

# Why get a postal vote?

Parliament is in deadlock and we are preparing for a GE to be held soon. The Liberal Democrats will go into any election campaigning to win, fighting for our place in the European Union, where we can work internationally to tackle the Climate Emergency.

Help us make that happen.

**Be ready to vote for the Lib Dems by registering for a postal vote now.**

Boris Johnson and Jeremy Corbyn have proved they are not fit for office. Now is the time for Jo Swinson and the Liberal Democrats to take centre stage.

Organising a postal vote is a brilliant way of supporting us, it means **your vote can be cast in advance of polling day in your own time.**

It means that if you are campaigning with us on polling day, you know your vote is already in the bag.

And even if you aren't, it means that our campaigners have one less door to knock on on polling day.

After every election I speak to people who planned to vote but couldn't in the end because something came up on the day – they got ill or were away unexpectedly. But when the country is teetering on the brink of another General Election, I don't want you to miss out.

The next general election will dictate the course of our country, at a chaotic and busy time, it is important to make sure your vote is counted.

**We are expected to make significant gains across the country as we build on our recent electoral success.** Having made strides in the local and European elections, we continue to stand up for an open, inclusive and progressive UK in the upcoming General Election.

You can be part of this movement to bring liberal values back to British politics.

[Simply fill in the form](#) and send it to your local council to be added to the postal vote list.

[Get your postal vote](#)

Thank you!

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## What's the role of Party President?

Probably the most common question I've had so far in this campaign is 'what's the role of President?' It's an important question because it gets to the heart of what we need to do to be more successful in our ambition to build a fair, free and open society, as it says in our constitution.

One part of the role – being the voice of the grassroots in the room with the party leadership – is one all previous Presidents have taken seriously. But what else they do with the role has varied depending on the circumstances.

Right now, with a new party leader, a new deputy leader and a growing Parliamentary Party, it would be a missed opportunity to see the role of President as another media spokesperson for the party. In our MPs, Peers and our excellent cadre of PPCs we have a great team of those already – and we need them to get all the coverage they can.

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## How We Can Do Better Than Ever Before

I'm the son of immigrants, one parent from Germany, the other from Poland. My family history is in miniature the troubled history of Europe, scarred by the horrors of extremism and war – and then my parents making a new home together in our country.

It's why for me our liberal democracy, despite all its flaws, is so precious. We need to step up to protect against the extremists and populists.

To do that, we need to [build a grassroots liberal movement](#), mobilising the millions who share our values. With such a movement we can continue our successes this year in taking more power – the legal, legitimate way – through campaigning and through elections.

**Winning elections at every level gives us more of that precious power to stop Brexit, to protect our planet, to heal the divisions in our society and to meet the needs of our local communities.**

That's why winning is so important – and that's why I've put helping you win at the heart of my pitch to be President.

**The key task for the next President is to ensure we have the right strategy and the right organisation to win bigger than ever before** – in local government, in the London Assembly, in the Welsh and Scottish governments, in Westminster and in future European elections too.

## **Unmatched Experience**

That's a task well-suited to my record and my skills:

- Creating with David Howarth the [core votes strategy](#) that underpinned our recovery since 2015
- Co-author of the party's handbook for general election agents
- Successfully championing the registered supporter scheme, now in place and successful
- Supporting the group doing the hard graft on reforming our disciplinary process, getting an improved and independent system in place
- Working with colleagues to introduce gender-balanced selection rules when the London Assembly was created, ensuring we took positive steps to improve our diversity
- Always listening to and informing members, running the best-read Liberal Democrat website outside HQ and the popular Liberal Democrat Newswire emails, all to keep supporters informed about what is going on and how to get involved
- And many other examples, based on my long experience of how the party works

It is, to borrow one of our favourite phrases, a record of action... and a promise of more.

Previous Presidents have varied how they do the job depending on the needs of the time.

Right now, we've got a brilliant new leader, deputy leader, a growing Parliamentary Party and soon, fingers crossed, a great new wave of MPs too. The best use of the role of President isn't to duplicate their media efforts. Rather, it is to support them – and all of us – by getting our strategy and organisation right.

The President definitely needs to be wheeled out in the media to take the flack when things go wrong. I've got plenty of experience of surviving trial by media, whether Channel 4 grilling me over a Lib Dem minister up on police charges, the early morning rigours of doing Radio 4's Today programme, getting interviewed by Jeremy Paxman or surviving the questioning of Andrew Neill. Understanding how to handle crises is also what I do professionally, advising everyone from small charities through to large international companies.

**What I can also be is a President who keeps us focused on what will bring long-term success for us in elections at all levels.**

## **The Right Focus**

Our federal party HQ, understandably, gets drawn into focusing on the next Westminster general election. But for success we need to think broader – remembering all those other elections and campaigns which matter too – and we need to think longer-term – remembering that there will be a general election after the next one too. That's where our next President can come in.

**If you elect me, this will be my only role in the party.**

So I can offer a relentless focus on getting our strategy and organisation right to succeed at all levels, tomorrow and in the long-run.

*To find out more or to sign up as a supporter, see <https://www.markpack.org.uk/president>.*

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## **Candidates standing for the Federal Conference Committee**

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## **Hear from Christine Jardine**

Waiting for the outcome of the nomination count for Party President felt a wee bit like that scene from The Big Bang Theory where Sheldon explains about Schrodinger's Cat.

You know, where as long as the box is closed the cat is both dead and alive?

The relief when they cat was actually alive, and I was nominated, was huge!

**Now of course is when the work really starts in listening to what you want from your new President, and whether I fit the bill.**

Over the past few years I've had a chance to see the role of President close

up. I have no illusions about how much work is involved, or what it will take to continue to build the wide movement we all want.

But I also know how important it is that the membership has a strong, clear, effective voice. A president who speaks for the members, but more importantly, one who listens to what they want and communicates that to the leadership.

We have a fantastic team at HQ with so many bright, capable people working to fulfil our vision for the party whether it's in campaigns, fundraising, policy or the press team.

I see the President's role there as facilitating what they do.

Not directing the operation, after all they are the ones with the expertise, but supporting and making sure that they have what they need from the party infrastructure.

The new chief executive will run the party day to day. I would be there to oversee.

**Most of all I see the President as the link between the members, the staff, the parliamentarians and the public.**

Communication is the key, both within the party and to the outside world.

If we are going to build a grassroots movement, we have to reach the voters and convince them that we have something to offer.

We have to create a movement, with a goal and an image that they believe in and want to be part of.

In the third decade of the 21st Century that will mean mass communication on TV, radio and online.

**As president I think I will have the skills and the platform to convey our message there.**

As the party grows we will increasingly be talking about a national message.

Talking to the country with one voice, as well as to our individual constituencies, both geographic and social.

We have to use that national exposure to add a new string to our bow. Or rather, return to a string we played well in the past.

There will always be an important role for our hugely successful door to door grassroots campaigning and delivering.

But in a General Election we can reach so many more people with an effective social media, TV and radio presence.

Take an average nightly regional or national new programme like Reporting Scotland. Six hundred thousand people watch it every night.

When I worked there, Jim Wallace and Charles Kennedy, who was President at the time, were on constantly. We won 15 seats in the Scottish Parliament and had 11 MPs in Scotland because the public heard what we had to say in an effective media message.

And it wasn't just in Scotland; it worked across the country when Simon was President, they used their existing platform and built a bigger profile as President.

**That's what I want to do.**

But as well as having a message, we have to make it an attractive proposition to be a member. We need to encourage the people who don't just want to do something good and make a contribution.

We need to convince people to see us as a long-term investment and something to be part of and get something from.

**It's not just about a quick vote and move on. I want people to put down roots in this party.**

I want to make them feel welcome. Make it clear that as members they have a President who will listen to what they say and make sure it gets to the people who need to hear it.

**I want to be a President who listens and then gets it done.**

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