



Young Liberals Conference - Winter 2017
Sunday 29th January: Executive Reports

Chair

Charlie Kingsbury

Chair's Report

Winter 2017

The role of Chair is incredibly varied depending on the changing needs of Young Liberals and its Executive. At its least exciting it is concerned with solving operational and administrative problems that often crop up in organisations (including our own). At its most interesting, it can involve anything from working with other officers to pioneer new approaches to campaigning, to policy, or to develop positions on current affairs, to meeting with members of the party to develop common strategies or achieve common goals.

Objectives

I set out at the start of our term to make sure that as an Executive we set ourselves a small number of objectives which we would use to guide our decisions throughout the year. The idea behind this was to give us achievable objectives by which we could measure collective success (or failure) especially when it came to setting a budget. Here are the goals we agreed on:

- a. Rebrand
- b. Young and Winning
- c. Diversity
- d. Reach
- e. Financial Autonomy

These goals will feature quite heavily in the below reports by our officers, and we all hope you consider them to be worthy objectives too.

Rebrand

The rebrand originally started as an idea I put forward to our conference in Edinburgh last year. I claimed it would be more than just a name change: it would be a sharpening of focus for us as well, and improving on our look so that we would present ourselves as more professional. Our goal was to have the lion's share of the necessary changes made in place by January, and in keeping with this all our social media has now changed to reflect our new name.

We're now working with the party to change our website, taking it as an opportunity to make it look better, and improve on its structure.

Young and Winning

Young and Winning was an idea I started floating during my last term on the Executive, with training delivered at Activate and Party Conference geared towards preparing young people with the skills necessary to go out and win elections.

This year, we're launching it properly, with a dedicated pot of money set aside with the aim of helping young people across the United Kingdom win wherever they are. Our training too continues to focus on the development of skills necessary to play vital roles in winning elections, whether you're a candidate or not.

Working closely with Ryan on this, we're hoping to host **six** Young and Winning Action Weekends this year, with two already confirmed in Cardiff and Ceredigion on the 1st and 8th of April.

Administrative Review

Since the start of our term, I've asked our officers to submit weekly reports of their activity to improve internal communication. Despite this Young Liberals has unfortunately suffered a few administrative set-backs early this term. This month I've been addressing the shortfalls in the way Young Liberals operates, which has involved talking to states to fix a number of problems that they face, and ensure improved engagement between the states and the federal mother organisation.

Federal Board

With the conclusion of elections to the various internal bodies of the party (during which we tried to support as many young and student candidates as we could on an individual basis), the Executive elected me to represent Young Liberals on the party's Federal Board so I could fulfill one of my few constitutional responsibilities: to be the primary spokesperson for Young Liberals both within and outside the party. Unfortunately its first meeting fell on the same date as an important Young Liberals strategy meeting - steps have been taken to ensure no such clash happens in the future.

Chatbox Review

Most of you will probably be aware of our Facebook group: the National Young Liberals Chatbox. As soon as this Executive took office, one of our promises to you was a review of the direction the Chatbox is going. The intention behind it is so that everyone gets an opportunity to have their say on how the Chatbox operates so that I can put together a report to show to and advise the admin team. The Review will continue until the 5th of February

HQ

Our relationship with the Party's HQ is vital in achieving our objectives, which is why our officers all met with their HQ counterparts in London. I had the opportunity to talk at length with Tim Gordon, the Chief Executive, where Dylan and I discussed a number of proposals to build into existing party structures some ideas that would help us engage with our members.

A few of us also met with Natalie Chindipha to talk about how we can improve on diversity in Young Liberals where it was agreed we'd support and promote training and other sessions hosted by the Party geared towards underrepresented groups in Young Liberals and the Liberal Democrats.

Fundraising

As part of our goal to improve our financial autonomy, we've set some targets (which you can view on the website by clicking on the budget). It was clear at the start of the year that each portfolio would have to take some budget cuts in order for us to reduce the size of our deficit. The amount of money we make in a year simply isn't enough for us to be able to do everything that we want for members.

In the next few months we intend to launch a *Friends of Young Liberals* fundraising scheme targeted at party members who aren't Young Liberals. In addition, we'll be looking at commercial advertising, ticketed dinners and such in the future.

Accountability

Holding officers to account is a significant part of the democratic fabric of Young Liberals. At present, anyone can come and sit in on our Executive meetings which are held every other month. That's not a feasible option for many in our organisation, and neither is the opportunity to ask questions only twice a year at Conference or Activate.

Starting from next month, every month when there isn't an Executive meeting we'll be giving members an opportunity to participate in a Q&A with the Executive. Members will be able to submit a question to the Executive, and at the end of the month we'll publish a list of answers.

Naturally, members can ask questions at any time of their choosing, but I believe it'd be beneficial for us to have formal processes of accountability throughout the year that supplement this.

Vice Chair

Jack Hughes & Dylan Morris

October

- Created and implemented the new Chatbox Code Of Conduct.
- Produced a statement from the Young Liberals, calling for Baroness Tonge's resignation.
- Created an online calendar to record the Young Liberals activity over the period of this years executive.
- Campaigned in Witney parliamentary by-election.

November

- Liaising with members on merchandise they would like to see, before getting the best price (merchandise available for York conference).
- Produced a response to a letter submitted by a member on the topic of diversity.
- Campaigned in Newport local elections and the Richmond Park parliamentary by-election.

December

- Sought out a returning officer for the LYE elections and the YL by-elections.
- Produced potential designs of merchandise

January

- Attendance of Conference!
- Election of two new moderators to the Chatbox.

General activities

- Moderating the Chatbox daily, to ensure the best platform for all Young Liberals to debate and discuss topical subjects.
- Discipline of members abusing the Chatbox.
- Liaising with the executive and managing internal communications.
- Minuting of executive meetings.
- Producing weekly reports.
- Engaging with members/addressing any concerns of the Young Liberals.
- Regular contact with the East Midlands Executive.
- Regular contact with HQ staff, in terms of training and advice.

Moving forwards

- Implement further changes to the Chatbox, based on feedback from the coming review.
- Fulfill our election promises to provide more international opportunities for sister party members as-well as YL members.
- Work closely with our Welfare Officer, Scott in order to fulfill our election promise of making the Young Liberals a more diverse youth wing.

Treasurer

Rachel Edwards & Stuart Wheatcroft

Progress to date

- Gained access to YL's five bank accounts through change of mandate forms, begun process of rationalisation by closing accounts
- Drafted three years worth of overdue accounts; the Executive has approved these accounts and they will be submitted to the Electoral Commission shortly
- Drafted and published a budget for the year, monitored spending against this budget
- Driven fundraising efforts - produced standing order forms, recruited fundraising volunteers, created a Paypal account for online fundraising

Future plans

- Reshape the role to avoid repeating history - agree an SLA with HQ to handle our future financial reporting responsibilities
- Lead a constitutional review to ensure our Constitution complies with party rules and relevant laws
- Submit a constitutional amendment to make Treasurer a position appointed on the basis of experience and ability to ensure compliance with relevant legal and accounting requirements

- Consolidate the organisation's finances and reduce the currently excessive number of bank accounts
- Drive fundraising by expanding the fundraising volunteers team and facilitating fundraising events

Campaigns Officer

Ryan Lytwyn

Social Media – updated strategy

Young Liberals statements

Following important political events - such as the Budget or a statement on Brexit from the Prime Minister - I have been drafting statements on behalf of YL. Working with the Communications Officer, these have been published on our website, Twitter and Facebook page. The two most recent statements are our response to the Autumn Statement and our response to Theresa May's January 2017 speech outlining her Brexit plan. These statements are designed to reflect, primarily, YL policy as agreed at conference, and Liberal Democrat policy.

Social media presence

In partnership with the Communications Officer, I have been running our social media accounts. The aim has been to publish updates on YL campaigns, as well as promoting our policies and candidates. I worked with Liberal Democrat HQ during the Witney and Richmond Park by-elections to co-ordinate our Twitter output.

Social media advertising

I have set up a new initiative where YL advertises our social media presence in the aftermath of national publicity for the Liberal

Democrats. This involves paying Facebook and Twitter to target our advertisements onto the timelines of young people with an interest in politics. Our advertisement always includes a link to joining the Liberal Democrats. The most recent advertising campaign was in December 2016 after the election of Sarah Olney.

Action Days: YOUNG AND WINNING

The purpose of Action Days

The Action Days will involve Young Liberals from across the UK travelling to a region in the UK to participate in canvassing for a young Liberal Democrat candidate. This is part of the new YL “Young and Winning” initiative, supporting young Liberal Democrat candidates. Transport costs will be subsidised up to £30 per person, and training will be provided for each Action Day.

The location and timing of our Action Days

We have budgeted for up to 7 Action Day campaigns across England and Wales, with the Scottish Young Liberals taking responsibility for their own Action Days. 2 of these Action Days will be held in Wales, with up to a further 5 held in England. All 7 will be held on weekends in the run up to the council elections in May.

Update on Action Days

I have been in contact with Cardiff and Ceredigion in Wales. We will be holding Action Days in both regions, with Cardiff held on the first weekend of April and Ceredigion on the second weekend of April. I will shortly be publishing events for both of these Action Days on Facebook and inviting Young Liberals to attend.

Campaign Themes

The 3 Themes

I have developed 3 campaign themes for YL to focus on in the coming year: Brexit, mental health and housing. These will feature in our Freshers campaigns later in the year, once the details of each have been developed. Currently, the outline is -

Brexit

Young Liberals will focus on defending the parts of the EU that most benefit young people, such as Erasmus.

Mental health

The Coalition did some fantastic work on mental health, and I am keen to promote that and make further progress on it. I have been in contact with a member of the new Liberal Democrat group on healthcare – we plan to work with them to draft motions on mental health to bring to Spring Conference and Autumn Conference.

Housing

Last year we ran a Freshers campaign about rents and I intend to build on this, with a particular focus on increasing the supply of housing to bring down rents.

Planning for Freshers 2017

Update

I have reviewed the report on last year's Freshers campaigns and intend to apply the conclusions to this year's campaigns. I aim to make further progress in the coming months, with the outline decided by March.

Policy Officer

Ciaran Morrissey

General activities

- Since taking office I've been working on streamlining the policy book and making it easier to understand and more accessible to members. This is an ongoing project, likely to continue until around March. It's fairly laborious as not all of the policies are correctly dated.
- Have chased up members of the FPC to find out when their meetings are, as I'm supposed to be an attendee. I've not had a response and so have tried again with the new FPC, but, again, I've not had a response or invitation so watch this space.
- Submitted policy to Conference so as to give the YL exec a mandate to argue in favour or against nuclear deterrent at Spring Conference.
- Worked with my policy committee in submitting policy to Federal Conference. We currently have a vacancy on the committee, so please let me know if you'd like to know more about the role.
- Held a policy webinar with Sal Brinton to shed some light on YL and the party's policymaking process

Working with other portfolios

- Devised a constitutional amendment in collaboration with Nate so as to share the burden of organising the policy-related events at Conference.
- Worked with Ryan on the topic of campaigns, away days, and Young and Winning, since I've got some relevant experience of recent, intense campaigns in Newcastle and Sunderland.
- Finally, Nate and I were in some very provisional talks about getting some of the Sunderland campaigners to come to Conference and talk about what it takes to win an election as a young person, but that idea fell by the wayside for factors beyond either of our control.

Areas for improvement

- There was one member who needed advice on a motion and, due to university deadlines, conference deadlines, and the Sandhill by-election, I didn't give him the advice on time.
- I have not attended as many executive meetings as I should have.
- I need to further chase up the FPC to ensure I am present at their meetings.

Targets

- Attend all meetings of the YL executive
- Attend all meetings of the FPC and agitate for YL's policy objectives at those meetings
- Complete the restructuring of the policy book and publish the revision ASAP
- Assist members with developing policy for Activate and clearly signpost the timeline for this

International Officer

Hannah Bettsworth & Andrew Martin

International Report

We took on the International role in an acting capacity as soon as we were elected on October 9 as the previous position holder had disappeared from contact at the end of August and was unreachable and urgent tasks needed completing.

LYMEC

LYMEC = European Liberal Youth umbrella organisation, includes Young Liberals and our sister parties in other European Countries. Linked to ALDE party.

ALDE Party = The political party comprising liberal parties across Europe, including the Liberal Democrats. Linked to but not the same as ALDE Group, the associated group in the European Parliament that also includes members of the European Democratic Party.

We managed to put together a self-funding team of 4 people to go to LYMEC Congress ahead of the deadline on October 10 (the day after the election results were announced!). We also managed to put together a resolution (motion) on Brexit by the deadline on October 14. This resolution was based around the motion approved at Lib Dem Conference in September. We added text suggested by Ógra Fianna Fáil (Ireland) and the European Liberal Students' Network, as well as securing the support of Jonge Democraten (D66, Netherlands). Unfortunately, when it came to the Congress itself, a some youth wings in favour of a Hard Brexit (chiefly Jong VLD, Belgium) employed

a tactic of proposing the deletion of almost all the lines of our resolution individually and separately, creating a long unproductive debate that resulted in the motion failing. However, it must be noted that rather than committing LYMEC against our position, the result was that LYMEC did not (and still does not) have a position on Brexit.

We are in discussions with LYMEC currently about cooperating to put together a resolution that most members of the organisation can agree on. We will form a common position with Alliance Youth and Ógra Fianna Fáil on this.

Andrew attended ALDE Congress on behalf of LYMEC in December. LYMEC had a lot of success at this Congress, working with several organisations to block an amendment which sought to remove the reference to girls as regards abortion rights (i.e. an attempt to prevent ALDE committing itself to support abortion rights for under 18s). We also helped block an amendment by the Liberal Democrats which sought to water down support for the sharing economy.

Young Liberals also sent 2 participants to the ALDE Winter Academy in December.

LYMEC's next Congress is expected to be around the 12 May and if you have any suggestions regarding resolutions (policy motions) you'd like LYMEC to adopt please contact us. We don't yet know when we'll have the appropriate information in order to be able to open applications to participate.

IFLRY

(IFLRY = Worldwide liberal youth organisation, linked to Liberal International.)

We sent 3 participants and provided an expert to a seminar on the refugee crisis. The seminar was organised by JD in The Hague involving 5 European and 5 MENA (Middle East/North Africa) Young Liberal organisations.

IFLRY's General Assembly was held in Amman in December. We were unable to send any participants for financial reasons (it costs hundreds for flights in addition to participation fees).

It is appropriate for us to inform you that IFLRY no-conned Ab

Brightman, who was one of their vice-presidents, at their General Assembly in Amman. Ab had been out of contact for several months in addition to having ceased to perform her duties. It would be inappropriate for us to say any more about this situation specifically, but we are happy to answer wider questions about IFLRY's Bureau (board) and how it operates. It would be better to submit these to us by email.

Liberal International New Manifesto

The Liberal International are in the process of putting together a new liberal manifesto, into which the Liberal Democrats are having an input. Andrew attended the meeting in Liberal Democrat HQ in which he particularly emphasised the need to include references to generational equality (including the role of housing within this).

Other

Hannah attended C's (Spanish) Youth Conference in Spain and supported the work of other liberal partners in explaining the constitutional procedures of Liberal Youth Organisations.

YL members attended a seminar organised by the German liberal students (JuLis). We are hoping to talk to countries about helping their election campaigns this year, particularly in Germany but we may also talk to our sister parties in the Netherlands.

We'll keep you informed about opportunities to participate in International Events. If you have any requests or suggestions we're happy to take them.

Communications Officer

Aria Babu

As Communications Officer most of you are very aware of what I do because it's most of the public facing stuff. Unlike the others, I don't really have big projects, just a series of small ones.

I send out most of the emails, tweets, posts on the Facebook page and updates to the website and now I manage the new Snapchat too.

In addition, I have been trying to sort out the website. With the rest of the rebrand, the website will also be changing. However we have a couple of things that need to be sorted out with Nationbuilder (the provider) and the main party vis a vis spending and what exactly we have access to. The aim is for the website to be a lot nicer than it currently is.

I also admin the Chatbox, which has its problems but in my opinion (and I may be alone in this) is running as smoothly as one can expect of a political discussion forum. There has been an updated code of conduct and we've chosen a couple more moderators.

I've been dealing with Campus Society, a new app that wants to link students to the things they're interested in. I've had a meeting with them and they're quite eager to have The Young Liberals on board. So I'm hoping to see if that works, and if people want that.

At the Richmond by-election I made the graphic that we put out as a paid ad, which was easily one of our most viewed posts on Facebook.

Ryan and I have talked about using that again in the future if we see an opportunities that we think we might be able to attract new members.

Events Officer

Nate Isaacson

Focussing on my manifesto promises

I've made good on my manifesto promise to subsidise tickets further - it may not seem like this is the case from the price, however the actual cost of conference itself has increased due to the difference in accommodation standard and venue standard.

I've also made good on my promise to try and make events safer and smoother for all members. This has been achieved by introducing the new code of conduct for all of our events and by constantly referring to the guidelines from the party on how to effectively safeguard our guests.

Consulting Conference Committee could have gone much better than I had hoped. Part of this is fault from me being too pro-active in trying to organise the conference quickly in the relatively small space of time that I had from taking office to implementing changes and booking venues. This will change for Activate and I intend to have spoken about it with the attending conference committee members at this conference. It was also a problem because one of the state chairs proved unnecessarily hard to communicate with and there was little to no cooperation on their part until the committee was readjusted and I

am now confident that we have a good team there. Special mention to Huw for being so persistent and wonderful at keeping me on track and focussed on events.

I have improved event advertising by utilising facebook's event mechanism and by creating new brand logos for all of our events. This will help us to advertise to members that are not yet integrated with our processes and will hopefully further boost turnout.

Winter Conference

As you can tell, Winter Conference was organised pretty successfully. We outsold the venue that we got, and have a roughly 80% increase in attendance for this conference compared to last year's conference.

There has been some mishaps with the motions and the deadlines. This was due to me receiving only one motion by the deadline. The current motions were last minute drafts brought to conference by members at my request.

The problems with the size of our venue this time were almost unavoidable and I apologise to members that did not manage to gain access to this conference due to the ticket shortage. I understand that this was an exciting agenda to participate in however there is only so much I can do when our sales were so poor in the first month of organising conference. I urge all members to purchase tickets much further in advance for activate to avoid similar disappointment.

I would like to specially mention Vicky Nevin for being a fantastic help to me during organising this conference, and as much as she likes to tell everyone that she's just doing her job, I really do think that without her support and indeed the support of a lot of you that I would have

been able to do the job as well.

Activate

No formal time or date of Manchester's activate this year has been set. It will more than likely take place at the end of July as did last year's. Conference Committee will begin discussions on Activate at the end of this conference.

Conference Crash

Again, no formal details on conference crash are available yet - more details will be made known to all of our members as soon as I have the relevant information myself. Again, Conference Committee will begin deliberations on Conference Crash at the end of this Conference.

Federal Conference in York

The federal conference in York is coming up in March. I will be attending this conference but some changes to how we operate at federal conferences need to be known to all members.

The first and most important of these is that the stall is not a place for all members to sit and eat, there is a designated zone for that, and this will make sure that we keep our exhibition stall open for people to come and find out what we are working on.

The second is that there will be no reception this time at York Conference. This is due to a large, albeit budget cut to the Events

Portfolio - as much as I would love to give all of you free wine until I went bankrupt, that is not a viable option.

The third is that our fringe this spring conference is heavily geared towards members of the wider party, and specifically on the question of our relationship with the wider party that can sometimes be seen as quite strained.

Federal Conference in Bournemouth

The only details that I know for Bournemouth conference is that there will be an exhibitor's stall and there will be at least one fringe event.

Commercial Opportunities work

Due to the large budget cut we have all had to take we are working on generating income through a commercial advertising means. This project is in very early stages and may not even come into action until after this term is over. If I am not the Young Liberals events officer this time next year I will be happy to continue to work on the project to make sure it is done.

Rebrand work

The rebrand is up, the visual side of it is my baby so I hope you like it. We're trying now to get as many resources to you as possible via a new google drive, it may take some time to have all of the details refined but I hope to have that with you as soon as possible.

Special shoutout to facebook for denying our name change request 4

times.

I'm about to start work on the website with Aria, our fantastic comms officer, we hope to have that finished for you soon.

Welfare and Access Officer

Scott Emery

When starting my term as Welfare and Accessibility Officer in November I managed to get funding for two first aiders on the exec to help react to any medical situations at any Young Liberal conferences or events. Myself and Aria have since completed the course and became qualified first aiders. As well as this I got funding for a first aid kit and sexual health provisions which will be at every conference and we will attempt to bring them to executive meetings and action days.

One of the priorities I set myself in my role was to tackle discrimination in YL and provide a more welcoming atmosphere. A few weeks back I set out a consultation on discrimination in a bid to provide a clearer picture. While I didn't receive many results there was some information which I will be looking into, but if anyone has any issues or general feelings about being a YL member then please contact me, I'm interested in hearing what you have to say. I was also instated as one of the new chatbox admins and I feel like we are continuing the improvements that were happening towards the end of last year.

In terms of party-wide stuff, I have been involved in a few investigations and I also helped out with the Alderdice Review. Mainly just gathering evidence for both. I've also campaigned in a few areas including Newport, Witney and, of course, Richmond. I am also now an accredited trainer within the party and am looking to use that to benefit YL by running a training session at Manchester conference.

I've been liaising with Jeanne Tarrant, Pastoral Officer, to help on the

new improved code of conduct for conferences and events run by YL. The results are some fair, clearer guidelines and a general improvement to a lot of the practical behind-the-scenes stuff at Conference.

As well as this I have had to deal with a few personal issues with members as would be expected. Please don't hesitate in contacting me by whatever means if you feel worried about anything that's happened to you as a YL member or if you just need someone to listen.

England

Declan Stones

It has been a busy period for the Young Liberals in England since I took office in October following victory in the By Election.

- I have attended all the English Council and English Council Executive Meetings since my appointment in which I have submitted reports to each meeting and represented the Young Liberals co-ordinately. If anyone would like the minutes from any meeting or the copy of the Young Liberals England reports to the EC or ECE, don't be hesitant to ask.
- I have communicated with the Main Party Regional Party Chairs and fellow members of the English Council and English Council Executive on a regular basis, including the former Chair, Steve Jarvis and the new Chair of the English Party, Liz Leffman. The purpose of this being to get the greatest possible support from the English Party for Youth Activity.
- We have sorted out the Branches of England on the Young Liberals website with the support of the federal Communications Officer in which I contacted past and current branch/society Chairs to get up to date contact information. I am pleased to announce we have several new branches formed throughout the country and existing branches have also grown.

- We have recently obtained up to date Membership Lists for the regions of England which have been given to my team of Regional Chairs.
- I appointed temporary Regional Chairs of the Yorkshire and Humber Region. I also have appointed members to sit on various committees namely conference, campaigns and policy to represent the English Party. In which I sat myself for a brief period on the conference committee.
- Young Liberals England has also recently updated the signatories on our English bank account.
- We have continued work with the Branch Development Fund with a number of projects being funded; I am encouraging Regional Chairs to take the lead on organising events in their regions in both campaigns and socials.
- At the most recent Young Liberals Executive Meeting we discussed potential locations for action days to fit with our priority “Young and Winning”. Potential sites in England include Oxfordshire, Cambridge, Westmorland & Lonsdale, Durham, and Bath, in which we will get support from the Campaigns Officer.
- I am soon going to set up a new system of Branch/Regional reports which are to begin in February. Reports will be on a monthly basis from Regional Chairs and on a Bi – Monthly basis from Society/Branch Chairs.
- Since now we have a new Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officers. Young Liberals England Elections are going to be held ASAP. At the elections we will elect a new Young Liberal England Executive this includes elections for Chair, Vice Chairs (Membership and Campaigns), National Members and Regional Chairs for specific areas of England. If anyone would like any information on the upcoming elections don't be hesitant to contact me.