Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
held on Thursday 13th November 2025
at the Orpington Club

Apologies for Absence
Mike Jones, Tina Futcher-Smith, Lesley Furniss, Claudio Gambarotta, Will Connolly, Matt ?, Joe Watchorn, Allan Tweddle, Sam Webber, Katherine Bollon, Gerda & John Loosmore

Attendees from Exec
Michael Chuter, Martin Cooper, Ian Catchpole,, Julie Ireland, Sandy Stern, Graeme Casey, Steven Jefferies, Andy Coleman, Stephen Gosling, Rick Das.

Members (who signed the register) Michael Hall, Taylor Matthews, Andrew Stotesbury, Louella Mohamed, Alan Carter, Chloe-Jane Ross, Peter Furniss, Gita Bapat,Clive Broadhurst, Martin Palmer. There were a few other members who didn't sign the register.

Minutes of the previous AGM held on 14 November 2024
The minuets were approved by the meeting

Matters arising
There were no matters arising

A**ny other business**
MC explained that as we had a speaker scheduled for 8:00pm we would deal with any other business at the beginning of the meeting. There was no other business.

Chair's report
Michael Chuter

Michael Chuter reminded us that 2024 had been nationally a remarkable year with the highest number of MPs in over 100 years, though the results had been disappointing locally, because we had focussed our efforts in neighbouring constituencies where the party stood more chance of success. He said it was clear that the electorate were becoming increasingly tactical in their voting and that meant we had to be even more ruthless in our targeting strategies going forward..

The May by-election in Bromley Common had been called at very short notice, indecently short to MC's mind, by which the Tories hoped to get ahead of the opposition,. The speed with which the Tories moved the writ, meant we had to do a rapid candidate approval round, with final candidate selection being carried out by the Executive. MC said this was not our normal procedure and he regrated being forced into it. We were fortunate that we found and an excellent, hardworking candidate, though we were disappointed by the result, which was Reform UK's first election win in London. MC said he was grateful to everyone who had put their names forward and he hoped they would all put their names forward again for the elections in May.

Following that result a review of target wards was carried out and it was decided to retain our current held wards and have a target and a development ward in each of Orpington and Beckenham. A normal selection process had been carried out for these wards and, as there were only 2 approved applicants for the target ward in Orpington and 3 for the target ward in Beckenham, there was no call for a hustings.

MC said we now needed to recruit paper candidates for the forthcoming May elections. MC thanked our councillors, members and the outgoing executive for their work during the year.

Membership secretary
Sandy Stern

The current membership is 394, at risk of leaving 8, compared with 383 in January, with 43 at risk. Nine new members joined following the Bromley Common and Holwood by election. There have been events to thank and engage members: A very useful by election follow up meeting was held, a by election thank you party and Norman Lamb spoke to a well-attended meeting, Lib Dem Pints have also proved popular.

There was a discussion about attracting new members and engaging existing members to be involved in more activities.

Council Group
Chloe-Jane Ross Lib Dem Group leader.

The Liberal Democrat Councillors have continued to support a wide range of community groups across the borough. Members have also been busy serving on council committees and representing residents at meetings.

At Full Council, they have been championing accessibility - winning a motion for support for a Disability Champion for London - supporting Friends Groups, pressing for higher standards in park management, and working for better planning policies that take account of the needs of local people. They have also represented the community in campaigns for the Churchill Theatre and Beckenham Public Hall.

The work of Bromley's Liberal Democrat Group is being recognised more widely. Chloe was invited to speak on a London panel at this year's Conference alongside Sarah Olney MP, the Leader of Richmond Council, the Group Leader from Southwark, and a representative from the London Region.

It was recognised that our five councillors work tirelessly for residents and lead our local campaigning. The meeting ended with a unanimous vote of thanks for their efforts.

Treasurers Report
In Ian Catchpole's absence, the Treasurer's report was presented by Michael Chuter. Ian arrived later in the evening to respond to questions.

The full accounts have been put on the party's web site and provide a comprehensive picture of the part's financial performant during 2024. The accounts had already been approved by the executive, and sent to HQ for inspection prior to forwarding on to the Electoral Commission. They were inspected by Michael Hall.

2024 Accounts
Net Assets Value- total assets were £8,369 at the end of 2023 and rose to 38,960 at the end of 2024. With a surplus of £591.69. (MC commented that this is remarkable achievement as 2024 was a general election year.) There was income of £18,458 and expenditure of £17,866.80.

Particular fund-raising activities in 2024 were a VIP dinner and a party.

This is a report of the 2024 accounts, we are now at the end of 2025 and the party continues to be in a good financial position for the local elections in May..

MC asked the meeting to thank Michael Hall for his review and Ian Catchpole for his diligence.

Campaign Chair

Julie Ireland

The Campaign Committee, have been very active establishing our targets for the May elections, which have been altered, (this is already mentioned in the Chair's report), finding candidates for the new targets, working out campaigning budgets, finding out if our messages work, establishing the manifesto. Learning lessons from the by election, particularly how Reform works. There were discussions following Julie Ireland's report:

It was noted how popular the fortnightly emailed newsletter is, even by non-supporters. There was a discussion about election laws particularly referring to Reform not abiding by them.

There was a unanimous vote of thanks for the Campaigns committee.

Election of the executive

Mike Jones has stood down as secretary after 8 years very efficient service. A unanimous vote of thanks was given to Mike for his service..

Of the positions on the executive only the chair was contested and the other applicant, Andrew Stotesbury, withdrew his application after making a brief statement.

In the absence of a contest, the following we elected to serve for 2026.

Chair Michael Chuter
Vice Chair Martin Cooper
Secretary vacant
Treasurer Ian Catchpole
Membership Development Officer Sand Stern
Elections & Campaigns Officer Julie Ireland
Diversity Champion Deepanshi Gulati
Constituency Reps:
Beckenham and Penge Steven Jefferies
Bromley and Biggin Hill Tina Futcher-Smith
Orpington vacant
Eltham and Chislehurst vacant
Honorary President vacant
Ordinary Member Stephen Gosling
Ordinary Member Matthew Thorp
Youth and student vacant

As there are several important vacancies on the executive Michael Chuter reminded the meeting that the constitution permits the executive to co-opt officers to those vacancies, which is what he hoped to be able to do. He also asked those present to consider putting themselves forward a request he would also be making to those not present.

Appointment of Independent Reviewer of the party's accounts

Once again we are grateful to Michael Hall for taking on this role.

Close of meeting

Michael Chuter thanked members for their attendance, closed the formal part of the meeting, and introduced our guest speaker Rob Blackie.