

# FOCUS on St George West

Liberal  
Democrats

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Produced & delivered by local volunteers

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In this edition... EU referendum open letter, election review, campaign updates, St George West news bites

## EU referendum: Let's lead, not leave

Dear Residents

On 23 June most of you face a straight - yet momentous - decision on Britain's future relationship with the European Union: whether to remain or to leave.

By now you will have heard many arguments and statistics making the case for either side.

**If you have not already come to a decision, I am writing to ask you to vote to remain in the EU.**

I want to make the positive case for the EU. I firmly believe that the UK's membership of our continental union is a strength: not just vitally important for ourselves, but also for our fellow Europeans and the wider world.

The EU was born from an attempt to stop the terrible wars that so afflicted our continent in the twentieth century, to allow peace to flourish. Not so long ago, Eastern European countries were our sworn enemies. But we have taken down – not built – walls between us. But the EU has been so successful that peace risks being taken for granted.

We now come together to discuss our differences and work together in many areas that all benefit from collaboration, such as science, the environment and global development. We willingly choose to share some of our nation's sovereignty with other like-minded nations to secure the benefits. EU decisions and laws are our decisions and laws, because the UK helps to make them.

As the critical challenges of climate change, water, food, migration, inequality, terrorism, poverty and disease are ever more global, moving back to a more nation-led approach seems like travel in the wrong direction.

Many other parts of the world are working to emulate the EU because of the model of cooperation it offers – some things are just better done at a continental level, just as some – such as the Paris climate agreement last year – are best done globally.

This is not to say the EU is perfect. It can be bureaucratic. It is undemocratic in places. It has been slow to modernise. It sometimes tries to take powers it should not have.



In a rare show of cross-party unity, the leaders of the Lib Dems, the Green Party, the new Labour Mayor and the head of the 'Bristol Better IN' campaign come together to support remaining in the EU

But all of these valid criticisms apply to other political units, including the UK.

And just like the UK, we should stay together and strive to address these criticisms by leading reform from within, in fact something the UK has done in the EU for decades.

The UK is a proud, outward-facing, internationalist country. We are stronger together, weaker apart. We work with like-minded countries to speak with a louder voice and ensure that we are not pushed around by other powers. Together we can plot a positive direction for the world's future.

**Please don't let others drag the UK out of the EU.**

**Please vote 'Remain' on 23 June.**

Yours sincerely

Ian Townsend

More information:

IN Together → [www.libdems.org.uk/europe](http://www.libdems.org.uk/europe)

StrongerIN → [www.strongerin.co.uk](http://www.strongerin.co.uk)

**Local news all year round - not just at elections**

# Ian Townsend says "Thank you!" to voters of St George West



## A new mayor for Bristol

In the May election the incumbent mayor George Ferguson was defeated by Marvin Rees. Labour gained 7 seats to secure an overall majority on the city council, the first since 2003. The Lib Dems were down 1 seat after unfavourable boundary changes and a number of experienced councillors standing down. The Green Party lost 3 seats and the Conservatives 2 seats.

Ian said: "The clear results from these elections give the Labour Party four years to put their manifesto commitments into action. I wish them well in a what will be a challenge in a difficult financial environment. While George Ferguson

may not have been widely popular in this part of the city, I pay tribute to him for serving as Bristol's first elected mayor and helping to raise our city's profile."

Mayor Rees fulfilled his commitment to a cross-party cabinet as we saw in the previous administration. Councillor Claire Campion-Smith, the previous Lord Mayor, has been appointed as the cabinet member for People, with responsibilities including care provision.

Sue Mountstephens was re-elected for 4 years in the Police & Crime Commissioner election.

## Labour prevail in our ward

In St George West, Labour's Asher Craig was elected as your councillor. Some 400 residents voted for the Liberal Democrats, a similar number to that which voted for the Green Party.

Ian said: "I wish Asher Craig all the best in her new role. I am sure she will work hard as your councillor and have pledged to work with her to move forward on the issues I have campaigned on since last summer. Thanks to all the candidates this was a positive and cordial campaign. I wish them all well for the future."

Ian added: "I also want to thank those residents who put their trust in me to represent you on the council, and for the messages of support I have received since the results. A special thanks goes to those who helped me in the run up to and on

5 May: supporting our campaigns, delivering Focus leaflets, canvassing voters and all the other tasks needed to take part in the election. It has been quite an experience! It has been a privilege to have met so many of you."

## A new role for Ian

Ilan is pleased to become the new chief executive of the Bristol Green Capital Partnership CIC at the end of June. This offers Ian an opportunity to contribute to making our city more sustainable. He has decided to step back from active politics for the time being so he can concentrate on this new challenge.

## What now?

- Consider joining the Lib Dems, adding your voice and enthusiasm to our local campaigns → [www.libdems.org.uk/join](http://www.libdems.org.uk/join)
- Sign up for e-Focus news updates: email [ian.townsend@bristollibdems.org](mailto:ian.townsend@bristollibdems.org)
- Attend regular St George Neighbourhood Forums and Partnership meetings and join a group on issues from wellbeing, the environment and transport → [www.stgeorgenp.org.uk](http://www.stgeorgenp.org.uk)
- Ask public questions at council meetings, start a petition, start or join a campaign group – like the BS5 Secondary Forum on school places.

## East Bristol pool update

After months of questions to the previous Mayor we know there is existing swimming pool under-capacity and that this is likely to worsen in future with a growing local population.

Mayor Marvin Rees' election provides a potential opportunity for progress, particularly given Bristol is to be Capital of Sport in 2017.

The petition has now reached 168 signatories (140 online, 28 paper). This will be presented at an appropriate future council meeting.

Sadly, the old Speedwell building is still derelict and has suffered a spate of fires in recent weeks. There are new proposals to demolish and replace the building with 29 one- and two-bedroom flats → [www.angusmeek.co.uk/speedwellswimmingbaths](http://www.angusmeek.co.uk/speedwellswimmingbaths)

## What now?

Sign the petition → [tinyurl.com/ebrispool](http://tinyurl.com/ebrispool)

Join the 'Friends of Speedwell swimming pool' Facebook group for updates

## Bank closure update

Lloyds Bank closed in April. We were unable to stop or slow down the closure process, so now Church Road lacks a bank branch.

The cash point was removed and there are no plans to bring one back. Personal banking customers can use post offices, and Lloyds have plans to extend this to business customers in future. In theory, financial services could be made available in other premises, such as our library, or perhaps Tesco.

Lloyds owns the site's freehold, which we understand will be sold on the market. It remains to be seen what will take its place.

Reportedly the 'big 6' banks closed 600 branches in the year to April 2016. The current access to banking rules - which require a 12-week consultation period - are to be independently reviewed by the end of this year → [tinyurl.com/bankreview](http://tinyurl.com/bankreview)

**What now?** You can submit evidence to the review about the local experience by 29 July → [responses@accesstobankingreview.uk](mailto:responses@accesstobankingreview.uk)

## Passing of Patrick Hassell

Sadly, former Lib Dem Hillfields councillor Patrick Hassell passed away suddenly on 13 May. Patrick regularly delivered in the ward and helped on election day at the library polling station, as well as standing in Frome Vale ward.

Ian said: "Patrick always offered me and the team kind and thoughtful support, such as on the swimming pool campaign. It was such a shock to hear the sad news only a few days after he had sent messages of encouragement after the election and offered to help deliver this very leaflet. My condolences go out to his family, friends and former colleagues."

## Mayor's first speech

In his first Council speech, Mayor Rees pledged support for a zero carbon Bristol by 2050 and the Hartcliffe recycling centre, affordable homes, a new race and gender pay gap commission, a Bristol corporate social responsibility charter, a Living Wage partnership with employers, and a review of 20mph and parking zones with councillors and neighbourhood partnerships.

Watch the speech in full → [bit.ly/1Y5jRMC](http://bit.ly/1Y5jRMC)

## St George West news bites

### More billboard site improvements

Thanks to St George in Bloom and local volunteers, the Church Rd's 'billboard' site has new fence panels and some lovely new plants.

### Neighbourhood partnership updates

The next Neighbourhood Forum is on 9 August at 7pm. For an update on May's Forum, see → [www.stgeorgenp.org.uk](http://www.stgeorgenp.org.uk)

You could make a real difference to our community by joining one of the several Neighbourhood Partnership groups: see the NP website for details.

Our Council neighbourhood officer, Gill Calloway, now has a Facebook page, check it out for information on the new Citizens Charter and other local updates of interest → [www.facebook.com/Gillcallowaybcc](http://www.facebook.com/Gillcallowaybcc)

### 20 mph & community speedwatch

Speeding is a major issue on the doorstep. I have heard reports that 20 mph is being enforced in our area, so please do take care.

Residents with particular areas of concerns can take part in 'community speedwatch', where you are trained to operate a speed-gun under police supervision and speeding drivers receive sent letters. For more info → [www.stgeorgenp.org.uk/speedwatch-2](http://www.stgeorgenp.org.uk/speedwatch-2)