



# Liberal Democrat History Group

## Annual General Meeting

**6.00 pm Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

In-person: David Lloyd George Room, National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HE

Online, via Zoom: register via the History Group website at [www.liberalhistory.org.uk/event/liberals-and-free-trade/](http://www.liberalhistory.org.uk/event/liberals-and-free-trade/)

### **Agenda and calling notice**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the AGM held on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025
3. Report from the Chair on activities during 2025
4. Report from the Treasurer and annual accounts
5. Report from the Membership Secretary
6. Election of Officers for 2026–27:
  - Chair
  - Secretary
  - Treasurer
  - Membership Secretary
  - Five ordinary members of the Executive Committee
  - Nominations, including self-nominations, may be made to the Secretary, in writing or by email (address below), at any time up until the start of the AGM.
7. Any other business

**The minutes of the 2025 AGM, the annual accounts for 2024–25 and the Chair's report on activities during 2025 are available below**  
**(and also on our website at: [www.liberalhistory.org.uk/event/liberals-and-free-trade/](http://www.liberalhistory.org.uk/event/liberals-and-free-trade/))**

*Also in the same room on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January:*

5.00 – 6.00pm: The NLC Library will be holding a **second-hand book sale**, focused primarily on Liberal history, politics and philosophy, drawing upon duplicates that have been donated. All proceeds will go towards the development of the NLC Library and enhancing its collection of Liberal material.

6.30 – 8.00pm: Liberal Democrat History Group discussion meeting on **Liberals and Free Trade**, with Professor Frank Trentmann (Birkbeck College, author of *Free Trade Nation*) and Lord Chris Fox (Liberal Democrat spokesperson on Business and Trade in the House of Lords). Chair: Baroness Julie Smith.

**For more details, see: [www.liberalhistory.org.uk/event/liberals-and-free-trade/](http://www.liberalhistory.org.uk/event/liberals-and-free-trade/)**

## **Liberal Democrat History Group AGM 2025**

### **Minutes of the meeting held at the National Liberal Club and online on 27 January 2025**

#### ***Present***

Duncan Brack, David Cloke, Julian Cope, Nick Davidson, Flora Death, John Death, Alastair Dow, Simon Drage, Andrew Ellis, David Evans, Suzanne Fletcher, Robert Ford, Sam Foulder-Hughes, Richard Good, , Simon Hughes, David Jeffrey, Denis Loretto, Derek McAuley, Michael McManus, Michael Meadowcroft, Robert Meadowcroft, John Mercer, Christopher Millington, Rosemary Mortimer, Richard O'Brien, Kath Pinnock, Christopher Read, Chris Rennard, David Rogers, Richard Sanderson, Chris Shirley, Paula Surridge, Nigel Taylor, Peter Truesdale, Mike Tuffrey, Paul Tyler and Charles Welchman.

#### ***Registered via Zoom***

Philip Bamborough, John Bicknell, David Blake, Belinda Brooks-Gordon, John Burrough, Amy Carman, Nick Collins, Steve Comer, Peter Downes, Nick Farnden, David Forrester, Alan Greenfield, Duncan Greenland, Peter Herlinger, Andrew Houseley, Ian Hunter, Andrew Hydon, Elizabeth Johnson, Martin Kettle, James King, Margaret Lally, Sandra Lawman, David Leal, Clémence Leveque, Nigel Lindsay, Caron Lindsay, Robert Maddock, Philip Mitchell, James Moore, Michael Mullaney, Paul Noblet, Sian Norris-Copson, Quintin Peppiatt, Jake Perkins, Chris Platts, Peter Price, David Prosser, Steffen Rick, David Rogers, Joye Rosenstiel, Ian Sherwood, Peter Sloman, Catherine Smart, Jim Spencer, Barry Standen, David Steel, Alexander Stennings, Daniel Ullmann, Stephen Vaughan, Susan Watson, Michael Welsh, Oliver West, Kevin Wilkins, Robin Wilson, Simon Wilson, Peter Wrigley, Arthur Wu and David Yates.

#### ***1. Welcome***

The Chair, Tony Little, welcomed members to the meeting and invited attendees to put any questions they might have into the Chat.

#### ***2. Apologies***

Nicholas Alderton, Malcolm Baines, Gabriel Barton-Singer, David Dutton, Tim Hill, John Leston, York Membery, Andrew Pinnock, Gianni Sarra, Alan Sherwell and Neil Stockley.

#### ***3. Minutes of AGM 2024***

Accepted as a correct record.

#### ***4. Matters Arising***

None

#### ***5. Report by the Treasurer***

The Treasurer introduced the accounts which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The Treasurer noted that the AGM two years previously had agreed to an increase in subscriptions because of inflation, especially the cost of postage and events. He was, therefore, thankful that the Club had made rooms available to the Group for free, only charging for AV.

In the 2023-24 subscription year the Group had made a surplus of £920. This had in part increased because of the move by some members from print to digital thus reducing the Group's printing and distribution costs. On the other hand, there had been a significant increase in website costs with £1,200 set aside for a new site. This was recorded as 'trade creditors'.

Meanwhile he was investing in a better deposit account for the Group at the Charity bank where he had obtained a rate of interest of 3.5%

AGREED: Recommendation that the accounts be formally adopted.

Recommendation that Andrew Thurnburn be appointed the independent examiner of the accounts.

## **6. Chair's Report**

The Chair noted that a written report from him had been circulated in advance of the meeting but said that he wished to highlight a few things.

On the website, the Chair said that he recognised that there were some teething problems that Chris Millington was working through. The Group was also aiming for an on-line membership function. He asked members to let the executive know if they encountered any issues. He also noted that the Group had also joined BlueSky.

The Group had run a full programme of meetings, most of which had also been on-line, recorded and subsequently put on the website. There had been a wide range of topics covered: the Irish famine, environmentalism, the Middle East and the Lloyd George coalition and relations with the Labour Party over the previous 100 years.

Plans included a meeting at conference on Keynesian economic policy with speakers Peter Sloman and Peter Walker and an academic meeting at Leicester university with the theme of 'New Directions in Liberal History'. Papers would be welcome.

The Chair argued that the Journal continued to be of a high standard with much work going into the special issue on Liberals and Empire. The next special issue, to be led by Malcolm Baines, would be on the fortunes of the Party from 1935-55.

The Group also had a project to update its booklets to match the new format of the Journal. The focus this year had been on *Liberalism*.

The Chair thanked all those who had helped through-out the year, including the members of the Committee, especially Joseph Walker who had done much of the initial work on the website and York Membery, both of whom were stepping down from the Committee, and Graham Lippiatt for dealing with the queries received. More volunteers would be welcome, especially from the women members of the Group.

The Chair's report was accepted.

## **7. Report from Membership Secretary:**

Andrew Pinnock reported that there were 413 members, 301 of whom had a print subscription; 91, digital and 21 both.

He noted that there had been problems with some not updating their standing orders and nine people who had paid something but who were not clear as to what subscription they wanted. Members were invited to contact him to clarify.

The Membership Secretary's report was noted.

## **8. Elections**

The following were elected to the Committee unopposed: Chair: Tony Little; Secretary: David Cloke; Treasurer: Paul Fox; Membership Secretary: Andrew Pinnock; Journal Editor: Duncan Brack; Website: Chris Millington; Meetings Organiser: Neil Stockley; Ordinary Members: Nicholas Alderton, James Moore, and Gianni Sarra.

## **9. Any other business**

### *Co-options*

The Chair reported that he proposed that the Committee would co-opt Malcolm Baines, John Death, John Leston, Andrew Loader and Neil Stockley.



## Liberal Democrat History Group Annual General Meeting Chair's Report for the Year 2025

The current political environment, dominated by an America pursuing its own narrow interests, an economic outlook which leaves many European citizens dissatisfied with their lot and electorates disillusioned with the long established political parties, may appear novel but it contains echoes of other times – especially the interwar period of the twentieth century. The history of that period does not provide easy answers but does help provide the tools for a fruitful analysis of our current predicaments. One of the abiding roles for the LDHG is to provide the materials for such deliberations for Liberals. It is a role of which we are always conscious and one for which we are always looking for members to contribute.

### Meetings

We have four principal tools at our disposal: meetings, the *Journal*, publications and the internet in its various incarnations.

Of these, meetings are the most pleasurable for the committee because they enable us to meet our contributors and obtain immediate feedback from members.

As usual we have organised meetings at the Lib Dem party conferences and at the National Liberal Club. As far as the technology allowed we have made these meetings on line and have made them available on our website to maximise the accessibility for those unable to attend in person. Plans for an academic one day conference were frustrated but we retain the ambition to try again in 2026.

At our last AGM, we reviewed the successful 2024 general election. Paula Surridge reviewed the demographics of Lib Dem support while Dave McCobb, the Lib Dem Director of Field Campaigns, added an insider's insight.

The Spring Conference fringe at York saw Peter Sloman and Rev. Peter Walker discuss the Liberal answer to the economic challenges of the 1920s & 1930s – solutions frustrated at the time but which formed the basis of post-World War II prosperity.

The contrasting outcomes of the two referenda on the Common Market/EU were considered during the summer meeting with Robert Saunders and Nicholas Alderton covering 1975 and Morgan Jones dealing with the negative 2016 referendum.

At the Autumn Conference we launched our latest publication with contrasting surveys of Liberal ideology, with Jonathan Parry presenting Liberalism as what Liberals did and campaigned for while David Howarth focusing on the distinctiveness of Liberal ethos and culture.

As tariff wars return, we are planning to look at the 1906 Free Trade campaign with Frank Trentmann and Lord Fox for our next meeting, after the AGM.

As always we would like to thank our chairs and speakers for making our debates so successful and our members for their knowledgeable and perceptive questioning. I would also like to add special thanks to the National Liberal Club for their continued support.

### Journal of Liberal History

The highlight of the past year was undoubtedly the special issue on the survival of the party through its darkest days of the 1930s through to the early post war period. Despite pioneering policy ideas, the Liberal Party did not adapt well to the arrival of a new competitor in the form of an independent Labour Party. Its internal quarrels further handicapped its responses; both familiar factors in our nation's current

political landscape, if not in our party. We are very grateful to Malcolm Baines for organising and guest editing this bumper issue.

Although the scale of the special issue did impose some minor restriction on the size of subsequent issues, for cost reasons, it did nothing to reduce the variety of topics covered during the year, which ranged from Gladstone to Roy Jenkins and from the Rainbow Circle to the recent Coalition.

Of particular interest was the survey of the influence of historical persons and events on the great and good in the Liberal Democrats. This was a repeat of a survey we conducted thirty years previously. As might be expected the events of significance were mostly from the current century but, more interestingly, the leading figures of influence included philosophers from the seventeenth century and a leader from the nineteenth century as well figures from the twentieth century.

The Journal requires the input of a wide range of people from the editorial board and the contributors to the peer-reviewers and the editorial team. We are grateful to them all for their efforts. Special thanks are due to Nick Alderton & Eugenio Biagini for stimulating the increased number of reviews and Duncan Brack for master-minding the whole process.

### **LDHG Online**

The revamp of the website took much longer than expected and involved more work than anticipated. However the new site has been launched and may be found at <https://liberalhistory.org.uk/> or searching for Journal of Liberal History. The site now contains not only the archive of the *Journal* and the recordings of our meetings but a wealth of other information about the history of the party and its predecessors. It also now allows members to join or renew their membership and to purchase our publications.

Of course, as with previous iterations of the site there have been teething problems which we have been identifying and rectifying throughout the year. We welcome comments from anyone using the site about problems they encounter or suggesting material they would like to see on it. Naturally the biggest constraint is the

volunteer labour needed to undertake the tasks.

Our presence on social media has been making modest but steady progress. In addition to YouTube, Facebook, X and Bluesky, we intend to add LinkedIn.

### **Publications**

We have been working through our range of pamphlets to upgrade them to the same size as the *Journal* with better quality paper and illustrations. At the same time we have sought to update the content to provide the information needed about our history, relevant to today's needs.

This year we published a new edition of *Liberalism: The Ideas that built the Liberal Democrats*, with a completely re-written introduction and revised entries on the different strands that have contributed to the evolution of British political Liberalism. It was launched and sold well at the Autumn Conference.

We would like to continue this work stream with a pamphlet scheduled for the Autumn Conference in 2026. For the group, the publishing of books has become more difficult but we are exploring the possibilities of working with others within the Liberal Democrats or self-publishing. We are conscious of our environmental costs and have offered digital *Journal* subscriptions. As a next step we are exploring making our publications available electronically and would welcome the views of members.

### **Thanks**

Although the committee has a number of veterans, over the last few years we have refreshed its membership. Unfortunately we have not yet been able to alter the ethnic or gender balance and would welcome volunteers to come forward. Nevertheless, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the new members for the ideas they have brought with them and the work they have undertaken which has been reflected in the full range of activities. Naturally I would also like to thank the veterans for their continued work and commitment.

**Tony Little**

**December 2025**

**LIBERAL DEMOCRAT HISTORY GROUP  
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT  
YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2025**

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
Subscriptions	13,820	13,625
Donations	1,209	1,008
Sales	2,540	3,246
Royalties	15	57
Bank Interest	721	943
	<b>18,305</b>	<b>18,879</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Journal Printing	4,585	3,612
Journal DTP & Sub-editing	3,211	2,704
Journal Mailing	5,364	5,022
Conference Meetings & Other Events	2,056	2,103
Conference Stalls	798	964
Website	461	1,350
Membership Admin	105	69
Publications	1,014	1,618
Publications Postage	153	278
Bank Charges	143	204
Sundry Expenditure	38	35
	<b>17,928</b>	<b>17,959</b>
<b>SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) FOR YEAR</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>920</b>

**JLH Subscriptions**

Print	319	330
Digital	102	99
Print & Digital	35	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>460</b>

**LIBERAL DEMOCRAT HISTORY GROUP  
BALANCE SHEET  
30 SEPTEMBER 2025**

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
<b>Cash at Bank</b>		
Current	396	735
Deposit	-	-
Charity Bank	16,056	16,915
Stripe / PayPal	32	-
<b>Sub-total</b>	<u><b>16,484</b></u>	<u><b>17,650</b></u>
Debtors	446	595
Payments in Advance	-	-
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<u><b>16,930</b></u>	<u><b>18,245</b></u>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Receipts in Advance	(1,755)	(1,565)
Trade Creditors inc Provision	(57)	(1,939)
<b>Sub-total</b>	<u><b>(1,812)</b></u>	<u><b>(3,504)</b></u>
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<u><u><b>15,118</b></u></u>	<u><u><b>14,741</b></u></u>
<b>Represented by:</b>		
<b>ACCUMULATED FUNDS</b>		
Balance at 1 October	14,741	13,821
Surplus in Year	377	920
<b>Accumulated Funds</b>	<u><u><b>15,118</b></u></u>	<u><u><b>14,741</b></u></u>

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Paul J Fox CPFA - Hon Treasurer

**ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT**

We have examined, without carrying out an audit, the above Balance Sheet and attached Income & Expenditure Account prepared from the books and records of the Liberal Democrat History Group, and are satisfied that they are in accordance with those books and records.

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ANDREW THURBURN & Co  
Chartered Accountants  
38 Tamworth Road  
Croydon  
Surrey CR0 1XU

7th November 2025