

Campaigns Officer's Report to NBLD AGM 2023

It's been a busy year for elections! We did not achieve all our objectives, despite our large and energetic campaigns, but there were bright spots to celebrate. **Thank you** to:

- All supporters and members who contributed to our campaigns, the elections in May and June were large and energetic!
- Dave Hodgson for being not just the Mayoral candidate but a leader of the wider campaigns.
- All our candidates, in target seats and paper candidates, those who were elected and those who were not successful, especially Hilde Hendrickx who had been a popular and hard-working councillor for Newnham and lost out in a very tough 4-way fight, and her running mate Tom Pattinson.
- Those target candidates who worked so hard and did not win: Stephen Bowering, Louise Crofts, Sachdev Goldi, Linda Jack, Henna Khanum, John Manning, Jas Parmar, Nigel Spencer, Peter Stephens, John Symonds.
- Retiring councillors Tim Hill & Jake Sampson.
- Billy Thompson our Campaigns Organiser who was a key part of us achieving what we did.
- Emma Holland-Lindsay and her team for a vigorous campaign in Mid Bedfordshire.

1. Mayoral election, 4 May 2023

Out of 47,873 votes cast (374 rejected ballot papers), we ended 145 votes behind the Conservative, Tom Wootton, who, with no Supplementary Vote any longer, was elected.

2. Councillor elections, 4 May 2023

The total number of seats on the Council increased from 40 to 46 following a boundary review which was unfavourable to the Liberal Democrats. We went into the election with 14 seats and after the election had 13 seats. We are currently the joint second largest party: Conservative 14; Labour 13; Liberal Democrats 13; Green 3; Independents 3.

We won seats in Shortstown (Leigh Coombs) and Wootton (Sue Abood) and won the new seat of Riverfield, formerly part of Newnham ward which had two Liberal Democrat councillors (Billy Thompson).

3. Local elections review

The Executive carried out a review of the election including the pre-election period. Key take aways were the importance of having candidates in place early and clear communication with candidates throughout.

4. Wyboston byelection, 29 June 2023 (caused by resignation of Tom Wootton as councillor)

Tom Townsend was an excellent candidate, hard-working and self-motivated. This was the Tories' safest ward and they needed their MP, Mayor and several councillors out on polling day to be sure of victory. We finished on 33% having squeezed Labour to 4%; I estimate our on-the-day vote was about 40%.

5. Mid Beds Parliamentary byelection, 29 October 2023

We finished third with Labour winning, but we were the only party to increase our votes (actual number). We gained a good amount of canvass data in the Borough area and a number of deliverers.

6. Elections 2024

The Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) elections will be held in May 2024 and the General Election will be held by the end of January 2025. The region is running the selection for PCC and I recommend we support other Bedfordshire local parties to lead on this election.

The financial situation of the Local Party has, to date, constrained the size, quality and coverage we achieve with literature, FOCUS have been A4 and just gone out in held wards. In the New Year will we plan to put out a newspaper and "annual report" or similar that can be delivered wider than our held wards.