

Removing the Conservatives from power

With our Brighton conference approaching ([agenda and registration here](#)), I've recently written the latest report back to conference on the Board's work. Here is a slightly expanded and updated version of that report.

The next general election

With a new Conservative Party leader nearly upon us, the range of plausible **dates for the general election is wide open**. As it now may well be much sooner than seemed likely at the time of our last conference, the Federal Board has been reviewing our general election plans.

Preparations are being stepped up across the party. The pre-manifesto document being debated at conference is an important part of that as is **Ed Davey's announcement of a major new package to help people with their fuel bills this winter – [axing the planned increase in the fuel bill cap and providing extra help to those most in need](#)**.

This all makes now an even more important time for us all to be out on the doorsteps, recruiting new members and campaign helpers. There's been a clear pattern in our recent electoral successes at all levels that building up campaign organisations well in advance of the formal election campaign is a central element to success.

A [Membership Incentive Scheme](#) is in place, with **generous additional payments to local parties who recruit or renew party members locally**, especially if it is done on direct debit.

Thanks in particular to our wonderful three Parliamentary by-election wins in the last year, when that general election comes, we'll be a key part of the route to removing the Conservatives from government in Westminster.

That makes the Parliamentary seats in the (variously and flexibility defined) Blue Wall an increasingly important focus for us as the next general election polling day nears. But the majority of our councillors, our members and our voters are outside the Blue Wall.

So it's not only the target seats for the next Westminster election we need to prosper at. We also **need to be winning at other levels of election more broadly**. We need to continue the sort of breadth in our recovery we saw in May's local elections – amazing progress against the Conservatives in the Blue Wall and continuing recovery elsewhere, including up against Labour and the nationalists. Both of these tracks need to be successful for us to be a growing, national party.

That's why the Board has continued to prioritise investment in the breadth of our campaigns officers network, supporting not only Parliamentary target seats but also progress in other areas too. Thank you to all the other parts of the party who have cooperated on this, giving us a much larger network of

staff supporting grassroots campaigning than we had before.

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Author:

[Scrap the energy price hike](#)

We need bold and urgent action to help families pay their bills and heat their homes this winter. There is no other choice.

Families and pensioners across the country are in the grip of a cost-of-living crisis. We have already seen energy bills rise by £700 this year. They simply cannot afford another, even bigger rise of £1,400 in October.

This is an emergency, and the Government must step in now to save families and pensioners £1,400 by cancelling the planned rise in energy bills this October.

We need a bold plan to spare families from soaring energy bills.

The Liberal Democrat plan is to cancel the 70% increase in the energy price cap expected to be announced by Ofgem later this month. The Government would instead pay the shortfall to energy suppliers so that they can afford to supply customers at the current rates.

‘I think we could be heading for a social catastrophe.’

Leader of the Liberal Democrats Sir [@EdwardJDavey](#) is calling on the government to cover the cost of the energy price rise in October.

He is asked where the money to cover the cost will come from.

pic.twitter.com/NuKI1B8GEq

– Good Morning Britain (@GMB) [August 9, 2022](#)

The estimated £36 billion cost should be met by **expanding the windfall tax on oil and gas company profits**, and using the Government’s higher-than-expected VAT revenues as a result of soaring inflation.

A proper Windfall Tax could raise around £20 billion to help keep people’s energy bills from rising in October. **Fossil fuel giants have seen their profits soar.** BP and Shell made £29 billion in profits in the first six months of the year alone.

We are also calling for more targeted support for vulnerable and low income households. This would include **doubling the Warm Homes Discount to £300 and extending it to all those on Universal Credit and Pension Credit**, while investing in insulating fuel poor homes to bring prices down in the long term.

The contest to be leader of the Conservative Party might as well be happening in a parallel universe. Neither candidate has any idea how to help families and pensioners through what could be the toughest winter in decades.

We need a bold plan to spare families from soaring energy bills.

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Federal Communications and Elections Committee July report

General Election preparedness

As is our key focus, in our last meeting we continued to discuss our General Election preparedness and planning.

In summary, our plan builds on what worked in the 2019 general election (and previous plans), changes what didn't work, and looks to the future for new ideas and approaches.

The plan is a live document and progress is being made in all the areas, with a relentless focus on ensuring that we can deliver **gains at the next General Election: whenever it may be.**

Westminster Candidates review

The Committee previously commissioned a review into our Westminster candidate selections. We felt strongly that the **recent round of selections have been too slow and cumbersome. Change is desperately needed.**

We are **thankful to Alison Suttie and Tim Farron** for their comprehensive review, the thirty interviewees and more than 50 others who provided input in writing. The review points to **a roadmap for a more efficient future process.**

Candidate selection is a State matter, and we are also thankful to the States for their engagement with the review. We **look forward to taking this work forward as a team.** The final version of the report will now go to the Joint Candidates Sub-Committee, the appropriate body for cross-state candidate

discussions.

We must not be this delayed again.

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Author:

[Getting ready to remove the Conservatives from power](#)

When will the next general election be?

Sorry, I don't know. But I do know that the range of plausible dates is wide open – from only a couple of months away through to January 2025. And that whenever the date is, we also have a massive round of local elections in May.

Which is why we **need to step up our campaigning, capacity building and planning** through the second half of this year. Even if this Parliament goes its full term, the benefits of extra canvassing, member recruitment and training this summer will still be considerable.

We certainly need to be out campaigning, looking at the horror show that is the Conservative Party leadership contest so far – full of candidates who aren't headlining big issues like fixing the NHS and tackling climate change, but are rushing to the media to talk about restricting the rights of trans people.

Both our elections committee (FCEC) and the Board have recently reviewed our general election preparations, and the team at HQ is revising our contingency plans for a snap election. A **pre-manifesto overview of our policy** approach is also coming to the autumn's [federal party conference](#).

It was great to see the **huge bump in canvassing as a result of our 'Big Build' weekend in early July** – and the bump in new leaflet deliverers that came in as a result. Our party membership also not only got a bump from the win in Tiverton & Honiton, but the growth has continued since too rather than fading away as happened with previous by-election bumps.

So I'd encourage everyone in local parties to think about how to up your campaigning plans over the summer, and where we don't yet have a **Prospective Parliamentary Candidate (PPC)** in place to think about talking to your state or regional party about when to **timetable your selection** for.

Wonderful people

We've had a brilliant run of council by-elections already since the May local elections, with a net seven gains (compared to net four gains for Labour). That makes us the **best performing party in those contests**, and it was particularly good to see **Linda Chung win the Hampstead Town by-election** – winning the seat from third place and taking it from Labour.

Also deserving particular praise is the first person to top our 'Golden Mallets' scheme for people who got the most posters put up in the May elections. **Cliff Woodcraft from Sheffield topped the list with an awesome 466 (!) posters**. Badges are on their way to all the winners.

Our next big set of prizes is the Party Awards at our autumn conference. Nominations are now open for:

- The Belinda Eyre-Brook Award
- The Dadabhai Naoroji Award
- The Harriet Smith Award
- The Patsy Calton Award
- The Penhaligon Award
- The President's Award

You can [read more and make nominations here](#).

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[Autumn Conference 2022 motions selection](#)

The Federal Conference Committee (FCC) met on Saturday, 9th July to start its work on the **final agenda for Autumn 2022 Conference**, which will be taking place in Brighton, with an option for online attendance.

If you haven't yet registered for Conference, I would recommend doing so here.

At the meeting we discussed several items in relation to future venues and the meeting and motions schedule for 2023 into 2024. As previously reported, **we will be returning to York for Spring Conference 17 to 19 March 2023**.

The Federal Conference Committee has also continued work with its **Working Group on a Hybrid Conference** and has put together a technical specifications document which will be used to look at options and software platforms for a

future hybrid conference. This was an interesting meeting as we also discussed wider membership engagement at Conference (applicable for in-person and hybrid conference options).

Conference is an excellent way to engage with the membership, to influence the party's policy and strategy, but also so many other activities. We are looking forward to an exciting fringe programme with a range of different topics and presentations. There will also be the extensive training programme available at Conference – we really do recommend that you look at that. The directory will be published very soon. I am especially looking forward to the return of the Lib Dem Quiz and of course Glee.

The agenda for conference, including the texts of the motions and timings, will be published shortly. As per usual the Conference will include the Leaders Speech, Committee and Parliamentary Reports, the Leaders Q&A and some set-piece speeches; we are also **delighted that Kira Rudik, leader of the Ukrainian Holos Party, will be joining us at Conference.** The further details of these will be announced in due course.

We received 41 policy motions, four business motions, five constitutional amendments and three standing order amendments. As always, unfortunately, time is tight, and we cannot take all the motions submitted.

The FCC wants to extend its **thanks to all members to take the time to write and prepare motions**; if you are interested in shaping party policy then please do reach out to the FCC via the motions (and/or amendments) drafting service and we will be able to assist you.

From the submitted motions, we selected 18 policy motions, three business motions, four constitutional amendment, and two standing order amendments. There are also slots for two emergency motions.

I have included **below the list of motions submitted** (please note that some of the naming of the motions may vary between this list and publication of the agenda), who they were submitted by and if not selected, the reason for non-selection. With regards to constitutional and standing order amendments, these are automatically selected; however, ruled either in or out of order.

You may recall from the previous report that we confirmed that there would be a debate on the issue of nuclear weapons at Autumn 2022 Conference, and a nuclear weapons motion has been selected for debate.

Please note that the next set of deadlines are:

Drafting advice deadline (emergency motions and amendments): 22 August at 13.00

Amendments and Emergency Motions deadline and deadline for Appeals against non-selection of motions: 5 September at 13.00

Appeals deadline for Amendments and Emergency Motions: 15 September at 13.00

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Author: