



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Telford and Wrekin Liberal Democrats

held on Thursday 27th November 2025 at 7.00pm
at The Pheasant (function room), Shawbirch Rd, Admaston, Telford TF5 0AD

Present: Cllr Kim Tonks (in the chair), David Ellams (minuting), Archie Barnett, Cllr Kevin Booker, Eden Ellams, Paul Howard, Cllr Roger Hughes, Cllr Anthony Lowe, Cllr Bill Tomlinson, Joshua Tomlinson, Cllr Karen Tomlinson, Kerry Weston, Sally Wiggin.

Guest: Cllr Alex Wagner

1. Apologies

Received from: Cllr Neil Bentley, Jacqui Booker, Cllr Karen Blundell, Paul Bryant, Charlotte Burgess-Bate, Alison Cheshire, Steve Cheshire, Cllr Paul Crewe, Cllr Tom Dainty, Irene Evans, John Evans, Rory Freckleton, David Goodall, David Haycox, Cllr Thomas Janke, Cllr Martyn Jobe, Milan Thakur, Cllr Mark Wiggin.

2. Minutes of previous Annual General Meeting held on Monday 18th November 2024

Separate document: <https://www.twld.org.uk/agm-2024-minutes>

The minutes were unanimously approved as a true and correct record.

3. Reports from:

3.1 Chair

Written report received:

It's been a very big year with lots of successes including the biggest highlight of the year, taking control of Shropshire Council, including Neil taking Cheswardine in our own local party area.

It's now important for us to focus on getting going on campaigning for Telford & Wrekin elections in 2027. This includes recruiting people to come forward as candidates, or volunteers if they don't want to be candidates. Also supporting our current councillors to maintain their seats as well as helping new ones get these. We can offer an alternative to those people who may be swaying away from Labour due to national concerns.

We are also pleased to have candidates for the parish and town council seats and thanks to David Ellams for securing these for us and to the candidates for standing and volunteers for supporting.

I would also like to thank everyone for supporting me as Chair for the past 3 years, and particularly to David for all of his help and guidance and I look forward to continuing to work with the Exec and the party.

Kim Tonks

Further remarks:

David Ellams has been elected Vice Chair (Rural) of the regional party, and I have been elected as an executive committee member. David Ellams has also been elected to the Lib Dem English Council.

The Chair's report was unanimously approved.

3.2 Treasurer

Written report received:

This is the second year of using Xero. It has made reconciling and submitting the end of year accounts much easier.

Please do look at the attached Xero report and ask questions if you wish to know more:

<https://www.twld.org.uk/finance-2025>

The Accounts are healthy and the balance is £8,243.40.

Sally Wiggin

The Treasurer's report was unanimously approved.

3.4 Membership Development Officer

Written report received:

Membership numbers (as at 25 October):

Current members	116
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Current registered supporters	49
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Paul Howard

The Membership Development Officer's report was unanimously approved.

4. Motions to AGM

No motions had been received.

5. Election of Honorary President

There was one candidate:

Candidate: Pat Fairclough

Proposed: David Ellams

Seconded: Karen Tomlinson

Pat Fairclough was unanimously elected.

6. Election of Officers & Executive Committee Members

6.1 Chair

There was one candidate:

Candidate: Anthony Lowe

Proposed: Kevin Booker

Seconded: Eden Ellams

Anthony Lowe was declared duly elected.

6.2 Vice Chair

There was one candidate:

Candidate: Kim Tonks

Proposed: David Ellams

Seconded: Bill Tomlinson

Kim Tonks was declared duly elected.

6.3 Treasurer

There was one candidate:

Candidate: Sally Wiggin

Proposed: David Ellams

Seconded: Bill Tomlinson

Sally Wiggin was declared duly elected.

6.4 Secretary

There was one candidate:

Candidate: David Ellams

Proposed: Kim Tonks

Seconded: Bill Tomlinson

David Ellams was declared duly elected.

6.5 Membership Development Officer

There was one candidate:

Candidate: Kerry Weston

Proposed: Kim Tonks

Seconded: David Ellams

Kerry Weston was declared duly elected.

6.6 Elections Officer

There was one candidate:

Candidate: Paul Howard

Proposed: Karen Tomlinson

Seconded: Kevin Booker

Paul Howard was declared duly elected.

6.7 Diversity Champion

There was one candidate:

Candidate: Martyn Jobe

Proposed: David Ellams
Seconded: Anthony Lowe
Martyn Jobe was declared duly elected.

6.8 Fundraising Officer

There were no candidates

6.9 Six Executive Committee Members

There was one candidate:
Candidate: Kevin Booker
Proposed: Anthony Lowe
Seconded: Karen Tomlinson
Kevin Booker was declared duly elected.

7. To note the Accounts for 2024

Note: The 2024 Accounts for the Local Party were approved by the Executive Committee of the Local Party and sent to Party HQ before the end of March 2025. Therefore the accounts had been approved and only needed to be noted.

Separate document:

<https://www.twld.org.uk/twld-accounts-2024>

The accounts were unanimously noted.

8. Appointment of Independent Examiner for the 2025 Local Party Accounts

Resolution to re-appoint Keith Norton as Independent Examiner.

Proposed: Sally Wiggin

Seconded: David Ellams.

The appointment was unanimously approved.

9. Reports from the Liberal Democrat Groups of:

9.1 Telford & Wrekin Council

Written report received:

Labour still very nervous with the gains being made by Reform and their prospects at the next local elections in 2027. They are being more friendly towards us as I believe they see us potentially as an ally.

I have requested publicly at cabinet and full council that council tax is kept below inflation and if possible not increased at all next year to help with residents cost of living problems. There is an expectation that next year's Government settlement will be favourable to the council, which should help achieve this.

The council overall is well run with Children's services rated excellent and adults good. It was recently voted the best council in England. The council is used to show best practice

for others to follow.

The local plan has gone to the inspector and public hearings led by the inspector at the earliest will start at the beginning of next year. Locally I have heard from one of the developers at the old Maxcell site that the market is very flat and sales the lowest they can remember. For the 1500 dwellings and local centre north of Shawbirch, Bloor Homes at the consultation, which followed their pre application meeting stated a planning application would be made this summer, however nothing yet. A planning officer at a stakeholder meeting hinted that this was because Bloor Homes didn't want to seem disrespectful and apply before the planning inspector had looked at the proposals. This was one of the comments we made when the preapplication was submitted. I am not sure this was Bloor Homes decision, or whether the council have had a word.

Cllr Bill Tomlinson

Further remarks

Cllr Tomlinson reported that the Labour leader of the Council had approached him, putting out feelers in case of no overall control in 2027.

The Telford & Wrekin Council group report was unanimously approved.

9.2 Shropshire Council

Written report received:

The financial position of the council is the main priority for the new Liberal Democrat administration. We knew that when we won overall control in May that we would be inheriting a difficult set of finances but as we make our way through each department, it is alarming how badly the council has been run down by the previous Conservative administration. That said, with a new interim CEO, Tanya Miles at the helm, the council employees are positive about the changes outlined by the Lib Dems in our 'New Direction for Shropshire' policy and are working as hard as they can to steady the "ship".

Cllr Neil Bentley

The Shropshire Council group report was unanimously approved.

9.3 Cheswardine Parish Council

Written report received:

The council is looking positively at local services the parish council could potentially take over from Shropshire Council as part of the Shropshire Partnership. The council are also putting together a new National Lottery grant to fund the next phase of playground development. Finally, the new Community Garden is complete with a new picnic bench, bird boxes and blooming wildflowers. This is an ongoing project maintained by the parish council but with all community groups involved in its development.

Cllr Neil Bentley

The Cheswardine Parish Council group report was unanimously approved.

9.4 Newport Town Council

Written report received:

Since NTC saved the local Library Services following TWC cut backs, Newport Community Library has gone from strength to strength, with an array of events (including sold out author visits and a 6 week "tech made friendly" course), regular activities (including Bounce & Rhyme, monthly book club and Lego club) and a summer reading challenge that had

more children partake than Southwater Library! The library is now open 5 days a week and has extended opening hours (10am-5pm, Tuesday to Friday and 9.30am-1pm on a Saturday). Church Aston and Edgmond Parish Councils, both now contribute financially towards Newport Community Library.

The PCC "Police Base", planned to be operated from Newport Community Library, is still on the cards and is progressing - it is currently at a stage where legal discussions are being had, so we unfortunately cannot share further information at this time.

NTC are taking on the St George's Day event from 2026, after the St George's Day committee have stepped down.

The Guildhall has recently had secondary glazing installed - the look and feel of the listed building hasn't been impacted, however the energy saving benefits are already being felt (with the building now being warmer) and cost wise, will be seen moving forward, with lower energy costs.

The Hub is going from strength to strength, with significant funding support from NTC, now offering holiday activities, youth club, community Café, toddler and pre-school storytime, an after school safe space and a newly introduced Hub Youth Committee, to take the offerings that the facility provides, even further forward. The Hub is having a refurbishment (floor and windows) next week (funded by the extensive amount of grant funding that the NTC Funding Officer has sought).

Links with BBS have increased significantly, with the school linking with The Hub to offer a Platinum Pathways (a Café training programme for young people aged 14+).

The Newport Repair Café, run by NTC (initially a 1 year pilot scheme, funded by some of my Cllr Pride funding) has been operating quarterly from The Hub for 1 year now, and has seen an increase in customers and volunteers and will therefore continue to run for a further year.

The Christmas Lights Switch on is now being delivered by NTC, in conjunction with Newport Carnival Committee & Nova Panto, with the switch on being moved to a Saturday (22 November) and an all day event, rather than Friday evening. It is hoped that moving the event to a day time into the early evening, will reduce any antisocial behaviour and enhance the already very popular event.

Cllr Sarah Syrda

The Newport Town Council group report was unanimously approved.

9.5 Wellington Town Council

Written report received:

LibDems are effectively the opposition on WTC because only 1 of the wards is held by a Conservative (Dothill Ward) Cllr Lisa Jinks and LibDems have 4

Cllr Karen Tomlinson is currently on leave of absence

Cllr Martyn Jobe is on the new Library and Community Hub committee and Cllr Anthony Lowe is on the Events and Communications committee. Cllr Stephen Delaunay is one of two Deputy Chair of Policy and Resources committee and is also Chairman of Regeneration Partnership which includes councillors from T&W and expert others eg Sally Themans of Love Wellington and Rob Francis who is a wellingtonian and in addition a specialist consultant in regeneration of towns and the high street and has no political allegiance but brings a wealth of relevant experience and is also a climate change champion acting as a

facilitator for T&W at various events including on 31st October which will be attended by by various parishes and towns across T&W and community groups

It is our fervent hope that Kerry Weston will have been elected to WTC for Haygate Ward on November 20th

Cllr Stephen Delaunay continues to give a stronger voice to the Libdem group on WTC because of his experience and the respect he has accumulated from the controlling Labour group over many years

Cllr Anthony Lowe

Further remarks:

Cllr Lowe commented that in retrospect, the comment about the Haygate by-election looked like hubris.

The Wellington Town Council group report was unanimously approved.

9.6 Wrockwardine Parish Council

Written report received:

There has been much unsettlement due to the proposed changes in the boundary review including Admaston moving to Wellington Town Council and Wrockwardine and Rodington merging. Both Wrockwardine and Rodington plan to campaign against this merger.

Unfortunately another consequence of this is that Wrockwardine have decided not to proceed with any of the traffic management plan for Admaston & Bratton. This is mainly due to the costs that the council keep adding on to the proposals and the lack of communication from them for several years. It has become completely unachievable for the parish council to fund with costs nudging up with each quote taking the scheme well over the £200,000 mark. Myself and other parish councillors are extremely frustrated by this and feel that Telford & Wrekin have made the whole process very difficult. However, WPC did plan to fund the mini island part of the scheme but since the boundary review have decided against this so this is something that I will need to try and ask WTC to do if I get elected in 2027.

Cllr Kim Tonks

Questions:

Cllr Karen Tomlinson asked where the money would go if Admaston & Bratton was moved into Wellington. Cllr Tonks said there was currently no solid information on this. Cllr Bill Tomlinson asked when the move would take place. Cllr Tonks confirmed that it would be at the point of the 2027 local elections.

The Wrockwardine Parish Council group report was unanimously approved.

10. Any other business

Chair-elect Anthony Lowe presented Kim Tonks with flowers to say thank you for her work as Chair over the past three years.

Paul Howard pointed out that in the Haygate by-election, had there been only one progressive candidate, Kerry Weston would have won. He mooted the possibility of a deal with the Greens for 2027. David Ellams responded to say that it was the intention to stand candidates everywhere, although that did not necessarily mean campaigning everywhere. His view was that enabling the Greens to "get a foot in the door" would cause problems down the line, pointing to Worcester where they dominate.

David Ellams invited guest speaker Cllr Alex Wagner to comment on the question of deals. Alex said that deals could look very inviting at a point in time when the party only had the resources to target a limited number of wards. However, this could be regretted later if the party is in a position to fight more wards and a deal has caused them to be “locked out” of winnable wards. He suggested that the local party consider whether it sees itself being able to expand its footprint considerably in the future, as it may want to avoid “giving” wards to the Greens if so. Kevin Booker said that until there was proportional representation, voting was going to be tactical. Alex agreed and said that voters could make up their own minds. David agreed and said that providing information to voters to inform tactical voting (including bar charts) was key.

11. Next meeting

Proposed date for next executive committee meeting: Thursday 8th January 2026.

Proposed date for 2026 AGM: Thursday 19th November 2026

The meeting dates were unanimously agreed.

12. Guest Speaker: Cllr Alex Wagner

Cllr Alex Wagner gave a very interesting talk reflecting on the six months since the Lib Dems took control of Shropshire Council. As Deputy Leader, Alex was able to give the meeting a very clear picture of the changes the new administration had made in the running of the Council. Alex also reflected on the benefits of having truly dedicated cabinet members, where previously many of the Tory cabinet members claimed the allowance, attended the meetings, but did little to effect change. Alex also reflected on the absolutely dire financial situation the new administration had inherited from the Tories, and the need to be very clear on priorities.

In addition, Alex discussed the new partnerships the Council was forming with town and parish councils. These involved not only handing over some of the financial responsibility for certain services, but also a good deal of control of how those services are run. Members asked whether there had been opposition from parish councils to the idea of taking on services. Alex said that in some cases there had, but when he set out the stark choices of either parish precept money helping to fund services or a significantly worse service being provided, many parish councillors had come round to the idea. Indeed one parish council gave Alex a real grilling on his first visit, but had later requested to be one of the parishes in next year’s pilot. In other cases, some town councils were eager from the beginning to take control of – and shape – their local services.