

Chair's Report for the Wokingham Borough Liberal Democrats Annual General Meeting 30th November 2024

In 2024 we made history twice, defending our leadership of Wokingham Borough Council for the first time in an 'all-up' election and electing Wokingham's first ever Liberal Democrat MP. We are now able to represent residents on the local and national stage.



Of course, it has not all been plain sailing. We were unable to elect or re-elect all our candidates in the May local elections, and we lacked the money and campaigning capacity to fight the Earley and Woodley parliamentary seat in full.

We have worked hard to achieve these successes and can be proud of them. However, our opponents will not sit back and allow us to remain in power, as witnessed by the by-election we are currently fighting in Shinfield. We cannot rest on our laurels and must focus again on building our financial and volunteering resources, whilst maintaining our outstanding organisational focus.

The Treasurer's report highlights the shortfall in our income against what we need to maintain our current position. We want to compete in other wards and constituencies, which makes the shortfall even larger. For this reason, we are asking every member to make a regular monthly contribution of whatever they can afford to ensure we have the funds to continue winning.

The focus on campaigning has also distracted us from the important business of engaging fully with our membership and volunteer base, on politics and socially. If you agree about the importance of these, please help us do better by arranging some events.

We have reduced from 3 full-time campaign staff (2 paid, one volunteer) to approximately one full-time equivalent. My busy and growing council workload means I must scale back my local party and campaigns work, and we need to develop the next generation of volunteer campaign leaders. We need individuals willing to manage parts of the campaign. We also need an organiser in every ward, to recruiting volunteers and wholesale literature, as paid delivery is unaffordable. Please do get more involved.

It has been a privilege to be your chairman in this incredible year. Thank you for your support to our executive, councillors and candidates and I look forward to our continued success, for the good of our residents and the triumph of liberal values.