn more about what they do.

Sessions will be hosted by:

- **Young Liberals**
- **Victoria Collins MP**

We ask that you don't take food into these sessions to help keep the venue tidy.

TRAINING

A variety of training is on offer, including:

- The relationship between agent, candidate and campaigns team **with David Allworthy**
- Winning Unitary Council Seats/Fundraising to Win **with Spencer Caminsky**
- Approvals and Selections/Local Party Returning Officers **with Richard Cole**
- Data Protection **with Esther McGee**

Further details, including timeslots, can be found in the Conference Extra.

EXHIBITION

Just off the main foyer, you will find the exhibition where you can take some time to find out more about the work of some of our associated organisations, including the Young Liberals, the SLF, ALDC and more

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2025 - 2027

PURPOSE

The Plan aims to give a clear idea of the Regional Party's current position and sets out guidelines for its committees and staff on where to focus resources until early 2027.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

The Region comprises:

- 38 local parties
- 61 constituencies
- 50 councils, of which 13 are led by Liberal Democrats
- 533 councillors
- Seven MPs

We have approximately 6900 members (as of September 2025).

New strategic mayoral elections are due to take place in all parts of the Region in 2026 and 2027, with elections to new unitaries taking place in the wake of the abolition of district councils.

In many parts of the Region there remains uncertainty in detail about the shape of local and strategic government.



STRENGTHS

- Seven MPs
- Control or leadership of a significant number of councils
- Leadership from officers and committee chairs of the regional party
- High quality staff
- Stable membership
- Legacy of past leadership weaknesses is now behind us
- Proven campaigning ability
- Many parts of the Region are demographically liberal.

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of regional identity, especially since Brexit
- A lack of media take-up
- A largely inactive and ageing membership
- Lack of engagement with members
- We don't appear to have anything to attract people not already committed to the Party
- Lack of key skills in many parts of the region, especially in terms of Affinity
- Lack of effective strategies to combat Reform or the Green Party
- Many local parties are close to derelict
- Training offer does not reach all corners of the region
- Overdependence on councillor tithes
- Some complacency among those in elected office and volunteers, and in certain geographic areas.

OPPORTUNITIES

- The seven MPs can cause the Liberal Democrats to spread into neighbouring areas
- The rise of Reform can galvanise members and even non-members into renewed political activity
- We can gain seats on, and control of, new authorities
- We can deliver significant improvements for people by running councils and having strategic mayors
- New parliamentary seats are clearly available for building up
- Votes at 16 allows us to undertake new forms of reaching out to secondary school age potential voters.

THREATS

- Strategic mayoral elections are something that Liberal Democrat campaigning techniques have yet to crack
- Reduction in tithes as a result of local government reorganisation could weaken local party fund-raising
- We are not the only third party in town
- Risk of losing seats because of local government reorganisation.



WHERE WE AIM TO BE

OBJECTIVES

- a) To increase membership by 10% of 2025 figures by December 2026
- b) To increase member retention to 95%
- c) To ensure strategic co-ordinating committees (previously know as county co-ordinating committees) are refreshed and made relevant to the new electoral landscape
- d) To ensure that each strategic co-ordinating committee, and the Bedfordshire local parties, have a target retention and gain list for 2026 and 2027
- e) To ensure all Advanced and Moving Forward local parties have a candidate by the end of 2026
- f) Improve Liberal Democrat visibility
- g) Improve diversity and participation.

HOW WE GET THERE

1) PARTNERS

- Work closely with the Federal Party and ALDC in all aspects of our work.

2) SEAT DEVELOPMENT

- Build a fund to support by-elections
- Deliver increased support and training via strategic co-ordinating committees and ALDC
- Build staff and leadership support for Moving Forward local parties
- Build staff and leadership support for local parties in council areas where there is a prospect of control
- Ensure that each strategic mayoral seat has an appropriate candidate as well as a campaign structure and plan focussed on winning
- Ensure that returning officers are place for all seats undertaking selections.



3) GENERAL CAMPAIGNING

- Develop tactics for co-ordinating between local parties in order to win strategic mayoral elections
- Encourage strategic co-ordinating committees and large local parties to undertake localised campaign skills training
- Develop tactics for taking on the Green Party and Reform
- Develop a plan for Votes at 16
- Encourage local parties to undertake collaborative rather than own ward canvassing.

4) BUILDING AND DEVELOPING MEMBERSHIP AND LOCAL PARTIES

- Develop (or make available) training for local party officers
- Develop a mentor programme for chairs, treasurers and other officers
- Establish an effective Fund-Raising Committee to support refreshed local fund-raising initiative
- Develop a database of people available to speak at 'pint and politics' or similar events
- To ensure that all local parties contact all their members once a year
- Establish regular communication with members through the quarterly newsletter.

5) INCREASING LIBERAL DEMOCRAT VISIBILITY

- Facilitate party-based media training for council groups
- Work with the Federal Party media officers to improve MP and council coverage in the media, traditional and otherwise.

6) IMPROVING DIVERSITY AND PARTICIPATION

- Encourage Liberal Democrat councils to establish youth councils, helping young people engage in politics early and creating opportunities to recruit new activists
- Support local parties in setting up youth branches, either by involving existing young members or by reaching out to local colleges, where they can showcase what we're doing for young people and highlight youth-focused campaigns
- Encourage all Liberal Democrat council groups and local parties to reach out to diverse communities
- Encourage Liberal Democrat councils to have parental leave policies
- Explore new ways of encouraging and facilitating women to participate in the party.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

The below amendments are intended to make the Region more representative by giving local parties in areas without county coordinating committees (currently Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton) a specific representative on the Regional Executive, as well as increase the size of the Campaigns Committee and Development and Membership Engagement Committees to improve representativeness and make inquorate meetings less likely. The Candidates Committee, Conference Committee and Policy Committee already have up to nine members.

Submitted by the Regional Executive

Proposed: Jacqui Morley

Seconded: Chris White

Insert new section 4.2 (f) after section 4.2 (e) and re-letter subsequent sections:

(f) one representative, nominated by and from local parties in areas not covered by county co-ordinating committees. Where more than one nominee is put forward the Executive shall select one of the nominees to take up the role.

Add new section 8.1 (c)

(c) a representative nominated by and from local parties in areas not covered by county co-ordinating committees. Where more than one nominee is put forward the Regional Executive shall select one of the nominees to take up the role.

In section 9.1 (a) delete "two" and insert "three"

In section 9.1 (b) delete "two" and insert "three"

In section 9.1 (d) delete "two" and insert "three"

In section 10.1 (a) delete "two" and insert "three"

In section 10.1 (b) delete "two" and insert "three"

In section 10.1 (c) delete "two" and insert "three"



Welcome to the Historic City of Colchester

Visit our
website



Hollytrees Museum and Colchester
Visitor Information Centre

Named Britain's first city or 'Colonia' by order of the Roman Emperor Claudius, and before that the capital of the Iron Age Trinovantes Tribe, Colchester's rich history stretches back more than 2000 years.

Today the historic city centre is ripe for exploring, with nationally important heritage from every era and so much more to discover. Visitors will find a lively destination where the ancient merges seamlessly with the modern; offering family friendly visitor attractions, cutting edge contemporary culture, and great places to eat, drink and shop.

Beyond the city's Roman Walls the wider Colchester area boasts some of England's most iconic landscapes; from the Dedham Vale immortalised by Constable to the salt marshes and mud flats of Mersea Island, where

Colchester Native Oysters have been cultivated and consumed since Roman times.

Under an hour from London yet perfectly poised at the gateway to East Anglia, with picturesque villages on its doorstep and only minutes from idyllic coast and countryside, Colchester is the perfect destination for a well-deserved short break, day trip or family holiday in 2025.

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