

Minutes of LDO AGM – 24 November 2024 1:30pm GMT

Attendees:

George Cunningham (Outgoing Chair)
John Shardlow (Secretary)
Colin Bloodworth
Nick Lord (Treasurer)
Terence Champion
Chris
Nasreen Davidson
Yolly (Vice Chair)
Michael Levett
Victoria Bateman
Merlene Emerson (Returning Officer)
Khadija El Morabit
Hauwa Usman

Guest Speaker:

Edward Lucas

Not present:

Prof. Michael Miller
Edward Vickers
Andrew Muir
Vince Thompson
Caroline Padbury
Bruce Darrington

Apologies:

None

Minutes:

Meeting started at 1:30pm UK time.

Khadija from Morocco introduced herself.

George introduced everyone else.

Minutes of the previous AGM were approved.

George gave the Chair's Report (published separately).

Treasurer's report from Nick: Summary: Bank Account 1,200 GBP donations. Revenues have doubled. Costs are under control. 215 GBP surplus this year.

Membership/Data Protection officer's report: Currently 169 members. Highest was 190 in July 2024. Membership is spread across all inhabited continents. Work on membership mailings with David Sapiro. Issues with US credit card payments. Email automation will be available soon. Dedicated email created for membership emails.

Guest Speaker

George welcomed Ed Lucas as guest speaker. "Where is the world heading to after the US Elections?"

Gravest security crisis of our lifetime. The Russian threat is real. Ukraine has bought us three years but we have wasted them and we've let them down. Nuclear blackmail has worked for Putin. The Chinese Communist Party is the next threat. Hybrid warfare is happening. Finland is good at deterring Russia but the rest of Europe is not. The Trump administration doesn't see the EU as worth bothering with when dealing with China.

George asked about China and Ed spoke about the weaponization of the Chinese diaspora. We're on the back foot with regard to China.

Nick asked about ASEAN playing off great powers against each other. Malaysia/Indonesia have a problem with Gaza. But also not keen on the China problem in the South China Sea.

Yolly asked what might happen if Putin died? What would the wider Russian government do? Might be better or worse but Russia is an empire and doesn't sit easily with ex colonies. Or Russia might fall apart. Or could get a 'fake liberal' taking over, buying time and then we get something bad again.

Nasreen asked, any insight of the Trump government towards Iran. Ed has not been able to discuss with them yet.

Khadija, asked about the Middle East – Ed suggested Layla Moran would be better to speak on that.

Terry asked about Conservatives and Reform trying to curry favour with Trump. Ed said it will be chaotic to start with. The US will be more transactional under Trump. Ed suggested using frozen Russian assets to buy weapons from the US to keep them happy and provide them to Ukraine.

Michael asked about Russian dissidents. Ed said the only serious opposition to Russia is Ukraine's military.

Ed left at 2:30 UK time.

Motions.

1. "Lib Dems Abroad: Broad Objectives and Steering Committee Composition for 2025" PASSED unanimously.
2. Constitutional Amendment: Delete first sentence of section 9.7.2: "The Lib Dems Overseas Local Party will not be an accounting unit under UK PPERA and therefore will not have a UK bank account". Explanation. In 2024, the Federal Board decided that Lib Dems Overseas should have a UK bank account. There is also an intention by the party to make Lib Dems Overseas an accounting unit under UK PPERA. PASSED unanimously.
3. Constitutional Amendment: added phrase *in italics* in section 5.2 The Annual General Meeting will appoint one or more Honorary Presidents - *to be voted in or reconfirmed on an annual basis at the AGM* - to help fulfil certain specific tasks, who will be entitled to attend all meetings of the Executive. Explanation: To permit motion 5 to take place. PASSED unanimously.

Election of 2025 Honorary Presidents.

Election of Lib Dems Overseas Honorary Presidents for 2025 (with those not renewed to step down). Explanation: With 72 Members of Parliament elected in 2024, it is a good moment to change our Honorary Presidents from members of the House of Lords to more active members in the House of Commons. George Cunningham is recommended to remain an Honorary President, as Founder of Lib Dems Abroad (Chair 2022-24) and Lib Dems Overseas (Chair 2017-21 and 2024).

George Cunningham
David Chadwick MP
Caroline Voaden MP

All elected unanimously.

Election of 2025 LDO Executive

Merlene as returning officer:

All elected unopposed.

Chair – Terry
Vice Chair – Victoria
Secretary – John
Treasurer – Nick
Member Development Officer – Michael
Data Protection Officer - Colin

Ordinary Members:

Nasreen
George
Hauwa
Stephen (Yolly)
Khadija
Vince
Christopher

Other Matters

Christmas video to be done

Terry, as incoming LDO chair, said emphasis will be on membership and finances next year.

George mentioned LDA concerns about Lib Dem members who have membership of foreign parties not ideologically aligned with Lib Dem values.

Colin mentioned the Labour government is not supportive of unfreezing overseas state pensions.

Next meeting around Jan 20th – probably 1:30PM UK time.

Yolly proposed a vote of thanks to George for all his hard work as Chair over the years.

Meeting closed at 2:55 PM.