

# Liberal News.

Spring 2018



## Local Government on the edge: Austerity from Westminster closes in on Town Halls across the country.



### Cllr Steve Radford, Liberal Group Leader, Liverpool City Council:

From 2010 Councils have seen Local Government in England face 40% cuts to their funding from Central Government, and even with tax and charge increases the level of monies available is down by a quarter. The next few years will see further reductions with the Revenue Support Grant being cut by 77% in the five years to 2020, leaving many Councils with no funds from this previously significant income stream. The Local Government Association has estimated that by 2020 Councils will face a £5.8 billion shortfall in funding with the reductions since 2010 amounting to £15.7 billion less from Central Government. It can hardly be a surprise that all of this is directly impacting services, and after many years of

reductions some Councils are no longer able to cope with further cuts. Even the Conservative Chair of the LGA, Lord Porter, has spoken about Councils facing great uncertainty and wondering how services can be maintained in the future if financial changes are not made.

Already the problems of austerity have driven Northamptonshire Council to introduce special financial measures not used by any other authority for twenty years. The fact is that while a Conservative authority previously much lauded for its low Council Tax is the first to get into difficulty many others are close behind, and this is a direct consequence of Government policy. The fundamental issue is a consistent lack of faith in the independence of local government. Too often Central Government is dismissive of local authorities as somehow second best or third rate. Yet all the evidence indicates that our Councils are some of the most able parts of government, despite being under increasing financial pressure at a time when the need for their services was greatly increasing due to both population growth and demographic aging. We have not seen the proper understanding or respect for the government closest to the people. As the programme of austerity has taken hold of Local Government the agenda has sadly turned to one of trying to maintain services that meet the statutory requirements and in many cases avoiding difficult choices. Keeping your authority the right side of the law is laudable except it does not appear that Westminster and Whitehall have been taking much notice of the drift towards serious problems caused by the running down of capacity.

Central Government needs to stop shifting the blame for cuts to Councils and enter into a dialogue that seeks to provide the funds and powers necessary for them to provide the services they are required to maintain. This must mean a reinvigoration of established units, not the centralization of power and the undermining of any real democratic accountability by further moves to regional Mayors. It is also about time that Councils have a range of revenue raising powers and there is some serious debate about how Council Tax and Business Rate can be modernised or replaced to enable rather than restrain locally elected leaders.



**Thursday 3rd May 2018:  
Local Government Elections.  
We Need Your Help!**

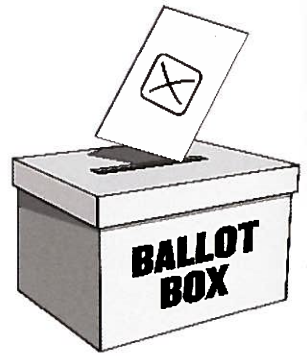


Local Government is the lifeblood of the Liberal Party because it allows us to represent real people and put some of our grand ideas into practical action. In May our Party will have candidates around the country flying the flag for an independent Liberalism that listens to residents and is able to ask the difficult questions that need asking. Liberal Councillors are not beholden to any interest group or set of financial interests. Up and down the country Liberal Councillors have made the difference because they thought differently, worked harder and would not be silent when a stale consensus needed questioning. The presence of Liberals on Local Authorities gives our small Party a credibility beyond our numbers. Despite all the disadvantages of not being one of the big three political machines we have maintained a presence in Council chambers for nearly thirty years. Many have said that this could not be maintained and that the only option was to learn to compromise our Liberalism and surrender to the ways of the establishment.

Over the years we have questioned the wisdom of the conventional view on such matters as so-called Housing Market Renewal, the Single European Currency, local taxation and many more issues both big and small. Every Councillor elected and each vote won helps make sure that our perspective is available to challenge a political environment that is both fractured and febrile. Our times are in need of those who have open minds, a faith in reason and free debate.

# Local Election 2018.

Around the country Liberals are running serious campaigns for seats on Local Authorities. Below we have some comments and details of the issues in those campaigns and contact information so that if your area does not have elections this year you might consider going to help with the campaigning.



## Liverpool, Billy Lake:

I have been a Tuebrook resident with my family for over 30 years. During that time I have coached youth football teams in Tuebrook. In recent years I have worked on the Tuebrook Community First Panel allocating tens of thousands of pounds in matching funding to local charities. I have also served as a Trustee for Tuebrook Hope Centre leading on Youth and Sports Activities.

The Liberal Councillors in Tuebrook go the extra mile, keeping the community in touch with Street Letters, Advice Centres and doorstep conversations. This is real community engagement. I want to join this team that now goes back over forty years. We need a strong opposition voice in the Town hall - the alternative is Labour Councillors who expect the people to serve Mayor Joe Anderson's Labour Party rather than representing the people. The choice is between a Labour placeman or an independent minded local resident at a time when the City Council is in chaos. The Chief Exec is suspended, a Police investigation into corruption and obstruction of justice is on-going and we have a Labour establishment alternating between crying financial crisis and saying 'business as usual' despite the senior leadership being in disarray.

**Contact Tel - 0151 259 5953 or Email [northwestliberalparty@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:northwestliberalparty@hotmail.co.uk).**



## Trafford, Neil Taylor:

I will be standing in the Timperley Ward of Trafford Council, a Metropolitan Borough of Greater Manchester.

In addition to leafleting we are also using online media to campaign. However we get the message out the issues are the same. A vote for me means an independent local voice with experience and a track record of getting things done on the Council. Supporting the Green Belt is a key priority that must not be open to compromise. I am very much aware that land is needed for new, and affordable housing stock, but the Timperley Wedge is simply the wrong place. This is the lungs between us and Manchester Airport, and the proposed HS2. Our schools, doctors, dentist and other services are already over subscribed. Our roads are crumbling and 3,000 additional homes will finish off the over stretched facilities, and cause more traffic and pollution.

YouTube Vlog [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1\\_mUqw6\\_O0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1_mUqw6_O0)  
and the updated Trafford Liberal web site at <http://liberaltrafford.org.uk/>

I have also covered a DNA dog poo story that you can read at:  
<http://liberaltrafford.org.uk/index.php/blog/211-dog-poo-dna-registration>.

**Give us a call on 0161 9805473 or Email: [Info@liberaltrafford.co.uk](mailto:Info@liberaltrafford.co.uk) [www.liberaltrafford.org.uk](http://www.liberaltrafford.org.uk)  
Write to: Neil Taylor, 33 Old Meadow Lane, Hale, WA15 8JT.**



## Birmingham, Mike Sheridan:

I am planning to stand in the Tyseley & Hay Mills Ward of Birmingham City Council. It is the first time that there has been elections on these new ward boundaries in Birmingham but it should be a safe Labour seat, although in the past the Lib Dems have won in this area. If anyone would like to come and help, we will be delivering a leaflet and doing some canvassing in April. The ward is only 7 minutes from Birmingham City Centre by train, so really easy to get to.

**My contact details are: Tel - 0121 777 1752 or Email - [thmliberals@gmail.com](mailto:thmliberals@gmail.com).**





## **London, Laurence Williams:**

I will be standing as a Liberal candidate in the London locals in Bexley borough. We have 32 councils in London and 2 / 3 GE constituencies in each, with 73 MPs in total. Bexley is in the bottom right hand corner of London. We have 63 councillors, 52 {?} of which are Tory. Our last Libdem councillor was elected in 2002, and he defected to the Tories in 2005, after the GE, in which he was the Libdem candidate in Old Bexley & Sidcup!

The Libdem GE vote now averages 2.5% in Bexley. I have two choices to stand in the locals:

1. Usual ward choice where I live [Cray Meadows ward]; nice and easy to get neighbour signatures, or;
2. Go for the libdem 'stronghold' ward of Danson Park [which is in the neighbouring Bexleyheath & Crayford constituency] to possibly get more votes and recognition for 'Real Liberals'!

The LibDem's last MP in London is in Carlshalton & Wallington. He has a vastly diminished majority now of 1400 since 1997, and he is an ardent 'Remoaner' in a largely 'Brexit' constituency. Carlshalton & Wallington starts about 10 miles from where I live and includes the old London Airport at Croydon. This could well be good territory for a Liberal startup effort.

I hope to get some meetings going here in due course, probably at the Civil Service Club, right beside the National Liberal Club, in London's West End.

**Call or Email: [williams24williams@gmail.com](mailto:williams24williams@gmail.com) Tel: 07796 194 002**



## **Oldham, Cllr Angie Farrell:**

I have been in politics for nearly 40 years since joining the Liberal Party in 1979. I had always been interested in politics since about 14 years old and being born with Cerebral Palsy I had first-hand experience of discrimination and had campaigned for equal rights for Disabled People. Joining a Political Party appealed to me, I decided to join the Liberal Party. I was attracted by the community, grassroots form of local campaigning asking what people's concerns were instead of telling them and keeping in contact all year round. The more I found out about the values and policies of the Liberal Party the more I felt it was the right Party for me. I soon became active, running campaigns, producing and delivering leaflets.

I have been a Liberal for many years, I became a LibDem Parish Councillor in 1991 and have served to the present day. From 2001-2007 also serving on Oldham Borough Council. Some may remember my husband Tony who also served as a Parish Councillor from 1991 until he died in 2005.

Since the coalition with the Tories in 2010 and the disastrous decision to charge student fees amongst other national and local issues, I found my Liberal values being compromised, so I decided to get back to my roots. I was happy to be warmly welcomed back into the Liberal Party and look forward to the challenges of setting up a Liberal Branch, recruiting new members and campaigning for Liberal values and policies which I believe will benefit Local People.

**Contact Email: [a.farrell70@ntlworld.com](mailto:a.farrell70@ntlworld.com)**



## **Reading, Stephen Graham:**

I am looking forward to my third opportunity to contest Norcot Ward on Reading Borough Council.

Residents lack a real choice at the ballot box, with only a handful of wards attracting candidates outside the main political parties, and I hope to make Norcot Ward one of the most diverse at the ballot box.

The Labour run council has failed to sign off the borough accounts for 2016/17, a major black mark against its name. The timely submission and auditing of the accounts reassures residents that the council is being run properly and efficiently.

After a sustained period in power, in the region of 3 decades, the local Labour Party needs to be held accountable for its words and actions. A healthy choice of candidates on the ballot paper gives residents the opportunity to express their democratic choice and make their voice heard.

**Contact Tel: 0118 956 1258.**

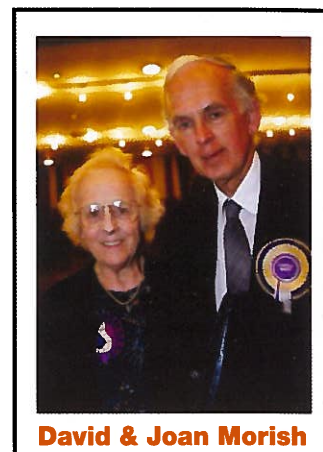
# In Memoriam.

Over the last few months our Party has lost two figures who played key roles in the re-founding of the Party nearly thirty years ago. They will be sadly missed and fondly remembered for their long and much appreciated efforts in the Liberal cause.

## **David Morrish.**

David Morrish was a man of great capacity, kindness and modesty who helped re-found the Liberal Party in the late 1980s and revitalised Exeter Liberalism from the 1960s onwards.

His earliest political memories recalled the war years when he was an evacuee in Cornwall going on outings to the Penryn Liberal Club, and in the 1945 General Election campaigning with the Liberal Party candidate for Plymouth Sutton. After taking a degree at Exeter University with further study in the USA and humanitarian work in Iran, from 1959 he settled in Exeter as a FE tutor. He soon became a pillar of the Liberal Party, being a Councillor for fifty years serving on both Exeter and Devon Councils with a period leading Devon County Council. He stood in Parliamentary Elections in four decades for the Exeter and Tiverton Constituencies. During this lengthy political life he was well known by everyone, even his opponents, for his eloquence and integrity. This can be clearly shown by the many comments from across the political spectrum of warm regard and regret for his passing. He will be long remembered in Liberal circles and well beyond his locality as an outstanding person who brought a good name to politics.



**David & Joan Morrish**

Cllr Jenny Roach Writes: It is with great sadness that we report the passing of David Morrish. David was a Quaker who lived his life in the Quaker way. Throughout his political life he was respected by politicians of all colours. The words principled, kind, honest and upright are ones that describe him well. He had principles and he lived by them, perhaps the best example of those principles was that he refused to accept a knighthood for his services to politics. He didn't believe in the honours system so he didn't accept that knighthood. The Liberal Party is still in existence because of all the hard work he did in holding the Party together. His commitment to the Liberal cause will be remembered by Liberals everywhere. A life lived well, RIP David.

## **Theresia Williamson.**

Theresia Williamson passed away last June and had been a longstanding activist, Councillor and Parliamentary candidate. She was born in Germany in 1925 and her first hand experience of political extremism and war informed her Liberalism and internationalist outlook. After marrying Charles Williamson in Hamberg in 1947 she moved to the UK, settling in Eastbourne in 1975. Her activism involved the United Nations Association, the Fawcett Society and various peace organisations in addition to the Liberal Party and a period as an Eastbourne District Councillor. Her commitment and enthusiasm were evident at her regular participation at the Annual Assembly. She stood as Liberal candidate for the Eastbourne Parliamentary constituency four times, including the famous 1990 By-election. During the 1990s she was the Party's Environmental Spokesperson.

Theresia was from a generation that had learned in the most difficult of circumstances what damage politics could do to the world and had a unchangeable commitment to showing that on the great issues of peace, the environment and human dignity, people of good will could work towards a far better world. Theresia showed a commitment to these ideals and her example is a lesson worth considering for those who aim to follow in her footsteps.

# **Liberal Party News.**



**Summer 2018 Special Assembly: Saturday 2nd June 2018. The venue will be the Bridge Hotel Function Room, Castle Square, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 1RQ from 11.30am-6:00pm. The NEC Meeting will continue when the Assembly business is concluded.**

If you have an idea for a debate or if you have a draft motion which you would like to put forward for consideration please get in touch as the agenda will be finalised soon after local elections in May.

A discussion that might well be worth some prior consideration is how the Lib News can be made better in the future. How can we get more people to contribute articles or is the era of an occasional paper newsletter over, given the possibilities of online communication?

New Year Assembly 2018: The January 6th Assembly in Birmingham passed motions on the issues of Catalan Independence, renewable energy and employment rights. You can see the full details on the Party website in the Liberal Library section.

The Liberal Party recently launched a major update to our website. Take a look at : [www.liberal.org.uk](http://www.liberal.org.uk)  
Keep up with us on Social media: [www.twitter.com/LiberalPartyUK1](https://www.twitter.com/LiberalPartyUK1) & [www.facebook.com/LiberalPartyUK/](https://www.facebook.com/LiberalPartyUK/)

Laurence Williams has started a Liberal WhatsApp group covering GB should anyone wish to join in. If you've a 'Smart Mobile' phone, it's fairly easy to download the WhatsApp App onto it via your App Store and once it's installed, just look up 'Liberals London Laurence' [LLL] to join in. Laurence hopes to add snippets from in 'The Smoke' for general Liberal interest as he goes along.

We always want to hear from Liberals around the country so feel free to send us your articles, letters or news items. Liberal News can be contacted at: [northwestliberalparty@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:northwestliberalparty@hotmail.co.uk). By mail at Liberal Party, 41 Sutton Street, Liverpool, L13 7EG.