

Determined Davey and Moving Forwards to 2021 Elections

November's meeting opened with a discussion with Ed Davey in which he outlined his plans for the Parliamentary Party going forwards. Collectively we deliberated on how to make sure all parts of the party are collaborating effectively and making best use of Ed's overarching strategy.

The Moving Forward Programme

The move to joint-fund staff between Federal, State and Regional parties is paying off and we **now have full time Campaign Managers/Regional Development Officers working in every Region**, working in cooperation with ALDC and a substantial staff team. Our field capacity is as large as it perhaps has ever been at this stage in a Parliament supporting our campaigns teams on the ground.

In quarter 3 of 2020 we focussed a lot of our work on mapping seats to the Tiering Strategy to ensure we have a shared understanding across the party of where each of our Local Parties sits. This will help us **better target the different kinds of resources we have to get the maximum number of Lib Dems elected in forthcoming elections.**

This isn't the place for a full run-down, but the Tiers are roughly:

Tier 1 = Advanced – local parties that have won their Westminster / devolved government constituency seat or are genuinely challenging to win it in the current cycle.

Tier 2 = Moving forward – developed local organisations landing second in Westminster / devolved government level OR are challenging for/have control of their local authority looking to entrench and break into being 'advanced'

Tier 3 = Developing – local parties with their first bridgehead gains at local authority level and working to expand.

Tier 4 = Start-up – local parties working to get themselves functioning smoothly and growing.

The next stage of the work will be helping local parties to draw up their local development plans so that they can progress up the tiers. Each and every seat is an opportunity.

Pacts with opposition parties

We discussed the use of pacts and agreed that, in our view, the **expected starting point is to always field a full slate of candidates and to not make**

pacts with opposition parties.

Naturally, though, where there are exceptional circumstances and strong arguments, pacts can be the right thing. This is especially at local level, where of course FCEC's remit does not extend!

As a committee of experienced campaigners, we would encourage local parties considering such pacts to work closely with their regions, who do have a remit over agreeing such pacts, and make the most of the support and expertise available to them from the party. We are all pulling in one direction – painting the map gold.

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Spring Conference 2021

Federal Conference Committee met for the morning of Saturday 14 the November 2020. The meeting was designed to pick up on issues that arose from the Autumn Conference feedback meeting that took place in October.

At the feedback meeting, the FCC had decided that Spring Conference would take place online. We will be using the Hopin platform and conference will operate in a very similar manner to Autumn Conference.

At that last meeting, we decided on the registration rates, and the rates for the exhibition and fringe for party bodies. We finalised some aspects of those rates at the November meeting.

The conference deadlines are as follows (all of these are at 1pm):

- Drafting Advice for motions: 17th December 2020
- Motions Deadline: 6th January 2021
- Drafting Advice deadline for amendments: 22nd February 2021
- Amendments and Emergency Motions deadline: 8th March 2021
- Appeals deadline: 18th March 2021
- Spring Conference: 19th to 21st March 2021

At the November meeting, we also dealt with a few issues that concern Hopin. We noted, for example, that there is to be a 'report user' button added for the future.

Although Autumn conference was a great success overall, there were some areas that worked better than others. The committee considered in detail how it might make the exhibition more attractive, for example. It had formed a working group beforehand to consider proposals. We will look to provide additional information to exhibitors in advance, we will make sure that chairs plug the exhibition, and specific stands within it on a rotation basis, immediately before auditorium breaks. We will look to hold some VIP tours of the exhibition. We will also try and explain in a video what the exhibition is so that attendees can see in advance. We will also only offer medium and large stands in the future. All of that is designed to get better footfall through the exhibition and to make it more attractive.

In terms of the fringe, the committee decided to extend the session times from 50 minutes to between 60 and 75 minutes in duration. We will also look to provide more and better information in advance to those running fringes to try and eliminate technical difficulties.

The committee also considered the conference app and documentation. We noted that, for an online conference, it makes no sense to have a separate Agenda, Conference Extra, and Conference Daily. It would be a lot better if they were merged into one document, and that is what we are going to do for Spring Conference. We will publicise an Agenda containing all of the motions that we have selected. That will be available as a printed document, at an extra cost, should people want it. We will then make available a compendious electronic agenda that contains the motions, the amendments, and all of the questions that we select at the later deadlines. We hope that that will provide an easier, and more user-friendly way of navigating through what we are debating. Because that document will overlap the app to a large extent, we will not be making the app available at Spring Conference.

We also had a discussion about the conference deadlines. We are looking to simplify the way in which items are submitted after the main motion and amendments deadline. We are hoping to introduce a single type form through which people can communicate with the FCC and the chairs and aides of sessions about, for example, procedural motions, late questions, and points of order. We also looked at where our conference attendees came from in the country and how long they had been members for. There were a number of very long-standing members a conference and a number of very new members. There was a particular bias towards local parties that have a track record of electoral success.

We look forward to seeing you all at Spring Conference!

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The Tories' climate plans won't undo the damage of the last five years

Today the Government announced their Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution.

Sadly, it fails to undo the damage the Conservatives have done to the UK's progress on climate change over the past five years.

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Fighting for equality and inclusion for disabled people everywhere

Disability History Month is an important opportunity to remember how far we have come in the battle for disability rights and equality.

There is still a long road ahead to ensure equality and inclusion for disabled people.

It is also a time to honour those who have led the way forward, defied stereotypes and contributed so much to the success of our country.

8 November marked the the 25th anniversary of the passing of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The act made it illegal for employers and service providers to discriminate against someone because they were disabled. This was a key step in advancing disability rights.

As a society we have come a long way since then, but we cannot afford to become complacent – **there is still a long road ahead to ensure equality and inclusion for disabled people everywhere.**

This year's theme is "access" which highlights continued failures to improve accessibility be it in the physical environment, access to information or services.

We all benefit when everyone can fully participate in our society.

We must work to challenge this because we all benefit when everyone can fully participate in our society.

Finally, I want to thank everyone involved in organising this month's events.

I wish you all the very best for a successful and thought-provoking Disability History Month.

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We cannot stand by as thousands are left homeless this winter

With coronavirus putting the most vulnerable in our communities at risk, we must ensure no one is left behind.

2020 has seen a sharp rise in rough sleeping. **Without a home to stay in, these people are at a higher risk of catching the virus and have no way to self-isolate.**

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