

Minutes of the Winchester District Liberal Democrats' 2025 Annual General Meeting on

Saturday 29th November at St Paul's Church, St Paul's Hill, Winchester

Chair Vivian Achwal welcomed the attendees

Two minutes silence was held in the memory of Bob Boddy. The Chair sent her best wishes to Gillie and Bob's family.

1. Apologies for absence

Paul Williams, Liz Baron and Gill Russell

Present

Cam Appleby, Mark Allinson, Richard Murphy, Martin Tod, John La Trobe Bateman, Dinah Ashcroft, Russell Gordon-Smith, Chris Edwards, Geraldine Buchanan, Paul Greenwood, Susan Chesters, Mark Reach, Tom Pullin, Tina Gericke, Kelsie Learney, Andrew Rolt, Andrew Adams, Frank Devoy, Richard Eve, Sudhakar Achwal, Vivian Achwal, Nathan Eve, Margaret Ranger, Joan Greenough, Siobhan Barr, James Batho, Jenny Farthing, John Brien, Graham Winyard, Gregor McHardy, Karen Gardener, Yvette Riley, Mark Frankland, Milan Fuchs, Eric Bodger, Peter Roberts, Sam Dalling, Clare Pinniger, Pete Critchwell, Charlotte Bailey, Anne Weir, Steve Cramoysan, John Beveridge, Rachel Aron, Robert Marcus, Mary Leslie, Olufemi Balogun, Bela Fuchs, Dale Thomson, Paul Gardener, Sue Collis, Mike Collis, Michael Darby, Chris Westwood, Jonny Morris, Stewart Miller, Tom Wood-Shreeve and Otto.

2. Approval of Minutes of previous AGM

The Minutes of the 2024 AGM were **approved. Tom Wood-Shreeve proposed and Richard Eve seconded.**

3. Chair's Report, Vivian Achwal

At the end of my time as Chair of Winchester District Liberal Democrats, I feel a mixture of gratitude, pride, and genuine optimism for the future of our local party. It has been an honour to serve in this role, and an even greater honour to work alongside so many dedicated, passionate, and generous people.

I would like to begin by offering my heartfelt thanks to our Executive Committee. You have each brought your own energy, expertise and have challenged where needed. Whether we were navigating campaign strategy, membership engagement, policy discussions, or the day to-day business that keeps this local party moving, you consistently showed commitment, good humour, and a willingness to roll up your sleeves. The strength of this organisation comes from the leadership you provide, and I am deeply grateful for the support you have given me.

Our councillors and candidates have represented us with skill and integrity, and our team has built a foundation that the next chair can build on with confidence. Our next goal is to win the Mayoral election, take control of Hampshire County Council and keep control of Winchester City Council. As I step aside from this role, I do so knowing that the party is in safe hands. We have a passionate membership, a committed executive, and a culture of teamwork that will carry us forward. I may be outgoing as chair, but I'm not going far—I look forward to continuing to support our work in whatever way I can.

Thank you once again for your trust, your hard work, and your friendship. It has been a privilege to lead this team. Here's to the next chapter, and to the continued success of Winchester District Liberal Democrats.

At the end of the Chair's report, Vivian made a presentation to the outgoing Secretary, Cam, and thanked her for her hard work. Yvette Riley, the incoming Chair, then presented Vivian with a bouquet of flowers and thanking her, praised her willingness to have a go at anything, including fixing a wide range of office machinery!

Danny also thanked Vivian and Sudhakar Achwal for being a great Mayor and Mayoress.

4. Treasurer's Report, Mark Allinson

Mark opened his report by noting that the AGM is the highlight of our year and joked that the Treasurer's report is the highlight of the AGM.

Mark continued, 2024 was a big year politically. It was also a big year financially. We spent an unprecedented amount of money, over a quarter of a million pounds, including over £150,000 on campaigning – literature, postage, and of course hundreds of stakeboards.

And it paid off.

It also had to be paid *for*!

We started the year with £146,000 of cash in the bank, thanks to a bequest from the estate of a longstanding Winchester member, Dr Joan Read. And we received nearly £190,000 of donations during the year, thanks to

- A further bequest from Joan Read's estate
- One-off donations from several particularly generous supporters (thank you to those who are here today)
- Monthly payments by councillors, from their not-very-generous allowance (thank you, councillors)
- The successful launch of the 985 Club for high-value donors (thank you, 985 Club members)
- Regular and one-off donations from hundreds of members and supporters (thank you everyone)

So all in all, a very big year of raising lots of money and spending even more!

As I said, we started the year with £146,000 cash and as a result of all that activity, we finished it with about £74,000. So, a big reduction, but for good reason.

We will need to do a lot of fundraising going forward due to the rising cost of staff and literature,

5. Appointment of independent examiner, Mark Allinson

It was agreed that Steve Sollitt should be appointed subject to his agreement. Margot will contact him to ask. Yvette Riley proposed and Richard Eve seconded the proposal.

6. Amendment to the constitution

Tom Wood-Shreeve explained the proposed changes to the Constitution. There will be a reduction on the Executive Committee from 7 ordinary members down to 2 and from 7 co-opted members down to 2. Also, to be, more nimble and quicker, there will no longer be branch representatives – they are typically represented on the Exec anyway.

Andy Adams expressed a 'slight concern that the reduction will mean that there is not the opportunity for ordinary members of local party to contribute and that the proposals hadn't been brought to Exec first for proper discussion'.

Eric Bodger commented, 'that as one of the people who is being cut, I applaud this as the Exec doesn't get things done'.

Charlotte Bailey said, 'I do support this amendment but want to be reassured that ordinary members of the local party are kept in the loop better – so would be great if we could have a newsletter to let us know'.

Danny responded that 'these were all very good points – want to make sure everyone does know what is going on and having a smaller exec will mean that it can get things done quicker but also do more work on branches and get more information to members.' He noted that 'currently meetings can go on for 3 or 4 hours with no decision made and Operations Committee ends up making the decision.'

Sam Dalling asked how many members of the new executive there will be. Tom ran through the list of all those who will be on Executive.

The Amendment was approved with just one vote against.

7. Winchester City Council Report, Martin Tod

Martin started by talking about the Local plan which is on track to be adopted. It has the highest standards environmentally in Hampshire.

Secondly, a Town council is being set up.

Martin then went on to list the Council's achievements. The Nature Improvement Plan. Central Winchester Regeneration. Confidence the Council can offer balanced budgets for its final two years. Still top district for climate action. £3.4million to improve council houses. Doing all these things while creating an environment where businesses are thriving. Buying 146 council houses in Kings Barton. Winning Pawprints award for animal welfare services. National leader for nitrate and phosphate mitigation. Air quality in Winchester City Centre has improved to the extent that DEFRA has confirmed it no longer needs to be monitored as an Air Quality Management Area, but the Council has set itself higher standards still. Action on fly tipping – gone for prosecutions rather than fixed notices. The introduction of food waste recycling. Gold accreditation from the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance recognising the highest standard of support for those experiencing domestic abuse. River Park Pavilion. Bishops Waltham lo

8. Hampshire County Council Report, Martin Tod

Martin reported that the County Council's finances are horrendous.

He said that the Lib Dem County Councillors have been fighting cuts, for instance, to bus services. He added that there is a rigidity about how the County does things so he looks forward to Local Government Reorganisation because of this – the inflexibility is not helping and where we've persuaded them to do things differently they haven't then acted.

Martin reflected that the County is a hard place, but the stakes are higher – children's services, social care, etc.

He closed by explaining that the Lib Dems think they can win control in 2026, saying, "We want to take control of the County and with your help we'll be able to do that".

8. Election of Officers and Committee (Returning Officer Tim Groves)

Tim ran through each of the nominations, proposers and seconders.

Position	Name	Proposed	Seconded
Chair	Yvette Riley	Danny Chambers	Martin Tod
Vice-Chair	Viv Achwal	Anne Small	Cam Appleby
Secretary	Peter Roberts	William Tench	Dr Danny Chambers
Treasurer	Mark Allinson	Sue Collis	Anne Weir
Deputy Treasurer	Frank Devoy	Cam Appleby	Richard
Diversity & Inclusion Officer	Tom Wood-Shreeve	Dr Danny Chambers	Cam Appleby
Membership Development Officer	Gillie Boddy (agreed to carry on but was absent from AGM due to bereavement)		
Elections Officer	Will Tench	Yvette Riley	Cam Appleby
Data Officer	Richard Eve	ASR role NA	NA
Chair of approvals panel	Anne Weir	ASR role NA	NA
Executive Member	Gill Russell	Vivian Achwal	Cam Appleby
Executive Member	Cam Appleby	Yvette Riley	Viv Achwal
Executive Member	Andy Adams	Dominic Hiscock	Veronica Oldfield
Executive Member (County Councillor)	Jackie Porter	NA Appointed by County Councillors	NA
Executive Member (City Councillor)	Martin Tod	NA Appointed by City Councillors	NA

All the Officers were approved. Tim explained that there were 3 nominations for the 2 roles of ordinary member and so there would be an electronic vote to elect the 2 ordinary numbers (Gill Russell chose to stand down several days after the AGM so no vote was held).

Gillie Boddy was contacted later and agreed to continue as the Membership Development Officer.

For Danny's Report Back, Danny's speech and Martin Tod's speech on the Mayoralty, see the Appendices below.

Appendix 1 - Danny's Report Back – Karen Gardner

I wanted to give you a **brief** summary of the work Danny and the team have done this year. And to tell you a little bit about our team.

Team

We have an **absolutely fantastic** and **very** hard working team. **Emily** works in the Westminster office supporting Danny in Parliament, for example helping with speech writing, research, work on legislation, and policy casework. **Kimberly, Peter and Nathan** are caseworkers, though Nathan is about to become the party's Campaigns Organiser-

- **Tom** Randall deals with Danny's media and communications.

Will has worked on our local campaigns

And **Hayley**, Danny's PA basically runs his life.

It has a very busy year for all of us, but also a hugely rewarding one.

Parliament

Danny has been working **really hard** in Parliament. Since he was elected, he has spoken in **129 debates** - 108 since the last AGM.

To put this in some sort of **context**, Flick Drummond and Steve Brine both spoke in Parliament about 48 times a year.

Danny has been standing up for his constituents and **holding the government to account** on issues that local people **really care about**, for example - he has **repeatedly** challenged the government about their **inaction** on the war in Gaza and their **failure** to sanction the Israeli Government. *We **know** this is important to local people because this year we have received **more correspondence** about the conflict in Gaza than anything else.*

Mental Health

In his role as **Mental Health Spokesperson</**

Danny also secured two debates highlighting the damaging impact of cuts to overseas aid budgets on global public health.

Danny spent a **lot of** time this year working on the Mental Health Bill, which updates the law on the detention of people with mental illness or a mental disorder.

He also did a **huge amount of work** on the Tobacco and Vapes Bill, which aims to create a **smoke-free generation** and will also crack down on the **sale of vapes to young people**. This is probably the **most important** piece of public health legislation in a generation.

What Danny was doing with these bills was literally going through **them line by line** trying to improve the legislation.

And last week, Danny's **Puppy Smuggling Bill** passed its third reading in the Lords, **meaning it will become law**.

This Bill will **ban** the import of **heavily pregnant animals**, and **puppies and kittens under six months old**, who have been taken from their mothers **far too young** and are often transported long distances in horrible conditions and sold by unscrupulous traders and purely for profit.

The Bill also **bans** the import of pets with mutilations such as cropped ears. **This is a massive boost for animal welfare**.

Only about **5% of private members bills succeed** and it is a **fantastic achievement** for Danny as a new MP, and someone who cares **passionately** about animal welfare, to get the cross-party support necessary to enable this bill to become law.

Casework

Casework is also really important to Danny.

Since Danny was elected, we have **done over 12,000 pieces of casework**.

(so that is people writing to Danny to ask for help with problems, or to take action, for example lobbying the Government on an issue such as Gaza, or the family farm tax.

By way of comparison, Flick Drummond was very proud of doing **7000** pieces of casework **in 5 years**.

And we also **know** from the party nationally that we are doing about twice as much casework as most Lib Dem MP offices.

And casework is **incredibly important** because people often come to Danny in **absolute desperation** because they **literally** have nowhere else to turn - and his help can make a **real difference** to their lives.

To give you some very brief examples -

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Kimberly spent a **huge** amount of time and effort helping a lady who had suffered the **most appalling domestic abuse** get the help she needed, and which she had previously been denied. When the constituent phoned the office to say thank you, she told me '**Danny has changed my life.**'

And **Peter** - our amazing volunteer - has helped **countless families** with children with special educational needs, who were **exhausted** and **demoralized** from battling the system to get the help their children needed.

I used to work for Tim Farron. When I left, he had done 162,000 pieces of casework. On his leaflets they put '**Everyone knows someone Tim has helped**' - and it is **absolutely true**. And I have no doubt whatsoever that this is one of the main reasons he keeps getting re-elected.

And we are all working very hard to help Danny get to that same point

In the Constituency

Over the past year, Danny has attended **more than 450 events in the Constituency**, including visiting **local schools**, speaking to community groups like the **Men's Breakfast Club** in Bishops Waltham, **meeting farmers, touring businesses such as IBM**, and supporting local community projects.

A highlight of the year for Danny was **driving an ambulance to Ukraine** to deliver vital medical equipment, visit a hospital and to learn more about the war effort.

This year Danny has also been taking part in the **Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme**, which gives MPs **first-hand** experience of the forces so they can better understand military life, and the challenges the military face.

Danny has also been doing a lot of campaigning in the Constituency

With Will's **expert help**, Danny along with our councillors - has worked on a number of important local campaigns this year including -

- Campaigning against **sewage dumping** in our rivers,
- Campaigning to **protect and improve our A&E**,
- Protesting against **bus cuts** - Danny spoke at large demonstrations against the cancellation of the 61 service, and met a lot of local people protesting about the removal of the number 4 service. We are now also campaigning against the cancellation of the bus to Henry Beaufort School.

And we **successfully campaigned against the proposed closure of the Chesil Lodge** Day Centre- a **wonderful** service for adults with dementia.

And our recent petition calling on the Government to **protect The South Downs National Park** **attracted 1200 signatures**, in a couple of days.

Danny has appeared in the **press over 220 times** since the start of the year: **100 times in local papers; 70** times in parish and community newsletters; and he has **given 50 local TV and radio interviews**.

He has also appeared 79 times in the national media, including in the New Statesman and papers such as The Times, The Express, The Daily Mail, The Guardian, Independent, and Nature Magazine.

Danny's social media profile has also increased **significantly** in the last year, for example, he now has **an extra 5000 followers** on Facebook.

Danny is a compassionate, evidence driven, hard-working MP who is **determined** to make a real difference — in **Parliament, in the Constituency, and in the lives of the people who turn to him for help**.

Everything we do as a team is **shaped by those values**, and by the shared commitment that we all have to stand up for our community and deliver the best possible service for local people.

Appendix 2 - Danny's speech

It is a privilege to be here and everything I've achieved is all down to your hard work. Cast your minds back to last May when Rishi unexpectedly stood in the rain and called a General Election and two hours later many of you who are here were there in the office.

I said then, if you can get me over the line I promise to be the most hard working MP Winchester has had and the most rooted in the community.

All the successes that Karen has read out couldn't have been achieved without my fantastic team, standing up for farmers, rural communities, small businesses, mental health problems – time and time the team have stepped in and improved people's lives – the quiet unseen work.

I have just visited the hospital's antimicrobial department. Banning puppy smuggling is an important public health measure as smuggled puppies are not tested for disease.

I have visited drone factories, army bases, a leading amputee rehabilitation hospital – a place filled with incredible courage, a lot of pain, huge belief that if they get the right support can win.

As Karen said, I have been going through Government bills line by line. We got some critical amendments to the mental health bill including that the children of mental health patients have to be identified and given the support they need – older children are often primary carers – now the onus will be on hospitals and schools to make sure these children are supported – this was a huge win.

After years of Lib Dem pressure, the Chancellor agreed to remove the cruel 2 child benefit cap.

Since the General Election we now have a team of 72 MPs and we have helped make a difference

We need to win next May - we need to make sure everyone knows who will be the best people to run the new councils – we can't afford to let Greens win lots of seats.

Most of all if we want a power base here we need to start campaigning now – we want the Tories to not bother fighting hard here – if we're not fighting for our survival we can help other areas – dad used to say can't fatten a pig on market day.

We ran one of the biggest campaigns in the country for 3 years and that's why we won so well.

One of the biggest questions is how do we beat Reform. It's not with a single slogan but with compassion, service and community – keep doing what Lib Dems have always done, building trust one doorstep at a time.

We kept the tips open, Chesil Lodge, the Men's Shed in Alresford led by Clare we set up petitions and demos, etc. We're still fighting. AT 6.30 am in rain and dark Danny and Jackie were walking the route of a school bus which is due to be cancelled.

We also have hope and we have the volunteers – people who really care.

Despite the economic woes we're still one of the wealthiest countries in the world.

Can be a country where people can get the health care they need free at point of delivery, where everyone gets a fair wage.

Street by street is how we'll defend our democracy.

Thank you for helping me and the councillors to get the platform to be able to help people's lives.

Thank you Viv, thank you Neil as Treasurer, thank you Tom who is standing down as my Chief of Staff and to Karen who is now running the whole operation and Hayley. Nathan being a councillor in the casework team has been invaluable, Nathan also leading canvassing, also Kimberley and Emily in parliament.

I hope you feel today that the last few years have been worth it.

I am really excited about next few years

Now we have opportunities to grow the Lib Dem voice in national conversation.

Appendix 3 – The Hampshire and Solent Area Mayoralty - Martin Tod

The Mayoralty is a new opportunity – it will make a real difference.

It was felt that Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (HIOW) were missing out which was a problem. A transport investment programme of £15 billion for transport all went to the existing mayors.

Also, businesses – some Reform and Green ideas are anti-business.

The election is likely to be a battle with Reform about what really matters.

Sometimes in politics you want to win, sometimes you want the other guy to lose - this time!

How do we win? We have been working very hard with HQ and the County group to get one team – we are going to elect the Mayor, double the number of MPs and win control of more councils.

Mayors sit with other councils around the table and we want those councils to be Lib Dem ones.

I want Winchester and Hamble Valley to both have Lib Dem MPs.

Hamble Valley, East Hampshire, Romsey and Southampton North and Farnham and Borden.

Working to get an integrated campaign – we have had policy discussions for the mayoralty and we have been fundraising.

We have been fighting Reform already and we have either beaten them or increased our vote.

In the new year there will be a by-election in Gosport - Reform called the by-election within 72 hrs of the incumbent councillor dying which is very bad form.

HQ are very clearly behind us – Michael Wilson, Mark Jefferey and Charlie Wise have joined the campaign and attend a weekly meeting including with Keith House, leader of the Hampshire County Council Lib Dem group, to liaise with the County operation.

Also, have a fantastic mayoral campaign team – Yvette Riley has come on board as campaign manager and thanks also to Clare Pinniger and Neil Cutler and the others who are all helping.

Danny has talked about the difference he has made. The City Council is another way we make a great difference and we can make that difference right across HIOW - working together we can win this for Winchester.

Questions from the floor

Cllr Russell Gordon-Smith asked **what the relationship would be between the district councils and the mayoral office**. Martin replied that the people with a vote will be those representing the upper tier authorities which doesn't include district councils. He observed that, "the best result will be achieved if the views of all tiers of government are respected. In practice, it will be down to the character and priorities of the Mayor to say how do we make sure all voices are heard".

Cllr Jonny Morris asked **how do we beat the Greens** (commenting that they keep him awake at night). Martin responded, saying, "A lot of green support is tactical and we need to make our message clear. The Green activists haven't shown up in the by-elections against Reform. Need to also

that you should never run in an election against someone whose job appears in children's books!