

# AdLib

The magazine from the Liberal Democrats

In this issue

ISSUE 27  
APRIL  
2016

## LIB DEMS FIGHT FOR EUROPE

Members explain why we're stronger together

## ELECTION 2016

Following campaign trails across the country

## MEMBER STORIES

From new members to Lib Dem veterans

#INtogether

# STAYING IN EUROPE

plus

NEWS • VIEWS • TIPS • TOOLS • AND SO MUCH MORE



# The year of the revival

Welcome to the latest edition of *Ad Lib*, containing, as always, exciting and varied content created by everyone from new members to long-standing activists

## What does your donation to the Lib Dems pay for?

£150

pays for



1,000 targeted letters

£100

pays for



1,500 full-colour leaflets

£50

pays for



3,000 tabloid newspapers

£25

pays for



50 phone calls

To donate, please visit  
[www.libdems.org.uk/donate](http://www.libdems.org.uk/donate)  
 or call 020 7022 0988

Liberal Democrats  
 Stronger Economy Fairer Society

This year is an important one in our revival. In May, we will be fighting for Liberal Democrat values in Wales, Scotland and England. Our fightback is a journey, and every new member, every new voter and every election takes us a step closer in getting us back to where we will need to be. Find out more about our progress on page 14.

In June, we will be campaigning as the only UK-wide pro-European party to secure the future of our country inside Europe. Our case for the UK to stay in the EU is as much emotional and patriotic as it is pragmatic. As an internationalist party, we believe in cooperation, diplomacy and dialogue over confrontation, isolationism and nationalism. Leading in Europe provides us the opportunity to exercise leadership on the global stage and tackle major international crises effectively. Everything from climate change, cross-border crime and counterterrorism to global trade, economic prosperity and the refugee crisis will be better addressed with the UK leading at the heart of Europe. Find out more about what our members think on page 10.

In addition to all this, we have Dorothy Thornhill unpicking the housing crisis on page 18 and delve into the life of our campaign-loving leader, Tim Farron, on page 8. And be sure not to miss our interview with celebrity doctor, journalist and new Lib Dem member Saleyha

Ahsan on page 20.



Al Ghaff,  
Head of Membership

Twitter @GhaffAl

Events over the next three months are going to shape the future of the party, and the country. So please do get involved, spread the Lib Dem message, and help us create a UK to be proud of.

Editor Al Ghaff

For editorial enquiries, contact [adlib@libdems.org.uk](mailto:adlib@libdems.org.uk)

Design courtesy of Think Publishing

Printed by Sterling Solutions, Kettering Parkway,  
Kettering Venture Park, Northamptonshire NN15 6XU

Published and promoted by and on behalf of the Liberal Democrats,  
8-10 Great George Street, London SW1P 3AE  
Tel: (020) 7022 0988

Leading in Europe provides us the opportunity to exercise leadership on the global stage and tackle major international crises effectively.

## Contents

### Ad hoc

#### Bits and pieces to interest and inspire

- 4 News Party updates
- 6 Local:global From Tower Hamlets to Canada
- 8 Spotlight on... 48 hours in the life of Tim Farron

### Features

- 10 Focus on Three members explain why, when it comes to Europe, the Lib Dems are #INtogether
- 14 Campaign priorities We hear from those in the thick of the fightback on the ground
- 18 In theory/in practice Dorothy Thornhill on how to solve the housing crisis
- 20 My Liberal life Celebrity doctor/journalist/army officer Saleyha Ahsan tells us why she joined the party

### Liberal thinking

#### Tips and thoughts – by members, for members

- 23 Election countdown How you could help
- 24 Get involved Two new recruits tell us what they gained from joining the #LibDemFightback
- 25 My Liberalism Chair of Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary Suzanne Fletcher
- 26 A Liberal legacy Party Treasurer Mike German

# Liberal gleanings

We round up the latest party updates, including Spring Conference, our work with sister parties around the world and Regional Diversity Champions

**TELL US A STORY:**  
email [adlib@libdems.org.uk](mailto:adlib@libdems.org.uk) with your news



## A Wales that works for you

Kirsty Williams and the Welsh Lib Dems are mounting a strong campaign across Wales for the Assembly and Police Commissioner elections on 5 May.

Responding to everyday people's concerns, Kirsty and her team are promising to deliver "a Wales that works for you". That means more nurses on hospital wards, smaller class sizes for children, and supporting people to own their own home. Find out more about her campaign messages on page 16.

After 17 years of Labour-led Government in Cardiff Bay, there is the opportunity for a change. People recognise that Labour still fails to get the basics right. But UKIP is targeting Wales heavily, and recent polls put them on course to win seats – we must stop this from happening.

The party has selected an impressive slate of candidates, including four female contenders, for its top four constituency seats.

If you'd like to find out more, or can volunteer some time to help the Welsh Lib Dems, please visit [www.welshlibdems.wales](http://www.welshlibdems.wales)

## Leading the way in London

Caroline Pidgeon, Liberal Democrat candidate for London Mayor, fills us in on her campaign news



For the London Mayor and Assembly elections I am happy to be leading such a diverse team. Fifty-two per cent of our candidates are women and 36% from BAME communities. London Liberal Democrats are fielding a team that looks like London.

As the team and I go out campaigning, we find people worried about the lack of affordable housing. Concerned about the business of getting to work each day because of overcrowding on public transport. Fearful that air pollution is choking children's lungs.

I have the plans to tackle these problems. A costed plan to talk about affordable housing. A plan to tackle overcrowding by halving fares before 7.30am. Banning HGVs from central London to protect cyclists.

Putting extra police on our streets. Come and join us to help spread those messages. [www.londonlibdems.org.uk](http://www.londonlibdems.org.uk)

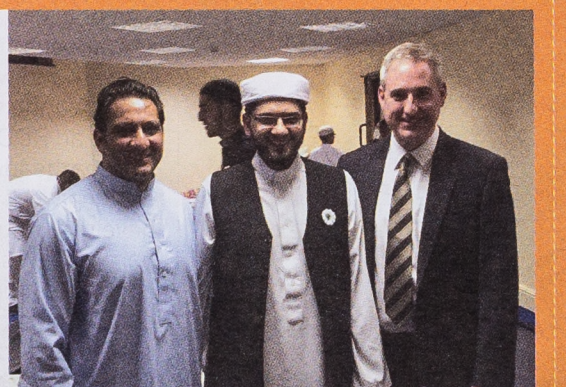


## WHERE YOU ARE



### VISIT MY MOSQUE

Hundreds of party activists took part in the Visit My Mosque initiative on 7 February, such as Elaine Bagshaw, Lib Dem Candidate for City & East GLA seat (left) and Greg Mulholland, Lib Dem MP for Leeds North West (right).



## GOING GLOBAL

The Lib Dem International Office has been working with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy to undertake democracy development work with our sister parties around the world, primarily Eastern Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa.

Our International Office supports the advancement of liberalism in emerging democracies by building the capacity of Liberal sister parties in the fields of policy, communications and campaigning, and increasing the participation of women, youth and under-represented groups like the LGBT+ community in the political process. Through developing strong relationships with parties and regional liberal networks such as the Africa Liberal Network (ALN) and the Arab Alliance for Freedom and Democracy, we have supported the growth of liberal democracy worldwide for many years.

Over the past two years we've been assisting the Botswana Movement for Democracy to become the official opposition party in Botswana and holding the ruling party to account, offering a viable alternative for the electorate. We have also overseen the expansion of the ALN to 44 member parties, making it the largest network of liberal parties outside of Europe. In Serbia, we helped the Liberal Democratic Party to establish a Human Rights Council specifically designed to support the rights of LGBT people in the country and to promote a strong human rights agenda within the party. In South Africa, we have worked closely with the Democratic Alliance through its Young Leaders Programme, an initiative to create a pool of young politicians with the skills to lead their country in the future.

To find out more about our global goings-on, head to [www.libdems.org.uk/international](http://www.libdems.org.uk/international)



## SPRING CONFERENCE

More than 1,300 members gathered in York from 11-13 March for Spring Conference. Members debated a range of motions on topics such as fracking, drugs reform and diversity. For the first time, every member had the right to vote as a result of One Member, One Vote.

One of the biggest policy changes was our fellow members' decision to back plans on legalising cannabis and end the war on drugs. Our members also voted for a plan to help deliver Tim Farron's vision of a gender-balanced and more diverse parliamentary party at the next General Election. Tim's goal will be pursued by an ambitious package of measures, including the appointment of a Diversity Champion and a Task Force to drive a programme of recruitment. It is hoped that a new generation of diverse Lib Dem MPs will boost the party's fightback to build a Liberal Britain.

At the conference rally, Tim shared the stage with three new members. They shared their stories and told us why they joined the Lib Dem family. But crucially, they all joined us because someone asked them to. So, Tim set a mission for all of us: recruit two new members this month.

If you'd like to find out more on how to recruit new members, please email [help@libdems.org.uk](mailto:help@libdems.org.uk)

## Become a Regional Diversity Champion!



Regional Diversity Champions (RDCs) lead the diversity, inclusion and outreach strategy for their region. They are elected by the Regional Executive for a year-long term to champion the equalities agenda and widen participation among under-represented groups. Being an RDC is a unique chance to spearhead some of the most exciting work in your region and have real influence, driving the party's diversity strategy forward. For more information, or to find out how you could become an RDC, please contact [diversity@libdems.org.uk](mailto:diversity@libdems.org.uk).



**Liberal Youth Diversity Working Group**  
We're happy to announce a new group has been set up to advise on diversity-related issues affecting young people. Get in touch on [diversity@libdems.org.uk](mailto:diversity@libdems.org.uk) to find out more.

# East London

While east London is considered Labour territory, **Elaine Bagshaw**, London Assembly candidate for City and East, says that changing perceptions is vital to making a difference

1

## Pressing issues

Tower Hamlets, where I live, is the poorest borough in the country. We have a really high unemployment rate and lots of families live on an annual wage of less than £15k.

There are more than 25,000 people on the social housing waiting list, and we also have a bad reputation, due to past corruption, which means people who should be attracted to the borough, aren't.

2

## Member surge

I think the General Election result spurred a lot of Lib Dem supporters to go out and work to make sure the policies they cared about were put in place. From 8 May, Tower Hamlets saw more than 200 new people join the party, while Newham, and Barking and Dagenham have gone from having 25 members across the two boroughs, to more than 100.

We ran a by-election in Newham, where we've never stood anyone in the ward before, and came second.

3

## Campaigning

We have people out campaigning every weekday evening and at weekends. As we've not been active across east London for a while, we've not had a lot of data, so our focus has been on doorknocking to find out what issues concern people and how they feel about the EU referendum. We're positioning ourselves as the listening party in the area.



**Above: A lack of affordable homes in Tower Hamlets has led to a social housing waiting list of more than 25,000. Below: Elaine (centre) along with other Lib Dem supporters, who are doorknocking to discover people's concerns in the borough**

ERIC PARRY/SUPERSTOCK/SHUTTERSTOCK

4

## Changing opinions

Our party has a habit of viewing places where we've always been popular as models for success. However, I think we need to get much better at looking at places like east London – which hasn't been a natural area for the party, but where we're striding forward all the time – and thinking how is that happening? And is it something we can capitalise on?

So in Tower Hamlets and Newham, for instance, we have party literature in Bengali, to serve that community.

*I think the message that liberalism is needed so much now brought people to us immediately after the General Election, and is still bringing them now.*

If you work in a way that's tailored to your area, you see results.

5

## Our vision

Rather than focusing on how many votes we need to win seats, our team looks at what amazing things we'll be able to do when we run the council. In Tower Hamlets we can do something about all those people waiting for a home, and we can support Syrian refugees coming to the borough and local business – those kinds of things that other people aren't doing.

# Canada

After a nine-year hiatus, Canada is once more a Liberal-led nation. **Al Ghaff**, Lib Dem Head of Membership, looks at how diversity led to victory

**T**hanks to Canada's Liberal Party, the new Canadian Parliament, elected last year, is the most diverse in the nation's history. And Justin Trudeau's Cabinet can boast the same.

During the election campaign, Trudeau declared that he wanted to be the Prime Minister of all Canadians. He promised to build a Government as diverse as Canada and include an equal number of women and men in his cabinet. He surprised the sceptical media by delivering on his promise.

At the unveiling of his Cabinet, in response to a question from a reporter about why it is gender-balanced and diverse, he famously said, "because it's 2015".

Trudeau's belief in diversity is not because it's politically correct and savvy or helps him further outmanoeuvre Canadian Conservatives, but because it's a liberal principle and a progressive cause. Trudeau has rightly stated that Canada is stronger and his Government more effective when it reflects the diversity of the society it seeks to serve.

In electoral terms, Trudeau expanded his party's reach across Canada by ensuring that it reflects and represents the communities it is seeking to serve. By doing that, his message of hope triumphed against that of fear and division.

The voter turnout for Canada's election in October 2015 increased by more than 7%. While there is arguably a variety of factors contributing to the increased turnout and Trudeau's electoral success, there are no doubts that the diversity of the Liberals' membership and

## WHO'S IN THE CABINET?

Canada's Cabinet is now the first in the country's history to have equal numbers of men and women – 15 of each – most of whom are aged under 50.

Ministers include Maryam Monsef – Minister of Democratic Institutions and the first Muslim Canadian in the Cabinet – plus aboriginal politicians Jody Wilson-Raybould and Hunter Tootoo, who are the Minister of Justice and Minister of Fisheries,

Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, respectively.

The cabinet also has three Sikh politicians – Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Amarjeet Sohi, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, and the first Sikh Canadian to command an army regiment, Harjit S Sajjan, Minister of National Defence.

Other additions include Kent Hehr, Minister of

Veterans Affairs, who was rendered paraplegic in his 20s, former astronaut Marc Garneau, Minister of Transport, and Carolyn Bennett, Indigenous Affairs Minister.

In the Canadian House of Commons, of 338 newly elected MPs, 10 are aboriginal and 26% are women.

In the British House of Commons, women have just under 30% representation.



**Above left: The Canadian Liberal Party's tagline 'Real Change Now', displayed during an election rally. Above right: Justin Trudeau arrives at an event with his Cabinet**

candidates – alongside Trudeau's appeal to Canadians from different backgrounds – certainly contributed.

Trudeau has always stood for what's right, even when some of his positions on certain public policy issues, such as civil liberties, foreign policy, counterterrorism and indigenous rights, were not particularly popular, even with some liberal-leaning activists.

Liberals of all shades, including Liberal Democrats in the UK, should observe the lessons of Trudeau's successful leadership.

Only by reflecting the diversity of the communities we seek to serve, will we be relevant and electorally successful.

All of us in the Liberal Democrats family in the UK must do more on diversity, not simply to change our electoral fortunes, but *because it's 2016!*

**Have your say! Check out the Agenda 2020 consultation paper, submit your ideas and help define our vision for the future.**

[www.libdems.org.uk/agenda2020](http://www.libdems.org.uk/agenda2020)

I have been joining teams of Lib Dems up and down the country. It has been a fantastic experience, seeing people who really believe in their local communities standing up for them and getting out doing what I like most: campaigning.

This is a top priority for me and I wanted to share with you a little of what I've been up to.

The first few weeks of the year have seen me in Three Rivers, Stockport, Newcastle, Manchester, Hounslow, Camberwell and Peckham, East Dunbartonshire, Edinburgh and Cardiff (twice!).

Every visit has been very different and yet each one has reaffirmed the importance of us getting things done for people who often have no one else to speak up or act on their behalf.

In Three Rivers, I saw Sara Bedford's team and its innovative free public library in a telephone box (yes, you read that correctly). It was also bitterly cold and a photo shoot that took minutes felt like it lasted for hours, as passing traffic kept spoiling the shot!

In Newcastle – my old stomping ground – I joined in with party members' campaign for proper investment in their Metro system.

In Cardiff, Eluned Parrott took me out on the doorstep in Adamsdown, which had a curiously intergalactic theme – we passed Orbit Street, Planet Street and Meteor Street!

In Edinburgh, Alex Cole-Hamilton took me out campaigning in the evening. This was despite enduring an unscheduled trip to A&E after being badly bitten by a dog earlier in the day. That is serious dedication.

In Camberwell and Peckham, I went to support the extremely impressive Lauren Pemberton-Nelson. Just 18 years old, Lauren is the sort of person who is the future of our party – energetic, dynamic and committed to her community. (We also managed to lose Simon Hughes on one very complex estate!)

Hats off to Hina Malik, too, whose by-election efforts in Hounslow I went along to support. Aside from being another very impressive person, Hina has the best Lib Dem committee room food I have tasted. Ever.

There are many more things I could mention if I had the space. But mostly I am just very proud to lead a party that contains such wonderful campaigners, all determined to make their mark for the Liberal Democrats.



Showing support for impressive Lauren Pemberton-Nelson



Helping (and selfie-ing) with Alex Cole-Hamilton



Thumbs up for Eluned Parrott in Wales



Supporting Hina Malik's Hounslow candidacy



Joining the protest in Newcastle upon Tyne



On the beat in the Three Rivers district



# TIM FARRON: ON THE ROAD

From Cardiff to Manchester and more in between – **Tim Farron's** campaign trail is anything but brief. He fills us in on where and how our members are leading the Lib Dem fightback

Contact info:  
**Tim Farron**  
 e tim.farron@libdems.org.uk  
 w www.timfarron.co.uk  
 @timfarron

# EUROPE:

## Why the only way is 'in'

With the referendum on whether the UK stays in the European Union due to take place on 23 June, we ask three members why we're stronger when we're #INtogether

### Catherine Bearder MEP

The Liberal Democrats are the most outward-facing of all the UK parties – being internationalist is in our DNA

In Europe, Britain can thrive. Working alongside our neighbours, we can continue to prosper and be seen as a leading player on the global stage, respected all over the world.

In Europe, we have delivered decades of peace, opportunities for future generations, a single market for businesses to grow into, environmental protections to tackle issues like poor air quality, and the ability for police forces to capture some of the world's most dangerous criminals and extradite them to face justice.

These are cross-border issues: international crime, climate change... These don't stop at the White Cliffs of Dover. Only by standing tall in Europe can the UK play a leading role in shaping its future.

We're making the patriotic case. Don't be mistaken – the 'outers' would have you believe patriotism is traditionalism. No one can turn back time, but we can look confidently into the future.

I'm sick of nationalists claiming the UK and the union flag for themselves. The union flag is our flag and we will be reclaiming it for our campaign to keep Britain at the heart of Europe.

Of course, that's not to say we Liberal Democrats see Europe as perfect – as Liberals, we're naturally sceptical of power and want to work to improve those institutions that govern us.



We want to see our country leading reforms in Europe. We want red tape for smaller businesses reduced. We want to see greater transparency in all decision-making processes so people in the UK don't feel decisions are made behind closed doors, and we want to see the single market fully completed to allow all businesses access to tariff-free trade.

And these aren't unrealistic reforms. Our own former MEPs, including Sharon Bowles, made great strides in reducing red tape during the last Parliament.

Decision-making processes are becoming more and more transparent. Take the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership – the Liberal Trade Commissioner has ensured key documents are now made publicly available, making it the most transparent trade deal to date.

What's more, the single market is continually growing, but we want to see it rolled out in all areas – including digital – to ensure all British businesses have the level playing field of the single market open to them.

If you agree, join our campaign for the UK to remain #INtogether. We want to see Britain leading in Europe, not leaving.

**International crime, climate change... These don't stop at the White Cliffs of Dover. Only by standing tall in Europe can the UK play a leading role in shaping its future**

### Dinesh Dhamija, Tim Farron's adviser on Enterprise and a member of the Spelthorne and Runnymede local party

'In' is a must for UK business

Challenged to name a single businessperson supporting Labour at the last election, Ed Balls famously stumbled. In the end, he came up with a name, albeit the wrong one.

Just as then with Labour, I imagine the 'leave' campaign will find the occasional businessperson in support of Brexit, but I have no doubt that the vast majority will be unequivocally 'in'.

Why? Let me tell you my story...

In 1999 I founded ebookers.com – the UK's first online travel business – and being in the EU gave us a number of immediate advantages: a potential market of 500 million people to sell to; no taxes, duties or monopolies; and the largest skills base in the world.

Small wonder, then, that in five years we had offices

in 11 countries, 300 million potential customers and sales of £600m, as well as providing jobs for 2,000 people. This would not have been possible outside the EU.

And it wasn't just my business that benefited – our consumers did too. The open market drove down costs and enabled low-cost airlines like easyJet to break down the monopolies of the national carriers and airports.

And we are still seeing benefits today. After 15 years of attempting to take on the credit card companies alone, it was only after the UK Competition and Markets Authority partnered with the EU that it was able to force Visa and MasterCard to reduce

charges from 1.3% to 0.3%. This will save UK businesses £1.7bn per year – savings that can be passed straight on to consumers and will enable businesses to flourish.

Business understands that the bigger the market, the better the deal for consumers, the greater the opportunity and the more jobs will be created.

Iain Duncan Smith says EU membership is about politics, not business, but while politicians are still divided, business people are almost unanimously in favour of remaining. Why? Because even if politicians don't understand, we know that a nation's wealth lies in the jobs it creates – and that means remaining in Europe.



# #INtogether



## Keep Britain in Europe

- **To find out more about Europe:**  
[www.libdems.org.uk/europe](http://www.libdems.org.uk/europe)
- **Sign the Europe petition:**  
[www.libdems.org.uk/europe](http://www.libdems.org.uk/europe)
- **To donate:** [www.libdems.org.uk/europe-donate](http://www.libdems.org.uk/europe-donate)
- **To recruit new members to the party:**  
[www.libdems.org.uk/join](http://www.libdems.org.uk/join)



### Amy Stuart, a new member of the Bristol local party

Leaving the EU would damage our research and education prospects

Waiting to hear Douglas Carswell speak at the launch of the Cambridge Brexit campaign, I knew I was in the minority of Lib Dems in not being unequivocally 'in'. Although I wasn't anti-EU by any means, I felt prepared for a speech that would challenge my Europhilic roots and push me towards a decision not favoured by many in the party.

That speech, however, didn't come. What I'd expected to be an intellectual and emotive case for an independent UK was instead a blur of economic platitudes – each one inconsistent with the last. The longer I listened to blame being passed around – from Brussels, to Cameron, to big corporations, back to Brussels – the less of a coherent argument I could detect. I realised the case to stay was not only that of certainty, but of integrity, security and prosperity. It was one that had to be about positivity in a way the 'leave' campaign would always struggle to be.

As a student of natural sciences at the University of Cambridge, I benefit from the EU every day. About a quarter of the research funding for the university comes from the EU. As one of the world's most influential research institutes, it's easy to see how the benefits of this investment reach far beyond the city



*As the problems we face become ever more global, it is now more important than ever to step forward on the global stage, not back*

limits. Students coming from the EU bring an increased cultural diversity to the student body and increased economic investment to the city. Equally, I have friends and family studying and working across Europe, an experience greatly facilitated by our membership of the Union.

The case has been made many times that a Brexit would be incredibly

damaging for scientific research in the UK – never better than by Nobel Prize winner Paul Nurse, when he described the "island in science" we would become. By removing ourselves from a political union, we consciously remove ourselves from a scientific community that churns out huge quantities of data pivotal to the progression of research in the UK.

However, my everyday experience can but scratch the surface of the immense importance of remaining in the EU. As the problems we face become ever more global – those of climate change and the refugee crisis are clear examples – it is now more important than ever to step forward on the global stage, not back. While many prominent supporters of the Brexit campaign crave sovereignty above all else, they must realise that what we gain in self-authority is dwarfed by what we relinquish in control over our neighbours. We lay down our power to regulate the pollution that reaches our shores, to influence the economic regulations that will affect every business in the country regardless of the referendum result, to be privy to classified information on terror and security alerts across Europe – for what? Very little, I suspect.

Though the EU is a body with many flaws, it is one that we cannot afford to forfeit – and one that cannot afford to forfeit us. We must use our position to influence and improve the EU and its actions across all member states, not bow out at a time of huge political uncertainty. For the reasons above, and many more that would carry this article across many pages, I will be voting for the UK to remain in the EU.





Shaffaq and Lib Dem supporters protest against cuts to bus services

# By-elections: Our time to shine

With the May elections fast approaching, Lib Dems across the UK fill us in on the progress they're making

**A new vision for Sheffield**  
Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed  
@shaffaqmohd

All-out city council elections on new boundaries, a Police and Crime Commissioner election for South Yorkshire, and a Parliamentary by-election in Sheffield Brightside and Hillsborough can mean only one thing – election season is upon Sheffield. And, once again, it is the Liberal Democrats who are taking the fight to Labour.

I am ambitious about what the Liberal Democrats can achieve in Sheffield. And, importantly, I am ambitious for what the Liberal Democrats can achieve for Sheffield.

For far too long, Labour has taken voters for granted. Times are changing in Sheffield and, from all the conversations I have had on the doorsteps, people are looking for something different.

Thousands of local residents are up in arms at the felling of Sheffield's historic tree-lined streets. Thousands are outraged at the cuts to public bus services, and we are all horrified by the lack of vision Labour has for Sheffield – a city with all the potential to be a northern powerhouse, but hamstrung by an ineffectual Labour council. It is the Liberal Democrats who offer a positive vision for our city – a vision that welcomes business and investment, values our heritage and historic natural beauty, and offers

*It is the Lib Dems who offer a positive vision for our city – one that welcomes business and investment, values our heritage and historic natural beauty, and offers jobs and opportunity.*

jobs and opportunity for people living here.

Eighty-four candidates will be taking the fight to Labour in every ward – and, in particular, in those crucial target marginal ones, me included. Our huge surge in local party membership and the boost from holding the Sheffield Hallam Parliamentary seat have led our candidates and campaigners out onto the doorsteps and to the letter boxes, determined to take the battle to Labour again.

Make no mistake about it, Labour thought it could unseat us from Hallam. But our troops fought back. From our army of doorknockers and telephone canvassers to deliverers, envelope stuffers and cake makers, our Liberal Democrat troops are ready to cause Labour another upset in Sheffield this year and get even more councillors back into the town hall on 5 May.

**For those wanting to get involved in the campaign in Sheffield, visit [www.shefflibdems.org.uk](http://www.shefflibdems.org.uk) or call the office on 0114 2755111.**

## Turning the tides in Edinburgh

Alex Cole-Hamilton  
@agcolehamilton

After the General Election in 2015, it would have been easy for the team in Edinburgh West to take the summer off, forget about campaigning for a bit and recover from the tough campaign. But Alex Cole-Hamilton knew this was not an option.

Despite losing to the Nationalist tsunami in Scotland, we came astonishingly close to stopping the SNP in Edinburgh West. Mike Crockart increased the Lib Dem vote, getting 1,500 more votes in 2015 than he got in 2010, making it one of the closest results in the country.

The Edinburgh Western Scottish Parliament constituency is almost the

same as the Westminster seat.

Pundits, campaigners and the SNP know that it is one of the only places where the SNP is at risk of losing.

Alex and the local team know this, too. That's why, since the General Election, they've knocked on 21,000 doors, delivered 14 constituency-wide leaflets and raised tens of thousands of pounds.

*Since the General Election, Alex and the local team have knocked on 21,000 doors, delivered 14 constituency-wide leaflets and raised tens of thousands of pounds.*

And the results speak for themselves. Canvassing returns are really encouraging, with a palpable drift away from the SNP – when Tim Farron came to knock on doors with Alex he said it's the best response he's had since the election!

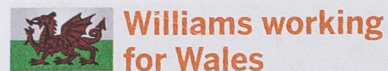
With the local MP facing pressure to resign because of property deals that are being investigated by the police, and the SNP MSP being deselected after his own activists branded him lazy and dire, Edinburgh Western looks on course to be one of the best results in the country in May.

But we need your help, and offers to assist with leafleting, funding and doorknocking are all very welcome.

**Get more info and pledge your support by visiting [www.alexcolemilton.org.uk](http://www.alexcolemilton.org.uk)**







**Kirsty Williams**  
@Kirsty\_Williams

As Welsh Liberal Democrat Leader since 2008, Kirsty Williams has an impressive track record.

Whether it's securing extra investment for schools and hospitals across Wales as part of our budget negotiations with Labour, successfully passing a Private Members' Bill in the Assembly to deliver Safe Nurse Staffing Levels for hospital wards in Wales, or being awarded 'AM of the Year' a record-breaking three times in the past five years, her delivery is formidable.

Motivated to get involved in politics after seeing unfairness all around her as she was growing up, Kirsty firmly believes that no one should be robbed of the chance to succeed in life because of poverty or poor access to education, housing and medical treatment. And this

motivation comes through in the Welsh Lib Dem key promises for 2016: giving NHS staff the time to care for our loved ones by putting more nurses on hospital wards; giving teachers the time to properly teach our children by delivering smaller class sizes; and giving everyone the opportunity to have a job and their own home.

And, if her record as Welsh Leader is impressive, her record as Assembly Member for Brecon and Radnorshire (B&R) is second to none. It includes £6m secured for new facilities at

*Kirsty firmly believes that no one should be robbed of the chance to succeed in life because of poverty or poor access to education, housing and medical treatment.*

Llandrindod Wells Hospital; three new multimillion-pound road improvements bypassing Talgarth, Bronllys and Cwmbach – all built and open; GP surgeries saved in Coelbren and Llanwrtyd Wells... the list goes on.

With a swathe of new members since last May, Kirsty and the B&R team are campaigning with their tails up, but more than aware that the Conservatives are once again targeting to win the seat, so will welcome any offers of help with open arms. In return, we can offer free accommodation – but, unlike the Tories, that'll be in a local member's spare room, not a plush hotel!

**If you're interested in finding out more about Kirsty's campaign, visit [www.kirstywilliams.org.uk](http://www.kirstywilliams.org.uk) or follow her on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/kirstywilliams.cymru](http://www.facebook.com/kirstywilliams.cymru)**

**To get involved, please contact Kirsty's Campaign Organiser, Louis Urruty, on [louis@brlibdems.org.uk](mailto:louis@brlibdems.org.uk) or call 01874 625739.**



Kirsty has had many successes as Welsh Leader and Assembly Member for Brecon and Radnorshire



# Liberal Democrats WINNING here!

and here!  
Aird & Loch Ness  
from yellow to orange!

**We are winning everywhere!  
Our share of the vote in  
council by-elections since the  
2015 General Election has  
gone up by 4.6%**

and here!  
Fylde, Preston  
from purple to orange!

and here!  
Hessle, York  
from red to orange!

**Conservatives: Down 1.7%  
Labour: Down 3.5%  
UKIP: Down 3.1%**

and here!  
Stratford on Avon  
from blue to orange!

[www.libdems.org.uk/volunteer](http://www.libdems.org.uk/volunteer)

# A long-term plan for housing



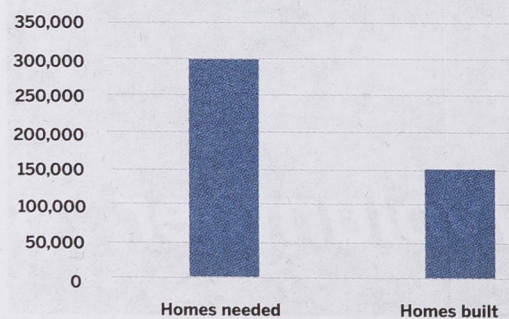
Lib Dem Spokesperson for Communities and Local Government and the Mayor of Watford **Dorothy Thornhill** is passionate about the issue of housing. Here, she gives an overview of the party's plans to tackle the problems caused by a lack of affordable homes in Britain

**T**oday we have a housing crisis. There are millions of people across Britain who are living in poor-quality housing, forced to pay extortionate rents, or desperate to buy a home of their own, but are struggling to save a deposit.

That is why I am so pleased that Tim Farron has made housing one of our party's top priorities. We made a good start on tackling the crisis in Coalition – outlawing revenge evictions, bringing empty homes back into use and implementing Help to Buy. But this Government needs to take forward the Liberal Democrat long-term plan for housing.

The first issue is a huge increase in supply. We are building only half the homes that are needed – around 150,000 a year. We are calling for this to be doubled to 300,000 a year to meet demand. This lack of supply is fuelling higher prices and makes it increasingly difficult for people to get onto the housing ladder.

## Current levels of housebuilding



At the same time, we need more affordable homes for those who require them – enough low-rent housing for those for whom home ownership is not within reach.

The Government's new housing reforms will make the crisis even worse for those on lower incomes. Starter Homes require

*We need more affordable homes for those who require them – enough low-rent housing for those for whom home ownership is not within reach*



an average deposit of £40,000 and a salary of £50,000.<sup>1</sup> Councils will be forced to sell off their more expensive council homes – around 113,000. Rents of many social tenants will increase through Pay to Stay. The extension of Right to Buy will leave fewer affordable homes, with no guarantee they will be replaced.

In the Lords, we are attacking the Government's plans and pushing for changes

to the Housing and Planning Bill. We need more homes – of mixed tenure – and in the right places. Labour may talk the talk, but in their 13 years in power there was a net loss of 420,000 council homes. Britain needs a united, credible opposition to confront the Tories on housing. We have a long-term plan and we're fighting for it.



## THE HOUSING CRISIS IN NUMBERS

**1.6**  
million on  
social housing  
waiting lists

**31**  
Average age of a  
first-time buyer

Average house price

**£288,000**

Average house price in London

**£540,000**

**8%**

of homes in rural areas  
are affordable compared to  
20% elsewhere

**1/3**

of private rented homes fail  
the Decent Homes Standard



## LIB DEM PLAN FOR HOUSING

- Build 300,000 homes a year, including in 10 newly created garden cities in areas where homes are needed most.
- Create a Government-backed Housing Investment Bank to provide long-term capital for major new housebuilding projects.
- Use the Olympic precept as a funding stream for 200,000 new homes in London.
- Ban letting fees for tenants and professionalise the private rented sector through licensing.
- Introduce new Help to Rent deposit loans to help young people get into their first place.
- Give councils the ability to double council tax on second homes.
- Cut council tax by £100 for 10 years if you insulate your home, and ban landlords from letting out homes tenants cannot reasonably afford to heat.

### Footnote

<sup>1</sup> According to research by Shelter: [blog.shelter.org.uk/2015/10/can-you-afford-a-starter-home](http://blog.shelter.org.uk/2015/10/can-you-afford-a-starter-home)

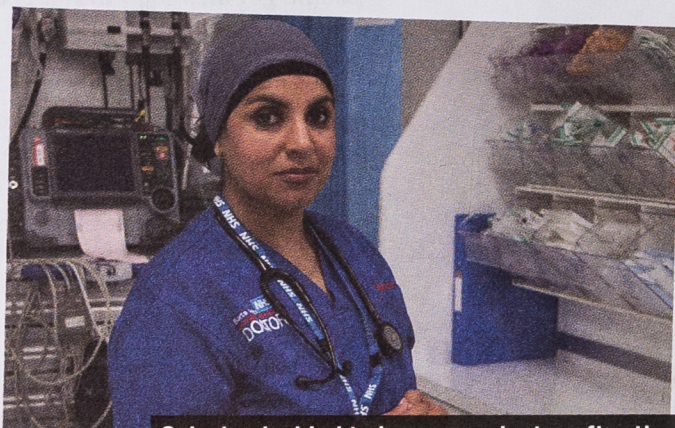
# JOINING THE LIB DEM FIGHTBACK

An A&E doctor with a master's in international human rights and humanitarian law, a former British Army Officer and a documentary maker... **Dr Saleyha Ahsan's** credentials are humbling. Her latest venture? Joining the Liberal Democrats. Wasim Yunus finds out more

**Q** How did you come to be the first British Muslim woman to graduate from Sandhurst?

**A** It started at university [Saleyha studied chemistry at Salford], where I completed the TA Officer Commissioning course. I absolutely loved it, and it made me consider the army as a career option. Later, while I was training to be a journalist at BBC Wiltshire Sound radio, the idea was still niggling in the back of my mind. So I applied to Sandhurst, thinking if nothing came of it, I'd simply carry on with journalism.

Well, I was accepted and before I knew it, I was there. I thought, "What am I doing here? I don't have a double-barrelled surname, I went to an



Saleyha decided to become a doctor after time spent in Bosnia with the Royal Army Medical Corps



Saleyha in Algeria in 2013

inner-city comprehensive and I'm certainly not rich". But it was the greatest year of my life. It changed me and, if I could, I'd do it all again!

**Q** You're now an emergency medicine doctor – when did you decide to take that route?

**A** After Sandhurst, I was in the army for four years, during which time I completed an operational tour of Bosnia with the Royal Army Medical Corps. I was inspired by the doctors – so made a decision to retrain.

When I returned to the UK, I made the very difficult decision of leaving the army, and enrolled at Dundee University to study medicine. I worked in Glasgow and Edinburgh before moving back to London, where I specialised in emergency medicine.

**Q** You've been creating high-profile articles and documentaries since 2009 – why journalism?

**A** I've wanted to be a journalist since I first saw Kate Adie reporting from Lebanon. While I had planned on returning to the army as a doctor, after I left, I realised I was able to do things I couldn't before, like visit different countries and verbalise opinions a lot more openly. So, while studying medicine, I also started making documentaries.

This certainly had its own challenges, such as being shot at during filming in Palestine.

**Q** The junior doctor debate must strike a chord – how do you feel about what's happened?

**A** I'm appalled by the way Jeremy Hunt has attacked junior doctors as part of his plan to change their contract. How did those whose only purpose for going to work is to treat the sick and vulnerable become the target? Honestly, never did I ever think any Government would be capable of such blatant disregard. Hunt will forever be known as the Secretary of State for Health who pushed doctors to strike and even then refused to listen, and imposed an unsafe, unfair contract on us.

Striking is the last resort and it comes as a result of Hunt and his team refusing to listen to our concerns. We have to do this – ultimately, patients could be at risk if doctors are forced to work unsafe contracts.

The BMA represents me and I know how hard it is working to resolve this. Hunt has used an incredible amount of spin and not been completely honest with what has happened and the data he's using. It's misrepresented. Patient safety is core to every doctor's focus. Will Hunt be accountable if patients are put at risk or something terrible happens as a result of an overworked doctor on a shift pattern without safeguards and adequate rest?

**Q** What do you think this spells, on a wider scale, for the future of the NHS?

**A** I believe this latest debacle is yet another step towards privatising the NHS. This is also an attack on the less privileged in our society. Those who can afford private healthcare don't have to worry about getting adequate care. However, even then, is healthcare being provided because it's best for the patient or best for the private companies? And what about everyone else who won't have access

*I used to get angry about politics, but I decided to do something about it – nothing can happen if you just sit around and complain*



Junior doctors on strike in protest over the Government's proposed contract changes

to private healthcare? What about those who are so desperately sick and only have what's left of the NHS? What about those who have health insurance, but it falls short of what they need when they become sick? We see this situation in America all the time – people lose their homes, become bankrupt. We can't have that here.

**Q** The EU referendum is taking place soon. Why do you think the UK is better off staying in?

**A** Just look at the benefits, such as the European Court of Human Rights and working time regulations. It's our biggest trading partner. Economics isn't my forte, but it's obvious we're going to massively lose by leaving. Plus, why would we want to abide by the rules of a club we're not a part of? It's a bit of a risky gamble to think we can perform on a global stage to the same extent. What if we can't? Would we be isolated? The global picture is too unstable right now for the UK to break away.

**Q** And finally, why did you decide the Liberal Democrats were right for you?

**A** I used to get angry about the state of politics, but then decided it was time to do something about it – nothing can ever happen if you just sit around and complain. I joined the Liberal Democrats because I believe in the values they stand for: positive change, liberty and equality.



## Saleyha says...

**Syria** The first vote against the action against Assad was wrong. I was on the ground in Syria when that happened, and the people felt abandoned. Now we have a much bigger, tragic problem with ISIS. Assad must be made accountable for his crimes against humanity.

**Refugees** David Cameron's 20,000 figure is far too short. We're one of the world's largest economies and I'm sure there's more we can do. How do you want to be remembered, historically – as the side that helped or the side that left people to suffer?

**Votes for 16-year-olds** Absolutely, yes. Young adults are incredibly well informed now, so why aren't they allowed to have a say about their own future?

**The US presidential race** Donald Trump is a liability. We have laws banning people from coming into the country because they spew hate speech. Surely this applies to him.

# LIBERAL THINKING

Tips, tricks, tools and thoughts – by Liberal Democrats, for Liberal Democrats



## The membership incentive scheme

Local parties are rewarded for growing their membership.



- Net growth of between 1 and 10:

18% of all the membership subscription fees paid by all members during that quarter

- Net growth of more than 10:

33% of all the membership subscription fees paid by all members during that quarter

If you'd like to find out more on how to recruit new members, please email [help@libdems.org.uk](mailto:help@libdems.org.uk)

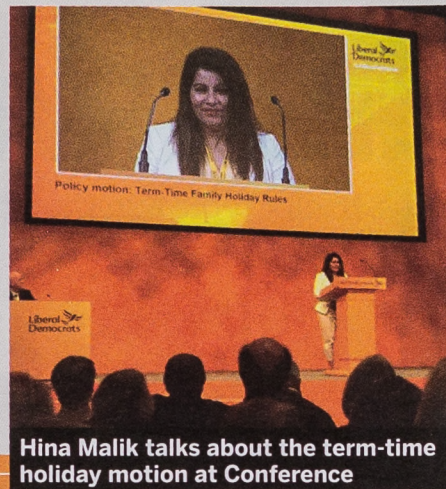
**Liberal Democrats**  
Stronger Economy Fairer Society



Join our volunteers and make a difference to the May 2016 elections. Polling stations will be open from 7am-10pm and we need volunteers to help get our messages and values out to voters. If you think you could lend a hand, visit [www.libdems.org.uk/volunteer](http://www.libdems.org.uk/volunteer)

# LIB DEM GIVES BACK

What makes the Lib Dem party one to be proud of? Our members, whose dedication and hard work we'd be nothing without. We also know how much members benefit from being part of the team. Here, we spoke to two new members about what they've given to – and gained from – the party



Hina Malik talks about the term-time holiday motion at Conference

**Spurred on by a desire to help with the #LibDemFightback, 18-year-old Lauren Pemberton-Nelson, from Southwark, joined in May 2015**



I'd been a supporter of the Liberal Democrats for a while, as I believe in the classic values of liberalism, tolerance and individualism, and also agreed with a

lot of the party policies. I canvassed prior to the 2015 General Election, but wasn't officially a member. After the election defeat, I thought it was important to get involved as much as possible and help contribute to the party.

Since joining, I've helped out with Ben Maitland's by-election and was a candidate in a by-election myself last month. While I'd never had a major problem speaking to people, doorstepping during my campaigning really helped build up my confidence.

I missed college on the day of the by-election, but even my agent said I probably learnt more that day by not going in. Not saying you don't learn in college, of course, but when it comes to politics, actually going out there makes you have a much better understanding of how it all works.

A career in politics definitely interests me, and being part of a party makes you understand the reasoning behind the

policies, and that they're not just there to win votes. That is very useful now and will be useful at university, too.

I also like the community feel of the party. People are really friendly. I went to the September Conference and it was really easy to meet new people and make friends. I didn't know what to expect so was positively surprised.

**After being impressed by Simon Hughes, Hina Malik, from Hounslow, decided the Lib Dems was the party for her, and hasn't stopped working hard for us since**



I used to be a Labour person, but when I met Simon Hughes in 2014 and spoke to him about a women's empowerment project I was working on, he gave me his undivided attention. It made a mark on me and I thought, "I like the way these people work".

I started supporting Simon and Vince Cable's campaign and saw that Liberal values are reflected in the party members and the way they interact. They all made me feel supported and that was really important to me.

The Bournemouth Conference was a fantastic experience. Jonathan Brown introduced me to different

members and they were very welcoming and warm.

I approached Rosalyn Gordon, Chair of Liberal Democrat Women, and said I wanted to talk about the holidays in term-time motion. I asked: "Will they let me talk? I'm new," and she said: "What's stopping you? We are very open here, anyone can speak."

Rosalyn gathered information from me and helped me fill in the forms. At the motion the next day, my name was called! This party gives you a chance, brings you forward and supports you.

I've been through a difficult marriage, domestic violence and divorce and want to empower other women in my community. I wanted a platform where I could make a difference, and be part of policies that affect women or children.

I was on a panel and stood as Councillor for the Cranford ward. The area is Labour-focused, but I shifted the Lib Dem position from fourth to third, with an 11.5% swing for Liberal, so I made an impact.

I've got hope for the future and, if we can tap into the disengaged communities and focus on some policies that they see are good for them, there's nothing stopping the Lib Dems from winning.

Find out what campaigns other members are running at [www.facebook.com/groups/LibDemCampaigners](http://www.facebook.com/groups/LibDemCampaigners)

## My Liberalism

→ Chair of Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary **Suzanne Fletcher** on what our values mean to her



→ Working for community has been the focus of my activism since I was first elected in 1981.

That was when I became the first Liberal to hold a seat on Stockton Council. Being the solo democrat on the council, there were lots of fights regarding freedom of information and more democracy and openness. I was very focused on issues in my ward and founded an organisation to help homeless families with children. The work we did to establish that need has been picked up by statutory organisations, and now there is purpose-built accommodation for them. But, at the time, it was something nobody knew about. It wasn't the most popular topic to talk about, but I never was concerned about that.

→ Being a Liberal Democrat is about making sure everyone's voice is heard. At the moment, the people we most need to listen to are asylum seekers.

During my time on the council, I met a lot of refugees and asylum seekers, which influenced how I think and what I do now. The more I found out, the angrier I became at how unjust the system was. I began to work with a community group, which is where the issue of the infamous red doors came in.

After that, myself and two others set up Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary ([www.ld4sos.org.uk](http://www.ld4sos.org.uk)), to ensure we had a Lib Dem organisation that was ready to speak out on these issues, cultivate policy and coordinate what was happening. I was very involved in the party's asylum policy that we have, which is excellent, particularly on stopping indefinite detention. We were the first party to call an end to this inhumane system, which a civilised democratic society shouldn't even consider having.

It's important we make sure these people have a voice, as it's difficult for them to speak up when they're desperate not to be seen as troublemakers,

or do anything to jeopardise their case. It's also difficult given the attitude taken by some of the media – the plight of asylum seekers isn't exactly what people are interested in. But, using the words of one asylum seeker I worked with recently, all they want is to be treated with dignity and respect. That doesn't cost any money.

→ Seekers of Sanctuary embodies everything that the Lib Dems stand for, and we feed what we discover is going on out there, into the parliamentary system.

Communication is key – getting information into Parliament, out of Parliament and around the party, plus encouraging people to sign petitions and get involved with various campaigns.

We work with and support people who head out to refugee camps and find out what's actually going on there, and what conditions are like. I've just been reading a briefing from the Refugee Council that has some really interesting facts and figures about asylum seekers. Getting factual information like this out there is absolutely crucial for changing public perception.

*The most important thing people can do is make sure we're doing our utmost to make a better life for people who have come here to seek sanctuary.*

The most important thing people can do is join and offer to help continue the work we're doing to tackle these issues, and make sure, as Lib Dems, we're doing our utmost to change the system and make a better life for people who have come here to seek sanctuary.

→ I'm cautiously hopeful for the future of the party, as long as we all remember, and publicise, what the Liberal Democrats stand for.

Now that we've had the election result that we have, it's really important that we make sure everyone – including our own members – understands what it is we stand for: liberty, community and equality.

We're here to fight for a fair and free society, and we value the importance of every individual. I think a lot of the Labour Party is about doing things for people, while the Conservatives expect people to do things for themselves, even if they're not able. But we're here to give people dignity and respect and enable them to do things for themselves.

I think if we hadn't set up Seekers of Sanctuary, someone else would have needed to, given everything that's gone on over the past four years. It's the same for the Lib Dems. We are needed in this country. We need people with values, who are going to stand up for the dispossessed. If we don't do it, who will?



# A Liberal legacy

Liberal Democrat Party Treasurer **Mike German** on what leaving a legacy could mean to the party



**A**s the new Party Treasurer, I have spent the first couple of months looking at how I can best help the party and address the challenges we are facing.

Funding is our lifeblood. We need cash in the short term, but we need to plan for the longer-term future as well. So I am identifying areas on which we can focus to grow revenue that will enable the party to move forward in a stable position, to fight for the values we believe in.

One of the ways that could make all the difference to the party is leaving a gift in a will. Gifts in wills are simple to arrange and suit most personal circumstances.



Many of our members are increasingly deciding to support the party with such a gift, including Chris

Elwood (left), a retired teacher and former Lib Dem Councillor. It can be a fixed amount or a percentage of your estate. It can be left to the Federal party, your state or region, or to your local party. If you leave a legacy to the Federal party, a percentage of your gift will benefit your local party, too. Leaving a legacy to the Liberal Democrats can also have tax benefits for your family. The choice is yours.

### Where there's a will...

We have already helped many party members with the detail of leaving a gift in their will, and we can assist you in how to go about it, too. If you are interested in leaving a legacy to the party, please contact us on the details below, to obtain a copy of our legacy leaflet or our guide to making your will. All matters will be treated very confidentially.

Many thanks for considering the future of our party and the values we all share.

**Mike German, Party Treasurer**

Want to know more about how you can leave a Lib Dem legacy? Contact Mike at [legacy@libdems.org.uk](mailto:legacy@libdems.org.uk)

**GET IN TOUCH**

*"My local constituency is Hazel Grove, in Greater Manchester, and it is with them that I have done most of my work for the party. I decided to leave a legacy to the party for several reasons, mainly to return to the party a little of the benefit that I have had of being involved for so long.*

*Legacies are an easy way to ensure that our party continues to influence the political scene for the future, to fight the important causes.*

*I have left 10% to the party, so it doesn't have to be much."*

*Chris Elwood*



# THE MOST INCLUSIVE CLUB IN LONDON

*No joining fee for Liberal Democrat Party Members*  
**Saving £385**



For 134 years, the National Liberal Club has supported the Liberal cause. It was founded by Gladstone in 1882 to act as a "home from home" for Liberal activists and supporters – and it still does so today.

With a friendly and relaxed atmosphere, the club is liberal in the broadest sense. The first of the "gentlemen's clubs" to admit women, it is open to political or purely social members. Membership benefits include:

Magnificent dining room and cocktail bar

Concerts, barbecues, quizzes

Debates & lectures

Over 150 reciprocal clubs worldwide

Banqueting rooms & business room

Liberal politics & history library



Annual membership is £770, no joining fee offer ends September 2016

reduced rates for country/overseas members, and partners

Junior Membership for 17 to 29 years starting from £192.50

Contact Membership Secretary Rosemary Tweddle on **020 7930 9871** or visit [www.nlc.org.uk](http://www.nlc.org.uk)

National Liberal Club • Whitehall Place • LONDON • SW1A 2HE



JOIN THE CAMPAIGN  
[libdems.org.uk/europe](http://libdems.org.uk/europe)

#INtogether