

Executive reports to Green Liberal Democrats (GLD) 17Sept 2017 AGM:

1. Chair Graham Neale

It's been a busy few months since our last AGM in March. Once again, our work was interrupted by elections, this time both local and national. We have worked to develop our relationship with our elected members, with some success, whilst contact with Great George Street has been difficult. I will be writing to our president Baroness Sal Brinton after our AGM to ask how we should address our head office, who is our point of contact and what support we should expect from them. Whilst we appreciate there is a relatively small team, our executive are all volunteers, working without clerical support and the response to different attempts to contact the staff by both our executive members and myself as chair, have been disappointing. The party relies on our volunteers, yet it has been difficult to get any meaningful support from the professionals at our head office. I hope my next report will reflect a change in that relationship.

The new team of executive members have managed to work well together. The recovery from the loss of membership and financial records was slower than we had anticipated, and it is only because of the extra work of our team that we have managed to recover at all. I would especially like to thank Richard for his support and vision, and Simon for his work in sorting out the membership list and our accounts. We have a new bank account, meaning that we are not hamstrung by old banking systems. The click-to join options, along with monthly payment will help our membership grow. We have worked hard to refresh our website, trying to keep the best of the old, and incorporate the best of the constant innovations in that sector. The executive often uses Skype to meet, which has saved us hundreds of pounds in travel expenses. We have set up a Linked-In group to facilitate professional networking, and our Twitter feed and Facebook Pages are among the most popular in the party. The catering at our executive meetings has been vegetarian, with ample provision for this of us with a vegan diet, reflecting our commitment to consider the planet, and promote our acceptance of the diversity of our members.

The writing, printing and distribution of *Challenge* takes a lot of time and effort, with thanks due to Christian and George for taking the lead in editing and commissioning articles. The Summer 2017 edition cost us over £1,000, and whilst I appreciate that some members feel a need to hold a paper copy in their hands, more and more of us are accepting that an electronic version is cheaper, and just as informative, whilst having a smaller carbon footprint. I expect we will move to smaller print runs, even as our membership grows. In a world of new media, I feel the time and other resources we devote to the anachronism that is 'GLD as a publishing house' should be reduced. We can reach across the world with an on-line article, which was inconceivable when the first *Challenge* rolled off the press - we should take full advantage of this.

I am looking forward to next year, hopefully it will be uninterrupted by the onerous and archaic clerical and calendar headache that is the preparation for our AGMs. I would like to work with our executive to bring forward a system that frees us from slavishly checking our diaries to meet arbitrary deadlines, and which doesn't include people phoning me asking if they have managed to successfully negotiate

the system of nomination and, met the the deadline to stand for election to our executive. Any system which eliminates people with enthusiasm and appropriate skills, simply because of a complicated process needs to be revisited; similarly the time and money spent on writing and sending notices of AGM can only be spent once. Once again, we need to move with the times; notice published on our website and social media should be deemed adequate.

As chair, I have attended many events and meetings, working to promote sustainability both within and beyond our party. The accounts will reflect that I paid for travel and sustenance from my own pocket. Our executive will be spending much of this conference on our stall and I would like to thank them for their commitment both here in Bournemouth, and in the hours they pour into Green Liberal Democrats. On a more personal note, they have been most supportive as friends. There is much to do to run this Associated Organisation - and we could use some help, if you can use emails, you are amply qualified to help us. We could use up to eight hours a week of clerical support. It would involve proof-reading emails, compiling lists of contacts, and helping to arrange meetings.

Finally I would like to thank our membership for their support in enabling me to chair an organisation at the cross roads of sustainability and Liberalism - we have tried to ensure your money is well spent, and that these two causes combined, have a place in UK politics.

2. Vice Chair, Political. Richard Joy

In the five months since the March AGM in York the main focus has been on internal GLD matters. This has involved working closely with the Chair, Graham Neale, on the following:

- GLD web site:
 - assessment of the current web site
 - defining the required functionality for an updated / new web site
 - defining a specification for a new web site
 - discussions with specialist design agencies to investigate options for creating a new image for GLD
 - issuing tenders to web development agencies for quotations for professionally developed web site
 - reviewing quotations to determine best option for building a new image for GLD
- GLD strategic review
 - working with the Chair, to consider options to move GLD from a membership of c. 500 to achieve rapid growth in membership
- Financial issues
 - supporting the Treasurer
- Fringe events: Bournemouth conference
 - working with other members of the exec to prepare for fringe events

3. Vice Chair Organisation, Peter Bruce

The Executive Committee has been in a transition period: growing its activity and teamworking as the new Exec members took responsibility for rebuilding GLD's capability and influence in promoting Green policies to new levels in the party. The Committee grew, with some new members actively engaged but also suffered some losses due to non-attendance, people's other commitments and illness.

Meetings have averaged one per month since March AGM with good support to actionees, such as in the group launching the new website. Skype is used for one in two meetings to save costs and time. An away weekend in July was fruitful to teambuilding with free accommodation kindly provided by George Miles. Diversity in Committee member views has been a strength in terms of ideas, with differences being resolved effectively with good honesty in communication and trust building.

For the AGM, Constitutional change proposals are limited to clarity on co-optee terms and including the diversity statement required of Associated Organisations like GLD. The nominations for the Exec resulted in most positions receiving nominees to the Returning Officer (but VC Political and Membership Secretary are still vacant) and no voting competition is required. It is essential that we help Exec Committee members (including new co-optees) to all contribute actively as we grow the organization in members and influence in the Liberal Democrats and wider.

4. Honorary Treasurer, Simon Oliver

I was elected treasurer in March on the understanding that I would assume my duties after my June wedding and honeymoon. In July I restored order to the membership database, revised the financial procedures, paid expenses up to date, created the first budget that GLD has had in years and opened an account to facilitate online banking.

In August I drafted a detailed membership process, delivered online membership via direct debit and facilitated the first paperless recruitment.

This has been accomplished against a background of intransigence and obstruction from the previous Treasurer, for whatever reason, who's repeated and ongoing refusal to pass over GLD's financial records and account access to authorised officers has caused significant trouble and expense. We now have access to and control over your generous contributions, and the organisation has been brought back from the brink of collapse and disrepute.

Membership: Following a data quality exercise and some assumptions made in the absence of the accounts, our membership database is showing the following as of 9th September 2017:

Current members:

3 life members (all on email)

3 members who have opted out of receiving Challenge (all on email)

370 other members (96 without email). Note that 68 of these have not supplied their Libdem membership numbers and are thus technically Associate members.

Overdue members

128 potential members currently listed as overdue, 3 without email addresses. These are people who have joined since 2014 (except 5 who joined earlier but contacted us recently) for whom no recent payment has been received and recorded. 42 paid in cash or cheque, indicating a retention issue more than anything. But that leaves 86 nominally paying by standing order, for whom no standing order was ever set up! We will be contacting these 86 shortly to ask them to sign up to our new online direct debit system instead. This will be rolled out to all cash/cheque payers for renewals and existing standing order payers before their next payment so that they can decide if they want to switch.

Lapsed members

349 former members are currently listed as lapsed. We have email addresses for 231 of these and may contact them in the future to see if they wish to rejoin. The definition of lapsed is someone who joined before 2014 for whom no payment has been recorded since before 2014.

Cancelled members

There are also 83 cancelled/resigned former members (57 with email). Most of these are simply people who have stopped their standing orders, although a few made the point of telling us. We will wait for these people to approach us again, if they wish to.
