



The newsletter for Liberal Democrat Disability Association members and supporters.

A view from the Chair[s]

It's been a busy and sad few months since the last Federal conference in Brighton in September. We managed to get through that conference after the death of Robert Adamson, my co-chair. He will be sorely missed.

The majority of the executive were elected unopposed. The only position that needed voting on, was for Chair.

The result as provided by the Returning Officer was as follows:

David Buxton 30 votes

Phil Stevens and Gemma Roulston (standing as Joint Chairs) 35 votes

Phil Stevens and Gemma are duly elected as Joint Chairs.

The rest of the executive are; Victoria Evans (secretary), Claire Roulston (Membership Secretary), Maureen Rigg (Treasurer), Ordinary members – Jemma Charlton, Avril Coelho, Matthew Clark and Poppy Hasted. This is the committee which will run from January 2019-December 2020.

I was asked for my advice by the Diversity, Training and Candidates office at HQ, on the wording on the press release that was due to go out on the International Day of People with Disabilities (December 3rd). Just before Christmas, the Policy Unit asked for my advice on what should go into the contingency manifesto on the topic of disability. The executive all worked on this, and I submitted our suggestions by the deadline (21st December). A few weeks ago (month?), Brian Orrell RCC (Regional Candidates Chair) for London, approached me and asked if I knew of anyone who could be a scribe to allow a blind member to fully participate in an Assessment Day for approval to be a PPC (Prospective Parliamentary Candidate). I was able to find out from Victoria Evans if she was interested, and able to do the job. When Victoria came back with yes to both, I forwarded her details to Brian. Victoria found the day interesting and said that the candidate was appreciative of the help.

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In late November, Phil Stevens, Charley Hasted and I met with Vince Cable MP and Stephen Lloyd MP to discuss various matters. We discussed the Disabled Student's Allowance and the problems with that, social care, how Stephen could get out the news about what he was working on with reference to Universal Credit etc, poor support for Carers, and Disability Hate Crime. Vince and Stephen were thanked for their time. It would be great if this could be repeated.



We were saddened to see that Stephen Lloyd MP for Eastbourne, decided to resign the Whip in Parliament, due to his promise to vote for any deal that was agreed with the EU. I wrote to Stephen asking if he wanted to continue to be our President, but he has not yet replied. Until recently Stephen's resignation has meant that the Party has not had a spokesperson on DWP and welfare matters. I am pleased to announce that Christine Jardine MP for Edinburgh West has now been appointed to take on this important role. We look forward to working with Christine in any way we can.

We were pleased to see the Government introduce a fund that will help disabled people stand for election. It is only for local elections, and as such,

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cannot be used for Parliamentary elections. It runs until April 2020. It cannot be used in Wales. There are also limits on what it can be used to pay for. For example, any payments for taxis or personal assistants, would only be allowed if they were only used because of the person's disability or related to the needs of the disabled person. For more information, please go to <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/enablefund>

The Government will be consulting on a longer-term solution to the question of how to create a level playing field for disabled candidates.

Disabled people are worried about the implications of Brexit, and the lack of information on what our rights will be after it is rather concerning. Another thing that is of major concern to disabled people is the delay in the new green paper on the reform of Social care. It has been repeatedly delayed, with no real information coming forward on when it will be issued, and also what will be in it. The longer the delay in producing the green paper, the more stress the current system is put under. How much longer must disabled people, carers, families, support workers, and social workers have to wait before there is action to help alleviate the current issues.

Gemma Roulston and Phil Stevens, LDDA Co-Chairs

Biographies from members of the Executive

With such a diverse membership it isn't always possible for us all to meet up, so here are some biographies of executive members – not everyone had time to put one together or supply a photo for this edition.

Victoria Evans – LDDA Secretary, London Region

Previously a Yeovil Lib Dem, I joined the Liberal Democrats in 2015 before moving to London Region to begin a career in research and communications in The City. As LDDA Secretary, my core duties are coordinating meetings of the executive and LDDA representation at Liberal Democrat events. As part of my role in LDDA, I seek to strengthen representation for disabled people with hidden disabilities, and to raise awareness of the unique healthcare needs of disabled people. My other research interests include the development of accessible education for autistic students and barriers to political representation of disabled people. I can be contacted for practical and scribing assistance at Liberal Democrat parliamentary candidate assessment days.

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Contact: secretary@disabilitylibdems.org.uk

Gemma Roulston – LDDA Co-Chair, South East Region



Been involved with LDDA since 2000. Have fibromyalgia, osteoarthritis and depression. I am also carer to my two adult children, who both have disabilities, which are dyspraxia, learning disability and speech and language issues. It's been fun and games. I am also the person who updates the website, and I am a moderator on the LDDA Facebook group. What do I want LDDA to do? I want us to grow our membership so that we can become a SAO (Specified Associated Organisation, to do that we need to get 250 members, we are about 60 short), help develop policy, be the group within the Party that is contacted on anything to do with disability and carer issues.

Clare Roulston – Membership Secretary, South East Region



I have been involved with LDDA since 2010, and I am taking over the role of Membership Secretary from my mum. My disabilities are asthma, fibromyalgia, Mental Health (self-harm), dyspraxia, Learning Disability and speech and language. I am also a carer for my mum, when she is suffering. What do I want LDDA to do? I want our membership to grow and develop. You don't have to be disabled to be a member.

Maureen Rigg – Treasurer, North East Region

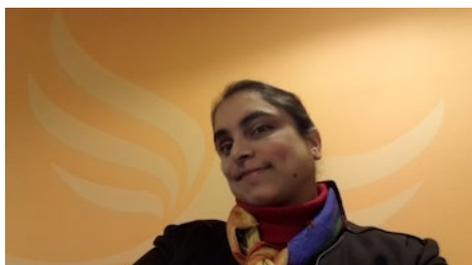


I took over as treasurer in January, not having been on the Exec committee previously. As I live in North East England, I'm some distance from most of the other members, and can only realistically do the role because our meetings are by phone conference.

My interest in LDDA didn't spring from my own condition but from helping and supporting my mother whose osteoarthritis resulted in 3 hip replacements, a knee replacement, a girdle stone operation and an almost permanently dislocated hip joint. By that stage,

unsurprisingly, she was pretty much wheelchair bound. I see two important roles for LDDA – working with groups outside the party on access and support issues (such as the RNIB work on shared surfaces, pavement parking etc) and at the same time taking as full a part as possible in the policy formation process in the party – influencing in whatever way we can to make each new policy as positive as can be for people with disabilities.

Avril Coelho – Ordinary Executive Member, London Region



Avril Coelho is an Ordinary Member of the LDDA Executive who is based in London Region where she is a ward councillor for Hampton North ward in the Twickenham Constituency serving on LBRUT Committees. She has different interrelated disabilities some of

which are symptoms of a very rare condition called Parry-Romberg's Syndrome. She doesn't let her disabilities hold her back.

Having campaigned on numerous issues relating to different aspects of her intersectionality; It is not surprising that Avril is also on the Executive Committee for the Liberal Democrat's Campaign for Race Equality. Avril campaigns for underrepresented groups and the most vulnerable in society to have equality of opportunity and wants the LDDA to eradicate barriers faced by disabled people, refugees, the homeless and those who need equality of opportunity through levelling the playing field, understanding needs, education and reasonable adjustments that aren't always made.

Phil Clarke – General Member, Eastern Region



I joined LDDA at Autumn Conference 2017 and the Liberal Democrat Party in 2015, whilst I only personally suffer with chronic pain it does cause mobility issues at times. I have an interest in equal access and joined the LDDA to both expand my own knowledge and help out when, and where, I can. I'm recently co-opted onto the Executive to help out with producing newsletters and other publications and I also currently act as the Data Officer for my local party. I'm always keen to receive information and documents that people think would be worth sharing among the wider membership and within our local party regions. I also agree

with Gemma Roulston and hope LDDA can reach the required number of members to get SAO status as it would give us a larger voice.

Contact: ldda@philclarke.me.uk

Your LDDA, Needs You!

Anyone willing to donate any of their valuable time, please let us know what sort of assistance you would be able to provide.

Small things such as spreading the word about the association and encouraging members in your local party and region to join – you don't have to be disabled to be a member.

Assisting with the stall at conferences, even for an hour or so, chatting to attendees about who we are and what we do. Writing content for newsletters, website and other publications. If there are any issues you feel we should research and campaign as a group – please let us know about them also.

Many hands make light work!

Our Vision:

A world where everyone affected by disability can live life to their full potential and secure the care, and support, they need.

<https://disabilitylibdems.org.uk/en/>