

Hounslow Liberal Democrats Chair Report November 2023

Report from Donal Quinn, Hounslow Liberal Democrat Chair

2023 was a quiet election year, which provided the local party with an opportunity to put in place key infrastructure, build capacity and plan for elections in 2024.

Key areas have been:

- A by-election in Heston West
- Selecting our Parliamentary Candidates
- Organising social events
- Migrating to new digital platforms

Heston West by election

2023 has been a good year for the local party. A by-election in Heston West cropped up early in March, propelling us into campaign mode. This ward is not our traditional stomping ground however, if we want to grow as a local party we need to be campaigning in new areas, reaching out to different communities in the borough. We had an excellent candidate in Chaitan Shah who approached the campaign with enthusiasm and vigour. We came a credible second place, demonstrating that we can beat the Tories in the borough and begin to challenge Labour. From our campaign in Heston West, the message was clear - **residents are fed up with Labour and want a change**. With careful targeting and focused campaigning, Hounslow Liberal Democrats can go into the local election campaign in 2026 on a strong electoral footing.



Key to our campaign in Heston West was our collaboration with other local Lib Dem teams across London. Support from our neighbours in Twickenham and Richmond, who are formidable campaigners, was particularly appreciated. Thank you to Chaitan Shah for stepping up as a candidate, Kuldev Sehra for his efforts as agent and co-ordinating the campaign, and a word of thanks to those elected representatives who campaigned with us - our party leader



Ed Davey MP, Members of Parliament Sarah Olney and Munira Wilson, Gareth Roberts,

Leader of Richmond Council, and London Assembly Member Caroline Pidgeon. A special thanks to London Assembly Member, Hina Bokhari for all her help and support with the campaign. She is a true friend of the local party.

Finally, to all members who supported our campaign in any way, whether that was knocking on doors, delivering leaflets or making phone calls - thank you.

Prospective Parliamentary Candidates (PPC)

We are in the process of selecting our Prospective Parliamentary Candidates for the three parliamentary constituencies across the borough. These candidates are selected as per the boundary changes set out by the Boundary Commission. The ward of Whitton will come into the constituency of Brentford & Isleworth, and the three wards of Chiswick (Chiswick Gunnersbury, Chiswick Riverside and Chiswick Homefields) will form part of the new constituency of Hammersmith & Chiswick.

Kuldev Sehra has been selected as our PPC for Brentford & Isleworth. Kuldev is a true local champion and a seasoned campaigner. Since being elected as a councillor for Whitton in 2022, he has worked tirelessly for residents. Kuldev will be an outstanding candidate and we look forward to our campaign in 2024.



Our candidates for Feltham & Heston and Hammersmith & Chiswick will be selected over the next coming weeks.

We look forward to supporting our candidates across these three constituencies, and we will use these campaigns to build a platform for the local elections in 2026. We will also be lending our support in neighbouring target seats so that we get more Lib Dems elected to Westminster; in Wimbledon, and Esher and Walton, to name two.

Social Events



We have had several social events this year. We have hosted two quiz nights, one in April, and the other in October. These have proved popular with members and have been a great opportunity for us to come together in a relaxed atmosphere. At each event we have had guest

speakers, including Munira Wilson, MP for Twickenham, and Hina Bokhari, London Assembly Member.

In November, we hosted a very successful drinks reception and Q&A with Sarah Olney, MP for Richmond Park, in Chiswick. This event was attended by members from across the borough. Sarah was an informative, engaging speaker and it was an evening which brought members together over food and drink. It was lovely to meet seasoned and new members alike.



Membership

Hounslow Liberal Democrats currently has 202 members, recruiting six new members since August 2023. In 2024, we will continue to grow the membership and build capacity.

What's next

Hounslow Borough Liberal Democrats elects its Executive each November. At the Annual General Meeting a new team will be elected by members who will continue to move the local party forward. 2024 is an important year with a probable double election so preparation for these elections, campaign planning and delivery, as well as voter engagement will be the top priorities.

The General Election date will happen at some point before January 2025, however, London will definitely go to the polls on 2 May 2024 in the Mayoral and Assembly elections.

In the London Assembly election, every vote counts. The Londonwide list of 11 candidates is used to ensure proper representation after the election of the 14 constituency members. As a local party, we will be helping get more Liberal Democrats elected to the Assembly. Rob Blackie will be our Mayoral candidate and current Assembly member Cllr Hina Bokhari, who was first elected in 2021, leads the list, with Cllr Gareth Roberts leading the South West Constituency campaign, where he came close to becoming our first ever constituency AM in 2021.

We must maintain and grow our grouping at the next Assembly election and Hounslow Liberal Democrats will support the work of the London Liberal Democrats in doing so. We will support the campaign to elect Gareth Roberts, which will also provide us with an opportunity to lay the foundations for success in the council elections, 2026.

London Assembly Member Caroline Pidgeon will not be seeking re-election in 2024. Hounslow Liberal Democrats would like to take this opportunity to thank her for the years of service and advocacy across London and wish her well for the future.

In 2024, we look forward to expanding our programme of social events with more social get-togethers and training workshops, as well as fundraising events so that we can raise adequate funds for our campaigns.

We are growing the team. If you are interested in joining us or wish to stand in the local elections in 2026, or would like to find out more about it, please do contact us on info@hounslowlibdems.org.uk



Finally, my time as Chair comes to an end on 31 December 2023. I will be passing the baton to a new chair who will continue to grow the party. The local party is stable and some key infrastructure has been put in place to make the party stronger.

2024 is an important year for us - it will be a year of campaigning, campaigning, campaigning. If we want Liberal Democrats elected to Hounslow Borough Council in 2026, we have to earn it. We need to do much more campaigning on a local level and engage further with residents.

It has been a pleasure to lead the local party for three years, and thanks to all of you who have supported me. I wish the local party well and look forward to continuing to contribute to its success.

Donal Quinn
Hounslow Liberal Democrats, Chair.