

Thank you Viv and Sudhakar



We're so proud of the wonderful impact that Lib Dem Cllrs Sudhakar and Viv Achwal made as Winchester's recent Mayor and Mayoress.

They drew praise from residents for their hard work and thoughtfulness during visits to over 350 community events over the year. In addition, a really varied and inclusive set of fundraising events, including a Bollywood Evening, raised £25,000 for Sudhakar's chosen charities - WinACC, Home-Start Winchester and Trinity Winchester.

Upcoming Events

Please go to winld.org.uk/events for more information on the following events:

July 5th - the legendary Meon Valley BBQ.

July 22nd - new date for talk by Anand Menon, Director of Britain in a Changing Europe.

September 26th - the return of the annual dinner with guest Lib Dem President Josh Babarinde.

WHAT LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION MEANS FOR US

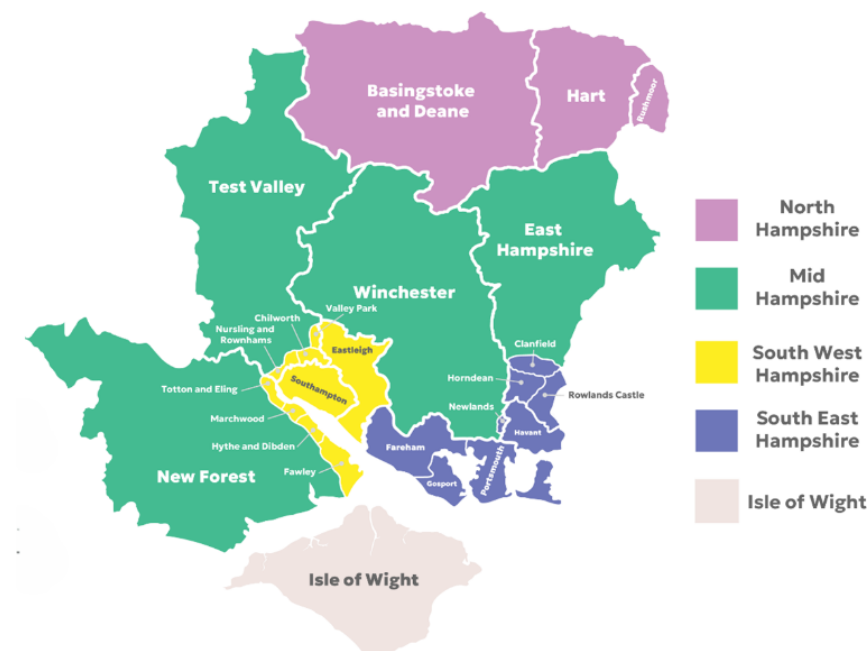
The Government made its long-awaited announcement on Local Government Reorganisation at the end of March and with it came the news that the vast majority of Winchester district will form part of the new **Mid Hampshire** Unitary Authority, along with almost all of the East Hampshire and Test Valley council areas and much of the New Forest.

Newlands in Denmead is the one part of our current district that will be separated, going to the **South East** Unitary Authority. The **Mid Hampshire** unitary footprint covers a large geographical area due to its mainly rural character, stretching from the west of the New Forest to the Surrey border near Farnham.

After a phased handover the new authority will assume the responsibilities of Hampshire County Council and the district councils making up the footprint in April 2028.

Shadow elections for the new authority will be held next May but we are still waiting to hear from Government how many councillors the new authority will have and how many constituents each councillor will represent.

Despite the lack of information, Lib Dem council group leaders across **Mid Hampshire** are already in discussion, as are the local party chairs, and they expect to have a uniform approvals process in place for the unitary footprint shortly. This will ensure that all candidates for our unitary are approved on the same basis and will sign up to the same councillor contract. A **Mid Hampshire** campaign group will also be formed shortly.



UNPRECEDENTED RESULTS

Wow! May's County and City local elections resulted in an unprecedented set of wins for Winchester District's Lib Dems - 13 of 15 City Council wards were won as well as all 7 of our 7 County divisions.

Thank you to everyone who made a contribution to the campaign that produced these remarkable results.

With 22 separate seats up for grabs across both councils, the scale of our campaign had to be huge, with 470,000 leaflets produced (with up to 25 different versions of each type of leaflet) and 120,000 addressed letters (including 32,000 blue/cream letters).

Thank you to all who donated - we can't pay for our literature without you! And thank you to: all who helped with bundling or stuffing; those who wholesaled the literature to our deliverers; the deliverers; the blue letter team; those who knocked on doors; those who put up stake boards and took them down again; the tellers; the data entry team; the campaign strategists; Nathan Eve and Will Tench who worked ridiculous hours; and those who put their names forward to stand for election!

At the City Council, where we took 4 seats from the Conservatives, there are now an incredible 36 Lib Dem councillors, with the Conservatives and Greens both having just 4.

It's clear that the Lib Dems are the party that are best placed to beat Reform and Reform did come second in three of our wards - a worrying trend that we need to be alert to.

Lib Dems across the rest of Hampshire were unable to repeat our County clean sweep and although the Conservatives lost their majority at the County for the first time in 29 years, they still ended up as the largest party with 27 councillors to 26 Lib Dems and 20 Reform.

However, as a district, May's remarkable results have given us a terrific springboard from which to launch our 2027 Unitary elections campaign. **With a great deal of hard work, the Lib Dems can win control of our new Mid Hampshire Unitary Authority next year. It's vital we keep up our winning habit. Momentum is so important and we have a Mayoral election for Hampshire and the Solent to win in 2028 in the lead up to the next General Election in 2029.**

Dr Joan Read 1931-2022 - her life and legacy



Joan Read was a dedicated Liberal Democrat who, through her quiet service volunteering for previous Lib Dem MP Mark Oaten as a caseworker and her generous donation to the local party in her will, has left a lasting legacy for Winchester. Her lifetime of support and legacy

donation has been instrumental in helping Winchester Liberal Democrats achieve its greatest ever successes in recent years.

From the birth of the Liberal Democrats in the 1980s, Joan Read was amongst its strongest champions. Throughout her life, she reflected the ideals the party represents.

Joan was born in Chittagong, then India, now Bangladesh, in 1931 but was sent back to the UK to the care of aunt at just three years old. After boarding school she went on to study medicine at Barts Hospital in London, a major achievement for a woman in the 1950s. In the 1960s, she would become head of pathology in the Bahamas.

She returned to the United Kingdom in 1978, moving to Alresford to be close to family and working in the microbiology laboratory at Southampton General Hospital until her retirement. For Joan, however, retirement was just the beginning of another chapter. While continuing to work part-time at a family planning clinic, she became more involved with local politics, supporting the Liberal Democrats.

For 13 years she volunteered several days a week as a caseworker for Winchester's previous Liberal Democrat MP - Mark Oaten who said - "Joan was such an amazing support to me when I was the MP. For 13 years she was by my side almost every Friday at the local surgeries we ran. Together we must have heard thousands of cases and in that time she would have helped so many people with problems. She liked to focus on the really tough cases and would never give up until a solution was found. Joan never wanted to be in the limelight - she just had a deep commitment to helping people and supporting the Liberal Democrats. It is typical of her that her legacy

has been to help support Danny win. She would be proud to see how successful and hard working he is as Winchester's MP."

Local party members remember Joan working hard, ever present at meetings and social events and serving as the Alresford Lib Dem branch secretary. She regularly attended party conference often travelling with Jackie Porter who recalled her taking the opportunity when visiting Harrogate or Bournemouth for conference to buy a new pair of beautiful shoes, to add to her collection.

An excellent fundraising campaign for the 2019 General Election meant we entered the 2020s with some reserves but by 2022 when news of Joan's bequest arrived, funds were seriously depleted - by this point we had even had to discontinue the members' newsletter in order to still have enough money to pay for Focuses.

Joan's will stated that the money she was leaving to the local party was to help get another Lib Dem MP elected for Winchester. Her bequest was certainly transformational - the timing of it enabled us to mount a formidable campaign for the two years running up to the 2024 General Election. It allowed us to move into our current far larger office, employ two staff and create a general election and local election winning literature campaign.

It was undoubtedly instrumental in Danny becoming our MP in July 2024 with a whopping majority of 13,821, the largest majority of any new MP of any party in 2024. This large majority should make re-election in 2029 easier than for MPs with smaller majorities.



Danny Chambers with Joan Read's nephew Jonathan Read in February 2024.

If you visit the office, you will see that the boardroom is named in Joan's honour.

Winchester Liberal Democrats now have 36 City Council seats, we have 7/7 County seats in

our district and Hampshire Lib Dems have 26 County Council seats. The scale of these victories was also made possible by Dr Joan Read's generous legacy donation which allowed those who followed her to continue achieving win after win.

But now there is a new challenge ahead. While the Conservatives are fading in strength, an even more divisive politics from Reform UK is rising. It is well funded, often from foreign billionaires, and is intent on using those vast financial resources to undo much of the progress those who believe in liberal values, like Dr Read, fought so long for.

Winchester Liberal Democrats will need more people like Joan Read. Her legacy donation helped us defeat the Conservatives, the next might just help us defeat Reform.

Owing to our costly 2024 General Election campaign and the very large number of elections this year we have had to ramp up our fundraising campaign to build up funds once again. Thank you to all who make regular donations and to those who have responded to fundraising appeals both for the General Election and more recently.

Blue letter heroes make such a difference

Thank you to everyone who helped with the 'blue letter' campaign this year (and who has in the past). It was our biggest yet, aside from the General Election.

Special thanks to Sam Dalling who oversaw this hugely time-intensive operation and to **Michael Jackson** who single-handedly addressed a staggering 5000 cream/blue envelopes.

In total, 32,000 addressed blue and cream letters were delivered (cream letters go to postal voters, blues to non-PV voters).

It takes quite a few people to get each letter on a doorstep. The candidates who write their individual letters, the proofreaders, a person to print them on the Portsmouth office Riso machine, someone to collect them, someone to sort and print off the address sheets, someone to make-up envelope packs for addressing, volunteers to hand address the envelopes (this year we had over 30 addressers), volunteers to stuff the letters into

envelopes, more volunteers to bundle them into walks, wholesalers to deliver them to deliverers and deliverers to pound the streets.

deciding how to cast their vote on election day. They offered a personal touch, speaking directly to each individual and brought a unique, authentic quality to our Liberal

Democrat team that truly helped us stand out.

"The feedback I got during and after the campaign was overwhelmingly positive.

"One resident said 'Congratulations, we loved the letter your team delivered'. Another told me 'Martin, after receiving your letter this afternoon, I knew exactly who I would be voting for, you!'

"To everyone involved, no matter how big or small your contribution... thank you! You played a vital part in the difference between victory and defeat, and I am truly grateful."

Winchester Chair, Yvette Riley added, "we know in a close contest the 'blues' can swing the result our way so thank you to all who helped with this huge project. **The blue letters really do make such a difference.**"

The feedback that we get though, suggests these letters make a real difference and that the effort is worthwhile.

Newly elected Denmead councillor, Martin Clay, who won by just 188 votes is convinced by the 'blue letters'. He said, "These letters made a significant difference for many residents who were still



Office volunteers stuffing blue envelopes, including record breaker Michael Jackson (in the blue shirt) who addressed 5000 envelopes.