

# LIB DEM NEWS

## News and updates from Barnet Liberal Democrats



### Council Report

Full Council meetings are so few and far between its difficult to get a handle on things. The last Council meeting was 26 July , the next will be November 1<sup>st</sup>. The July meeting was remarkable for a comment from a leading Conservative that “we are all Liberal Democrats now “. It had some connection with the referendum vote but I am still working out what he meant by that.

Council meetings are very frustrating for me because on my own I do not count as a political group so I cannot put motions or expect to be called to speak. But, it's not such a worry because Council meeting these days do not really decide very much that will make a difference.

Outside the Council meetings I continue to pick up so many emails from local residents. The common theme is residents simply cannot get a sensible response, if they get one at all, from the Council departments. Typically the areas of complaint are planning,

highway maintenance, and council tax. To be fair when I intervene I usually have an immediate response from Officers.

Transport for London has resurrected their proposals to cut the number 82 bus service from North Finchley to Victoria. They will replace this route by extending the number 13 route. At the same time the 159 Route will continue on from West Hampstead to terminate at Golders Green. Barnet has upped parking enforcement. This is now 24 hour round the clock. CCTV cameras have been installed at key yellow box junctions. Many drivers are being caught out. The rule is you must not enter the yellow box until it is clear to exit (unless turning right) do not anticipate the exit will be clear. However some yellow boxes are causing genuine problems. Highways officers have agreed to look at the yellow box junction on Cricklewood Lane NW2 .

The Conservatives are patting themselves on the back for recovering the Icelandic Bank monies in full . They especially want to take credit for recovering interest payments of around 1.3 million pounds. By my calculations if the Conservatives had placed the deposits in a “safe “ account interest of over 5 million would have accrued.

Finally I understand I will be presented with a memento for thirty years as a Councillor at the next Council Meeting on November 1<sup>st</sup> . I hope to see some of you there.

**Cllr Jack Cohen**

## BARNET UPDATE



### 251 Bus Route not fit for purpose

Barnet Lib Dems call for an increase in capacity from Edgware to Arnos Grove.

### Parking Enforcement

Barnet now carrying out parking enforcement 24 hour round the clock! CCTV cameras have been installed at key yellow box junctions.

### Your Local News

Please send us news of anything happening in the borough that you would like members to know about.

Send to Jane at:  
jane.gibs@gmail.com

## A Word from the Chair

---



Let me begin by extending a very warm welcome to all the new members who joined the Barnet party after the Referendum. Since our summer edition of the newsletter more than 100 have joined our ranks, bringing the membership of the party now to more than 400. As the holiday season draws to an end we are in excellent shape and more than ready for the autumn campaign period ahead.

The last few months have, of course, been dominated by the build-up to June 23 and coming to terms with the extraordinary and devastating outcome of the vote.

From the outset the party took a leading role in the campaign. Our publicity officer Alasdair Hill organised the first meeting in Barnet of the cross-party Stronger In group. There followed leafleting campaigns at busy train stations and street stalls all over the borough (both Stronger In and Lib Dem). Our members were out day after day delivering our literature door-to-door. Many of us went to Lib

Dem HQ to man the phone-banks and call voters across the capital. Thanks to all of you who piled in and gave up your time to make this happen.

As to the Referendum result and the future for a Brexit Britain we all had the opportunity in Barnet to air our views at the excellent discussion evening organised by the Garden Suburb ward.

Amongst the many issues raised was the collapse in the pound, the rise in prices that will inevitably follow and the impact this will have on the poorest in the community. Members also pointed to the reputational damage to a country once renowned for being welcoming, outward looking and a bastion of tolerance. Fears were expressed as to the possible breakup of the UK. The plight of EU citizens currently in the country was raised. Legal issues also got an airing with opinions expressed regarding the invocation of article 50 and the repeal of the *1972 European Communities Act*. My thanks to Peter Lusher and his ward committee for organising this very successful evening and to Diana Iwi for hosting it.

Distracted though we were by the Referendum we did not forget that Barnet residents have other pressing matters to worry about. One such concern is the 251 bus route from Edgware to Arnos Grove. So full are the buses at rush hour that many would-be

passengers fail to get on. We were on the streets in July collecting signatures for a petition to the mayor of London to increase capacity on the route. Our thanks to Alasdair Hill for highlighting this issue and for organising the campaign to get something done about it.

Soon the autumn campaign season will be under way. Here our focus must be on the 2018 council elections and our target ward Childs Hill. As many of you will know we held all three seats in this ward for a remarkable 28 years until the last elections in 2014 when two seats were narrowly lost. We are absolutely determined to recover these. The campaign will involve leafleting, canvassing, phoning and making our presence felt throughout the ward at any and every opportunity. Stand by for further announcements!

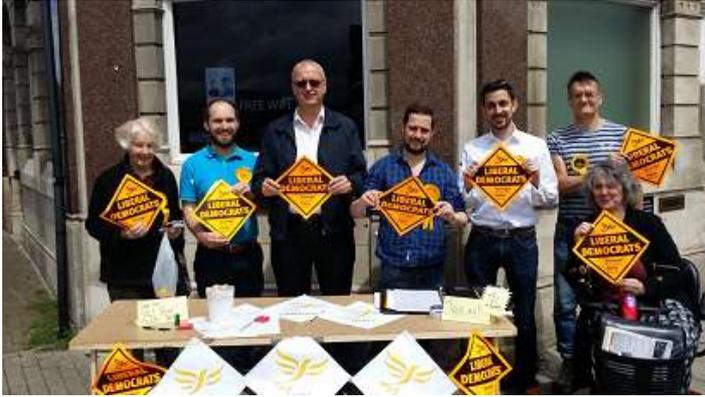
On the subject of Childs Hill, Cllr Jack Cohen's service to his constituents in the ward has now lasted, unbroken, for 30 years! We can mark the occasion by turning up to the Council presentation (November 1<sup>st</sup>) in large numbers to cheer him on!

I look forward to seeing many of you at the Conference on September 17.

Best wishes  
**Gerry FitzGerald**

# Barnet Lib Dem News

## 251 Bus Route fit for purpose?



Barnet Liberal Democrats call for an increased capacity from Edgware to Arnos Grove in the morning commute.

The Barnet Liberal Democrats have launched their campaign to increase capacity along the heavily used 251 bus route.

Linking Edgware to Arnos Grove the 251 bus route is one of only a few bus routes that traverse the Borough of Barnet from East to West. Operated by London Sovereign Ltd, the 29-seater E200 Dart bus model connects the key town centres of Burnt Oak, Mill Hill and Totteridge. But overcrowding has made the route unfit for purpose.

Data sourced from a Freedom of Information request raised by the Barnet Lib Dems suggests that there is on average no space from 7am to 9.30am along the route from Watling Avenue in Burnt Oak to Totteridge; a distance of over 5km.

In the morning rush hour on Mill Hill Broadway people are left on the pavement frustrated as bus after bus drive past. Commuters are faced with the prospect of anxiously waiting for the chance to cram on a bus or leave their homes even earlier to get to work on time."

The Barnet Liberal Democrats have started a petition calling on the Mayor of London to improve the route.

"It is vital that the mayor as chair of TfL ensure a more frequent service or double-deckers are used during peak times in order to provide an effective service for many hundreds of outer London commuters."

Petition can be found at:

<https://www.change.org/p/transport-for-london-increase-the-capacity-on-the-251-bus-route-during-the-morning-and-afternoon-rush-hour>

More information about Alasdair Hill and the Mill Hill Liberal Democrats can be found at:

<https://alasdairghill.wordpress.com/>

## Autumn Conference at Brighton

As I write this piece it is only a couple of weeks until Conference and as every year I am really looking forward to it. This year the latest figures are showing record numbers of members signing up to attend. Of those who have registered a large number are new members who were part of the almost 20,000 new members who have signed up since July. It is likely therefore that a fifth of people at conference will be new faces.

Lib Dem Conference can be summed up in one word – Involvement. Conference is the constitutional body on the party that makes policy. We debate, discuss and vote on policy motions that often are put forward by individual party members and local parties. Ideas like raising the tax threshold to £10,000, was the idea of a member from Chester and increasing shareholder democratic participation in companies by our very own Janice Turner. These ideas have become policy and can really change things. Guidance on the process is on the website and also the Outline Agenda.

Conference is bigger than just the debates and speeches. From breakfast briefings to late night discos, the fringe programme is packed with events from dawn to dusk and beyond. Guest speakers from all walks of life and even other political parties talk to and debate with members in small meeting of twenty to a hundred and most of these are open to all members.

For those of you who want to be politically active or stand for election, there are training courses, free of charge, you can attend, covering every aspect of political life from personal image to downloading a voter data base.

And then there is the fun. Meeting and socializing with likeminded peoples from all over the UK. There is always quite a big contingent from Barnet who go to Conference and we arrange a couple of chances to go out together for an evening meal, nothing formal but it does give you a chance to meet with local members.

So what are you waiting for if you have not signed up then go online and do it now? There is a special first time attendee rate of only £60. If you cannot attend for the full four days, why not consider a weekend or even a day trip.

Further details including a guide to first time attendees is available on the Lib Dem Website.

[http://www.libdems.org.uk/first\\_timers](http://www.libdems.org.uk/first_timers)

*Sean*

# Barnet Lib Dem News



## News from Lord Palmer

After a hectic few months of new legislation, the Referendum, Government reshuffles, and the appointment by the Tories of a new Prime Minister, Parliament went into summer recess until 5th September. Of course 'Government' still carries on, but there is a welcome relief from new laws and Parliamentarians either go back to their constituencies or take a holiday.

In many key constituencies the Liberal Democrats have been gearing up for a possible General Election, although I believe The Prime Minister is unlikely to call one before next Spring and maybe not until 2020.

Tim Farron has wisely appointed Nick Clegg as the party's European Union spokesperson in order to hold the Government to account over its plans for Brexit.

We hear the Tory Government say 'Brexit means Brexit' but what does that mean other than a sound-bite? We still don't know whether we will be in the single market or excluded from it. We still don't know what it means for immigration, including the

precarious position of British people living abroad and those Europeans who have come to reside and work in Britain. What will happen about cooperation in tackling terrorism and cross-border crime? We are told Mrs May does not favour a 'Norway' style relationship with the EU. We are not told what she does favour.

So there is no real opposition from Labour, more preoccupied in its own internal strife. There is no known exit plan. The Civil Service is grossly unprepared for the negotiations, with few in the Administration with the skills to negotiate trade agreements.

It falls to the Liberal Democrats, a pro Europe Party, to hold the Government to account as to how it intends to answer the challenges and dilemmas which were disgracefully ignored by those who promoted leaving the EU.

We in The House of Lords, where there is considerable knowledge and skills, could well play a significant role in the coming months and years in raising issues and suggesting solutions.

**Monroe Palmer**

## Brexit Discussion

A record number of members attended a lively Discussion Evening, on the subject of 'Brexit - What next?', hosted by Diana Iwi on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> July. Because of the numbers attending, the discussion was split into two groups, one led by Altan Akbiyik (Secretary of HGS Lib-Dems), the other by Peter Lusher (Chair).

Both groups reviewed the current situation. There seemed to be widespread acceptance that Britain

was unlikely to apply for Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty (which formally starts the process of a country applying to leave the EU) until Christmas or the New Year.

Both groups spent some time discussing the implications of all this for the Liberal Democrats. As the most consistently pro-European party, it was understandable that Tim Farron had committed the party to continuing support for the EU. But there was widespread acceptance that the Party's stance needed to remain both flexible and realistic. If the UK ultimately does leave the EU and the Lib-Dems campaigned to re-apply for membership, how would the Euro be dealt with (there is currently a requirement that all new EU member states agree in the longer term to adopt the Euro)?

It was agreed that with every day that passes, it becomes clearer that untangling the UK from our membership of the EU is a task of enormous complexity which is likely to subject the new May Government to tremendous stresses. Add in a wholly ineffective Labour Party, and a UKIP which seems to be losing its way, and there does seem to be an enormous opportunity for the Liberal Democrats to continue picking up more and more support.

**Peter Lusher**

## Dates for your diary

**17-20 September 2016**

Autumn Conference, Brighton

**1 November 2016**

Presentation for Cllr Jack Cohen's 30 years service Council meeting starts 7pm (arrive early for seat)

**29 November AGM**

Tuesday November 29 AGM at **St Paul's Church Hall, Long Lane, N3 2PU**