

Welcome to conference! Our location is the University of Suffolk Waterfront Building, 19 Neptune Quay, Ipswich IP4 1QJ. Travel and parking information is at eastlibdems.org.uk/conference/travel-information-2023

The main doors are off the A1156 opposite Suffolk Archives and off Coprolite Street past the accessible parking.

Reception, main sessions and lunch take place on the ground floor. Training and breakout sessions take place on the 1st floor. This is accessible by stairs and the lift.

You are welcome to use the University guest WiFi. The network name is *SuffolkUni*. No password is required but you must accept the terms and conditions.

Conference standing orders are available at eastlibdems.org.uk/standing-orders and at the registration desk.

To ask a question or take part in a debate please complete a speaker's card available in the main hall or from the registration desk.

0930 Doors open

The registration desk is in the foyer of the Waterfront Building.

1000 Welcome to conference

Victor Scrivens (Chair of Conference Committee)

James Sandbach (Prospective Parliamentary Candidate, Ipswich).

Training (1st floor)

Introduction to Targeted Email

1010 – 1110

Meet the party's new bulk email tool. Learn how to send your emails to member and voters and the tips and tricks you need to run great email marketing campaigns.

Inclusive Council Groups and Communities (ALDC)

1010–1110

Understand how to make your council group inclusive, responsive to local communities and properly representative.

Regional Officers' reports

Lucy Nethsingha (Chair, East of England Liberal Democrats)

John Shreeve (Treasurer, East of England Liberal Democrats)

Lucy Nethsingha will report to members on the activities of the regional party and regional executive. Sally Symington will report on financial affairs. Members will be asked to vote to receive these reports and the 2022 accounts.

Regional Chair's report

2023 has been a very successful year for the Liberal Democrats across the East of England, and I am personally really delighted with the progress we have made in the East of England since I took over as Chair in 2021.

Looking back at the position the party was in in January 2021, it is really encouraging to see just how different the political landscape looks now.

Spring of 2021 was a bleak period in many ways, with the pandemic still running rampant and the country apparently willing to give Boris Johnson and the Conservatives the benefit of the doubt over their handling of both the pandemic and Brexit. Those days seem oddly far away this autumn, and it is an interesting indication of the speed with which political fortunes rise and fall in this age of 24 hour media.

The extraordinary chaos the Conservative party unleashed on the country between the revelations of party-gate in winter 2021/2, followed by the utter chaos of the Truss premiership, have left us with an electorate deeply suspicious of politicians in general, but also very keen to support those who can offer an alternative to Conservatives right across the East of England.

The Lib Dems in the East of England found ourselves well placed to respond to this changed political picture. The decision last autumn to take on four interns to increase our campaign capacity meant we were able to support more candidates and local parties in the local elections this May than ever before. They, along with our permanent staff, have made a significant contribution to an extraordinary level of success in the elections this year. Some particular highlights were:

- Lib Dems gained overall control of **Dacorum Council** from the Conservatives. Part of this council area lies in the new Harpenden and Berkhamsted parliamentary seat.



- Lib Dems maintained overall control of **Chelmsford, North Norfolk, St Albans, Three Rivers** and **Watford** councils.
- Lib Dem gains tipped the following Conservative councils into No Overall Control with the Lib Dems as the largest non-Conservative group: **Brentwood, Broadland** and **Welwyn Hatfield**.
- These councils also moved from Conservative control to NOC following Lib Dem gains: **Central Bedfordshire** (2nd largest non-Con group), **East Hertfordshire** (2nd largest non-Con group), **East Suffolk** (3rd largest non-Con group), **Hertsmere** (2nd largest non-Con group), **Kings Lynn & West Norfolk** and **West Suffolk**.
- **Maldon** (following an earlier by-election victory), **Breckland** and **West Suffolk** all saw at least one Lib Dem councillor elected after previously having no Lib Dem representation.

We are now in overall control of seven councils across the East of England and are involved in administrations running another fifteen more, meaning Lib Dems are in administration in 22 out of 50 councils across our region.

The one enormous sadness from the elections in May was the loss of Dave Hodgson, Mayor of Bedford, who missed out by only 145 votes. Dave has been a fantastically successful Mayor of Bedford since 2009, and to lose by such a narrow margin, entirely as a result of the Conservative policy of removing the AV voting system was very bitter. Thank you Dave both for your incredible work as a successful Lib Dem Mayor over so many years, and at such a difficult time politically, and also for your long support for the East of England Region.

Looking forward the party is now preparing for Police and Crime Commissioner elections, which will certainly be held in May 2024, and to a General Election which is likely to be held sometime in 2024, although the latest possible date is January 2025. (I think we are all hoping Rishi Sunak will not hang on until the last possible moment and force a Christmas election campaign on the whole country.) We will then also have County Council elections across much of the Region in 2025.

It is important to make sure that each of these elections is used as an opportunity to build on our recent success, and that we keep the sense of growth and momentum we have gained over the past two years.

The Police and Crime Commissioner elections are always a challenge for Lib Dems, but they also offer an opportunity for strong campaigning in areas where we would hope to do well in the General Election, and perhaps equally importantly in the County elections in 2025. Voters are often creatures of habit, and getting the message out that Lib Dems are strong and active across



the East of England, working hard to deliver better services, and restore trust in politicians is something we can all do, whatever the strength of our local party.

If you are actively involved in campaigning, thank you, and if you haven't yet signed up with Minivan for canvassing, do please give it a go. Voters are delighted to talk to local representatives at the moment, and keen to hear that there are people active in their local area offering an alternative. Travelling to a target seat (for a Westminster constituency) can be a really good way of getting involved and learning about how campaigns are run, so please do try to visit your nearest target seat if you can, along with thinking about what targets there are in your local area. We always need more people to stand for councils too, so do speak to someone here at conference if you are interested. The ALDC stand will be able to tell you all about what is involved and how you can run a good campaign even in an area where there has been little activity for a while.

Finally thank you SO much to everyone who has helped to contribute to our success this year, in particular to our amazing regional staff, and all on the Regional Exec, who support them and me, and help to make being on the Regional Exec a real pleasure, thank you all!!

Treasurer's report

The 2022 Statement of Accounts was signed and submitted to the Liberal Democrat Compliance Department in March 2023 as required by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA).

2022 FIGURES

The income received by the region in 2022 was £70,387.99, compared with £100,136 in 2021. The drop reflects the absence of loans to county coordinating groups in 2022 to finance deposits.

The membership rebate fell by 6% to £50,247.32 due to the ongoing, but slowly reducing decline in the number of party members. Donations fell sharply, decreasing by over a half to £2,609. Income from the recovery of newsletter costs from local parties increased considerably to £12,700. Staff costs continue to be 50% funded by the Liberal Democrat Federal Party. At the end of 2022 an intern scheme was introduced to support campaigning for the local elections in May 2023 which is being financed out of reserves.

Expenditure decreased significantly in 2022 to £60,694.09. Loans to county coordinating groups fell out of the comparable figures for 2021. Staff costs funded through the arrangement agreed with the federal party amounted to



£35,424, in addition to our own staff costs of £9,611. Grants for campaign costs amounting to £4,000 were made to local parties and due to the timing of invoices, the regional newsletter receipts were considerably in excess of the expenses. This resulted in a surplus for the year of £9,694 compared with a deficit of £10,992 in 2021.

The surplus for the year increased reserves from £76,487 to £86,181.

Income and expenditure account

	2022	2021
Income	£	£
Membership	50,247	53,427
Donations	2,609	5,956
Fundraising income	–	125
Transfers in	4,200	34,350
Miscellaneous	13,332	6,279
	70,388	100,136
Expenditure	£	£
Office costs	1,681	1,153
Staff costs	9,611	17,759
Transfers out	39,424	73,418
Campaigning	374	267
Fundraising	–	–
Financing	47	42
Miscellaneous	9,557	18,488
	60,694	111,128
(Deficit) / Surplus	9,694	(10,992)

Balance sheet

	2022	2021
Fixed assets	£	£
		–
Current assets		
Cash in hand and at bank	86,181	76,487
Total assets	86,181	76,487
Liabilities	£	£
Creditors and accruals	–	–
	–	–
Total (net) assets	86,181	76,487
Reserves		
Accumulated fund at the start of the year	76,487	87,479
(Deficit) / Surplus	9,694	(10,992)
Accumulated fund at the end of the year	86,181	76,487
Total reserves	86,181	76,487

The screenshot displays the Campaign Hub interface with the Liberal Democrats logo and several training modules available for viewing, including 'Getting Your Message Right', 'Digital In Depth: Email Journeys', and 'Digital In Depth: Facebook Advertisements'.

Sign up to the Campaign Hub Today!

Sign up at: [LibDems.org.uk/access](https://libdems.org.uk/access)

Are you signed up to the Campaign Hub?

- Literature templates and examples of good practice
- Digital advice and resources
- Brush up your skills or learn about something new by watching the recorded training

Sign up at libdems.org.uk/ access. You need to be logged into google via the email you provided to access the Hub!



Outline budget

	2023 budget	2023 YTD	2023 budget
Income	£	£	£
Donations and appeals	4,000	1,616	2,000
Fundraising	500	-	500
Membership rebate	37,000	36,976	40,000
Newsletter income	10,000	5,712	5,000
Regional conference	2,000	0	2,000
Miscellaneous	-	850	-
English party staff allowance	8,100	-	-
Interest	-	231	250
	61,600	45,385	49,750
Expenditure		£	
Development and policy	500	-	2,000
Campaigning	500	554	1,000
Fundraising costs	-	-	-
Grants to local parties	10,000	-	-
Miscellaneous	-	10,093	-
Newsletter costs	10,000	666	5,000
Office and admin	1,200	206	1,500
Regional conference	2,000	-	2,000
Staff costs	32,775	51,704	40,000
Federal party staff cost sharing	40,000	11,267	
Training costs	-	-	1,000
Contingency / loans to local parties	-	-	-
Financing costs	-	-	50
	96,975	74,490	52,550
Surplus / (Deficit)	(35,375)	(29,105)	(2,800)

2023

The focus for 2023 has been to ensure that staff are funded from recurring revenues and that the reserves have been invested in recruiting and training interns to support the campaign and development staff.

2024 BUDGET

The 2024 budget sees continued investment in staff to support key areas and development in the region ahead of the general election expected later in the year. The region is also looking to fund the deposits for the Police (Fire) and Crime Commissioner elections for the County Coordinating Groups where required.

FINALLY

Thank you to the many volunteer treasurers in local parties and branches. The Electoral Commission reporting requirements are onerous and a big debt of gratitude goes to those who facilitate the smooth running of the finances and ensure the essential compliance requirements are met.

Conference is requested to

1. Receive the Treasurer's Report and 2022 accounts.
2. Approve the 2024 outline budget.
3. Appoint an Independent Examiner.



1030 Parliamentary Reports

Chair: Lucy Nethsingha (Chair, East of England Liberal Democrats)

Daisy Cooper MP
Don Foster

Daisy Cooper is MP for St Albans, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats and Spokesperson on Health and Social Care. She was elected to Parliament in 2019.

Don Foster (Lord Foster of Bath) is President of the East of England Liberal Democrats and served as MP for Bath from 1992 until 2015. He joined the House of Lords in October 2015 and lives in Suffolk.

Questions may be submitted in advance to conference@eastlibdems.org.uk or use the speaker / question cards provided

1100 BREAK

1115 General Election Briefing

The Campaigns Team will brief members on planning for the General Election expected in 2024 (and by January 2025 at the latest).

This is a confidential session

Training (1st floor)

1120-1150

ALDC Artworker

Try out ALDC Artworker – a great free tool to help Lib Dem campaigners create leaflets and direct mail online



1200 Motion: Economic development and diversity

Chair: Peter Chivall (Member, Conference Committee)

Proposer: James Sandbach (Chair, East of England Policy Committee)

Seconder: tbc

Conference notes that whilst the East of England is a highly successful region, with over 3.3 million jobs, above average employment and educational achievement and health, and is at the forefront of innovation and research in key sectors (e.g. tech, finance, pharmaceuticals, green energy) there is sustained regional inequality.

We are a region of contrasts with significant deprivation, often within coastal and rural communities and rising poverty levels within major towns (e.g. Luton, Peterborough) alongside some of the UK's most successful places and 'economic corridors'. The challenges of an ageing population, housing affordability, rural isolation, access to skills, transport, digital connectivity, and infrastructure needs are not being met and the Government's failed levelling-up agenda does nothing to address intra-regional inequality.

Conference also notes the particular challenges of coastal communities; 2021 Census data shows that of the ten local authority areas in the region with the lowest growth rates, seven are in the coastal strip from Kings Lynn to Southend. At the same time this concentrated 'hot spot' success has led to problems of housing and services provision, congestion and pressure on infrastructure.

Conference therefore adopts the following priorities for the future of our region to take the opportunities and spread them across the region by:

1. Improving East-West rail and public transport infrastructure.
2. Inter authority co-ordination of planning to ensure the spread of success.
3. Coastal regeneration through closer business contacts fostered by local authorities with the economic dynamism shown in the Cambridge and Norwich Science park areas.
4. Creating an A14 / A11 enterprise corridor,
5. Creation of twinned enterprise zones around the region.
6. A regional devolution settlement to provide greater equity in distribution of resources.
7. Better integration of housing, planning, highways and economic development and skills hubs at local government level.



8. Opening up our sea links with mainland Europe.
9. Develop our Town Centres as hubs for sustainable business and skills.

AMENDMENT 1

Proposer: Nathan Hunt (Huntingdonshire)

Add new point 10:

10. Encouraging the development of new electricity infrastructure and upgrades to existing electricity infrastructure – both onshore and offshore – to allow the East to become the green energy capital of the UK.

	Training Ground floor	Training 1 st floor	Training 1 st floor
1200 – 1300	<p>Create a winning plan for the General Election</p> <p>Campaign planning is more than just which leaflets you deliver. Learn how best to plan your GE Election.</p> <p><i>With Stephen Lambert, East of England Campaigns Manager</i></p>	<p>Technology Surgery</p> <p>Troubleshoot your Connect, Eventcube, Fleet, Targeted Email or other technology issues with the party's tech team</p> <p>DROP IN SESSION</p>	<p>Effective Council Groups</p> <p>How to make your council group effective, sustainable and successful.</p> <p><i>With Richard Cole, ALDC Development Officer</i></p>

1230 Hope in Politics

A presentation by Young Liberals

www.youngliberals.uk

1300 LUNCH BREAK

Lunch will be served in the foyer on the ground floor



1345 Farming and the rural economy

Stuart Roberts

Much of the East of England is rural in character yet the Conservatives have taken rural areas for granted for too long. The session will address the key issues facing rural areas and the Liberal Democrat response.

Stuart Roberts is Chair of the Liberal Democrats Food and Farming Working Group – read the policy at www.libdems.org.uk/conference/motions/autumn-2023/f28. He is a former Deputy President of the National Farmers Union and farms cereal, beef and sheep in Hertfordshire.

Training Ground floor	Training 1 st floor	Training 1 st floor
<p>Building a more diverse party 1345 – 1415</p> <p>The Liberal Democrat diversity strategy, how to start and where resources are available. For diversity officers, local party chairs and everyone interested in the topic.</p> <p><i>With Trudy Church, Chief Operating Officer, Liberal Democrats</i></p>	<p>Introduction to Fleet 1345 – 1500</p> <p>We've got a brand new website tool that makes it easy to run great online campaigns, raise money and win elections. Join us to find out how it works.</p> <p><i>With Alisha Lewis, Liberal Democrat Technology Trainer</i></p>	<p>Keeping your council seat 1345 – 1500</p> <p>So you've won! Brilliant! Now learn how to keep your seat and grow your team. A must for all councillors, especially those elected for the first time.</p> <p><i>With Richard Cole, ALDC Development Officer</i></p>

1415 Housing in the East

Cllr Stephen Robinson (Leader, Chelmsford City Council)
Cllr David Beavan (Deputy Leader, East Suffolk District Council)

Housing is one of the most contested areas in current public policy as the divisions in the Conservative party, Labour party announcements, and the recent housing debate at Lib Dem conference show.

Cllr Stephen Robinson and Cllr David Beavan will lead a discussion on the Liberal Democrat approach, addressing issues including the difference a Lib Dem

council can make, the impact of government policy and the way forward. You can read the policy adopted by Lib Dem conference at www.libdems.org.uk/conference/motions/autumn-2023/f31.

1445 Our climate

Cllr Pippa Heylings (Parliamentary candidate, South Cambridgeshire)

Pippa Heyling will speak and lead a discussion on the climate crisis.

Pippa is Chair of the Climate Change and Environment Advisory Committee at Lib Dem-controlled South Cambridgeshire Council. She has a wide range of experience in the climate and environmental field including leading the green transformation at South Cambridgeshire Council and representing local government at the UN climate talks. As a business owner, she has worked with communities and governments around the world on environmental challenges.

1515 Ed Davey MP

Leader of the Liberal Democrats

Ed was first elected to Parliament by the people of Kingston and Surbiton in 1997. One of his proudest moments came in 2003, when he moved the clause that repealed Section 28, a Conservative law that banned schools from teaching about same-sex relationships.

As Energy Secretary in government, Ed helped to quadruple the UK's renewable power and make it the world-leader in offshore wind – creating good jobs across the country, tackling climate change and bringing down people's energy bills.

Ed was the first to call for a public inquiry into the Covid pandemic, the first to demand a windfall tax on the record profits of the oil and gas giants, and the first to propose a freeze in energy bills in the summer of 2022. He has led the party to four historic by-election victories over the Conservatives in Chesham & Amersham, North Shropshire, Tiverton & Honiton and Somerton & Frome.

Ed has been a carer for most of his life: first for his mum, who died of cancer when he was a teenager; then for his Nana in her final years; and now he and his wife Emily care for their severely disabled son John.

When he became Leader, Ed vowed to be the voice of carers. He draws on his long experience of caring to stand up for other family carers and fight for investment in the NHS and social care.



CONFERENCE AT A GLANCE

Main hall

1000 Welcome to Conference

Regional officers' reports

Chair Lucy Nethsingha
Treasurer Sally Symington (2022)

1030 Parliamentary Reports

Daisy Cooper MP
Don Foster

TRAINING (1st floor)

1010–1110	1010–1110
Introduction to Targeted Email	Inclusive council groups and communities

1100 BREAK

1115 General Election presentation

1200 Policy motion: Economic Development & Diversity

1230 Hope in Politics

1300 LUNCH (45 minutes)

1345 Farming and the rural economy

1415 Housing in the East

1445 Our Climate

1515 Guest speaker: Ed Davey MP

1600 CLOSE OF CONFERENCE

1630

Post-conference drinks and canapes

Hosted by Ipswich Lib Dems and their PCC James Sandbach
£5 entry on the door or [pay in advance online](#)

TRAINING (Ground floor)

1200–1300	1200–1300	1120–1150 ALDC Artworker
Create a Winning Plan for the General Election	Technology surgery DROP IN	1200–1300 Effective Council Groups

TRAINING (1st floor)

TRAINING (Ground floor)

1345–1415	1345–1500	1345–1500
Building a more diverse party	Introduction to Fleet	Keeping your council seat

TRAINING (1st floor)