

Chair's Report 2019

Where to begin? I thought last year was quite eventful!

Firstly I want to thank everyone who has helped in whatever way to help make this year a success.

This year we had by elections in Whitefoot and Evelyn wards, coming a very respectable second in Whitefoot. Thanks to our candidates, Max Brockbank and Bunmi Wajero for flying the Lib Dem flag.

This was swiftly followed by the European Elections, in which we delivered thousands of leaflets and put up dozens of stakeboards, and, as I may have mentioned before, we topped the poll in Lewisham, thereby helping to elect three Liberal Democrat MEPs for London region.

These successes have undoubtedly contributed to a surge in membership, which at around 850 is now at an all-time high. We have also gained more than 100 registered supporters.

We are now of course working towards the Mayoral and London Assembly elections in May next year and had the privilege of having Siobhan Benita speak to us at the end of last year, setting out her vision for London. Our own Ade Fatukasi is standing for the London Assembly seat of Greenwich & Lewisham.

All the while of course we are aware that a General Election could be upon us with little warning, but nonetheless one where there is everything to play for. Our three constituency candidates, Chris Maines, Bobby Dean and Alex Feakes are in place and have started some ambitious campaigning.

This year we have tried to develop our capacity by establishing a number of sub-groups of the executive, Campaigns, Fundraising, Events & Membership Development and Communications. I want to thank everyone involved in these for their hard work.

This year sadly one of our long-standing members passed away. Bill Town was a founder member of the SDP and a past chair of Lewisham Liberal Democrats. I only knew Bill for a short time but these words by our treasurer, Mark Bennett, seemed to capture something of the Bill I knew:

“When counting beans it is a Good Thing to remember that it’s people who make a campaign. It was an honour to have known Bill and it will be a pleasure to remember his optimism, commitment, thoughtfulness and chuckle.”

We have achieved a lot in 2019 and it may not be over yet but I am confident that in 2020 we will continue to make strides towards a Liberal Lewisham and a Liberal London.

Many times this year I have felt woefully out of my depth but every time I have found the executive members supportive and encouraging and that has made it a pleasure to be your chair for 2019.

Peter George

October 2019