



# **ENGLISH YOUNG LIBERALS**

## **GM OFFICER REPORTS**

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### **William Tench**

#### **Events Committee Rep & English Young Liberals Chair**

I took office as English Chair earlier than planned - succeeding Jack Worrall, who became ineligible due to election to federal position, in November 2020. The initial two months meant that I had to focus on a number of things that I had not anticipated. The most pressing was ensuring that each region was compliant with the new English constitution, which came into effect on the 1st of January. As part of this, each region had to have their own constitution. By my election, just two regions (North East and East Midlands) had constitutions written and little progress had been made elsewhere. I supported Chairs in writing constitutions, and wrote a template to be adapted. This meant every region had a constitution by the deadline, and they are currently in the process of being formally ratified in Regional General Meetings.

I also had to take charge of our English Council delegation for the December meeting. Per my campaign commitment, I held a pre-briefing meeting with YL English Council Delegates (including those elected from their region) and then produced a briefing document beforehand to ensure that every young delegate could contribute as much as possible.

The majority of the rest of my activities are covered in the table below, which covers the progress I have made towards my manifesto commitments.

<b>Commitment</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Work closely with Regional Chairs to advertise and organise for Regional Conferences.	Have not yet occurred but will work with closer at the time. Focus on November AGMs as that is where positions are elected.  Have begun preparing a template presentation on how regions

	<p>can engage with YL (inspired by one which Kian Hearnshaw delivered as East Midlands Chair) for regional chairs to adapt and use at conference fringes and have secured a small budget for bookings and refreshments.</p>
<p>Push for Regional Conferences to be included in the Conference Access Scheme.</p>	<p>Secured £150 in the budget for a fund to support Young Liberals attending their regional conferences.</p>
<p>Increase the number of Young Liberals elected as English Council delegates.</p>	<p>Held individual meetings with regional chairs where we set targets for each region.</p> <p>Encouraged Young Liberals to apply for co-options to vacant Young Liberal positions, and assisted where I could. Better communication with regions and regional chairs would have made this more nationally impactful, however.</p>
<p>Aim to have three YL members elected to the English Council Executive in the 2021 ECE elections.</p>	<p>N/A, but will start to talk to Young Liberals elected to English Council in the near future about their interest and work on plans to maximise their chances of being elected.</p> <p>In November, we were lucky to see Kian Hearnshaw, Jack Worrall, Katharine Macy, Oliver Craven and Rebecca Procter elected to the English Council Executive. Thus, I may revise my target and be more ambitious about what we can achieve this year.</p>
<p>Protect the money we get from the English Party, by ensuring that reports to English Council Executive highlight its impact and benefit to YL and the wider party.</p>	<p>Attended English Council Executive with a report that seemed to be well received, especially highlighting the success of our campaigns work.</p> <p>Have started to build networks with ECE members, but COVID-19 has made this more difficult. However, there does seem to be a strong mood to protect the YL budget as much as possible within the English Party. A new settlement on YL funding is being sought which better balances between State and Federal parties where the financial burden comes from.</p> <p>Kian Hearnshaw's election as English Vice Chair and Jack Worrall's to the English Finance and Administration Committee give us extra seats around the table, and their extensive social connections within the English Party have been a huge help to EYL.</p>
<p>Increase and improve social media output, to supplement the federal account.</p>	<p>We have re-orientated the EYL account to primarily focusing on promoting English branches and the work of local councillors. The Federal Executive recently agreed that state accounts will also be signal-boosting candidates in internal elections and selections.</p>

	<p>We live tweeted the most recent English Council meeting, particularly highlighting YL contributions. This provides much needed transparency to both the English Party and to our elected reps.</p> <p>Impressions have improved by 94% in the three months (Nov, Dec, Jan) since my election compared to the three months immediately prior (Aug, Sep, Oct).</p>
<p>Increase communication with a bi-monthly email newsletter - which includes minutes from Exec meetings, and success stories from branches and young elected officials.</p>	<p>Upon consultation, this idea has been scrapped - people get enough emails from the Liberal Democrats.</p> <p>Our increased Twitter presence, the Branch Newsletter started by Elizabeth Bernard and the following of the Federal example of posting minutes in Young Liberal Forum achieve the aims set out by this commitment.</p> <p>I also did a 'report back' on the YL blog after English Council, which will be continued for the next two meetings.</p>
<p>Create a Twitter list of regional parties and accredited branches.</p>	<p>This has been done - we regularly use the Twitter list to amplify our branches successes, campaigns and events.</p> <p><a href="https://twitter.com/i/lists/1323212609798234112">https://twitter.com/i/lists/1323212609798234112</a></p>
<p>Improve the English section of the website - including links to regional party constitutions.</p>	<p>This work is currently in progress: every region now has a page - in various stages of development. However, Young Liberals can now find their regional constitution. This project is being undertaken by Fergus Ustianowski, the Vice Chair.</p> <p>Regional Chairs now have profiles on the website, in a similar way to the Federal Executive. This was published promptly at midnight on January 1st, the handover.</p> <p>The next stage will be to improve the landing page and use feedback to improve region pages.</p>
<p>Add an addendum to the style guide for English Party only material (for example, the logo).</p>	<p>This has not been achieved. The English Liberal Democrats are currently rebranding as the Liberal Democrats in England, and taking a navy colour scheme. We will follow this closely to align as much as possible with our state party.</p>
<p>Invite the Accessibility, Diversity and Standards Officer and the BAME Officer to every EYL Executive meeting.</p>	<p>This has been done, and has been a great help to us. The new BAME Officer will be invited when elected.</p> <p>Katharine gave diversity training to regional chairs in the handover period.</p>
<p>Work with Regional Chairs to increase the number of underrepresented voices in Regional Executives.</p>	<p>Regional Executives are currently being co-opted, but there is clearly still work to do. We had a discussion set aside in EYL Executive especially set out on how we can ensure we get a diverse range of applications.</p>

	<p>After seeing a lack of applications from women and nonbinary people, I have spoken to Janey Little (Diversity Committee Women's Rep) in an attempt to improve.</p>
<p>Seek balance in English appointments to Federal committees, where possible within the makeup of the Executive.</p>	<p>This has sadly not been possible due to the Executive being all male.</p>
<p>Use HQ's diversity calendar to ensure there is an appropriate and timely tweet from the EYL account on all faith, cultural, liberation and memorial days.</p>	<p>This has occurred, though Katharine Macy's YL diversity calendar has been used instead as more extensive. I usually schedule the tweets for the following month toward the end of each month, ensuring that tweets go out in a timely manner.</p> <p>I would like to see how we can improve the content, and highlight the voices of the communities we are celebrating more, as well as add a more educational dimension.</p>
<p>Allow people to register interest in becoming substitute English Council delegates; ensuring there is a go-to list in order to field a full slate.</p>	<p>This has not yet occurred. I do not yet have Typeform access due to ongoing issues.</p> <p>However, this is low priority due to the next English Council meeting not being until the summer. If Typeform access is not fixed by then, Thom Campion has been a great help in doing Typeforms.</p> <p>For the November English Council meeting, I was not in office long enough to put this in place. Substitutes were thus chosen by the classical 'ad-hoc' method. However, both substitutes were from groups underrepresented in the English Council.</p>
<p>Have a friendly competition between Regional Chairs for who can set-up the most new branches and have the most action days for the 2021 local elections.</p>	<p>I had forgotten about this until doing this review! This will be brought into place!</p>
<p>Continue to invite one member of the Federal YL Exec to each EYL Executive to brief Regional Chairs about their work.</p>	<p>This has been done - Joel Punwani attended our February meeting and Thom Campion will be invited to our next meeting.</p> <p>Additionally, Elizabeth Bernard is attending as a permanent guest in her capacity as co-Membership and Branch Development Officer.</p>

## **Fergus Ustianowski**

### **English Vice Chair, Campaigns Committee Rep & Western Counties Chair**

After taking office on 1<sup>st</sup> Jan, I created a constitution with help from EYL. We had our General Meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> Feb where 16 people turned up. Our executive were elected in except Gloucester rep which the position is still vacant. Our first executive meeting will be 16<sup>th</sup> Feb where we will discuss moving forward as a region.

As Vice Chair of EYL, I have assisted William in updating and improving the EYL webpage and putting information on the website for the regions and assisting in the EYL executive meetings and agenda. I will continue to assist and help in any way I can.

I am also sitting on the YL Campaigns committee as the EYL rep. We have been working on Young and Winning, the YL support for YL members standing in elections. If you do know anyone who is running in elections and a YL member please get them to sign up to Y&W. There are grants and training to help candidates. Also helping with national campaigns like no detriment Now and Erasmus+.

## **Luke Jeffery**

### **Devon and Cornwall Chair**

Despite being so early into the new terms for the regional chairs, I think that I can already point to progress being made in Devon and Cornwall. Firstly, I'd like to appreciate the level of engagement in the region with YL, as 23 out of our 85 members voted in our election in October. I put this down to work done previously in DCYL to engage with university societies in the region, and I'm very pleased to see such a high rate of engagement amongst our members.

In terms of the progress which has been made already during this term, the first win for DCYL was the agreement I have secured with the Regional Executive to co-opt a second YL member of the Regional Executive. I hope this will really help the Regional Party's engagement with younger members and ensure that YL voices are placed as close to the decision making as possible. Secondly, work has been underway with the new Regional Development Officer to provide training to local parties on how they can make themselves as welcoming and inviting to younger members as possible. Sadly, due to a lack of take-up amongst local parties this has had to be postponed, but I hope after the May elections the demand will be there for this again, when local parties will have more of a chance to focus on other issues beyond the elections. In the meantime I am working on proposals for restructuring how YL organises itself within the region, as having only 85 members over a geographically large area causes issues for branch formation. I hope to come to a solution which will bring areas together to hopefully achieve the critical mass of members needed for successful branches. This of course comes with problems as ideally those areas would be able to organise themselves, but I

worry that without a new plan that my aim of furthering branch creation in the region will not be feasible. I intend to do this fully in collaboration with our membership and existing branches as I do not want to impose a top-down solution which is even less conducive to creating functioning branches. I have sadly not been able to organise the Regional General Meeting yet, but I hope to do this in the next few weeks, alongside forming the new regional executive for DCYL, and at that point I think that we will be in a great position to continue working to improve the region.

Finally I wanted to discuss the work being undertaken ahead of May's local elections. I personally have been working on the social media side of the campaign in Devon and the Devon manifesto, and have recently taken on the role of Regional Social Media Officer. Being involved in the, ever more important, social media aspect of the campaign in Devon already (and hopefully Cornwall as well soon once I have got fully up to speed with the role) will hopefully be positive for YL as I can ensure that young members are listened to and involved in that in a way they may not have been previously. In addition being involved in the manifesto writing process again has allowed me to ensure issues disproportionately affecting young people are not forgotten, and that YL's views can be represented properly in that process. Finally, I am working on plans for action days and other support I can offer to our young candidates to hopefully see them get elected come May.

**Loukas Christou**  
**East Midlands Chair**

Considering that I have only been in office for just over a month I have not been able to achieve too much in this time. However, in that time I have had a personal meeting with each branch chair to touch base, introduce myself and discuss issues with them, created an inter-branch group chat for greater cooperation and communication within the East Midlands the hope for the result of this will be the ability to organise and communicate more widely within the region, and also attended the East Midlands Regional Exec meeting to introduce myself as the new Regional Chair for the east midlands. In the future I hope to explore the establishment of new branches within the region, look into creating a region wide event to engage the membership, and organise the best way we can get YL's involved in campaigning in May.

As a small region with few branches and few avenues for expansion the job in the future will be to utilise the resources of the region to get the most out of the activism within the East Midlands. Part of this will hopefully be inter and intra-regional events, looking into establishing new branches at Nottingham Trent and De Montfort, and having a successful campaign in May. These future developments I hope will give the East Midlands the best building blocks to expand organically as a YL region.

## **Kieron Franks**

### **Communications Committee Rep & East of England Chair**

With the start of my term commencing in January, I've only had a month and a half to get working on my manifesto. However, we are making some good headway! The first county-wide branch in the region (Essex) is in the process of being set up and our executive is starting to take shape with members from Hertfordshire and Essex currently offering to take up roles. This process is still underway and anyone else who is interested in running for the executive should get in touch with me by emailing me at [kieron.franks@youngliberals.uk](mailto:kieron.franks@youngliberals.uk) or by leaving me a message at 07922799195. I've also kept up with the meetings that I am required to attend (East of England Lib Dem Regional Executive, English YL).

On a wider note of what is happening in the region, the yet-to-be formally constituted Essex Young Liberals are already steaming ahead, holding social events, a phone banking training session and their first phone bank for a Young Liberal Candidate in Southend.

Based on this great start, the plan is (from the writing of this report) to hold the first East of England Young Liberals Annual General Meeting – due to be held just before the English AGM and then to convene the Regional Executive to discuss what support we can give to the region's YL candidates in the upcoming local elections. Beyond that, I will continue to work to get branches set up in each of the 6 counties which make up the region (Essex, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Norfolk) and represent the Young Liberals at regional meetings and the English Council, which I was elected to separately by Lib Dem members in the region at-large.

I'm really looking forward to what the year may bring for YL, the Lib Dems and the country in general as we hopefully head out of lockdown and beyond COVID-19.

## **Sam Cumber**

### **London Chair**

I've only been the chair for just under two months so I don't have an awful lot to say! I would like to thank you for voting for me to be the chair of London Young Liberals. I will do my best to engage with young members across all the boroughs. I would also like to thank Simon Mansfield, the 2020 chair, for all his hard work. Since being elected, I have attended meetings with the other regional chairs and with members of the London Regional Executive. I hope to be able to form a regional executive very soon where we can start to get to work on campaigns leading up to the May elections along with other events. Due to Covid restrictions, events in the upcoming months will be virtual. I have been in contact with Chris Annous, the fundraising manager for the London campaign on what the London regional party can do to help us organise events whether it be

spirited policy discussions on housing for example with Luisa Porritt our mayoral candidate. Special Action days supporting our YL candidates running in this May's elections will be organised as well.

In terms of our branches, I have been in contact with the East London branch about how I as chair can help in that area. I am also delighted to announce the formation and very recent accreditation of a new branch in North & Central London covering the boroughs of Enfield, Haringey, Islington, Westminster, Camden, Barnet and Brent. There is also the speculation of the formation of a South East branch as well along with the possibility of expanding the Sutton branch to involve other boroughs in south west London.

### **Oliver Jones Lyons**

#### **North East Chair**

**(Report received late)**

#### **GM Update**

After an attempt at a General Meeting with Guest Speaker Jamie Stone which was not quorate, NEYL had a really nice sit down chat with Jamie for an hour so. I'll be arranging a AGM, which I will ensure is quorate, needed to amend our constitution and appoint officers. We also plan to hold a second general meeting, as recommended by our constitution for a more membership engagement, regional policy and training focused GM most likely before regional conference

#### **Exec Update**

I am currently in the process of inviting members to our executive, with suggestions from Thom Campion (co-optee for Deputy Chair) given that there has been no take up from 2 emails sent to all members in the region and posts on forum

#### **Candidates Update**

We have 4 Young Liberals who are target candidates in the North East, I have been discussing with Joel Punwani the potential for a NEYL Phone Banking action day and once the new executive is selected I will meet with the target candidates to discuss our wider offer of support

#### **Branch Review**

I have also been working on the branch review with Rebecca Grubb, William Tench, and the other members of the team, I have been working on the branches in the North of

England (NE, NW and Y&H) and have had a number of very successful and fruitful conversations with branches which will inform my plans and the plans of the rest of the executive going forward

### Working with the regional executive

I have attended all regional officers and executive meetings since my term began including one before my term after a very gracious invite to substitute by the outgoing chair. I'd like to say a huge thank you to the regional executive for being so welcoming of me into their midst and another thank you for their co-option of myself as their third English Council representative.

### Forward Planning

I have a number of plans going forward

A Tiered Branch Structure: due to the geographical distribution of young liberals in the north east I plan to flesh out and launch a 4 tier structure for young liberals branches across the North East, starting with tier 4, a branch of the region where events and support come entirely from the region to tier 1, an independent branch for a local party area. This is the best way to ensure full coverage and support for all young liberals in the north east and will hopefully support branch development. This will see the region act as a branch for areas where there is no possibility of branch and as a supporting force for areas where branches are possible.

Network proposal: I intend to continue the development of my networks proposal for age based engagement, starting with the universities network as an area where NEYL is particularly weak given that Durham University YL were very supportive of this idea in our branch review call

Engagement with Local Party Chairs: I intend to have conversations with as many local party chairs as possible in order to get a better idea of YL presence in their areas and to try and hit the ground running to have more YL targets in 2022

## **Taylor Donoghue-Smith**

### **North West Chair**

Since becoming chair of the North West Young Liberals in January, I have started work immediately on planning for the year ahead. I worked with my predecessor, Eleanor Kelly, to draft the NWYL constitution. The draft version of this document is in effect until

ratified formally at our next General Meeting. Sadly, due to work commitments, I have not yet been able to organise the Regional General Meeting, but I aim to do so over the next few weeks and have spoken to a contact in the North West party on how we can help ensure high turnout for this event.

Applications are currently open for two positions on the North West Young Liberals executive: vice-chair and campaigns and communications officer. Because of the relatively low engagement rate with YL in the region, I decided that it would be best to appoint people to these positions via co-option. Once applications close, I will be assembling a three-person co-option panel, including myself, to assess submissions.

I am pleased to note that a Liberal Democrat society at Edge Hill was recently approved for affiliation to YL and I look forward to working with them, as well as our other fantastic university societies, over the coming months. Furthermore, I am also currently in discussion with a member at the University of Liverpool about forming a society. Of course, it is important that we engage with young members who have not gone to university and over the next few weeks, I will be contacting local party chairs in areas with little university presence to see how we can increase engagement by and with young people.

Looking ahead to the local elections in May, I have already had discussions with two young candidates in the region about how best NWYL can support their campaigns. These discussions have been positive and I look forward to working with them, as well as with other young candidates, between now and May so that we can maximise the chances of electing Young Liberals to councils across the region.

Relations between NWYL and the North West regional party are strong; I am in regular contact with Jen Yockney, the regional administrator, and I look forward to this continuing as the year progresses.

Whilst I am happy with the progress that has been made in the time I have been in position as Chair, there is still a lot to be done. I am hopeful that, once a full executive is in place, we can begin to make great strides on increasing our diversity, engagement and turnout.

**Julius Parker**  
**South Central Chair**

During my first month as South Central YL chair, have not made as much progress as I'd have liked to, primarily due to my work continuing and ramping up through this third lockdown leaving me with not as much time as I'd hoped to focus on YL.

I have however made contact with several branch chairs in the region and have made contact with the South Central Liberal Democrats who were very happy to hear from the South Central Young Liberals after an extended period of little to no contact. I will be

attending the next regional exec meeting in March, and look forward to having a better relationship with the wider region.

Over the coming weeks I am aiming to begin preparations to organise the regional executive; if anyone has any interest in that then I suggest you keep your eyes peeled for updates!

**Yan Malinowski**

**Diversity Committee Rep & South East Chair**

**No report submitted.**

**Patrick Gilbert**

**Policy Committee Rep & West Midlands Chair**

Since being co-opted into the role in October, progress on my manifesto aims has perhaps been harder than I anticipated. Several challenges presented themselves.

A lack of handover from my predecessor meant that it took longer than I would have liked to familiarise myself with the workings of the role, especially in terms of my involvement with the regional party. With that having been said, I would like to put on record my thanks to members of the West Midlands Liberal Democrat executive that made special effort to welcome me and assist me in my role so far.

In addition, I was co-opted into the role from the position of Comms Officer, meaning I have maintained responsibility for our social media in addition to the role of chair. Nevertheless I am satisfied with the presence we have maintained. In particular, I have tried to step up the way in which our regional social media promotes the work of the branches, and attempted to boost turnout for certain activities such as speaker events. In addition, I have attempted to reinvigorate the role of our Facebook group with relative success. At the peak of last term, it was the most active I have seen it in my time in the group. This is encouraging, even if it has tailed off (perhaps unsurprisingly) going into Christmas. My aim going forwards is to get back to that level of engagement, and social media activity that was seen last term. Something I will be discussing with the new executive is the possibility of a members group chat, in order to give even more direct access to myself and the executive and to further improve engagement and retention.

On the topic of communications, I have also established a group chat with myself and branch chairs in the region to open up those channels of communication. However at the moment, it only contains the Uni of Birmingham (myself), Keele and Warwick chairs.

I have attempted to make contact with other extant branches in the region, but to no avail so far. When we shift into campaigning mode shortly, I will hopefully be adding YL target seat candidates to that chat too.

One issue I identified early on, especially stemming from my lack of handover, was the extent to which the regional organisation suffers from a lack of institutional memory. I have made early steps to fix this, such as setting up a Google Drive and drafting the constitution, but I hope to explore further ways to solidify WMYL as an institution, especially as we get more activities underway.

In terms of events, this is where I hope to make the biggest improvements on my role so far. At the time of writing, we have not yet held our AGM, although I would be happy to give an oral report if requested. In the immediate term, my efforts have been focussed around this AGM, and hopefully getting as many people involved with the exec as possible. Following this, the main focus of the organisation will be campaigning events. Moving on from local elections, my focus for the rest of the term will be to continue with events and to further solidify institutional memory. A further aspiration, should there be demand, would be to support the establishment of new branches in the region, especially in more rural areas, or those less concentrated in the metropolitan area. The ultimate aim is to create sustainable, reproducible high levels of engagement, to repeatedly fill a decent amount of the executive, and to maintain a much higher presence than in the past.

**Adam Belcher**  
**Yorkshire and the Humber Chair**  
**(Report received late)**

After a bit of a slow start, I have started to reach out to YL branches in Yorkshire & Humber. All branches have been invited to send a representative to a regional executive which I hope will facilitate co-operation between branches, something that I believe is vital during this difficult time. I have been part of a meeting to revitalise a Leeds YL branch where I provided a lot of advice, and there is also a new Harrogate & Knaresborough branch in the works that I have reached out to.

My priority now is preparing for a regional AGM which will, amongst other things, update the regional constitution and confirm the first official regional executive. I intend for this to consist of the Chair, reps from each branch / society, a small number of ordinary members, and perhaps an honorary president. It is my hope that this executive will promote joint events between branches in the region, with the goal of

ensuring survival of branches at a time when recruitment is particularly difficult. Whilst there is a bright future ahead for our branches, this can only happen if we get through these present circumstances with our memberships intact. This is a model which has worked well in other regions (see Birmingham & Warwick).

I am also conscious of the upcoming local elections. I am aware that there are a number of young candidates who stand a very good chance of getting elected in May, and I will be working to identify these candidates and will liaise with the federal YL campaigns officer to ensure they are supported.

These long-term goals aside, I continue to attend to more regular business, attending and contributing to meetings of the EYL executive.