**High Peak Liberal Democrats**

**Constituency Executive Meeting**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 24th April 2018**

**at**

**Rems Café Bar, Chapel-en-le-Frith**

1. **Present**

R. Atkins, N. Bromley, A. Forbes, R. Lyon, J.Patterson, J. Simm, M. Smitham, B. Taylor, C. Weaver and M. Weaver.

1. **Apologies**

D. Rayworth, A. Scott, D. Lomax and S Worrall.

1. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was proposed by Barrie Taylor and seconded by Mark Smitham that the minutes of the meeting held on 27th March, 2018 be accepted. This was carried.

1. **Matters Arising** 
   1. The residents’ survey was being progressed by Barrie Taylor. It was noted that the version being developed for David Lomax would need to have his address updated and that the wording of the Brexit question needs refining. (**Action - Barrie Taylor).**
   2. The new trial format for meetings, with routine business starting at 1915 and a single-topic open session from 2000 was adopted for the April meeting. It was agreed that the discussion topic for the May session should be the NHS. **Item closed**.
   3. The members’ newsletter due to be published in May was reported to be on track. (**Action – Roy Lyon, Barrie Taylor and Margaret Weaver**).
   4. Margaret Weaver confirmed that there was no requirement to include candidates’ individual donations to their own campaigns on the election spending returns. **Item closed**.
   5. Margaret Weaver agreed to compose a candidates spending/records guide by May or June. **(Action – Margaret Weaver**).
   6. Mark Smitham summarized his social media research. He argued that the High Peak Lib Dems twitter account needed to be more active and that it should issue at least one tweet per week. It was also argued that a social media plan should be developed with messages planned in advance plus a stock answer bank that could be used to ensure a rapid social media response to events. It was also suggested that our candidates and councilors should wear a yellow tie or scarf in their publicity photos so that they could be more readily identified as Lib Dems. Mark agreed to take on the Social Media Officer role for the High Peak Lib Dems. Post meeting note: Mark has written a social media guide and added a media plan to the googledrive account. It was agreed that a briefing to officers and members would be provided at the end of the June Exec meeting. **(Action – Mark Smitham)**.
   7. Alistair Forbes reported that he had contacted the Buxton Pavilion regarding hire of the Studio Theatre and the marketing team had promised to provide details of costings, but this had not yet been received. (**Action – Alistair Forbes)**.
   8. Jane Simms reported that Sheffield Hallam Lib Dems raise funds via a variety of social activities such as Pie and Peas suppers, Pizza and Politics nights, Quiz Nights and Guest Speaker nights. Jane agreed to follow up with more information. **(Action – Jane Simms)**.
   9. Alistair Forbes reported that snow fences were a highly cost-effective way of keeping roads and railways open and that US research indicated fences were about 100 times cheaper than use of snow ploughs (*Snow Fence Guide, R Tabler, Strategic Highways Research Program, 1991*). Snow fences can be purchased for about 50p per metre (plus erection costs). **Item closed**.
2. Other parties’ literature can now be placed on the High Peak Lib Dems’ googledrive account. Post meeting note the account address has now been simplified to: <https://tinyurl.com/HPLDfolder> **Item closed**.
3. Roy Lyon explained that as part of the PPC selection process, the Regional Candidates Officer needed to be contacted. **(Action – Roy Lyon)**.
4. **Treasurer’s Report**
   1. The Treasurer reported that the party had approximately £3,000 in the bank. Despite an email from party HQ that approximately £180 in membership subscriptions would be credited to the High Peak Lib Dems, nothing had been received. The Treasurer agreed to contact party HQ to seek clarification regarding the criteria for distributing subscriptions to local parties. **(Action – Margaret Weaver)**.
5. **Membership Report**
   1. The Membership Development Officer reported that membership had grown from 153 to 154.
6. **HPBC 2019 Campaign Planning**
   1. Prospective candidates target wards and paper candidates for the remaining wards still need to be identified. Margaret Weaver has agreed to stand in Whaley Bridge.
   2. It was noted that the New Members Journey proposed by Adam Scott could be important in helping to engage new members. It was agreed that this would be discussed in the open session following the June meeting of the Executive.
7. **Brexit – open session**
   1. There was a wide ranging discussion centred on how we should cooperate with cross-party anti-Brexit groups, whilst retaining our stance as the only major party opposed to Brexit. It was noted that the Referendum result was in many ways a vote against Cameron and Osborne rather than a vote on the merits of EU membership. It was also pointed out that a sizeable number of (largely) right-wing supporters, who do not usually vote, did vote in the Referendum. These individuals are unlikely to vote in local or General Elections.
   2. Nick Bromley pointed out that relatively little debate had been had over what constituted a “good deal.” It was recognized that the Referendum had been subject to large amounts of misinformation (particularly on the Leave side).
   3. Mark Smitham queried how bad economic and social consequences of Brexit would have to be before a significant number of Leave voters would change their minds. It was noted that Remain arguments must appear factual rather than hectoring otherwise they would be counter-productive and drive Leavers towards evermore entrenched positions.
   4. It was agreed that the High Peak Lib Dems should run more stalls similar to the April Buxton stall, in order to continue to keep our pro-EU message visible. Stalls should be arranged over the summer in Whaley Bridge, New Mills and Buxton. It was agreed that leaflets and/or a banner contrasting Leaver claims with facts should be produced. **(Action – Alistair Forbes and Frank Swallow)**.
   5. It was also agreed that the High Peak Lib Dems need to cultivate a stronger print media and social media anti-Brexit message.
8. **AOB**
   1. Nick Bromley explained the activities he was doing to address decarbonisation, working with Baroness Featherstone and with Innovate UK to influence the government’s industrial strategy on autonomous vehicles. This work was particularly aimed at rural areas in which bus services were most likely to be withdrawn.
   2. Barrie Taylor suggested that energy policy (including fracking) would be a suitable subject for the July open session.
   3. Chris Weaver reminded all members that it was easy to help Hazel Grove with their local election campaign.
   4. Roy Lyon noted that current Conservative policies were threatening local libraries as they propose replacing librarians with volunteer staff. However, library funding needs to cover provision of books as well as staff. Labour opposition to the Conservatives’ plans had centred on protecting staff numbers; there was an opportunity for the Lib Dems to position themselves as the defenders of the library service.
   5. The next meeting was arranged for 22nd May in Buxton.

**Action Points**

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| **Action** | **Responsible** | **Time scale** |
| Residents’ survey | Barrie Taylor | May 2018 |
| NHS open meeting | Alistair Forbes | May 2018 |
| Members’ newsletter | Roy Lyon, Barrie Taylor and Margaret Weaver | May 2018 |
| Compose candidates spending/records guide | Margaret Weaver | June 2018 |
| Social media briefing | Mark Smitham | June 2018 |
| Studio Theatre hire, Buxton Pavilion | Alistair Forbes | On hold |
| Liaise with Sheffield Lib Dems on funding ideas | Jane Simm | May 2018 |
| Resurrect selection committee | Roy Lyon | May 2018 |
| Contact Regional Candidates Officer | Roy Lyon | May 2018 |
| Clarify membership subscriptions rules | Margaret Weaver | June 2018 |
| Arrange anti-Brexit EU stalls | Alistair Forbes & Frank Swallow | June 2018 |
| Encourage potential members to join the party | All | 30 June 2018 |