Report for Derbyshire Dales Liberal Democrats AGM 9th November 2023

Chair's report

Welcome!

Overall, it's been a monumental year for the Derbyshire Dales Lib Dems and the fact that we finish it as the largest party on the District Council, and the leaders of the Progressive Alliance, and indeed as 90% of Matlock Town Council, is quite an achievement.

Elections

The first half of the year was all about gearing up for the elections, fundraising, finding candidates, writing and delivering 1000s of Focuses, all while the existing councillors carried on with their existing workload.

As we got into the campaigns themselves, I don't need to remind anyone in this room of the extensive man hours put in, or of the envelopes stuffed, the streets trudged, the volunteers persuaded, the leaflets devised, edited and delivered, the website maintained. Our results are a testament to this hard work. They are also testament to the work of our previous councillors who had ensured that the Lib Dem reputation in Derbyshire Dales is one of hard work, pragmatism and delivery. This is not only for those who were councillors in the 2019-2023 council, but also in the past. Certainly, in Darley Dale, David Burton's long standing reputation went before him!

Importantly, we won 34% of votes, ahead of the Tories' 33% and Labour's 21%, which puts us in good shape for the General Election – not least because it's a great image for the bar chart on Robert's leaflets!

Agreeing the Progressive Alliance with Labour and the Greens was no small feat, and I know that Steve Flitter and Peter Dobbs - et al - worked very hard to achieve that.

5th May 2023 was memorable indeed, but that was just the beginning of the hard work for the newly elected councillors. We will hear more in their reports, and I won't go into details here, but it is important to acknowledge the challenges of being in command and delivering the change in our manifesto, rather than being in opposition. Suffice it to say that flooding, planning, allotments, SERCO, traffic, air quality, travellers, and numerous other issues have been keeping everyone busy, and I am sure I am far from the only resident of Derbyshire Dales who is pleased to have the Lib Dems managing all this on our behalfs!

It was also great to note that the by-election in Hilton also led to two Liberal Democrats being elected there, gaining the first Lib Dem seats on South Derbyshire District Council, but in a ward which happens to be part of the Derbyshire Dales constituency.

Finances

In terms of our finances, Henry remains as brilliantly in charge as ever, and I think the whole exec is very grateful to him for the time and effort and precision with which he manages it for us. Among the more tedious tasks he has had to carry out this year, has been updating the signatories on the bank accounts. Quite why this should be as complicated as it is one for the banks to explain, but Henry has manged to get it sorted!

As he says in his report, we are currently in reasonable shape financially, having built up some reserves in anticipation of the General Election, and thanks in no small part to the tithes paid by the councillors. However, there is no room whatsoever for complacency. With the happy problem of there now being more Focuses to print in more wards, and with the campaign spend that will be needed for the General Election, we need to do some significant fundraising over the next few months.

It's at this point that I'd like to thank Jane for her efforts and creativity in this area. With the various craft sales, car boots and other ideas she has made a huge effort, and I'm certainly hoping that I win the raffle tonight as the lino print of a hare that I bought from her this time last year, is just wonderful!

Jane's creativity and ideas are certainly what we will need as we look to raise significant additional funds. I would ask anyone who is not yet a subscriber to Derwent 88 to sign up. Please also look out for the twice yearly party fund raisers – which give you the opportunity to win quite a significant prize when you make a donation to the local party – and if you have further ideas, please do let the committee know.

Membership

In particular we need to bring in new members. Again, I'd like to thank Jane who has taken over as membership secretary after all the hard work that Saskia had put in. Our members are slightly down, and we do need to look at ways to raise that, especially as we will need more people than ever to help with all the deliveries and admin for the GE campaign. Jane has also taken on the role of Diversity Officer, which has meant various training courses and the challenge of looking at how to increase diversity in a particularly non-diverse region. Jane, thank you for the effort!

Website, design and systems

It's important to acknowledge the challenges of running our communications, be it the website or emails. I think it's fair to say that the party systems are not the easiest to manage, and the switch in website provider has meant a lot of work for Mark. I for one think the new site looks great, so thank you for that.

For a long time, Peter has been the sole design guru on the team, and his ability to design brilliant Focuses is second to none. This year Roger, Mark and David have both begun to get to grips with the party's design package, Affinity, which is also far from simple, and so hopefully are able to alleviate some of the load from Peter in that regard.

These background systems may seem like small fry compared to everything else we get up to, but I can tell you that the time it takes to manage them is considerable which is why it's important for me to acknowledge the effort made by Peter in his previous role of data officer and frankly General Systems Guru!

The Committee

Managing all of us superbly is Midge, whose efforts underpin everything - I honestly don't know where we would be without her! Midge, thank you.

General Election

Looking forward to next year, it is clear that the election is likely to be the biggest event in the calendar — although who knows when it will happen. I believe the latest date that it could be is January 2025, so let us at least hope that it will have happened before our next AGM, and that we will not be in the middle of a winter campaign this time next year!

It's worth mentioning that Mark Ireland-Jones has been putting in a lot of time as Robert's campaign manager, and that Robert himself has already been doing a huge amount, canvassing, putting together social media videos, meeting people and getting out and about.

Robert, we salute you, we are right behind you and we will do all we can to ensure that you replace Sarah Dines!

Role of Chair

Finally, this is my last AGM as Chair. It has been a tremendous honour to be chair of the Derbyshire Dales Lib Dems for the last 3 years. I have loved being able to contribute, learning about local politics, have been touched by the support I received when standing in elections, and more than anything else, have loved getting to know and working with all of you. I have been humbled to see what you all achieve, especially our councillors.

I have been frustrated that I haven't been able to consistently devote the effort to it that the role of Chair deserves, and so I am delighted to be handing over to Roger who will be a brilliant leader. I must say that stealing Roger from the Amber Valley Lib Dems has been one of the key achievements of the Derbyshire Dales Lib Dems over the past 18 months or so!

However, you can't get rid of me that easily, so I am touched to be staying on as Vice Chair. I'm happy to remain in the key role of Zoom Meeting Setter-Upper if Midge needs me to, and am looking forward to contributing to Robert's campaigning.

Treasurer's Report to 2023 AGM

The Accounts for 2022 are attached. They were approved by the Exec and submitted to Lib Dem HQ before 15th March 2022 as required, and in September they were independently examined by Saskia Tallis. They are to be noted at this AGM.

Apart from the Carsington Water by-election, there were no other elections in 2022. This allowed us to build our reserves and continue planning and working towards this year's District Council elections and the forthcoming General Election.

Current financial position [Appendix A]:

In preparation for next year's Regional elections, a possible early General Election, and the scheduled County elections in 2025, bank balances are in a reasonably healthy state (nearly £11,000 on 30th September). Most of that is expected to be spent in the run-up to, and during those elections. We spent about £2,500 during our very successful District Council election campaigns, and a by-election in Norbury is expected before Christmas. We also donated £100 to South Derbyshire Lib Dems who successfully fought the delayed election in

Hilton ward which is part of Derbyshire Dales constituency. Individual donations have declined somewhat, but we are grateful to our increased number of Councillors, who provide a valuable and stable source of income from their allowances.

Donations from the Derwent 88 100 Club remain strong, and fundraising income has increased thanks mainly to Jane Dent. However all members and supporters can help improve our campaigning and electoral prospects by joining Derwent 88, taking part in fundraising events, buying tickets for the Summer and Christmas Draws or simply responding to financial appeals.

Draft Budget 2024 [Appendix B]:

On the spending side I anticipate increased spending on regular all-year-round Focuses, with more wards being targeted, and, of course, inflation makes campaigning more expensive. I have budgeted for a couple of by-elections, and there are sufficient reserves to cover additional costs should they arise.

The increase in membership income is challenging but it is essential that we carry out regular recruitment campaigns to bring in more members and activists to secure the future of Derbyshire Dales Liberal Democrats. Our Councillors and members can help in that task by identifying friends, neighbours and residents who they believe would respond positively when asked to join the Liberal Democrats.

Even though the next scheduled local elections are in May 2025, our councillors and campaigners will be producing ward Focuses throughout the year and the PCC and Mayoral elections in 2024 will be an opportunity for us to campaign towards the General and County elections.

	<u>Derbyshire Dale</u> INCOME AND EX						
	1-Jan-23	to	30-Sep				
NCOME							
HQ - Membershi				183.6	7		
Donations: Derw				771.00			
Donations: Other		incl. GE donation	on	1,449.9	9		
Donations: Cllrs				2,860.0			
	ndraising events (all takings)			286.4			
Gifts in Kind (Dor	ated)			4 . 0			
Interest income				14.8	6		
Transfers in				-			
Miscellaneous				-			
	Total					5,570.00	
XPENDITURE							
Premises				41.60			
Office costs				6.00			
HQ - Digital Service	es			36.00			
Transfers out				-			
Campaigning cos	ts			1,358.69			
	ts [Local/General Election Agent]			2,379.56			
Fundraising costs				15.00			
Gifts in Kind (Cos				4.00			
Finance Charges				-			
Depreciation	a tax			_			
Miscellaneous		re Hilton By-Ele	ection	100.00			
Wilscenaricous		TC TITLOTT Dy LIC		100.00			
	Total					3,940.85	
Complete /Deficit							
Surplus/Deficit (-)					1,629.15	
	BALA	NCE SHEET	•				
	as at	30-Sep-23					
<u>ISSETS</u>							
Undeposited Fun	ds (cash in hand)						-
DDLD current A/							1,723.9
DDLD Savings A/							8,614.8
DDLD Current A/	c [RBS]						617.1
							10,955.9
							,
DEBTORS							
Agent's Account							
, ibelie 3 / iccount							
Gross Assats					-		10.055.0
Gross Assets							10,955.9
IABILITIES							
<u>LIABILITIES</u>							
Accounts Payable	/Uncashed cheques				-		
	Total of liabilities:				-		-
Nett Assets							10,955.9
Represented by:-							
Capital Brt Fwd 1	Jan 2023	Undeposited Fu	inds (Cash	in Hand)	-		
		DDLD current			1,069.65		
		DDLD Current	A/c [RBS]		8,257.15		9,326.80
		Surplus/deficit			-,		1,629.1
Plus							

APPENDIX B

Draft Budget 2024

		Evnerted	Draff						
		Outturn	Budget	Expected	Actual				
DDLD Expenses	Notes	2023	2024	Outurn Q1	Outurn Q1	Variance			
Running costs of Local Party									
Office Costs: Room Rental	meetings	85	20			0			
Office Costs: Members' Mailings/recruitment	printing & postage	9	200			0		For Expenditure	iture
Campaigning Costs: Marked Registers	incl Connect entry	275	275			0		items: Variance figures	nce figures
Campaigning Costs: Non election - Printing	Focus etc	2,500	3,800			0		in black indicate	cate
Campaigning Costs: Non election - Delivery	Postage, delivery etc	•	175			0		overspends; Variance	; Variance
Campaigning Costs: Non election - Digital	FB advertising etc	•	100			0		figures in red indicate	indicate
Campaigning Costs: Non election - Website		205	450			0		underspends	s. For
Fundraising expenses		15	30			0		Income items:	ns:
Miscellaneous	Incl By-elections	320	200			0		Variance figures in red	res in red
Subtotal:		3,436	6,080	•	•	0		indicate less income	income
Planned future spending:								than expected	D.
General Election*	saved to 'Devt Fund' p.a.	800	800			0			
Local Elections**	saved to 'Devt Fund' p.a.	1,800	1,800			0			
Total:		6,036	8,680	•	-	0			
DDLD Income									
Membership	from HQ [net]	220	400			0			
Donations: individual		200	1,000			0			
Donations: Derwent 88		1,076	1,200			0			
Donations: Cllrs 'tithes'		4,200	5,580			0	net of ALDC subs	C subs	
Fundraising		350	200			0	_	Incl. Draw and Raffle proceeds etc	ceeds etc
Bank interest		37	09			0			
Miscellaneous		-				0			
Total:		6,383	8,740	•	•	-			
Surplus/(Deficit)		347	09	0	•	0			
		One-off					Amount	Amount	,
		Donation (Ring-	Amount to be	Target	Amount saved up to	Quarters	to be	Spent on 2023	Amount Saved to
		(pepued)	saved	Date	Jan 2024	outstanding	_	Ш	Devt Fund
*General Election (every 5 years)		1000	4000	1-Oct-2024	£ 3,400.00	3	£ 200.00	£ -	£4,400.00
**Local Elections (every 2 years)			3600	1-Apr-2025	£ 1,350.00	9	£ 450.00	£2,500.00	£1,350.00
Total:			1600		£ 4,750.00		£ 650.00	£2,500.00	£5,750.00
Balance in LloydsSavings[Devt Fund] at	01/01/2024				£ 5,750.00				
Exp. Surplus in Lloyds Savings Account at	01/01/2024								
Account at	01/01/2024				_				
Expected Balance in RBS Account at	01/01/2024				£ 290.00				
				Total:	£11,720.00				

Fund Raising

In an effort to boost our coffers a little, this year I decided to try out selling craft items at a local horticultural show. I have friends and contacts in Grindleford so I plumped for that one. We were lucky with dry weather but brisk winds caused some problems. What was supposed to be an attractive display of handmade 'Japanese Knotbags' (I will bring some examples to the AGM) swinging gently in a breeze, was more like an obstacle course of trying to stop the gazebo from walking and retrieving said bags from the cricket pitch next door. But despite the hazards I made £70 and had good chats with lots of nice folk. Mark and his wife and Robert turned up on the day to show support and Robert seemed to meet friends and neighbours he hadn't seen for a while, so hopefully that might get a few more votes. Otherwise it was a useful event to try and help decision making for future events. Next year I will try the bigger Froggat show, which will be more expensive to enter but gets a lot of visitors.

Anyway, lots of crafting to do over winter. I will also keep an eye out for other events that I might be able to plug into. I will be also offering another of my lino prints as a raffle prize at the AGM- it will be the Golden Eagle this year. I will also bring along some hand crafted ceramic fridge magnets of sheep and autumnal leaves that I have been working on. These will be for sale...for a modest price...so empty your piggy banks! BTW bring any spare copper coins and 5p pieces along as I will be banking them if we have enough.

Jane Dent AGM 2023

DCC Report to DDLD AGM - 9th November 2023

The previous 12 months on the County Council have been very interesting and challenging!

£46m Black Hole at DCC.

Derbyshire County Council is facing a £46M gap in this year's budget, which must be addressed before the end of the financial year in March 2024.

Despite having the opportunity to reveal this at the full council meeting on the 13th September, the Leader, Councillor Barry Lewis, in his usual verbal report to all Councillors, chose to say that there was 'nothing to report'. The true position was then reported later that very day by the Managing Director, Emma Alexander, in a message to all employees.

Her message to staff highlighted the decision that spending on all but essential services would cease, there would be a recruitment freeze, projects would be delayed etc. Staff were being asked to come up with ideas as to how this amount of money could be saved and to give their ideas to their line managers.

No further details are available at the time of writing. Indeed, when asked by the press for details, no questions could be answered.

We may get some answers at an emergency meeting of the Full Council on the 28th November.

As the Lib Dem Group on the County Council, we ae not surprised that DCC has found itself in financial difficulty, given that this Tory Government has starved local councils of much needed investment.

You may be aware that DCC and Derby City Council recently spent many millions as part of a failed waste plant in Derby.

Asset disposal

DCC have recently declared a number of land and property assets in the county as being 'surplus to requirements', some of which are in Matlock. I have no issue with many of them such as redundant offices on Rutland Street, one of which has now been sold and hopefully will revert to being a family home.

Consultants have been brought in to look at the future of County Hall, an important iconic building in the town. There is a possibility that part of the building could be a prestigious hotel. I have asked and been 'assured' that the staff will remain at the offices and that County Hall will continue to be the HQ of DCC. Apparently, only 38% of the building is currently occupied.

I continue to have a problem with the very controversial selling off of the DCC car park and former playing field on Cavendish Road. Members may have seen in the press that the car park was blocked off and metal fences erected to the rear of two properties on George Road where residents' gardens abut the car park. This made it to the Sun Online and I happened by chance to be there when they did their interview having visited the resident who came home to find herself fenced in!

I have had meetings with senior officers about this and I do think they realise they were somewhat heavy handed in the way they dealt with it.

A group of local residents formed a Matlock Community Land Trust in the hope of buying the land and building, through a social landlord, some social housing for local people and allotments. A bid has been put in and we wait the outcome. The CLT put in a bid for the land to be an Asset of Community Value, accepted by the District Council officers but challenged by DCC's Councillor Spencer. A meeting with him about this with myself and the Chair of the CLT was difficult!

One of the pieces of land declared as surplus to requirements is the woodland known as the Starkholmes plantation off Tor Rise in Matlock. As happens all too frequently at DCC, residents were not informed of this and I am grateful to Councillors Linthwaite and Hughes for delivering letters from us informing them of the intention to dispose of the land.

The residents were obviously greatly concerned that one suggestion put forward by DCC was to demolish one of the adjacent houses to allow access to the land for housing!

We are sure that this can never happen.

Officers have now put this proposal to dispose of this piece of land on hold for the foreseeable future.

Flooding

The issue of flooding remains in Matlock and the surrounding area. Many questions are being asked of the Lead Local Flood Team by my District Council colleagues, particularly in relation to new housing developments, both already built and proposed.

Traffic regulation orders.

Still waiting for them to be implemented after more than four and a half years!

Speed Limits

Good news for some! I and District Council colleagues eventually managed to persuade highway engineers that lower speed limits were called for on Chesterfield Road in Matlock, given the number of new housing developments. These have now been introduced.

As previously reported, I would say that 95% of my casework is Highway related!

Sue Burfoot

County Councillor. Matlock and Tansley

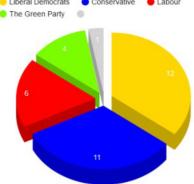
Matlock Division

Derbyshire Dales District Council Report to AGM November 2023

Clearly the most important thing this year for Derbyshire Dales Liberal Democrats was our success in the May District Council elections. From being the largest opposition party with 7 councillors we became the largest party overall with 12.

We retained all our existing seats (in Matlock and Ashbourne) and gained 3 in Darley Dale and 2 more in Ashbourne.

Party name	Seats won	% of votes
Liberal Democrats	12	34%
Conservative	11	33%
Labour	6	21%
The Green Party	4	6%
	1	3%
Independent	0	2%
Social Democratic Party	0	< 1%
Turnout:		43%



from DDDC website

We also won most votes despite not standing in every ward and having only paper candidates in 6 of them.

Being the largest party means that it is Liberal Democrats who hold the key positions in the District Council, alongside Labour, Green and Independent councillors with whom we share control of the Council, working as a Progressive Alliance.

A key lesson for any party or alliance coming into control of a Council is the fact that all the challenges that were there before the election still remain but it is now your job to sort them out. It's also important to recognise, and note the significance of the casework load and attention to detail in committees that all of our councillors have to commit to, doubly important given that half our councillors are new faces, and the narrow majority our Progressive Alliance holds in committees.

New policies and a new corporate plan There has been much activity in converting our election manifesto into policies and strategies that will produce the changes that we would like to see. Some changes will require a revised Local Plan and the process needed for this is under way. It will be very important to retain focus and interest in the Local Plan, however tedious this may seem, as it's the ultimate prize in terms of getting the right (housing) development in the right places for years to come.

Flooding Although the flood defence wall repair in Matlock is now complete and the road closures and diversions have ended, many areas of the Dales remain vulnerable to flooding both from surface run off and from our rivers. Many councillors have been active in publicising the many problems presented by development in areas where the existing infrastructure is working at or beyond its design capacity, assuming that that capacity has been accurately assessed.

Ashbourne Reborn The District Council was successful in its bid for Levelling Up Funding and the approx £15 million project is under way. This is the largest project that DDDC has undertaken and its successful delivery is vital. It has meant significant staff resource from DDDC has had to be diverted to the project. These are challenging times for infrastructure projects and this is one with a very tight timescale for delivery in order to meet the government deadlines.

Travellers The two traveller families to which the Council has a duty under the homeless act are still camped on station car parks – at Matlock and Matlock Bath. There has been some progress in developing criteria for site selection and a site at Homesford (in private ownership) now has planning approval. There is however much to be done before it is ready for use.

An additional member of the housing department is being recruited to help with finding additional sites, as will be required for the revised Local Plan.

Waste collection The round optimisation process carried out by Serco seems have been gone relatively smoothly. It is hoped that this will result in a more efficient operation. The cost of the Serco contract in DDDC's finances and the importance of reliable collections is of great significance it how the Council is viewed by residents.

Bakewell Road scheme Matlock The plan to turn the old market hall into a cinema has experienced some set-backs with none of the tenders for the work coming in within budget. Alternative reduced scope plans are being discussed.

Ashbourne Air Quality Action Plan Efforts from local campaigners to keep this in the public eye continue. It remains a Lib Dem target to ensure that effective actions are included in the plan to reduce pollution due to NOx. We are also pressing for the measurement of pollution from fine particulates to be introduced as soon as possible in the Council's testing regime.

Social Housing Platform Housing are the main social housing provider for the Dales and there have been continuing issues including getting response to complaints and in the large increases in charges for heating etc. where those services are provided communally. A cross party group of councillors led by Lib Dems has recently met with managers from Platform Housing to try to resolve the issues. There are also serious concerns with one of the other social housing providers, and we are working hard to make sure that social housing is provided at scale and quality (including environmental standards).

Toilets A clear goal set out in our manifesto was to increase where possible the provision of public toilets in the Dales. A working group formed from members of the Progressive Alliance is reviewing what can be achieved, bearing in mind finances and the condition of those conveniences not currently in use. A temporary toilet has been placed at Artists Corner for the summer and during the Matlock Bath Illuminations.

Car Parks Some progress in line with Lib Dem aspirations can be reported on car parks. The car park working group has recommended more 'free' time using the residents' permit by bringing forward the afternoon time from 4 to 3 pm. They are also suggesting some revision of the charging structure to encourage greater use of some less popular car parks.

Matlock Town Council Report for AGM November 2023

The year divides neatly into three periods – the period before the election, the election itself and the period following that election. I have divided the report accordingly, first covering activities in the pre-election period and ongoing activities, then the election period, and finally subsequent and future activities.

Pre-election period and ongoing activities Events

A full series of events were organised in July which includes an extension of Christmas lights into Firs Parade.

The Mayor is having a carol service on the 20th December 2023,

Imperial Rooms

The Imperial Rooms are meeting rooms in Matlock and include the town council offices. Utilisation of the Imperial Rooms fell during the pandemic but has now improved significantly with good utilisation including a number of planned weddings. The Council is looking to improve utilisation further, and also ensure that they pay their way fully.

The floor to the Riber Room has been refurbished.

Allotments in general

Matlock Town Council owns Wellfield Allotments which are managed by the Wellfield Allotments Society. Nearly all allotments are well cared for and productive. The Society is diligent in reporting those that are not maintained. Some areas of the Allotment site are not suitable for allotments due to trees and other factors and the Society works in consultation with the Council to maintain those areas. There have been two issues with neighbours that have been resolved amicably. The Council believes it is important to maintain good relationships with neighbours.

Nevertheless, the demand for allotments is high, particularly given the demise of Starkholmes Allotments and the Council is looking for additional land for that purpose.

Starkholmes Allotments

The owner of Starkholmes Allotments decided to seek a new use for the site and ultimately order the allotment holders to vacate the site. In support of continued use as allotments, the Town Council working with the District Council registered it as an Asset of Community Value. The landowner is appealing this designation and parties are awaiting a decision. The District Council has instructed solicitors to consider a compulsory lease of the site for use as allotments. This has not progressed to a decision whether to go ahead or not.

Starkholmes Village Green

A second site in Starkholmes is due to be transferred from District Council to Matlock Town Council ownership. This transfer is held up by legal issues with neighbouring properties.

Implementation of the climate strategy and the attainment of a net zero carbon dioxide goal

This main element will be the reduction in the carbon footprint of the Imperial Rooms. The necessary measures have been identified but implementation is reliant on funding from central government and will be pursued as that becomes available. The replacement for the council vehicle will not happen this year. Other contributors to the Council's carbon footprint are relatively small

and comprise equipment used for outside work. Their carbon footprint is considered on replacement but in many cases, suitable zero carbon equipment cannot be sourced.

Town Council Election May, 2023

The Town Council election in May resulted in a change in the make-up of the council. This was a consequence of the retirement of several LibDem councillors and revision to ward boundaries. Michael Crapper, David and Margaret Elsworth announced that they were retiring and would not be standing in the May Town Council Elections. Helen LeGood had also resigned from the Council. In addition, Matt Buckler, representing Riber and Starkholmes for the Green Party and Brian Smith, Independent, did not stand.

I would like to thank all the above for their service and support on the Town Council. There was a common purpose and commitment to the outgoing Council under the leadership of Steve Flitter.

The changes to the town ward boundaries included the creation of an additional ward, Cookstone, and a revision to the number of councillors in the Hurst Farm ward. The overall number of councillors remained at eleven.

LibDems fielded a list of ten candidates who were elected unopposed. However, this left Riber and Starkholmes

without a councillor and the position was advertised. The result was that a Labour member, Diane Fletcher, was coopted to that ward. No-one from the LibDems was willing to stand.

The new LibDem councillors are: Marilyn Franks, who also represents Darley Dale in the District Council, Jason Knighton, Alison Wain, Les West and Pat Wildgoose. Steve Flitter was elected Mayor for the year and David Hughes elected Leader.

Staffing

As well as a new set of councillors, the election effectively marked the retirement of Sue Smith as Town Clerk. Simon Hosmer was recruited to replace her. He came from Derbyshire County Council into a new and fairly demanding role. He was thrown in the deep-end with only a short hand-over period. His most important initial task was to address a staffing issue that had led to difficulties in closing the accounts for the year. Working with a temporary member of staff, he managed to get on top of both the accounts problem and the staffing problem. He should now be able to turn his capacities to other areas of council work. An outstanding risk is that he needs to be fully trained in the town clerk role to meet legal requirements. He is committed to doing that.

There is a view amongst councillors that staff might work more effectively. This issue is a hangover from before the election and it is to be addressed in the forthcoming year.

Post-election Council work

I believe that it would be fair to say that the new Council has yet to find its feet. The change in make-up and the changes in staffing has resulted in a loss of continuity, and that has been compounded by the substantial increase in workload for all the experienced town councillors who are also District councillors as a result of becoming the lead group there.

Nevertheless, a parade has been organised for the lighting of the Christmas tree, and Council staff have renovated a bus shelter. Planters remain a big issue for several councillors.

Derwent 88 Report to the AGM [November 2023]

At the time of writing, there are 32 individuals or couples participating in Derwent 88, and contributing varying amounts. Monthly 'stakes' range from £4 to £10, and monthly income amounts to £170. Half the income is devoted to the quarterly prizes, and half (net of costs, such as postage) is donated to DDLD.

Prizewinners during 2023 are as follows:

	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th
January	Saskia	Margaret	John & Jo	Patricia	Donald	Naomi Bell
	Tallis	Elsworth	Fallows	Mellor	Ashbury	
April	Henry	Claire	M & C	Robert	Margaret	Katharine
	Jebb	Cadogan	Cruttenden	Court	Elsworth	Roberts
July	Peter	Michael	M&S	Peter	Midge	Ben Fearn
	Dobbs	Crapper	Burfoot	Dobbs	Dobbs	
October	Robert	Claire	Katharine	Naomi Bell	Midge	Saskia
	Court	Cadogan	Roberts		Dobbs	Tallis

A total of £1076 has been donated to DDLD during the year: that amount includes some surplus funds that have built up in the account over the years. At the time of writing there is £280.97 in the Derwent 88 account, with several prize cheques not yet presented.

Members and supporters who would like to take part in Derwent 88, or increase their monthly or quarterly Standing Orders, can do so by contacting myself. Derwent 88 is a very successful (and fairly painless!) fundraiser for DDLD.

Henry Jebb