

Next Generation Cohort **13** 2018/19

THE PROGRAMME FOR TALENTED LIBERAL DEMOCRAT COUNCILLORS



Welcome to Next Generation...

Today's local leaders are expected to shape the place where their local residents live and work. The Next Generation programme is designed to encourage the sort of confident, capable and ambitious local leadership that will create thriving and prosperous communities.

Now in its twelfth year, it is recognised as one of the most prestigious courses for young, ambitious politicians from the three main parties to join. Uniquely, each programme is developed separately within individual party traditions, by party political experts, creating a bespoke political development opportunity for participants.

Next Generation provides the support and continuous personal development that ensures councillors have the right skills to transform into the sort of leaders required to reinvigorate the local political scene. It is designed for those who have already shown a proven commitment to the ideals of local government and have demonstrated flair or potential for leadership at a local level and have the capacity to develop politically.

It offers privileged access to senior party members and the best of policymakers, an open door to model authorities, the most experienced of mentors and an understanding of communications skills presented by the best the party has to offer.

As well as offering the practical skills of leadership, this programme is also designed to raise individuals profile within the local and national party.

The programme is delivered in partnership between the Local Government Association's (LGA) Leadership and Localism team and Liberal Democrat Office, and the Association of Liberal Democrat Councillors (ALDC).

Many previous Liberal Democrat cohorts have gone on to either lead their council or group, hold positions within the LGA, contribute high-quality policy ideas to the party, or continue cementing an important network of politically motivated Liberal Democrats in local government.

Each year the central party supports the programme, with many of the Liberal Democrats' front bench making time for participants in Westminster. This year the Next Generation 13 Cohort will be undertaking a dedicated training weekend at Yarnfield Park, as well as meeting the Westminster team in London.

Terry Stacy MBE JP

Head of LGA Liberal Democrat Group Office

Will Brooks

Principal Adviser, Leadership and Localism Team

Programme objectives

We will aim to:

- raise awareness of the different styles and approaches to political leadership
- help participants understand a distinctive Liberal Democrat approach to policy and governance
- enable participants to define their 'vision' for their council/ward/group
- increase confidence and awareness of the importance of communication and media skills
- help participants know more about their own personal strengths and weaknesses as a community and political leader
- develop participants understanding of the practical strategies to policy making and best practice in Liberal Democrat groups and councils.

Participants will meet key movers and shakers within the Liberal Democrats in Parliament and local government. In addition, in conjunction with ALDC, we will be setting up a premier network and long-term training opportunities for every Liberal Democrat Next Generation participant to ensure that their voice and perspective is heard at every level of Liberal Democrat activity every year, not just this one!

Programme dates

Module 1

Monday 15 October – Wednesday 17 October 2018
Swan Hotel Bedford

Module 2

Tuesday 27 November 2018
Westminster, London

Module 3

Friday 18 – Sunday 20 January 2019
Weekend residential at Yarnfield Park (Staffordshire)

Reflection and learning weekend

Your **Next Generation**

Cohort 2018/19

The background of the slide is a light orange color. Overlaid on this are several large, stylized, abstract shapes in a darker orange hue. These shapes resemble leaves or petals, with smooth, curved edges and pointed tips. They are arranged in a way that suggests growth and movement, with some shapes overlapping others. The overall aesthetic is clean, modern, and warm.



Robin Brown

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

I was elected as a councillor in the May 2018 elections to represent Hampton Wick ward in Richmond upon Thames. I also serve as the

Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance in our new administration. I live in the ward with my wife Jane and two children.

My professional career has been on the financial side of business. Most recently I was Chief Financial Officer for United Biscuits (UB) which owns McVities in the UK as well as operating internationally. I left UB in 2016.

I'm a school governor and treasurer for a small charity. I enjoy hillwalking and always use the bike to get around locally. I also play tennis, am an Arsenal football fan and enjoy the theatre.

Following my frustration with Brexit I joined the Lib Dems, enjoyed campaigning to help re-elect Vince Cable and decided to get more involved. Now I feel very involved and have a lot to learn!



Sarah Cheung Johnson

South Cambridgeshire District Council

I'm a British born Chinese mum of two pre-schoolers (one who has a special educational need) and together with my husband moved to

Cambridgeshire four years ago. I'm one of the 30 Lib Dems who won control of the South Cambs District Council this year and am a member of the Scrutiny Committee and Employment and Staffing Committee. I also hold the following positions in Lib Dem organisations:

- Diversity Officer, South Cambs Lib Dems
- Secretary, Chinese Lib Dems
- Executive Member, Your Liberal Britain

Following a 12 year career in investment banking IT as a project manager, latterly at Goldman Sachs, I now work part-time for the Institute of Manufacturing at Cambridge University as well as for Rod Cantrill, prospective parliamentary candidate (PPC) for Cambridge.



Mark Durrant

Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

Mark Durrant is one of the new cohort of Lib Dem councillors elected in Kingston in May 2018. He sits on the Children's and Adult Social

Care Committee, the Community Engagement Committee and the Malden and Coombe Committee. He is the Lib Dem representative for the Kingston Chamber of Commerce, and is on the working groups for communications, electric vehicles and debt collection reform. Mark has a special interest in helping people with disabilities. He works full time for Bloomberg Media advising clients globally on media, advertising and events. He is married with two grown up stepchildren living in Tokyo and Canada and a teenage son who has autism.



Richard Gomer

Eastleigh Borough Council

Richard Gomer has been a member of Eastleigh Borough Council since May 2018, representing West End North.

Richard works as a Research Fellow in the Web and Internet Science Research Group at the University of Southampton where he also obtained his PhD. He works primarily on human-centric technology design – including privacy, data protection and consent. He has a particular interest in how technology reinforces or disrupts power imbalances, the role that human values play in design, and how design and regulation can deliver intelligible environments that support individual agency. He'd like to improve public engagement in government by applying ideas from design thinking.

Richard is a member of the Association of Liberal Democrat Engineers and Scientists, and LGBT+ Lib Dems.



Aga Dychton

Watford Borough Council

From a very early age, I've always been very community orientated. Growing up in Poland to moving to the UK with my family, I've always cared about being

involved with my local community.

When my son was three, I decided to set up a Polish school in Watford for Polish families to educate their children about Polish culture, their roots and to bring the Polish community in Watford together. It has proven hugely successful and I am now delighted to be its chief executive.

I've always liked to break stereotypes. I think people have the idea that Eastern European citizens living in the UK are somehow disengaged from the place that they live in and not interested in becoming a part of that community. I've never felt like that and wanted to prove the opposite. I feel the Eastern European community feel part of where they live and work and deserve a voice on their local council.

After some thinking, in 2016, I decided that I wanted to run as a borough councillor and it is an enormous honour to be the first ever Polish councillor on Watford Borough Council. It was an even greater honour to have been re-elected to the role in 2018.

I've always enjoyed promoting the idea of community and helping people and being a councillor is a great way of doing just that. It's fantastic to be able to give the Eastern European community a voice in the council chamber and committee rooms in the Town Hall. It's something we simply don't have in enough places in other parts of the country.

Being a councillor also gives you a chance to change people's lives for the better, whoever they are and wherever they're from. I love the casework part of my job. A typical day could be helping to clear a bit of flytipping, helping to get funding for a community project or helping someone get better quality local housing. No one day is the same.



Alex Hegenbarth

Cheltenham Borough Council

Born in Worcestershire, I've spent my career working throughout the heritage sector. After joining the Liberal Democrats in 2015 I dove into local and national politics, taking a

proactive role leading my then local party in Swindon before spear-heading the Remain campaign across the region during the EU referendum.

In 2016 I moved to Gloucestershire where I threw myself back into local campaigning and was fortunate enough to be selected for, and to win, a by-election on the Cheltenham Borough Council in 2017 – a seat I defended successfully in 2018. I have since been elected onto the borough cabinet as Member for Corporate Services and I am also currently the local party Chair and PPC for the neighbouring Tewkesbury constituency.



Caroline Kerr

Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames

I was elected a councillor this May in Kingston and am currently Chair of my local Neighbourhood Committee.

You could call me a latecomer to

political activity since I only joined the Liberal Democrats at the beginning of the year, having been galvanised into action by the result of the Brexit referendum.

Career-wise, I spent 20 years as a reporter at ITN where I was Asia Correspondent, Consumer Correspondent and Business Editor. After leaving front-line journalism I set up a media training company which I still run.

I am loving the challenge of being a local councillor but realise I have so much to learn.



Richard Kilpatrick

Manchester City Council

One of the best things about being involved in my local community is the change that I can make and see around me. I was elected as the second Liberal Democrat councillor in Manchester to represent the

Didsbury West ward of the city. I became actively involved in politics in 2008 motivated by social mobility and what seemed like the sheer disregard for enabling people to meet their aspirations in life.

Originally from Middlesbrough in the North East of England I went to university at Northumbria before going on to work in education. Working in education meant I saw the impact of social immobility first hand. At that stage I made the choice to return to frontline politics, moving to Manchester to work for John Leech MP for Manchester Withington.

Manchester is a thriving city, with a booming digital sector, and high levels of outside investment. But behind the facade is a city with rising homelessness, a pending housing crisis, and swathes of deprivation. In May 2018, I became Manchester's second opposition councillor on a council that comprises of 96 councillors.

Working part-time in communications while acting as the deputy leader of the opposition in Manchester, meanwhile ensuring a sustainable fight back for the Liberal Democrats in a northern city. It is an honour to represent my neighbourhood and fight for the people of the city that adopted me as one of their own.

A tennis fan, Middlesbrough FC season ticket holder, lover of running, wine and football. Governor of St Catherines RC Primary School, Didsbury. Director of Didsbury Civic Society.



Hannah Kitching

Barnsley Council

Hannah Kitching was elected to Barnsley Council in May 2018. She is the only Liberal Democrat on the heavily Labour controlled council, representing Penistone West, a rural

ward on the far west of the borough.

Hannah joined the party in 2016 and quickly threw herself into active campaigning, leading and participating in local and national by-elections as well as the 2017 General Election campaign in Sheffield Hallam. She has worked with local parties to build the presence of Penistone Liberal Democrats from scratch, running a targeted campaign to win the Penistone West seat from Labour. She was also the Lib Dem candidate for Sheffield City Region Mayor.

Prior to getting involved in politics Hannah had a career in the NHS, both as a physiotherapist and in management development roles. She has built and led a successful direct sales team, raised two small children and now supports her husband in running their Sheffield based knife manufacturing business. They live just outside Penistone with their two primary school aged daughters. She enjoys dog walking, gardening and lifting heavy stuff at the gym!



Caroline Leaver

North Devon District Council

I am a district councillor for Newport ward, in Barnstaple, North Devon having been elected in a by-election in 2017, with a majority of 17, and I am a member of the Planning Committee.

I've been an active Lib Dem for decades, but despite living in North Devon for 15 years, my involvement and engagement with our local party really started with the EU referendum. For the local party I am a member of the Executive Committee, and am Membership Development Officer and Regional Executive rep. As a local party we are in the process of modernisation, and I see myself as being a key player in that.

My interest in communities stems from growing up in a home where each generation was involved with community activism, and liberal democracy. This led to my working in and with the voluntary sector and being a trustee of various organisations. The most recent is our local homeless and financial inclusion charity.



Colin Martin

Cornwall Council

Colin got involved in politics in 2005, becoming Constituency Organiser for Colin Breed MP, then moving further west to do the same job for Julia Goldsworthy MP.

In 2007, Colin ran the successful election campaign for the Lib Dems on Kerrier District Council. From 2008 to 2013, Colin worked for a variety of social enterprises, eventually setting one up from scratch in Bodmin.

In 2013, he trained as a teacher, and now works part-time teaching children who are too poorly to attend mainstream school.

Last year he won the 'safe' Tory council seat of Lostwithiel and is now Vice Chair of Cornwall Council's Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Vice Chair of Cornwall Liberal Democrats and PPC for South East Cornwall.



Colin McGerty

Cambridgeshire City Council

In 2014 I joined the Lib Dems to support Julian Huppert's re-election campaign in Cambridge and quickly discovered a passion for doorstep campaigning.

After the disappointment of that election, our party leader told us to "pick a ward and win it" and I decided to do just that. Through 2016 and 2017 I worked with a marvellous candidate to come from a very long way behind to within a few votes of taking the county council seat.

This was followed by the snap General Election where I took the lead on digital campaigning for Julian Huppert.

It was only in January 2018 that I decided to step forward as a candidate and comfortably held a seat from a retiring Lib Dem councillor. I am now Opposition Spokesperson for Streets and Open Spaces on Cambridge City Council.

I am very much enjoying being a ward councillor and a group spokesperson and look forward to growing in the role.

Programme developers

Councillor Abigail Bell

Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group,
Hull City Council

cllr.abi.bell@gmail.com
07564 333323

Abi was first elected in 2006 when the Lib Dem group in Hull went into minority control. She served on the Cabinet from 2007 and was Deputy Leader from 2009. In 2011 the Lib Dem group lost 10 councillors and went into opposition and Abi was elected as the Group Leader. She is now Deputy Leader of the group and has been focussing on the crucial all-out elections in Hull, 2018. Abi is an accredited trainer for the Lib Dems and has led the Next Gen course since 2012. Abi has a background in HR in both the charity and private sector. She has worked for Lib Dem HQ and ALDC as a campaigns officer and development officer respectively and loves nothing more than a good campaign!

Councillor Tim Pickstone

Chief Executive, ALDC

tim.pickstone@aldc.org
07976 831686

Tim Pickstone is Chief Executive of the Association of Liberal Democrat Councillors, taking up this role in 2006. Tim has worked on the Next Generation programme on behalf of ALDC for the last five years.

Tim has also been a councillor on Bury Metropolitan Borough Council since 2000, and led the group there for the last ten years. In May he defended his seat against Labour with a seven per cent swing.

Key contacts

Liberal Democrat Group Office

Terry Stacy MBE JP

020 7664 3295

terry.stacy@local.gov.uk

Rob Banks

020 7664 3204

rob.banks@local.gov.uk

Amy Haldane

020 7664 3293

amy.haldane@local.gov.uk

ALDC

Councillor Abigail Bell

07564 333323

cllr.abi.bell@gmail.com

Councillor Tim Pickstone

07976 831686

tim.pickstone@aldc.org



Local Government Association
Local Government House
Smith Square
London SW1P 3HZ

Telephone 020 7664 3000
Fax 020 7664 3030
Email info@local.gov.uk
www.local.gov.uk

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please contact us on 020 7664 3000.
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