

North Shropshire Liberal Democrats

Chair's Report for the Annual General Meeting on December 23, 2024

2024 has been a very exciting and successful year for us all, in locally and nationally. The greatest moment of the year was successfully defended Helen's spectacular by-election victory with an even more spectacular win at the General Election in July. That success is a testament not just to the political times in which we have been living, to Helen's character and her excellence as a local MP, but also to the hard work and determination of so many of activists, campaigners, and organisers who have worked together, giving up their time and helping to get our message across. It is very much a team effort, and I want to thank everyone who has played a role in helping make that happen this year.

If we look back to 2021, it was a very important year for North Shropshire Liberal Democrats. At the local elections that year we challenged the Conservatives across the constituency with very good campaigns that tapped into the public's unease and unhappiness with the then Tory government and the still Tory Council. On that vital campaigning foundation, we were able to make the case for taking the challenge to the Tories even further when the opportunity arose at the by-election later that year. With Helen elected, we have been able build further on those bases towards the key electoral challenges we faced this year and will face next year.

Now we look forward to 2025. We will have an unprecedented opportunity in our county's modern history to further transform the political map and with it, the way our local government and many key public services are run. This is an opportunity not just for us as liberals to take forward our vision, but more importantly, it is the chance to stand up for our local communities and to make their voices heard at Shirehall and beyond.

As well as executing an excellent campaign at the General Election in July, we have built up and maintained a network of volunteers and supporters. With their help we have knocked on so many doors and spoken to so many people. If democracy is in trouble around the world with a rising tide of apathy and disengagement, then North Shropshire is an example of how to combat it effectively.

I want to say thank you to everyone who has worked on the executive during 2024, for the contributions you have all made to keep the party running well at such an important time. Whether its managing our finances, ensuring our compliance, organising vital fundraising events, or organising our campaigns on the ground, it is not always the easiest or most exciting thing to be doing, but it is so vitally important for the whole campaign, and we can see the difference it makes for everybody by getting a decent and

hardworking MP like Helen elected, and hopefully soon a host of excellent local councillors.

Going into the next year we have a lot of hard work to do. Thanks to our campaigns team and our collaboration at the county level, we have a clear plan for literature and delivery over the next months leading up to election day. We also have all of our candidates selected and working hard on the ground in their own patches. We are also building a policy programme ready to take to voters in May.

It is my belief that, in terms of making a difference for local people across Shropshire, local elections matter just as much as any other. We need to be focused on winning as many seats as possible on Shropshire Council, on removing the atrocious Conservative administration from office, and putting ourselves in a position to deliver real and tangible improvements for our communities.

So I will finish by urging everyone here who can, to play their part in the run up to May, and to help us make the change that people deserve.