

## HUMANIST AND SECULARIST LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

**Annual General Meeting Online on Monday 18 November 2024 at 7.30 pm.**

### MINUTES

- 1 Apologies for absence:** Yannifer Malinowski, Julian Huppert
- 2 Minutes of the 2023 AGM (link provided with this notice)**

The minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting were accepted as a true record.

- 3 Reports from executive committee:**

**(a) Chair:** The Chair, Clare Delderfield reported that for her 2024 had been all about preparing for the General Election and getting more Lib Dems elected. She was surprised by the timing of the election but we did plan for Spring Conference and she thanked everyone who helped on the stand, especially Kay Kirkham, Jenny Wilkinson and Sue Vincent. The Committee started planning for the Autumn Conference and then the election was called. The Committee decided to support some HSLD members who were standing as MPs with a financial contribution and several of them were elected. She had noted that 34 of our 72 elected MPs affirmed when they had to swear in to Parliament, rather than taking an oath based on their faith. Autumn Conference was very successful, with a packed fringe event on Secularism with Andrew Copson, CEO of Humanists UK, Tom Gordon MP and Baroness Lorely Burt on the panel. The stand was well attended and new people joined. Clare also spoke at the Humanists UK reception at Conference which was attended by many of the new MPs.

Clare said that she thinks there is no better way to further our views than to get more MPs elected so it has been a quiet year for HSLD activities but worthwhile. Sitting in opposition to Labour should be helpful but there are some disappointments already, such as Wes Streeting coming out against Assisted Dying. Clare reported that she is standing down as HSLD Chair as she is now working full-time for one of the new MPs but she is happy to stay on the Executive as Vice Chair or a member of the Executive. Clare thanked everyone on the committee and said they had been superb – Kay Kirkham has kept us on a financial keel, Ganesh Sittampalam has been keeping our tech sorted out, Sam Weatherlate has kept Membership going and Sue Vincent has done the Secretary's duties.

Sue Vincent thanked Clare for her Chairship.

**(b) Treasurer:** The Treasurer, Kay Kirkham, reported that the main expenditure for the HSLD this year was £1,300 on fringe meetings and stands at federal party conferences. The Committee also decided to donate £500 to the campaigns of 5 parliamentary candidates who were members of HSLD.

Four of them were elected. Twenty-one new members joined at Autumn Conference. The organisation has opened a new online bank account that allows dual approvals of expenditure, which makes life easier.

The accounts for 2023 have now been approved.

The 2025 budget is a deficit budget and involves eating into the £4,500 cushion that we have in the bank. It assumes we will have stands at both federal conferences.

Kay thanked Ed Moore, who examined last year's accounts.

**(c) Secretary:** Sue Vincent reported that she is prepared to stand for re-election to this post and promised to try and get the minutes done more quickly next year.

**(d) Membership Secretary:** Sam Weatherlake, Membership Secretary, reported that we have around 120 members but the Lighthouse data system used by the party is not very accurate at assigning the correct member status. Sam has raised this with party HQ but they do not seem to be very interested in solving the problems that party Associated Organisations have with the system.

Several questions were asked of the Membership Secretary concerning the problems with the Lighthouse system and Kay Kirkham and Sam Weatherlake confirmed that they were continuing to discuss the problems with HQ.

#### **4 Consideration of Annual Accounts for 2023 (links provided with this notice):**

The Annual Accounts for 2023 were approved by the Executive Committee earlier in the year but the Annual Accounts were noted by the attendees at the AGM.

#### **5 Changes to Constitution:**

Sam Weatherlake reported that the proposed changes to the Constitution are intended to tidy up ambiguities and make items clearer than they were before. The main change was to update the sections on holding ballots for places on the Executive so that elections can be held online, which is not catered for in the present constitution. The Executive are all agreed on the changes.

The Chair thanked Sam for his work on updating the constitution.

A vote was held to pass the motion to update the constitution. A majority voted in favour so the motion was carried.

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#### **6 Determination of the annual subscription for 2024/25:**

The Chair reported that the Executive Committee proposed that the annual subscription be kept at £10 per year.

It was proposed that the annual subscription be kept at £10.

This was agreed with a clear majority.

## **7 Close of nominations for election of Executive Committee**

The following nominations were received:

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| (a) Chair:                | Jenny Wilkinson  |
| (b) Vice Chair            | Clare Delderfield  |
| (c) Treasurer             | Kay Kirkham  |
| (d) Secretary             | Sue Vincent  |
| (e) Membership Secretary  | Sam Weatherlake  |
| (f) Four Ordinary Members | John B Grout<br>Ganesh Sittampalam<br>Yannifer Malinowski<br>One vacancy |

## **8 Election of Executive Committee officers and members to non-contested positions:**

There were no contested positions at the close of nominations so the Chair suggested voting en bloc for the new Committee. It was unanimously AGREED to proceed in that way.

The election of the new committee was AGREED unanimously.

## **9 Nomination & approval of Honorary Co-Presidents:**

- (a) Dr Julian Huppert
- (b) Baroness Lorely Burt
- (c) Christine Jardine MP

The Chair proposed that the meeting approve of these nominations en bloc. This was unanimously AGREED and unanimously approved.

## **10 Honorary Co-Presidents' comments (if any)**

Julian Huppert wished everyone all the best but could not attend the AGM.

Lorely Burt spoke at our fringe at Autumn Conference

## **11 Appointment of examiner of the accounts for 2025:**

The Treasurer proposed that Dave Cooke be appointed to examine the accounts for 2025. This was unanimously approved. The Chair asked the Treasurer to pass on our thanks to him.

### **Close of formal AGM**

The formal AGM was followed by a talk from Olly Glover, the MP for Didcot & Wantage who was newly elected in June 2024. He spoke about his own atheist/agnostic views and how religion was embedded in certain parliamentary procedures and national events, such as Remembrance Sunday. After a short talk from Olly, a general discussion was held.