



# LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

## ARUNDEL AND SOUTH DOWNS CONSTITUENCY HASSOCKS AND HURSTPIERPOINT BRANCH

### MINUTES OF AGM HELD AT THE CRICKET PAVILION, ADASTRA PARK, HASSOCKS ON WEDNESDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> NOVEMBER 2017 AT 8.00 pm.

Present: 13 members

1. Apologies for Absence, Kevin Carey; Margaret Carey; Nigel Cook; Celia Lindsay; Ann Harris; Sue Hatton.  
Quorum is 20 or 1/5 of membership (14) if less. Meeting not quorate but no objection so meeting continued

2. Minutes of AGM 2016 held on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2016  
Agreed and signed.

3. Chairman's Report 2017

This year has been very successful with two Councillors being elected and a large rise in membership. There has been a lot of activity in the Branch involving many new helpers and members.

Our last AGM was just before the Richmond Park by-election, which was dramatically won by Sarah Olney. Three of our members, including a new member, worked for her.

We put out a Focus in November last year with an eye to the Coming County Council elections. In the New Year Kirsty Lord and Alison Bennett were selected to stand for the Hassocks & Burgess Hill South and Hurstpierpoint & Bolney Divisions. A District Council by-election in Bolney was announced and Rodney Jackson agreed to fight this. Hassocks & BHS was the target seat and a well structured campaign was fought, beginning with a residents' survey and following up with a Campaign Focus. A special leaflet for EU voters was produced and first time voters were written to. Alison took charge of the literature and produced some high quality material. For the first time we printed in full colour, possible because of the fall in commercial printing costs. A feature of the campaign was the number of younger people who offered to deliver for Kirsty. Although Hurstpierpoint & Bolney was originally designated by the Mid-Sussex Local Party as a non-target paperless campaign, it was soon clear that Alison had a lot of offers of help as well and it was decided to do a literature campaign, although not to canvass and Alison adapted the Hassocks literature for this purpose. This meant there was some exposure was possible for Rodney in the Bolney by-election. For the first time we made extensive use of social media, with particular help from one of our new members, Alex Sparasci.

In the end, as you will know, we took Hassocks & Burgess Hill South from the Tories by 20 votes. In Hurstpierpoint & Bolney we nearly trebled our vote on a higher turnout although the Tory was still some way ahead. Just before the County elections we learnt there was to be a District Council by-election caused by the resignation of two Conservative Councillors. We put up two candidates and Sue Hatton (who had been a District Councillor until 2015) stepped up to the plate and won a strong second place. All in all, with two elected Councillors this was a very successful pair of results and a great tribute to all those who worked hard to make it possible. In particular the Local Party which has given us financial support for which we are grateful.

The prospects for the future are good. Hurstpierpoint's results shows that we may be able to break through, at least in the District Ward around Hurstpierpoint itself. In Hassocks we should prepare for a very strong fight for the 2019 District elections when there will be three seats to contest. We also need to support Kirsty so she builds on her success and holds the County Council seat in 2021. A lot depends on the National mood. However, it is clear from our results this time, as in the past, that a good local candidate can make inroads with voters who are not natural Liberal Democrats and this can override the vagaries of national politics.

We have had several Politics and a Pint meetings in local pubs. These provide an opportunity for political discussion between fellow Lib Dems.

This autumn we ran a high profile campaign, co-operating with Labour and the Greens, against the proposal for a large strategic housing site north of Clayton Mills. This built on the stand taken by Sue Hatton at the District Council.

As always I have to thank our Committee for their commitment and enthusiasm this year. It has continued to be efficiently supported by Rodney Jackson as Secretary and new members have injected a new lease of life. We have everything to fight for in the future.

4. Financial Report

i) The Accounts for the Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint Branch for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 were presented. The consolidated Mid-Sussex accounts (including the Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint Branch) were approved by Mid-Sussex Party

ii) Balance at 31 12 2016 £414.29 iii) Excess of Income over Expenditure for 2016 £-120.00 (deficit)

iv) Current balance (22 Nov 2017) in is c. £400 in Mid-Sussex Account.

2016 has been a relatively quiet year with expenditure on leaflets for the EU Referendum and Police and Crime Commissioner campaigns.

This was in part paid for by modest local fundraising from events. The Branch was not charged a levy by Mid-Sussex as the Local Party benefitted from an increase in new members and followed a policy of helping Branches grow their funds ahead of the 2017 County campaign.

vi) 2017 started with £414.29 in the Branch account. This has been a very busy year. The County Council campaign saw an active and successful campaign with the election of Kirsty Lord to the County Council and then the subsequent General election and Hassocks by-election in which Sue Hatton was elected as a District Councillor. Year to 30<sup>th</sup> October, the Branch spent £1,934 on local campaigning including County pre-election leaflets £468, the County election £400, the Hassocks by-election £762 and post-election campaign £104.

Elected Councillors contribute a tithe/levy towards the communications budget in local funds and so the impact of this is now a regular monthly income from our newly elected District and County Councillors which is being allocated to the Branch. Up to the end of October the party has received £420.48 from this source. Branch fundraising and donations raised £400 to support the campaigns, Mid-Sussex Local party allocated £1,100 towards the Hassocks and Hurst campaigns.

The snap general election meant that the Local Party pulled all spare resources left to help fund the local constituency campaigns yet leaving enough to fight the Hassocks by-election. Mid-Sussex contributed proportionately to the Arundel & South Downs and Horsham GE campaigns as well as funding the Mid-Sussex GE campaign. As the Local Party raised strong donations towards the constituency campaigns, it was able fund these and remain solvent. A strong growth in Local Party membership boosted post-election income to Mid-Sussex from the National Party membership rebate scheme also helping to replenish Local Party funds.

Bringing the factors together, meant that Hassocks and Hurst had an income of £1,920.48 and expenditure of £1,934.00 leaving it with a similar balance to the start of the year, a good position moving forward with a positive resource for future campaigns.

The Branch has c £400 at its disposal.

vii) Current membership now stands at 74.

5. Election of Officers

The following were nominated.

Chairman: Colin Wilsdon (Proposed – Alison Bennett ; Seconded – Victoria Beard),

Treasurer: Mid-Sussex Treasurer (Paul Lucraft (Mid Sussex)).

Secretary: Rodney Jackson (Proposed – Colin Wilsdon; Seconded – Alison Bennett),

Membership Development Officer: Victoria Beard: Proposed-Colin Wilsdon; Seconded – Kirsty Lord

Young Liberals Rep: Drew Miller-Hyndman: Proposed – Colin Wilsdon; Seconded – Rodney Jackson

There being no further nominations they were all elected.

6. Election of Committee Members and Councillor Representatives

Alison Bennett; Alex Sparasci, Benedict Dempsey and Nigel Cook (Proposed – Rodney Jackson; Seconded - Colin Wilsdon.  
All elected.

District Councillor Representative.Sue Hatton

County Councillor Representative: Kirsty Lord

Branch Rep on Mid-Sussex Executive: Alison Bennett: Proposed – Victoria Beard; Seconded Kirsty Lord

7. Election of Independent Assessor for Accounts

To use Constituency Independent Examiner as accounts are consolidated. Paul Lucraft (Treasurer ) to organise.

8. AOB

i) To discuss press release at next Branch Executive Committee

ii) Next Focus to include live County issues

iii) More social evenings to be planned

iv) Benedict Dempsey asked for all those who have been active during the year to be thanked.

9. Meeting closed at c 8.00pm followed by refreshments

Signed:

Chairman