

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
held in the Elwick Club, 30th November 2017

16 members attended. This did not constitute a quorum, but the meeting proceeded on the assent of those present.

The first part of the evening began with the Chairman's welcome to members. He explained that the initial call to the AGM by sending every member an email, with all the documents attached had resulted in very few members opening it, so it had been decided to try again with a postal distribution, despite the considerable cost of this. The change of date had meant that our intended speaker on the current situation with Brexit was unable to attend.

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The Annual General Meeting then took place.

1 **Apologies** for absence: Fourteen members had sent apologies.

2 The **minutes** of the previous AGM held on 25th November 2016 had been circulated and were signed as a correct record.

3.1 **Chairman's Report:** Adrian Gee-Turner said that Brexit had taken up a huge amount of parliamentary time over the past year. The Ashford Lib Dem party had always been in favour of remaining in the Customs Union and having a second referendum, when agreement was reached and before the decision was finally made. The DUP also wants to remain in the Customs Union or else they will not support the Govt. Position. If another election is called the Ashford Party will not have a candidate in place.

3.2 **Treasurer's report.** Chris Grayling presented the accounts prepared by the former Treasurer, Ann Murray, which showed that we ended the year with a healthy bank balance. He stressed that to keep it healthy it is very important that local party members make their contribution to local party funds and the best way to do this is with regular, even small, contributions, and a Standing Order form can be supplied.

3.3 **Membership Secretary's report.** Nick Mengham said that the most important thing is to find out how to engage with the membership using social media. He asked if anyone was prepared to help with this, and Alex Coxall and Sheila Tyler agreed.

3.4 **Conference Report:** Ken Blanshard had sent a conference report in which he commented that the demographic of party membership had changed – there were now many more younger members attending and putting forward their ideas, and all were now able to vote. This led to more lively conferences.

4.1 **Borough Council Report.)** Unfortunately Councillor Koowaree was unable to attend due to ill

4.2 **County Council Report:)** health. The meeting sent him good wishes for his recovery. Adrian told the meeting that the LibDems are now the official opposition on the County Council, with 7 Councillors, Labour have 6, and UKIP which had been the opposition now had no-one. He also said that auditors were concerned about the level of borrowing by ABC to build up its empire of property, using the "Wandsworth Strategy" – to borrow to invest on a rising market, but this fails if the market is not rising. Also, Ashford has a much higher number of people on housing benefit than Wandsworth had and demand for office space is not increasing, so self-funding is harder to achieve.

5 **Motions to AGM:** There were none.

6 **Election of Hon. President:** The former Mayor and Borough Councillor, Rita Hawes, was proposed as Hon. President by proposed by Jill Norris and seconded by Clare Hardwick and this was unanimously agreed.

7 **Election of Officers:** Nominations had been received for all the posts on the Executive, the following members had been nominated:

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| 7.1 | Chair | Adrian Gee-Turner |
| 7.2 | Vice-Chair | James Galloway |

- 7.3 Secretary Theresa Dickens
- 7.4 Treasurer Chris Grayling
- 7.5 Membership Officer Nick Mengham
- 7.6 Data Officer Jill Norris
- 7.7 Exec Committee Ordinary Members - Steve Bowen, Stuart Dove, David Browne,

Alex Coxall

(There are vacant places for Ordinary Members to the Committee, so more people could be co-opted)

The nominations were proposed by Steve Bowen and seconded by Rita Hawes.

8.0 The accounts for 2016 were noted.

9.0 It was agreed that Alan Davies should be asked to audit the accounts for 2017.

10. Any Other Business: Jill Norris thought we should consider what we will do if George Koowaree decides not to stand for the next Borough and County elections.

Stuart Dove proposed a vote of thanks to the officers that were standing down after many years of service, namely Ann Murray, Len Micklewright and Clare Hardwick.

There was discussion about whether the Federal Party officers were presenting the LibDem stance on Brexit with sufficient strength. Some members were in favour of knowing the outcome of the Brexit negotiations before dismissing it. There was also a feeling that there had not been sufficient emphasis on the benefits of being a member of the EU, before the referendum. We should not become known as a one-issue party.

It was recommended that members investigate the Association of Liberal and Democratic Europeans.

This concluded the Annual General Meeting.