

TRLD AGM: Wed 26 November 2026

*To be read out by Vice Chair Richard Baker*

I am sorry to be away for this AGM (I am attending the National Adult Social Care Conference in Bournemouth) and not to be able to address you directly at the end of the final year of 2-year term as Chair of the Local Party.

Two issues have dominated the business of the Local Party since the beginning of the year.

First, the Approval and Selection Process for finding 52 Candidates for the Local Elections next year. I am very grateful to all those who contributed to this exhaustive, fair and transparent process, but particularly to those who served on the Approval Panels and to Donncha Hayes, Julia Cambridge and Kieran Mander who served with me on the Approvals Committee to turn Panel recommendations into definitive Approval Decisions. From other 63 applicants, 58 were approved to take part in Ward Selection meetings and I am very pleased that, as of last week, we now have 54 selected candidates, 3 for each of our 18 wards, to go forward for formal nomination as Liberal Democrat Candidates for May 2026. Especial thanks to Geraldine for organising the Selection Process as Returning Officer and, along with Jane Wilson, overseeing the Selection meetings across the borough.

The second is the culmination of over 3 years' of work that has resulted in the successful acquisition of our Office building in Mortlake, shortly to be renamed Adrian Slade House. I would like to thank the generous donors to the brick fund that have made this possible, but above all the tireless and exacting work of Ian Wrigglesworth, Robin Bevan and Laurence Mann in achieving this hugely significant contribution to securing a permanent base for the Local Party for many years ahead.

I am grateful to Donncha Hayes, who stepped in as Chair of the Local Elections Campaign Committee when Robin Brown had to step aside earlier in the year; Robin will continue to advise the Committee along with our HQ Campaign Manager Patrick Gilbert and long-serving Campaign Consultant, Michael Wilson. We recruited two Campaign Organisers during the year and I would like to thank Josh and Ian for all their work in helping get campaigning up to speed in all our wards in recent months Josh will be moving on to Merton Local Party at the end of the month and we have a recruitment process well underway to find his successor to work alongside Ian. So our thanks to Josh as he moves on to help win a fourth Lib Dem-run Council in SW London – if we keep up the good work in Twickenham & Richmond, I am sure many of our activists will be seeing Josh again in Merton.

We had another very successful Annual Dinner earlier in the summer and I would like to pay tribute to all the hard work, energy and enthusiasm our Events Officer, Alice Lankester has put into our Local Party Events for the last two years. You will all have the chance to thank Alice personally at our end of year Christmas Event in Kew on 5 December: there may be some last minute tickets available, so do please see Alice if you have yet to secure yours.

Jane Wilson has continued to collate the Members Newsletters, which has kept the wide membership informed and engaged with our activities, alongside her work as Membership Development Officer.

I would like to thank all the Executive Officers for their work and engagement this past year, but most especially Kieran Mander for organising our CORE Executive/Executive Officer Meetings throughout the year, our full Executive Committee meetings, our mid-year Extraordinary General Meeting and this AGM. Naresh Aggarwal, assisted by Deputy Treasurer Zeynip Aydin, has made sure our finances are in good shape and we are well resourced for what lies ahead: Naresh deserves special thanks for the constancy of his work and the monthly reporting we have to make to the Federal Party.

We will be launching an appeal to all Members to support the Local Election Campaign around the end of the year – we have great ambitions both here and in neighbouring areas in the year ahead and I hope all of us will continue to contribute to this both financially and in hard graft for the Liberal Democrat cause, which couldn't be more crucial at this highly charged time in national and international politics.

You will be voting for a new set of Executive Committee Officers at the end of this AGM and I wish the new Chair and the other Officers, both new and returning, all the best for 2026. I hope to continue on the Executive as Conference Officer, to ensure our Local Party continues to thrive locally and also have a strong presence at Federal Party Conference: we had over 40 Local Party members at the Autumn Conference and I hope to have an equally strong presence at next year's Autumn Conference in Brighton. I hope to see very few of you at Spring Conference in York in March, when we need to be campaigning here in the run-up to the all-up local elections in London in May, and possibly in Surrey too.

Finally my thanks to Vice Chair Richard Baker for reading this address and to him and Julia Cambridge for their advice and support as my Vice-Chairs over the last two years.