Chairs Report 2026

After three years as Chair, this is my last year. The last 12 months, in particular, have seen further success for the Liberal Democrats across the country. Unfortunately, this was not reciprocated here in Redbridge. Despite an excellent campaign, the best that Wanstead Village has ever seen, we were unable to achieve the breakthrough that our three candidates deserved. Indeed, the whole of East London remains a very difficult area for the Lib Dems. We need to think through our strategy going forward and to see how we can build on the work that we have done.

Nationally, I believe that there is much more to be positive about. Our large group of MPs are working hard on the issues that are important to the Lib Dems. There are three areas where our consistent policies may eventually bear fruit:

- On PR, we have a Prime Minister who has been on record as supporting a long overdue change to our electoral system
- Andy Burnham has also made clear his wish to see a much closer relationship with the EU. Although I guess he is hamstrung by the red lines in the last Labour manifesto, there are signs that these will disappear when it comes to the next general election. Ed Davey has, quite rightly, asked him to drop those red lines before then but I don't think that will happen.
- Again, Andy Burnham's commitment to a fundamental review of the Care system is to be welcomed. The Lib Dems have played a leading role in not only drawing attention to the failings of the current system but, more importantly, identifying ways of putting things right.

On all three issues, we cannot afford to be complacent and must remain vigilant.

Also, on a national level, there are clear signs that the Reform bubble has burst but, again, we must be vigilant and challenge their evil policies whenever we can.

Internationally, I think we must offer our congratulations to the Democrats in their mid term elections with the hope and expectation that Trump and his acolytes can be held to account compared with the spectacular failure of the Republican controlled Congress.

Even in Israel, there is now some hope that the reign of Netanyahu and his supporters is over with the two arab parties coming together to support the Eisenkott coalition in forming the next Government.

There are a number of issues closer to home which deserve our attention. I will mention just three.

- The saga of Broadmead Road bridge remains unresolved. We have pointed out how the failure of the Labour Council to address the concerns have contributed to the current situation. Whilst we remain hopeful that the Government will fund a substantial cost of replacing the bridge, this is by no means certain.
- Promises regarding Wanstead Youth Centre have come to nothing and I suspect that they won't be revived despite the Government emphasis on improving youth service facilities. The cynical amongst us would suggest that the Council never intended to re-open it.
- Finally, the threat to the future of the Redbridge Musical School and Service remains very real. Colleagues may be aware that the Council has more or less decided to repurpose the current site without finding a suitable location for the School. It, therefore, faces a very uncertain future not least because the Council is not communicating with users. I understand that a very poor, if not totally unsuitable, alternative is being considered. The irony is that the school is working hard to make a success of the biennial trip for school children to the Royal Albert Hall which takes place next March and a month later, it may have to close.

Our President, Felicity Banks, is retiring this year. She has a long and distinguished career in the party. She was elected for the former Roding ward in 1998 and served until 2014. She was Deputy Mayor in 2011-12 and Mayor in 2013-14. She produced the Roding Focus for several years and was a mainstay of the local party. We even had a Roding ward branch in those days.

Nowadays she is kept busy with outings run by the group of former London Mayors and the Woodford Historical society of which she is secretary.

Please share with me our thanks for everything that she has done.

Finally, my thanks to the Executive Committee for their support and hard work over the past three years.

Martin Rosner
November 2026