Folkestone and Hythe Liberal Democrats

Annual General Meeting 2023

Monday 18th December 7.30pm on Zoom

Minutes

In attendance: Peter Gane, Matthew Horrox (arrived 7.40), Val Loseby, Tom McNeice, Rosa Morris, Suzanne Piper, Tim Prater, Terry Preston, Jonathan Renshaw, Hugh Robertson-Richie, John Stokes.

Apologies: Roger West, Alison Pemberton.

1. **Welcome:** Secretary Tim Prater welcomed everyone. He asked people to think of those members and family of members not able to be with us, including Alison Pemberton and Pat West who are both undergoing treatment. The meeting sent every good wish to both and their partners Brian and Roger.

2. **Minutes** of the meeting held on 14 November 2022 were accepted as a true record. Proposed: Suzanne Piper, Seconded: John Stokes. Unanimous.

3. **Matters Arising:** Hugh Roberton-Ritchie asked about our Parliamentary Candidate status. The Lib Dems currently have no approved candidates in F&H approved and willing to stand at the General Election. Despite requests, Region had been unable to supply a Returning Officer to commence a selection during the year. In the last few weeks Region had announced they planned to appoint candidates to seats that had not already selected, and asked if we had a local candidate. Sadly, we do not, and notified them.

    Liberal Drinks was agreed to be moved to the SECOND Wednesday of each month as a number of members could not make the 1st Wednesday.

4. **Chairman's Report:** None received.

5. **Treasurer's Report, 2022 accounts and Independent Examiner's Report:** John Stokes (Treasurer) presented the current financial position, noting the Lib Dem Draw as our major fundraiser and overall acceptable financial position. John also presented the annual accounts for 2022, which had been considered by the Executive team in January and subsequently examined by Alan Collins as Independent Examiner who found no issues. To Note: proposed John Stokes, seconded Peter Gane, Agreed Unanimously.

6. **Independent Examiner 2023:** The meeting agreed to appoint Alan Collins as Independent Examiner for the 2023 accounts (proposed John Stokes, seconded Tim Prater, Agreed Unanimously).

7. **Motions submitted in advance [None received]**

8. **Reports from Councils**

    a. **Folkestone and Hythe District** – The District council elections had seen the Lib Dems hold (with increased majorities) both seats in Sandgate and West Folkestone, and also saw Lib Dem Groups elected to Folkestone Town Council and Hythe Town

Council. However the hope to win more district seats in Cheriton and Harbour did not prove successful. 2024 will see a PCC election n May and likely the General Election. Tim reported that Peter Gane had joined him and Gary Fuller the Lib Dem Group this year, so it was now a group of three.

Following the elections, negotiations between the groups had seen the Greens and Lib Dems forming an administration (with Tim as Deputy Leader and Gary also on the Cabinet) with Labour taking all Committee Chairs and the Chair of Council.

The new administration had halted the development of Princes Parade, was seeking to balance the budget and fix the forecast £18m deficit over the next 4 years, and introduce a new committee system by May 2024.

    b. **Folkestone Town**: Peter Gane updated that a new Town Clerk had been appointed in May (following the resignation of the previous Clerk on health grounds), but his departure was announced in November.

    c. **Hythe Town:** John S reported that the Council felt quite together, and work was underway on the budget and precept for 2024-25. Precept increase was hoped to be around 2=3%.

9. **Election of Officers 2023** were as follows:
   a. Chair – Matt Horrox
   b. Treasurer – John Stokes
   c. Secretary – Tim Prater
   d. Elections Officer – (TBC)
   e. Membership Development Officer: (TBC)
   f. Diversity Champion: (TBC)
   g. Eight ordinary executive members: Peter Gane, Val Loseby, Kate McNeice, Tom McNeice, Rosa Morris, Alison Pemberton, Suzanne Piper, Jonathan Renshaw
   h. Council Rep: Gary Fuller

10. **Close of Meeting.**