



ENGLISH YOUNG LIBERALS

Winter General Meeting 2024 Reports

Table of Contents

English Young Liberals Chair	2
Vice-Chair for Elections and Campaigns	4
Vice-Chair for Membership Engagement	5
Policy and Regional Engagement Officer	6
Events Representative	7
Devon and Cornwall Regional Chair	8
East Midlands Regional Chair	10
East of England Regional Chair	11
London Regional Chair	13
North East Regional Chair	16
North West Regional Chair	17
South Central Regional Chair	19
South East Regional Chair	20
West Midlands Regional Chair	21
Western Counties Regional Chair	22
Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Chair	23


English Young Liberals Chair

I am extremely pleased and proud of the work of the EYL Executive this term. With an incredibly talented and dedicated team, I believe that we are stronger than ever, and are increasingly ready to tackle the looming General Election head-on.

I have continued to dutifully write reports for and attend meetings of the Young Liberals Executive and the English Council Executive (ECE). Relationships on these bodies continue to be healthy and productive, and I am proud of the reputation for competency and respect that EYL has garnered on these committees.

For a full briefing on what EYL has been up to as an organisation, and what I have been doing as its Chair, you can read the reports that are linked in the minutes of Executive meetings, available at the links below. However, a summary of the key aspects are as follows:

- Subject to the completion of the co-option for Vice-Chair for Elections and Campaigns that is due to conclude this week, the **EYL Executive shall be at full strength**, with all English Council Reps in place.
- I have worked closely with Janey as chair of the Elections Committee to develop YL's General Election strategy and to ensure that regional chairs understand their role as part of it. **Campaigning in key target seats** will be a focus for the year, with making sure that resources are used effectively a top priority.
- At the end of the last term, I reflected with the Executive on the successes of the organisation and where we want to improve, as well as **receiving feedback** on how I have chaired and administered the Executive. This provided some good insight that I have been able to realise in my duties as Chair already.
- The **Winter General Meeting** is due to take place at **5pm on Friday 9th February**, which I am most looking forward to. The GM will consist of Executive Scrutiny, three Constitutional Amendments, and a General Election briefing.
- Our Policy and Regional Engagement Officer, James Bliss, drafted an excellent motion **recommitting the organisation to the IHRA definition of antisemitism**, which was passed as EYL Interim Policy, and has been submitted to this conference by the EYL Executive. You can find the text of the motion in the conference agenda and app.
- The EYL Executive is in the process of drafting a **funded project proposal** for submission to the Party in England. This is an exciting opportunity for us to make a real difference, and to further prove ourselves as an asset to the Party in England.
- **New Executive Regulations** were agreed upon and granted assent by the Executive, which you can read here: [EYL Executive Regulations \(Jan 2024\)](#)

- A **Goals Grid** was developed for regional chairs, which informed the creation of the new Executive regulations, and allows us to **track and review the progress** of regional chairs over the year.  Goals Grid - Regional Chairs

Links to relevant information:

- [Executive Minutes and Reports](#)
- [Information on Regional Executives](#)
- [General Meeting Documents](#)

Joe Norris

Vice-Chair for Elections and Campaigns

I was delighted to be informed of my co-option to the role of Vice Chair for Elections and Campaigns on Wednesday 7th February.

On 9th February I will be attending the EYL General Meeting.

In my co-option application I highlighted that I intend to focus on effective internal communication between campaigns committee and the membership, via the regions, and on ensuring campaigns are as inclusive as possible to our diverse membership.

As we head towards the much-anticipated General Election I will be looking to ensure EYL effectively contributes to the campaign activities of the party while being mindful of both the "Campaigning for Liberals" policy and my own conscience, both of which direct me to ensure that we exclusively campaign for candidates who uphold the dignity and human rights of each and every member.

Finally, I hope the membership will indulge me for this report lacking in detail given the timing of my co-option. I welcome any construction suggestions for my ongoing work, either at the General Meeting or by contacting me in the coming days.

Rebecca Procter

Vice-Chair for Membership Engagement

Recent months have been quiet for the role. This is in part due to the process of settling in and determining the outlook and purpose of this new role. Defining a new role such as this can often be a slow process, especially when having to fit around existing roles at the federal and state levels.

As EYL's representative on the Campaigns and Communications Committee, I have ensured that a regional perspective on campaign planning is being included. In the first meeting, I raised the importance of developing a mix of issue campaigns for university societies. Arguing that it is important to develop campaigns that can be used in places where we are Labour-facing and others which can be more effective in Conservative-facing places. So that regions and local branches across England are able to choose the campaigns most appropriate for their local situation.

A list of upcoming university and local branch campaigns will be produced shortly. However, the committee is keen to hear ideas from local and regional branches. If anyone has ideas for campaigns, or how campaigns should be run, please let me know so I can feed this into the committee.

Additionally, as part of my role I am planning a survey of university societies in England who used the Fresher's week campaign pack, in order to provide feedback on last year's packs and suggestions for next year's packs. Which I then hope to feed into ongoing discussions within the committee. Having obtained a list of the branches which requested feedback, I am planning on sending a survey later this month. Now that initial issues with emails have been resolved and my personal capacity has increased. I may ask regional chairs to support this by asking university branches to fill in the survey when it arrives in their inbox.

Rowan Fitton

Policy and Regional Engagement Officer

Due to me being moved locations at work, and as a result taking on a significantly increased workload I have had to take some time away from YL and the party for most of January, however things are now calming down with work so I will be returning back to perceiving things, this is also the reason for my late report (apologies to everyone for that), going forward I will be getting better at balancing work/libdem balance.

I attended the initial two policy committee meetings for the organisation of conference and then the motion selection meeting, I did however miss the most recent meeting for selection of amendments. The quality of motions at conference has been excellent and Ulysse, Lucas and the rest of the conference team have done amazing work in the organisation of this conference.

There has not been any meeting of the English Party Joint Policy Committee of the Regions recently, although this is something that I will be chasing up in the run up to Spring Conference.

As always if anyone wants to get in contact with me with anything please feel free to email me at james.bliss.ld@gmail.com

James Bliss

Events Representative

Sorry I couldn't be with you at this conference! I have supported the Events Officer, Lucas North, with advice and support ahead of this conference and will continue to do so ahead of Spring Conference, YL Activate and Autumn Conference.

On the English Young Liberal Executive I have further supported the chair and Executive during meetings where possible. Stay safe, look out for your friends, don't do anything that may damage your reputation in further life!

Huw James

Devon and Cornwall Regional Chair

EYL Exec: Apologies and a report sent to January meeting due to a conflict with a prior Council Group arrangement; apologies sent to February meeting due to illness.

Main Party Regional Exec: I have attended two regional executive meetings since starting in post in late 2023 due to an existing vacancy in the role. The first of these was an extraordinary meeting looking at funding for a regional staff post, due to the resignation of the existing Diversity & Development Officer, where regrettably region voted to eliminate the existing DDO post – providing training and support on campaigning and diversity to all local parties – in favour of a campaign organiser focussing on target seats. I spoke against the change, but the vote was overwhelmingly for it - with a clear feeling that winning seats is the priority in the region for the next twelve months. The second was largely business-as-usual, save a lengthy discussion regarding future plans for the regional conference – and in particular whether a standalone D&C conference was merited. I spoke briefly to note that the Tiverton joint conference in 2023 was not easily accessible to Cornwall members.

YL Regional Exec: D&C currently has no Regional Exec members other than myself; indeed, my objective for February/March is to link up with the only active branch in the region (Exeter University) with a view to co-opting the branch chair and seeking any interest from members there in joining the Regional Exec.

Regional Conferences: Regional conference was held jointly with Western Counties in late 2023. I made a brief report on this at December's pre-meet of the 2024 executive, which you can find [here](#). As I note above, discussions are ongoing regarding the arrangements for a 2024 conference; once confirmed, I will be advocating for a session to explore how the region engages with young people.

Action Days: I organised D&C's first Action Day in several years for Saturday 13th January to support Richard Foord's Campaign Launch in the new Honiton & Sidmouth seat – with thanks to Joe and Harvey for supporting with various elements of this. Really good to see a number of YL's from Exeter on the day and to hear from Richard's office that a number of folks had mentioned they were only aware of the day due to EYL comms. The region has a limited number of advanced/target seats, so the number of action days across the year is likely to be limited to avoid repetition/fatigue; I am however hoping to engage with the active Exeter University branch to boost attendance at future sessions.

Membership Engagement: While it was great to see a couple YLers at the January Action Day, this is a clear area where work is needed. As noted above, I hope to link in with the Exeter University branch to give some momentum to this, and will be working closely with the Regional Secretary, Regional Conference Secretary, and Regional Diversity Officer to try and bring some attention to bear on better involving young people – to strengthen both the YL region and the region as a whole.

Branches: Various notes above. Of the region's three branches, one is to be disaffiliated, one is stuck in a stop-start process being pushed by the relevant Local Party that is seeking to re-establish activity in the area, and the third has a strong but currently very localised focus, with limited involvement in surrounding areas and the wider region.

Socials: Nothing to report. My priority for this term is membership engagement more broadly; while I expect some social element to be part of that, given wider political circumstances I am anticipating that it will take more of a back seat this year.

Todd Olive

East Midlands Regional Chair

Update since the last General Meeting in August

- Helped organise an action day in Lincolnshire for the Carholme By-Election. We had a fantastic result coming in a good 2nd from 4th
- There was an action day held in Hinckley, our target seat in the region, by the local party. Unfortunately despite a good amount of advertising no Young Liberals attended. This is likely because there are no branches nearby which I plan to rectify. I also intend to work with neighbouring regions to sign post their members to nearby action days in my region and vice versa
- The Regional conference was cancelled due to low attendance, despite advertising from East Midlands Young Liberals (EMYL) on Social Media
- An AGM was later held, nothing relevant to YL to report
- There is interest from a Young Liberal at Lincoln University to found a Society there, which is brilliant news. My exec and I have been working to assist with finding enough members and we will shortly send out an email to all YL members in the area.
- Action Days have been held for the upcoming Parliament By Election in Wellingborough. Joe Norris has helped with the organising and EMYL have advertised. I'm unsure of turnout
- There is a YL member interested in joining the EMYL exec as either Campaigns or Comms Officer. I plan to have them on the exec before the next EYL meeting. There are still some spaces on the exec and we are always open to help so don't hesitate to join the Young Liberals Facebook group or contact me at Josh_Nightingale@outlook.com
- Assisted the Branch Development Officers with the status of Branches in the Region. All are being closed down due to lack of activity
- I am planning a meeting with the BDO's to discuss branch development, particularly at Lincoln University

Plans Moving Forward

- The Hinckley Local Party are planning to run an Action Day on the constituency every month until the General Election. Following discussions in EYL meeting I plan to run a YL Action Day at the same time to make it easier.
- Because there is only one target seat in the Region it may be difficult for members to travel there easily. Therefore EMYL plan to create a map of the closest advanced seats in neighbouring regions

Josh Nightingale

East of England Regional Chair

Since taking over as Chair in November I am pleased to report that the East of England has in many ways continued to move in the right direction.

Off the back of the work that my predecessor, Will Tennison, and his Executive put in to increase the organisation, effectiveness and relevance of YL within the Region we have been able to continue working towards

One goal I set myself at the start of my tenure was to swiftly improve the internal communication within the Region (until this year we had relied upon ad hoc systems of communication and Forum). Through the establishment of a YL region specific email (fully funded by the Region) as well as a Whatsapp Community I believe we have lit into place what is at the very least a good structure for the current and future Regional Execs to communicate with the members of the Region.

YL still enjoys a strong presence in the various region wide elected roles, with several Young Members sitting on the Regional Executive, several being elected EC members and myself sitting on Regional Conference Committee.

The Young Members elected and appointed to these branches are consistently loud voices that play an active role in shaping our Region.

Hopefully though come the next Regional Elections we will have an increased presence on these bodies, or at least a fresher one. Most Young Members engaged at a senior Regional are those who are also already highly active in YL itself.

We successfully reached out to CULA this year, another goal I set myself, bringing the largest University branch closer to the wider YL community with Sarah Anderson representing the Association on our Executive.

I hope that this closer relationship between Branch and Region will be highly beneficial for us both.

Unfortunately though as of 2024 CULA is now the only affiliated YL Branch within the Region. A lack of interest, coupled with Universities setting unreasonably lofty standards for Societies has caused several Branches demise.

This is of course very disappointing, and not something I take lightly.

Looking forward though, there is the ambition of establishing several more sustainable Branches across the Region.

This decline in Branches does also mirror our slight, but noticeable decline in membership. Although the Region as a whole has experienced a decline, I and the Exec are going to explore ways to boost membership engagement, recruitment and retention over this year.

On the Action Day front we are currently at the beginning of a very busy period for YL and the Region as a whole when it comes to campaigning. We are lucky enough to play host to several Advance and Moving Forward+ seats. Currently we have Action Days planned or in the works for North Norfolk, Chelmsford and South Cambridgeshire (in conjunction with CULA) - more are in the works.

A major barrier I do not feel we have yet been able to successfully overcome is how difficult it can be to engage YL members over a large geographical region with so few branches.

I can comfortably say that the Region is in a healthy place. We remain the 2nd largest English Region, we have an intelligent, experienced Executive, our strong ties to the Regional party have placed us well in terms of funding and the many Target seats present excellent opportunities for recruitment and engagement.

Finally I would like to give a special thank you to those who have served on last years Executive as well as this years: Will, Nathan, James, Sean and Sarah; and ofcourse Joe Norris and all those within the Region and YL who have assisted myself.

Tom Jordan

London Regional Chair

I started my role a little over a month ago, so I have mostly been getting my feet on the ground and planning for the future, with some stuff now coming to fruition. February will be a very busy month personally, with a borough-wide by-election for my local party, for whom I do most of the technical stuff, and a new job with an intense short-term project, so I will be a bit slower in the coming months though I will continue with current plans.

1. EYL Exec

- I attended meetings on 3rd Dec and 4th Feb, updating the exec on how I was settling and what my campaign priorities will be (Carshalton & Wallington and Wimbledon)
- I sent apologies due to personal issues for the 7th Jan meeting but submitted a report.

2. Main Party Regional Exec

- I have arranged monthly meetings with Craig O'Donnell, the relevant region staffer. On 05/01/24 I was briefed on YL PPCs and target seats, planned the first three action days, and was given contact details of relevant individuals, incl. to plan a parliamentary visit social.
- I have requested a follow up regarding a @[londonlibdems.org.uk](mailto:libdems.org.uk) email address for us which Nicholas, my predecessor, had requested. Conversations are on-going.
- A fellow regional exec member, also part of the Chinese Liberal Democrats, has offered YLers free places for their Lunar New Year's Dinner on 15th Feb which I promoted on Forum. Four places remain available, members interested should get in touch with me. Full details: <https://events.libdems.org.uk/events/55389/chinese-liberal-democracts-lunar-new-year-dinner>

3. YL Regional Exec

- I have successfully co-opted a campaigns officer and a membership engagement officer, in addition to two ordinary exec members. A fifth application remains pending due to membership eligibility, but I have encouraged them to join the party.
- I have sent an email inviting regional accredit branches to join the executive.

4. Regional Conference

- In-person conference will be going ahead on 24th February at the University of Greenwich. We have been conditionally offered a stand and ad space free of

charge, dependent on having some YLers volunteer as stewards. I will be asking for help from members, anyone willing to help should please contact me.

- I have requested a Conference kit from Joe, which should be with me before Sheffield. Anyone attending and willing to help with the stand should also contact me.

5. Action Days

- We held our first action day on the 27th of January in Carshalton and Wallington, campaigning for Bobby Dean, with decent turnout.
- I have postponed the Wimbledon Action Day planned for the 17th Feb to the 23rd March due to rail works, and YL conference clashing with their 10th Feb Action Day.
- The Feb action day will now be on Sun 25th Feb in Carshalton and Wallington.
- I shared the details for the Action Day in Esher and Walton on 3rd Feb on the London YL virtual hub, given it is a relatively close target constituency to London. I will also be pushing members to attend the Federal Action Day on 2nd March.

6. Membership Engagement

- I have gained access to the Facebook page and was able to reply to old messages, especially those with interest in getting involved. It was from here I managed to co-opt our membership engagement officer.
- I am sending two follow ups to people who have expressed interest in getting involved. I have encouraged both to join the party, as well as Forum, and informed them of upcoming events - campaign-related and social.

7. Branches

- I aided the Branch co-officers with their review, providing feedback with updated activity on London's accredited branches, especially those with unknown status.
- Luben Roussev successfully encouraged KCL and UCL Lib Dems to post a statement regarding KCL&UCL's Tories appalling Port and Policy discussion themes. The post has been well received on Instagram.
- I have introduced myself on the London university LDs WhatsApp groupchat, and have emailed the societies offering my support where needed.

8. Socials

- I have secured a visit to Parliament on the 1st March. There is 15 limited places available at:

<https://events.libdems.org.uk/events/56019/london-young-liberals-tour-of-parliament/>

Josh Lucas Mitte

North East Regional Chair

January was a busy month in the North East. We have launched the campaigns of our two mayoral candidates, we continue to campaign hard for local elections and we are finalising our last few PPCs.

Although we have no advance seats in the region, I'm working with the teams in Harrogate and Knaresborough and Westmorland & Lonsdale to set up advance seat action days. I will shortly be reaching out to the YL chairs of NW and Y&H to see if we can coordinate these.

Email issues in the NE region have stopped co-option emails for our exec going out but I'm assured these will be resolved soon.

I currently have a list of all young target candidates within the region who are standing for election in May and I am working with them to get support in the run-up. This has recently been through working with ALDC on their Local Election Appeal grant that supports candidates from under-represented groups who may be in a position to gain a seat at the upcoming elections.

In other news, I look forward to the upcoming EYL GM at Sheffield and although I can't be there in person, I look forward to joining you all digitally.

I hope this gives an idea of what I've been up to and what I hope to be able to achieve going forward.

If any members from across England have any questions, comments or concerns, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

Thom Campion

North West Regional Chair

Since the last General Meeting, it has been a positive period for NWYL. It was great to see NWYL member Paul Heilbron retain the Party's only seat on Salford Council in a by-election in January. I was able to organise Action Days to support Paul's campaign which were a roaring success (even if my health sadly prevented me from attending). While we do not have a high number of YL councillors in the region, those we do have are making in impact, as Cllr Rebecca Turner shall be doing at Regional Conference in Liverpool next week talking about her experience as a young councillor representing Waterfront South.

It was my plan to develop branches at the region's universities where they had become dormant. I am fortunate to have been involved in Lancaster's thriving society for so long before I left and wanted to ensure students at the Universities of Liverpool or Manchester could enjoy the same. Well, I am delighted that in both cases our members showed some initiative. I was approached to support the creation of branches at University of Manchester in December and University of Liverpool in January. Manchester have affiliated formally with the SU and had a successful "refreshers". As University of Liverpool staff, I have been able to meet with the new executive on campus and advise them to formally found the society. The plan is to have a society fully up and running for Freshers Week in September with organised events and plans to attract members.

Before the General Election, I intend to form a regional executive. Before I recruit designated officers, I intend to invite branch chairs to sit on the exec as per their right in the EYL constitution. This will better allow me to organise campaign events in our target seats.

I continue to work with the NWLD exec on which I sit ex-officio and ensure that Young Liberals are heard at that level. I welcome their receptiveness and willingness to have me there.

A lot has happened and there is a lot to be done. I am proud of where the region finds itself and much of that is to be accredited to our fantastic members rather than myself. I look forward to taking NWYL into a General Election footing and be part of ridding our communities of this Conservative government. I am happy to answer any question members may have.

Tom Sutton

South Central Regional Chair

As we look towards a General Election this year, we're picking up the pace in South Central with a couple of action days across the region, including in Newbury in November, Winchester and Swaythling (R&SN) in January, and planning further action days in Eastleigh and beyond in February. I have been in contact with the Regional Campaign Manager to help identify focuses, and am in the process of contacting or having contacted local organisers to make a start on action days going forward. We also have a number of Young Liberals standing in the general election.

We had a fantastic regional conference in Winchester providing an opportunity to meet with members from across South Central, and with Janey Little giving a speech and Q&A on engaging young people. We also saw a good number of people coming up to talk to us about engaging younger voters and members at our stall.

Going into the Spring I will be looking at the co-option of a Campaigns Officer and a Membership Engagement Officer for the Regional Young Liberals, and engaging further with Branch Chairs going forward.

Nathan Eve

South East Regional Chair

Over the past two months, I have been actively involved in various aspects of the Liberal Democrat community, particularly focusing on youth engagement and regional executive responsibilities.

In January, I attended the 2024 EYL meeting, simultaneously I began collecting data on society and group activities in our region.

Joining the Main Party Regional Exec, I introduced myself and networked at the South East Liberal Democrat's New Year's party.

Additionally, I initiated recruitment efforts for key positions and organised an Action Day to support Josh Babarinde PPC, supporting the upcoming general election.

Despite missing the Regional Conference, I committed to discussing its outcomes with members.

Moving into February, I continued my efforts by identifying potential exec members for EYL, reaching out to societies and universities for membership engagement, and actively participating in social events.

Taking on the role of Young Liberals membership officer for Eastbourne Liberals, I sought to engage young individuals in my town. Here I have already lightened the torch of #EastbourneTalkSeries with a kickstart in St Antony's Ward. The talk series will happen every two months allowing individuals to be involved in making a difference in their town.

Overall, my involvement has been marked by proactive engagement, networking, and a commitment to enhancing youth participation within the Liberal Democrat community.

I am yet to commence another action day in Henfield for the by-election and in support of the PPC. I will look forward to this future event.

I will continue to work hard and actively to engage more young people and continue my duties accordingly.

Tom Nevill

West Midlands Regional Chair

Since Newcastle I have, in no particular order:

- Ran the freshers campaign at Warwick Uni with mixed success
- Attended regional conference
- co opted a full regional exec which includes two women
- Campaigned in the Rugby by-election in a development+ constituency in which we gained one councillor, and came within 40 votes of winning both seats!
- Organised two action days in Kenilworth and Southam and attended the candidate's campaign launch
- Attended main party regional exec and I think inadvertently got myself co opted onto English council?
- Contacted the Keele branch to confirm their status as completely inactive
- Attended a YL visit to Birmingham city Council and had a constructive conversation with the Lib Dem political assistant
- Continued in my role as president of Warwick Lib Dem's growing the society, we have been named as one of the three most active YL branches in the country by the BDOs. No fewer than seven (7) members are present at conference today
- Began to prepare for how West Mids YL will approach the General Election
- Organised a regional social to be held on February 20
- Had many constructive conversations with the Coventry party, among other things organising potentially five YLers to stand in the May locals
- Began attending YL conference

Tim Macy

Western Counties Regional Chair

No report received.

Zeb Mackintosh

Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Chair

No report received.

George Sykes