



Conference Directory

Saturday, 13 October 2018

at

**The Forest School,
Robin Hood Lane,
Winnersh,
Wokingham
Berkshire RG41 5NE**

Registration opens at 9 am

Conference Venue and Directions

The Forest School, Robin Hood Lane, Winnersh, Wokingham, Berkshire RG41 5NE

The school is located between Reading and Wokingham, close to the A329, and next door to Winnersh Station.

Travelling By Car

From Reading, follow signs to A329 Wokingham. Keep following this road, passing the Showcase cinema roundabout. At the next major crossroads turn left into Robin Hood Lane (B3030). Pass Winnersh Station and the school entrance is second on your left.

From Wokingham, follow signs to A329 Reading. At the major crossroads by Sainsbury's store, turn right into Robin Hood Lane (B3030). Pass Winnersh Station and the school entrance is second on your left.

Travelling By Train

Winnersh Station, on the line between Waterloo and Reading, is next door to the school. On leaving the station, turn left into Robin Hood Lane. The school entrance is second on your left.

Car Parking

There is plenty of parking available at the venue. Stewards will be there to help you. Please follow their instructions.

After entering the school site, either on foot or in a vehicle, turn left at the mini-roundabout, go through the big metal gates, and carry on to the Sixth Form building which is towards the rear of the site.

INFORMATION

VENUE

We are using the whole of the first floor of the Sixth Form building, which consists of a central breakout area with the Main Hall and Training Rooms off it. There is a lift.

REGISTRATION

Registration opens at 9.00 am in the breakout area. Registration on the day will cost £25 or £10 for students / first time attendees / claimants.

BADGES

Please collect your badge and any further papers from the Registration Desk on arrival even if you have pre-registered. You can also pay your registration fee here.

Nobody will be allowed into the Regional Conference without a badge.

STEWARDS

There are stewards to help you at Conference. They can be identified by their tabards and pink badges.

LUNCH

Lunch tickets will be available from the Registration Desk at a cost of £5 per person.

Lunch will be served from the Conference Room between 12.00 and 2.20.

REFRESHMENTS

Tea, coffee and snacks will be available throughout the day in the breakout area.

TRAINING

All Training Sessions will be held in Training Rooms 1 and 2.

FRINGE MEETING

There will be a Fringe for PPCs in the Main Hall at 12.45.

REGIONAL ELECTIONS: There will be a ballot box on the Regional stand in the Exhibition Area for nomination forms for the Regional Elections. Forms will be available from the Stand, or can be downloaded from the Regional website:
<https://southcentrallibdems.org.uk/en/document/nomination-form.pdf>.
Please make sure you submit your form by the deadline of **14.00**.

EXHIBITION

As we go to press, the following organisations have indicated that they will be exhibiting at the Conference:

- Catherine Bearder MEP
- Election Workshop
- Green Liberal Democrats
- LGBT+ Liberal Democrats
- Lib Dem European Group
- Martin Kyrle
- South Central Region
- Young Liberals

WiFi

Wireless internet will be available. Login: GuestWireless, password: !ForestGuest!

SMOKING POLICY

Smoking is not permitted in any part of the school premises or grounds.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

This Conference has been organised by the South Central Region Conference Committee. We would welcome new members. Come and talk to us about what is involved.

Acting Chair: Penny Hopkins

Members: Prue Bray
Stuart Brown
Richard Fagence
Mohsin Khan
Coling Lawley
Beth Rowland

Thanks are due to Wokingham Liberal Democrats, who have provided the volunteers to help make your day enjoyable.

CONFERENCE STANDING ORDERS

1. OBJECT

1.1 These Standing Orders govern the preparation and conduct of the agenda of the Conference of the South Central Region. Subject to any amendment they shall remain in force from meeting to meeting.

1.2 These Standing Orders endure until amended by a two-thirds majority of voting representatives voting at a meeting of the Conference, at which the amendment has been notified to the members at least one week in advance of the meeting.

2. REGIONAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

The arrangements for Regional Conference, and the composition and powers of the Regional Conference Committee, are set out in Article 2 of the South Central Constitution.

3. QUORUM

If there are fewer than 25 voting representatives present at any time, any one voting representative may demand, and procure, that discussion of a topic be deferred.

4. RULES OF DEBATE AND CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

4.1 The conference committee shall specify the deadlines for the receipt of motions and amendments. All dates specified shall be notified to conference representatives and those entitled to submit motions. The conference committee has discretion to accept motions or amendments after the announced deadline if in their opinion developments of importance have taken place after the closing date. The selection of motions and amendments for debate is at the discretion of the conference committee.

4.2 No motion or amendment shall be discussed unless it has been proposed and formally seconded.

4.3 Representatives shall direct their speeches to the question under discussion or to a point of order or to a personal explanation.

4.4 Subject to the right of amendment of the Conference Committee in the case of any specific item of business, the discussion of all motions shall normally comprise:

4.4.1 Speech of mover of main motion and any alternative under 4.5 below, five minutes at most.

4.4.2 Speeches of movers of any amendment: three minutes at most.

4.4.3 Speeches from the floor: three minutes at most.

4.4.3 Rights of reply as provided by S04.7: three minutes at most.

4.5 The Conference Committee may:

4.5.1 Recognise an amendment as an alternative option and allow its proposer the same time as the speech of the proposer of the motion.

4.5.2 Take two or more motions covering the same or associated subject matter to be debated simultaneously (along with any amendments to such motions); such debate shall conclude with a vote on each motion and amendment in turn, or between motions, or amendments or parts of motions or amendments, as appropriate.

4.6 Each motion will be moved and any amendment will then be moved, debated and voted upon in the order in which they affect the wording of the motion, except that the Session Chair may vary the order of debate to improve discussion where the nature or complexity of the motion make this desirable. Subject to S04.5 above, all amendments shall be decided before substantive debate on any motion.

4.7 No member shall speak more than once on any motion or amendment or in any simultaneous debate under S04.5 above except:

4.7.1 To exercise any right of reply given by these Standing Orders;

4.7.2 By way of explanation;

4.7.3 To move any procedural motion;

4.7.4 On different aspects of a Report which is discussed in parts;

4.8 The Session Chair may allow any person who is not a Representative to the Conference to speak in any debate.

4.9 Speakers will be selected by the Session Chair from those members who indicate their wish to speak. In choosing speakers, the Session Chair shall attempt to provide a balanced debate between different viewpoints within the conference. The Session Chair shall also have regard, in choosing speakers, to the number of times a particular person has already been called to speak during the meeting of Conference.

4.10 A motion or amendment once moved and seconded may only be withdrawn with the consent of Conference, which shall be signified by a show of voting cards without discussion.

5. PROCEDURAL POINTS

5.1 Subject to SO 8.4, a person may rise to a point of personal explanation, but a personal explanation shall be confined to some material part of a former speech by that person at the same meeting which may have been misunderstood. A person so rising shall be entitled to be heard forthwith.

5.2 The ruling of the Session Chair on a point of order or the admissibility of a personal explanation shall not be open to discussion and shall only be open to challenge on a two thirds majority of those present and voting.

5.3 When a motion is under debate only the following procedural motions shall be allowed:

5.3.1 That the Session Chair's ruling be set aside;

5.3.2 To adjourn the debate in motion;

5.3.3 That the question be not put;

5.3.4 That the question be now put;

5.3.5 That a separate vote be taken

5.3.6 That the motion be referred back to the mover.

Any such procedural motion, when moved and formally seconded, shall immediately become the motion under discussion unless deferred under S05.6. When any such procedural motion is moved and where the Session Chair has not deferred debate under SO 5.6, only a higher procedural motion on the list above may then be moved before such procedural motion is decided.

5.4 Procedural motions 5.3.2 to 5.3.4 may only be moved without comment by a voting representative at the end of another person's speech.

5.5 The mover of any procedural motion under SO 5.3.1, SO 5.3.5 or SO 5.3.6 may make a brief speech of up to two minutes; and the Session Chair in case SO 5.3.1 and the mover of the motion in case SO 5.3.5 or SO5.3.6 shall have a brief right of reply of up to two minutes.

5.6 Motions SO5.3.4 and SO 5.3.6 above shall not be accepted unless the Session Chair believes that there has been adequate discussion of the matter under consideration. If a motion in case SO 5.3.4 is carried the movers shall have a right of reply before their motion is voted on.

5.7 Procedural motions require a two-thirds majority of those voting to be passed, except for 5.3.5 for a separate vote and 5.3.6 to refer the motion back, which shall require a simple majority to pass.

5.8 No procedural motion shall be moved during a vote.

6. RIGHT OF REPLY

6.1 The proposer of a motion shall have a right of reply at the close of the debate upon such motion, immediately before it is put to the vote.

6.2 If any amendment is proposed, the proposer of the motion shall be entitled to reply at the end of the debate upon the amendment.

6.3 The mover of any amendment shall have the right of reply immediately before the proposer of the substantive motion.

6.4 The right of reply may be delegated by the proposer concerned.

6.5 A representative exercising a right to reply shall not introduce new matter to the debate.

7. ACCEPTANCE OF AMENDMENT

The proposer or seconder of a motion may, with the consent of Conference, signified without discussion, accept a drafting amendment to the motion which has been proposed and may also accept any duly tabled amendment.

8. VOTING

8.1 On being appointed each representative shall be issued with a voting card. Such voting cards shall not be transferable.

8.2 Names of substitutes for any representative shall be notified to the Regional Conference Committee. Following valid receipt of such notification, each substitute shall be issued with a voting card and become a representative for the meeting in question, replacing the representative so substituted.

8.3 All votes shall be taken by a show of voting cards. The voting shall be counted by tellers at the request of the Session Chair or 15 members upstanding.

8.4 No point of personal explanation may be raised during a vote. Points of order raised during a vote shall only be admissible if they relate to the conduct of the vote.

8.5 A separate vote may be taken on a part of a motion or amendment at the discretion of the chair. Requests for a separate vote may be submitted in advance or as a procedural motion.

8.6 The Session Chair's decision and announcement of the result shall be final.

9. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

9.1 A voting representative may during any plenary Conference move a motion for the suspension of Standing Orders. The mover of the motion shall submit the motion and a brief written statement of the purpose of the proposed suspension to the Chair, who shall read them to the meeting. The Chair may take the request immediately upon receipt or at the end of the speech currently being made.

9.2 No motion to suspend standing orders may suspend any requirement of the Constitution of the party, the rights for submission of motions and amendments or procedural motions for next business or suspension of standing orders.

9.3 The Chair shall then (if the motion is in order) ask the conference if it wishes to debate the request for suspension. If the conference decides by a majority of those voting to debate the request, the mover may speak and a representative of the conference committee may reply. The Chair shall have the discretion whether to allow other speakers on the motion.

9.4 A motion to suspend Standing Orders shall be carried only if supported by at least two thirds of the Conference representatives voting. If the motion is carried, all Standing Orders shall be deemed to be still in force, except only for the purpose set out in the motion.

**TRAINING
Rooms 1 and 2**

Morning Session 9.45-11.00

Afternoon Session 14.00-15.15

Direct Mail, Knocking on Doors and MiniVAN,
Taking Good Photos, Getting Your Message Right

*Chris Ward
Development Officer for Berkshire,
Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire*

*Tom Wood
Development Officer for Hampshire and
the Isle of Wight*

**LUNCHTIME FRINGE
For PPCs and aspiring PPCs
Main Hall
12.45-13.45**

*Prue Bray
Regional Recruitment Officer*

*Steve Lambert
Chair of Regional Candidates Committee*



SPEAKER'S CARD

Called
Not called
Withdrawn

Please complete all sections on this card

Item: Title Policy Business Debate Speaker
(Please circle whichever applies)

Your nameM/F

Your Local Party

Any offices that you hold (Cllr, Group Leader, Chair, Secretary, PPC etc)

Is this the first time you have spoken at Regional Conference? Yes No

Do you want to speak: Are you a wheelchair user?

For the motion as a whole? Do you have any special needs to

For lines help you speak in this debate?

Against the motion as a whole? Do you consider yourself a member of an under-

Against lines represented group (eg BAME, LGBT+, disabled)?

Details:

Please use the reverse of this card to explain to the chair why you should be called, to enable the chair to balance the debate.
Personal data on this card will only be used for planning this debate. For details on how the Liberal Democrats use your data, see
www.libdems.org.uk/privacy

PUT THE DATE IN YOUR DIARIES

Saturday 20 October 2018

March to Stop Brexit

MEETING POINT: 12 pm at

Wellington Arch

Hyde Park Corner

Apsley Way

London W1J 7JZ

Please explain to the chair why you should be called, if you have any special knowledge of the subject, and a brief outline of what you will be saying/asking. The chair will need this to be able to balance the debate if too many cards are submitted.

CONFERENCE AGENDA - MAIN HALL

9.30 **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Stephen Newton

Chair, Wokingham Local Party

9.35 **Introducing our New Development Officers**

Chris Ward and Tom Wood

9.45 to 10.25 *Session Chair: Mohsin Khan*

Session Aide: tba

9.45 **Policy Motion 1**

FOOD SECURITY

Proposed by South Central Regional Policy Committee

Mover: Will Schrieber Summation: tba

1 **Conference notes with concern:**

2 A. Food stocks and responsibility for food security for the nation has been left to businesses to
3 achieve, without setting any requirements or expectations for these organisations. With
4 approximately 60% of our food imported and some fresh fruit and vegetable supply chains having
5 food reserves for less than 24 hours, our food supplies are at risk should there be significant global
6 supply chain disruption, whether Brexit or another shock event (e.g. fuel price spike).

7 B. Our agricultural system has evolved to be dependent upon EU subsidisation through the
8 Common Agricultural Programme (CAP), resulting in approximately 55% of farmer income being
9 earned through this.

10 C. Climate change and changing global demographics and trade will continue to increase pressure
11 on demand for food products.

12 D. Alignment between health and sustainability initiatives are missing, leading to conflicting
13 policies and approaches in various government departments.

14 **Conference believes:**

15 i) Brexit is showcasing the complexities of our food system. Businesses and their supply chains are
16 not prepared for even minor shocks, let alone significant changes to how food can move in and out
17 of our borders.

18 ii) There are no immediate quick win solutions to improving our food security. Supply chains are
19 built by businesses, not governments, and national agricultural production is currently built for the
20 current demand and trade model.

21 iii) The trajectory of our national diet is heading towards greater malnutrition and obesity. This will
22 lead to greater social and healthcare costs.

23 iv) Approaches to food security need to be aligned across government departments.

CONFERENCE AGENDA - MAIN HALL

24 **Conference calls for:**

- 25 1. Government to develop a food security task force to develop cross-cutting policies to deliver
- 26 environmental, social, economic, and health outcomes.
- 27 2. Continued alignment of UK and EU agricultural and food policies, regardless of Brexit
- 28 outcomes.

10.05 Policy Motion 2

SKILLING A WORLD IN TRANSITION

Proposed by South Central Regional Policy Committee

Mover: Will Schrieber Summation: tba

1 Conference notes with concern:

- 2 A. The rapid growth of technology is developing new opportunities for commercial growth and
- 3 efficiency. Whilst there is general agreement that keeping up with these changes will be critical to
- 4 being successful in the global economy, the skills required to succeed in this new economy are not
- 5 necessarily equally available throughout UK communities.
- 6 B. Adopting new technologies in the workplace is unlikely to take place in existing workforces and
- 7 enterprises, particularly older small and medium sized businesses. It is more likely to occur through
- 8 the absence of new jobs created.
- 9 C. Positions that are most at risk of these new technologies and disruptive business models are
- 10 likely to be those that occupy manual or mid-management levels of organisations, striking at the
- 11 heart of our middle classes. Beyond individual roles, companies that are slow to adopt to changing
- 12 workforce requirements may face challenges competing.
- 13 D. Low employment and income challenges in some parts of the country contributed to an anti-
- 14 immigrant sentiment that was fuelled in the Brexit referendum campaign.
- 15 E. Brexit and increasing labour costs are likely to accelerate the transformation of some sectors as
- 16 human resource becomes scarcer. We are already seeing this taking place in some areas of our
- 17 agricultural economy.
- 18 F. Capital flight out of communities may accelerate as the owners and beneficiaries of technologies
- 19 replacing local wages reside outside the communities that apply them.

20 **Conference believes:**

- 21 i) It is essential that the new economy benefits all in our society. Our educational and tax systems
- 22 are not fit for purpose in promoting this change.
- 23 ii) Existing regulations, skills grants, and local authority support are not sufficient to address the
- 24 risks these communities and businesses face.
- 25 iii) Not every community will be impacted in the same way. A one size fits all approach for the
- 26 country will be inefficient and is unlikely to succeed.

27 **Conference calls for:**

- 28 1. Government to create a transition strategy and funding system through taxation to support
- 29 communities.
- 30 2. Risk map of where hot spot communities may lie for targeted support.

CONFERENCE AGENDA - MAIN HALL

10.25 to 12.10 *Session Chair: James Read*
Session Aide: tba

10.25 Business Session

South Central Region Chair's Report

To receive the report of the Regional Chair

Mover: Gerald Vernon-Jackson, Regional Chair

Business Resolution

Budget 2019 - 2022 and Accounts

Proposed by South Central Region Executive Committee

Mover: Steve Sollitt, Summation: Gerald Vernon-Jackson

Conference:

1. adopts the 2019 - 2022 Budget;
2. appoints the independent inspector for 2018 accounts;
3. approves the inspected accounts for 2017.

A copy of the budget can be found on page 11

11.00 Keynote Speech 1

Catherine Bearder MEP

11.30 Reports to Conference

Catherine Bearder MEP (European Parliament)

Lord Chidgey (House of Lords)

(House of Commons)

Gerald Vernon-Jackson (Councils)

Copies of reports submitted can be found on pages 12 to 17

12.10 to 12.40 *Session Chair: Stuart Brown*
Session Aide: tba

12.10 Debate

The Citizen, the State and the Education of Young People

Where should we be heading in the 21st Century?

Professor John Howson

12.40 LUNCH

Lunch will be served from 12-2.20 pm

CONFERENCE AGENDA - MAIN HALL

14.00 to 15.05 *Session Chair: Tahir Moher*
Session Aide: Rachel Bishop-Firth

14.00 Presentation

Denise Baron

Head of Insight, LDHQ

Insights for Evidence-based Campaigning

14.35 Keynote Speech 2

Antony Hook

South East Brexit Spokesperson

Can we win a People's Vote?

15.05 Closing Remarks and Appeal

Gerald Vernon-Jackson

Regional Chair

15.15 to 16.45 *Session Chair: Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey*
Rapporteur: Margaret McNeill

15.15 Consultation Session on Vince Cable's proposed party reforms

Neil Fawcett

Member of Federal Board

ALL LIBERAL DEMOCRAT MEMBERS ARE WELCOME

**YOU DO NOT HAVE TO REGISTER FOR CONFERENCE
TO ATTEND THIS SESSION**

16.45 Close of Conference

SOUTH CENTRAL LIBERAL DEMOCRATS BUDGET 2019-2022

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>NOTE</u>
Income					
Membership rebate	35000	35000	35000	35000	1
Regional Conference	5500	6000	6000	6000	
Income for Staff	7500	7500	7500	7500	2
200 Club	1500	1500	1500	1500	7
Donations	2000	2000	2000	2000	3
Sundry	10	10	10	10	
Training	500	500	500	500	4
TOTAL	52010	52510	52510	52510	
Expenditure					
Salaries & fees	37500	37500	40000	40000	5
Campaign Support	4000	5000	5000	5000	
Candidates and Returning Officers	400	200	100	100	6
Training	750	1000	500	500	4
Membership awards	250	250	250	250	
Communications	350	350	350	350	
Regional Conference include venue costs	3000	3500	3500	3500	
Federal Conference costs	1000	1000	1000	1000	
200 Club Prizes	1000	1000	1000	1000	7
Room hire	100	100	100	100	
Travel	2000	2000	2000	2000	
TOTAL	50350	51900	53800	53800	
NET	1660	610	-1290	-1290	
BALANCE SHEET					
EXISTING RESERVES	10000	11660	12270	10980	
REVISED RESERVES	11660	12270	10980	9690	

NOTES

- 1 Increase in expected membership income in line with national change in membership levels and increase in membership fees
- 2 Income for staff part funded by local parties
- 3 Expected fundraising for different sources
- 4 Increase in training activity expected
- 5 Costs for regional staff
- 6 Budget to cover Candidate and Returning Officer training
- 7 200 Club Income and Expenditure

Steve Sollitt Treasurer
South Central Liberal Democrats 2018

Reports to Conference

European Parliamentary Report

It is of course with an increasingly heavy heart that I continue the journeys between Brussels, Strasbourg, London and Oxford but every time I'm tempted to give up hope I am reminded of the absolute omnishambles of the Tory Brexit negotiations thus far and the fact we must fight for a final say on the deal.

While I realise it is not the job of this report to remind you of our commitment as Liberal Democrats to continue this fight, I wanted to use the opening paragraphs as an opportunity to re-confirm this point. In order to deal with the increasing demands of Brexit I have attempted to condense my work down: outside of Brexit, I continue my focus on Biodiversity loss through my seat on the Environment Committee, I still sit on the Joint African, Caribbean and Pacific Parliamentary Assembly where we discuss trade and aid with colleagues from these countries.

As a Quaestor of the Parliament I sit on the Parliament's Harassment Committee and am a key player in the design of the Parliament's new harassment rules and disciplinary process.

Under the Brexit banner, I have focused a lot of my energy on championing citizens' rights and working with the Citizens' Rights Taskforce in order to do so. I also still convene the cross-party group of MEPs and we meet regularly with Guy Verhofstadt to assess how negotiations are going as well as receiving briefings from industry leaders who are trying to plan for leaving the EU.

Environment

This year I have been working on a Parliamentary Resolution on the benefits of cannabis used in a medical setting. There is currently only one EU regulatory approved cannabis-based medicine for sale on the Single Market. Cannabis-based medicines clearly offer massive potential in terms of delivering pain relief for patients suffering from a range of different diseases and illnesses. What is important is that we ensure the quality of these cannabis-based medicines by ensuring they go through rigorous regulatory approval like any medicine would.

I hosted a week-long wildlife trafficking exhibition in the European Parliament in July to coincide with the release of the midterm review of the EU's Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking. On display were illegal wildlife specimens confiscated by customs officers at Brussels airport. We had everything on display from a panther to a rare golden cactus as well as tiny endangered snails imported into the EU. This exhibition provided an excellent opportunity for MEPs, Governments, the Commission and the public to re-engage with this subject. It was also very timely because that same week Avaaz released a study in collaboration with the radio carbon dating facilities at Oxford University which showed 3/4 of so-called 'legal ivory' for sale in the EU is actually from elephants killed after the CITES ban on post 1947 ivory, some as recently as 2012.

Cross-party MEPs' group

I'm still working cross-party with pro-European British MEPs to stop Brexit and bring some sense into the Article 50 debate. We have had letters and articles published on multiple occasions in national newspapers raising the profile of unforeseen Brexit problems such as EHC cards for Dialysis patients and fisheries access for the Falkland Islands.

Citizens' Rights

The Home Office met with MEPs in the European Parliament in April to share their registration plans for EU citizens after Brexit. There was strong criticism from both MEPs and the citizens' rights group 'The Three Million' for the fact that registration after Brexit can only be done online which makes citizens' data vulnerable in case of a hack. Also, it was announced by the Home Office that their registration phone app only fully works on Androids not iPhones - which was met with both amusement and shock by MEPs.

On a cross-party level I am fighting to ensure UK citizens can continue to keep their rights to reside, move and work in EU countries after Brexit. UK citizens' rights have been largely overlooked so far in these negotiations.

ACP-EU - Parliamentary Report, September 2018

In June, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly convened in Brussels. The two main topics addressed were the fight against discrimination and demographic growth. The negotiations are about to start on the new agreement between the EU and the ACP on what will replace the current trading

and development agreement known as Cotonou. I am still a very active member of the Delegation, and in the social and environmental committee that I sit on I have been working together on the consequences of urbanisation, particularly the sound management of industrial and domestic waste in ACP countries. I am also co-writing, with a Botswanan MP, the JPA's report on the destabilising effects of wildlife trafficking in ACP countries and promoting the implementation of the EU Action Plan against wildlife trafficking. In the fringe of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly, we have been very active in maintaining relations with our liberal ACP counterparts.

Chair of the College of Quaestors

In July, I acquired the mantle of Chair of the College of Quaestors for 6 months. Quaestors are responsible for administrative and financial matters of direct concern to Members of Parliament. As Chair, I detailed several priorities including bringing the artistic presence of the European Parliament closer to the citizens of Europe via utilisation of interactive technologies and artistic performances in the Parliament. I will also closely follow the activities of the Brexit working group to help MEPs and staff, past and present, deal with the administrative issues as the UK prepares to leave the Union, particularly including matters pertaining to pensions, staff redundancies etc. I will also be involved with planning for the new Parliament and how we revise the information and training provided to newly elected MEPs.

The Advisory Committee on Harassment has made significant strides in both preventing and dealing with harassment in the European Parliament, including the provision of training, information brochures, a new code of appropriate behaviour and alterations in the internal rules of procedure. This has complemented my work in the High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity Working Group, which seeks to create a workplace of equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion. The Working Group has held hearings and created a Roadmap of actions to improve working conditions within the Parliament.

Cultural and artistic events in the Parliament provide an opportunity for Members to showcase artistic exhibitions, regional presentations, information stands, film screenings and concerts pertaining to issues they wish to highlight. As Quaestor responsible for these exhibitions, I continue to represent the interests of the Parliament whilst ensuring the rights of Members are protected when authorising events, a role made especially more important in the run up to the next European elections.

UK Office

My UK office, located in the party's HQ focuses on feeding information from Brussels back to the party and vice-versa, keeping me informed about local, regional and national issues. My team also keeps me informed on all issues around Brexit to ensure the flow of information that I feed back to the ALDE group in the Parliament. We also endeavour to answer all casework both generated by our own constituents and MPs' offices in need of advice on European issues.

We are now a smaller team in the UK as we begin to look at winding up operations ahead of the end of the parliamentary term, but we are more than happy to help so please do get in touch with Henry McMorrow if you have any questions.

Catherine Bearder MEP

Parliamentary Party Report (Lords)

Dick Newby and Ben Stoneham continue to serve as the Leader of the Liberal Democrats in the Lords and Lords Chief Whip respectively. Joan Walmsley and Navnit Dholakia continue to provide tireless support as Co-Deputy Leaders. We continue to have a strong team of party whips who support the leadership team – the two Deputy Whips, Diana Maddock and Chris Humphreys and then John Shipley, Mike Storey and Barbara Janke. We were delighted to add Angie Harris to our ranks earlier this year, and our thanks are extended to Brian Paddick who stood down as a whip earlier this year.

Brexit and the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill

We continue to provide real scrutiny of the Government in the House of Lords. We have taken the lead in challenging the Conservative Government, resulting in the Liberal Democrats providing effective opposition to the Government's legislative programme. The vast majority of our work since

the Spring Conference focussed on the passages of the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill through the Lords.

Report Stage of the Bill was where we saw the most political drama. Our priority was to secure cross-party support for the option of a referendum on the final deal. We voted on this cross-party amendment, but unfortunately it was defeated by just 58 votes.

The core team working on the Bill worked closely with a number of cross-party colleagues to push 15 key issues:

- To make repeal of the European Communities Act 1972 conditional on a Minister laying a report before Parliament outlining the steps taken to negotiate a customs union with the EU. There was a vote on this amendment, which was won by 348 to 225
- To provide enhanced protection for certain areas of retained EU law, requiring that they can only be modified by primary legislation. There was a vote on this amendment, which was won by 314 to 217
- Retaining the Charter of Fundamental Rights in UK law. There was a vote on this amendment, which was won by 316 to 245
- To ensure there is proper guidance to courts and tribunals. There was not a vote on this due to a government concession.
- Restricting the scope of delegated powers under the bill (Henry VII powers). There was a vote on this amendment, which was won by 349 to 221
- Removal of the ability to establish public bodies by SI under the bill. There was not a vote on this due to a government concession.
- Removal of the ability to create criminal offences by SI under the bill. There was not a vote on this due to government amendments to put in place extra protections around SIs under the bill.
- Removing the ability to increase or make new taxes, fees or charges under the bill. This was not voted on due to government concessions on this (see below)
- Removing the ability of the Act to amend itself. This was not voted on due to a government concession.
- To put Parliament in the driving seat of the process of approving the outcome of negotiations with the EU – to have a “meaningful vote”. There was a vote on this amendment, which was won by 355 to 244
- To require Ministers and the devolved authorities to act in a way that is compatible with the 1998 Northern Ireland Act, and to have due regard to the contents of the UK-EU Joint Report of December 2017. There was a vote on this amendment, which was won by 309 to 241
- To ensure that nothing in the bill will prevent the UK from replicating any EU law made on or after exit day; or from continuing to participate in, or have a formal relationship with, any of the agencies of the EU after exit day. There was a vote on this amendment, which was won by 298 to 227
- To remove the fixed exit day of 29th March 2019 that was inserted in the Commons and to revert back to the provisions which existed in the original version of the bill. There was a vote on this amendment, which was won by 311 to 233
- To remove an offending clause relating to transitional provisions. There was not a vote on this due to a government concession.
- To ensure that the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice continues to apply during the transition period. This amendment was not voted on, as the Minister reassured the House that “during the implementation period—assuming that that is actually agreed—the CJEU will continue to fulfil the role it currently does with regard to the UK’s legal structure.”

The wider frontbench team in the Lords also worked on a cross-party basis to continue to raise issues on a sectoral basis:

To continue coordination of international aid and development policy

- To maintain the UK’s membership of the single market
- To clarify the status of EU instruments adopted but not implemented before exit day
- To maintain the ‘do no harm’ principle for human health protection
- To fully retain all rights, powers liabilities, obligations, restrictions, remedies and procedures in domestic law
- Allowing the general principles of EU law to remain as a cause of action in court cases pertaining to a failure to comply with these principles. There was a vote on this amendment, which was won by 280 to 222

- Maintaining family friendly employment rights, gender equality and work-life balance for parents and carers
- To maintain the EU Protocol on animal sentience. There was a vote on this amendment, which was lost by 169 to 211
- To provide that the withdrawal agreement cannot be implemented without the approval of both Houses of a mandate for negotiations about the United Kingdom's future relationship with the European Union. There was a vote on this amendment, which was won by 270 to 233
- To maintain refugee family reunion within Europe. There was a vote on this amendment, which was won by 205 to 181
- To ensure that there are UK-wide frameworks in place
- To ensure that parliamentary committees to “sift” SIs made under the bill have real teeth. There was a vote on this amendment, which was won by 225 to 194
- Other members of the group also tabled amendments on the following issues:
- Prevents the government using statutory instruments to provide for grounds to challenge retained EU law – this should be done by primary legislation. There was a vote on this amendment, which was won by 285 to 235
- To continue coordination of foreign and security policy
- To continue internal security, justice and police cooperation
- Ensuring equality and discrimination protection
- To maintain the rights of EU citizens in the UK
- To place further restrictions on the government's position in regards to the devolved authorities
- To make arrangements for an independent evaluation on health and social care
- To ensure that there is a proper process in place for when SIs under the bill need to be laid urgently
- To require a minister to make a statement when laying SIs under the Act that it does not reduce any protection provided under equalities legislation

During the passage of the Bill, there were a total of 15 government defeats – the largest number on any piece of legislation for many years.

Thanks to our work in the Lords, a large number of Government concessions were achieved. We obviously still hope this Bill will never have to be used, but if it does need to be, it is a better bill than it was, thanks to the work of Liberal Democrat Peers. This was partly achieved through a large amount of cross-party working, the scale of which we have never had in the Lords before. The core bill team, the party whips, the whips' office, as well as the Chief Whip and Leader all played an important part in this.

Thanks to the incredible work of the campaigns team in LDHQ, the Crossbench Peers were subjected to a campaign of persuasion from party members up and down the country to ‘do the right thing’ on the Bill. My thanks to everyone who took part in this – the scale of its success was incredible to see and must now surely be a strategy we use again.

I am so grateful to every single member of the group who worked on this Bill and with so many people involved in this particular piece of legislation, it seems invidious to single out one person, but Sarah Ludford, our Brexit spokesperson in the Lords, was there for almost every single minute of debate in the Lords – 150 hours or so – and the group owes her a debt of gratitude for her dedication to the Bill.

Another Lib Dem victory

Away from Brexit, our team working on the pithily named Rating (Property in Commons Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Bill secured an important victory ensuring decisive action will be taken on empty housing in the future. The government accepted the principle of an amendment from Kath Pinnock and John Shipley to set in place an escalator of council tax charges. This will mean that the longer a property is left empty, the more council tax will have to be paid, an important step in tackling the housing crisis facing this country.

Private Members' Bills

17 Liberal Democrat Peers tabled Private Members' Bills this session. Sally Hamwee's bill to make provision for leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom to be granted to the family members of refugees and to refugees who are family members of British citizens and settled persons has now passed through the Lords and has gone to the Commons for consideration. Those bills likely to get further time for debate in the next few months include Jenny Randerson's bill to encourage

membership of the Open Skies Agreement should Brexit go ahead, and Sal Brinton's bill to expand the rights of victims of crimes.

Campaigns and Visits

The group continues to be very active around the country. The last few months have seen scores of Peers travel all over the country to speak at AGMs, 'Pizza and politics' and Christmas events. The Peers remain active local campaigners, and like the rest of the Party are gearing up for local elections in May.

Peers

In July, Ronnie Fearn retired from the group after 17 years as a peer, with 9 years as an MP before that and over 50 continuous years' service as a councillor in Merseyside. The party owes him a huge debt of gratitude and he goes with our good wishes for a happy and long retirement. Also in July, we welcomed Jonny Oates back to the group after his leave of absence – it is great to have him back.

Ben Stoneham

Chief Whip, House of Lords

Parliamentary Party Report (Commons)

MPs across the Commons have been in an energetic mood since we last met in Southport, despite the Tories' lacklustre legislative programme (so lacklustre that Government considered bringing Summer Recess forward – truly a sign that they are out of ideas!). Amidst the turmoil created by high-profile Government resignations, Labour divisions and SNP stunts, we have continued to speak truth to power in Parliament, fighting for an exit from Brexit, standing up for our constituents and speaking up for the most vulnerable.

As you might expect, Brexit continue to dominate the bulk of our Parliamentary time. The great work done by the Lords in securing no less than 15 victories on the EU (Withdrawal) Bill and – ultimately – forcing concessions from Government really gave us something to go on in the Commons and put us firmly back in the story.

Now that the Withdrawal Bill has received Royal Assent, the focus has shifted to legislating for the consequences of Brexit in other forms. Tom, as Brexit Spokesperson, has led from our benches not only on the EU (Withdrawal) Bill, but on countless connected Bills, including the Cross-border Trade Bill and the Haulage Permits and Trailer Registration Bill. We have now profited from a second victory in the Commons on Brexit legislation – this time on the Trade Bill. As greater Government details are announced (and then abandoned) there is a growing sense in the House that the only way to square this circle is through a vote on the deal and an exit from Brexit.

Vince's clear and calm leadership cuts through much of the chaos of the Commons. His speeches are met with listening ears in the Chamber as MPs across the House clearly respect what he has to say and the wisdom that informs it. His careful dismantling of the Government's case for expansion at Heathrow and interventions across a range of issues show what benefit he brings us. Outside of the Commons, Vince has spoken powerfully and impressively on the need to tackle tax abuses from the mega multi-national businesses that are increasingly determining the rules of the game and shaping the economy of the future. He has also launched our Health plan to secure the long-term future of the NHS and outlined the Party's flagship new Housing policy to increase the housing stock. His vision has ensured that this party stays focused on the key issues affecting people in the UK today.

We have also had notable successes in the pursuit of justice for hundreds of families who had relatives taken from them at Gosport Memorial Hospital. Owing to a campaign led by Stephen and action taken by Norman – against civil service protests – whilst in Government, a criminal investigation has begun against those responsible. Ed, our Home Affairs Spokesperson, has been busy scrutinising Home Office Bills on Counter Terrorism and Offensive Weapons, in addition to representing the Party in debate on the Serious Violence Strategy. As the former Minister responsible, he has also led the charge on the Government's nuclear policy and decision to scrap the Swansea Tidal Lagoon plan. Meanwhile, Tim has called out Chris Grayling's appalling track

record in managing the UK's rail network, which has seen services cut across the country. The depth of experience we can draw from on our bench has proved of immense value in promoting our Party's goals, exposing the flaws in Government policy and making legislation better

It is almost bizarre to think that the last General Election was only just over a year ago when you see how easily our newest MPs have adapted to Parliament. Wera's efforts in fighting to criminalise the abhorrent practice of upskirting have been fantastic. First introduced as a Presentation Bill, her legislation hit the headlines when Conservative dinosaur, Christopher Chope objected to its progression in the House. In the 72 hours that followed, the negative headlines for the Government led to them taking the decision to bring the Bill forward as a Government Bill and thereby robbing the likes of Chope, Davies and Bone the chance to object and delay the changes. I've never quite understood the logic of their position on this sort of legislation, but Wera's campaigning is likely to see her achieve legislative change inside her first term – which is frankly remarkable.

In addition to his work on Defence, Jamie continues to uphold Scottish interests in Westminster with characteristic flair, such as in his speech on Scotland's Claim of Right - a document he has the honour of being the sole MP (in office) to have signed. Layla continues to shine and has used Parliament to highlight pitfalls in the National Funding Formula. Christine has done a stellar shift covering for Jo in speaking for us on all things Foreign Affairs. Over a year into their first Parliamentary session, it's clear that our cohort of elected Members aren't wasting any time in putting the Government, Labour and the SNP to the sword.

Before concluding, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our Deputy Leader, Jo Swinson, on the birth of her second child, Gabriel in June of this year. As many of you will know, Jo has been on maternity leave these past few months – not least because of the disgraceful way the Conservatives have behaved with regards to her pairing arrangements. As Chief Whip I work with other Party Whips to set up pairing arrangements and with one notable exception this has worked. However, aside from proving yet again that the Tories cannot be trusted, the incident has reminded us all that pairing remains a non-ideal solution for managing parental leave in the Commons. Jo's experience serves to highlight the case for reform and I look forward to seeing real change coming.

To conclude, I would like to thank all of our cohort for their hard work and dedication over the course of the Parliamentary term and look forward to continuing to work together to champion our Party Policies when the House returns from Conference Recess.

Alistair Carmichael MP
Chief Whip, House of Commons

Our Regional MP, Layla Moran, is unable to be with us today. She spoke at our last two Conferences, and has also been active in the Region, attending events in Wokingham, Beaconsfield and Oxford East, and campaigning in Milton Keynes. Members will also have seen her appearances on BBC Politics South.