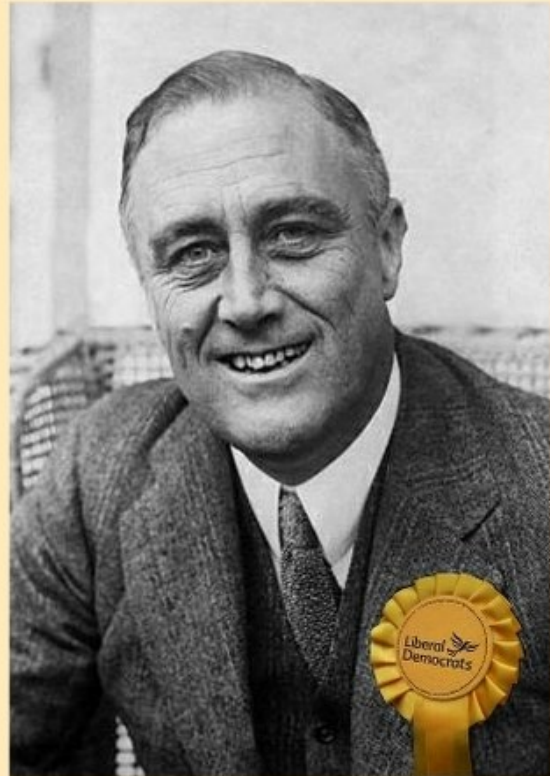


THE NEW DEAL



How the Liberal Democrats should go
into the 2029 general election

A pre-manifesto strategy document
from the Yorkist group of Liberal
Democrat activists

May 2026

The UK general election expected in the first half of 2029 represents a considerable opportunity for the Liberal Democrats. There is deep and widespread disillusionment with the Labour government, and our party has traditionally done well when both Labour and the Conservatives are equally unpopular. But the Liberal Democrats also have a parallel responsibility in terms of offering the electorate a way of constructively defending democracy.

In 2024, the party celebrated its most successful result – measured in parliamentary seats – since the 1920s when the Liberal Party ceased to be the primary alternative to the Conservatives as a party of government.

But the conditions that allowed the Lib Dems to achieve an astonishing 72 seats in 2024 will not necessarily be present in 2029.

In fact, without denigrating the very effective and carefully targeted work that allowed for a gain of 61 seats from the 2019 to 2024 elections, the Lib Dems were in many ways lucky to have the conditions that allowed for so many previously blue seats to go orange.

For this reason, along with the rise of Reform UK and the Greens' unprecedented popularity, a new approach is required for the 2029 election. The Yorkist group of Liberal Democrats is concerned that the party's current strategic approach is based too heavily on the thinking that what worked in 2024 will work again in 2029.

This paper therefore sets out how the party has got to where it is today, how the 2029 general election will be distinctly different from 2024, and what policies, messages and strategy the party needs in order to make the most of its opportunity and responsibility.

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Foreword

By Lord Wallace of Saltaire

British democracy is now threatened by deepening public disillusion as well as by foreign interference and threats. No party has polled above 30% over the past year; approval of all Westminster party leaders is in negative territory. With Greens attracting discontented left-wingers and Reform disgruntled right-wingers away from the two once-dominant parties, Liberal Democrats risk being squeezed out of the national debate. Yet with the likelihood that no single party will win an overall majority at the next election, we might soon find ourselves negotiating as a potential partner in government.

The British political debate ducks most of the awkward choices we face. Voters have been promised lower taxes than in our European neighbours as well as rising pensions, expanding health care, and higher public investment. Longer life expectancy and a falling birthrate mean that it's difficult to staff public services without attracting workers from abroad, but opposition to immigration is increasing. Ministers warn that foreign threats require stronger defence but don't provide the funding needed. Keir Starmer promises a 'national conversation' to explain the challenges we face and the response needed, but fails to develop a narrative that persuades the public.

Effective local campaigning, focus on a limited number of issues, and tactical voting won the Liberal Democrats 72 seats in 2024. To build on that in time for the next election, we need a broader narrative and platform. The defence of liberal values, now under attack from powerful and wealthy forces within the USA and elsewhere, must be a core part of any Liberal Democrat narrative. So must the defence and renewal of constitutional democracy, to strengthen safeguards against abuse of executive power and rebuild public trust. But national renewal, as this paper argues, requires above all a new economic deal, bringing together tax reform, adjustment to new technology, a greater emphasis on sustainability, and a reversal of the widening gap between poverty and wealth. Our narrative must also explain the necessity of closer cooperation with our neighbours in a turbulent global order. And it must promise to engage citizens in public life through stronger local democracy and wider opportunities for public service.

This paper aims to start a conversation within the party on the narrative we need to construct. We have at most three years until the next election. Too many voters have come to despair of any political party's ability to overcome the country's economic stagnation and social divides. Liberal Democrats must find a way to offer them hope that national renewal – economic, social and political – is possible and attainable.

William Wallace

Executive Summary

The next general election, expected in 2029, will be contested in a very different political landscape than the 2024 election. That means the Liberal Democrats cannot rely on the same strategy that did so well last time. The May 2026 English local elections, where we made gains in areas where there are Lib Dem MPs but fell back in the rest of the country despite the unpopularity of both Labour and the Conservatives, illustrate this well.

With two divides emerging in the realigned UK political situation, the Lib Dems need to ensure they are seen to be clearly on the progressive/centre-left side of the vertical divide, and on the 'anti-system' side of the horizontal divide. This will require clear national messaging to run in parallel with local campaigning. Failure to do this is likely to result in a loss of people being willing to support the party, and a loss of many of the seats the party currently holds.

The 'Yorkist' group of concerned party activists therefore recommends a strategy for the 2029 election based around a 'new deal'. This should be a collection of policies that both mark the Lib Dems out as a progressive party that wants to reform – though not revolutionise – the current governmental and economic system, and should also catch the public's imagination through thinking outside the political box. It must address the public's most pressing concerns, but also be different to hitherto mainstream politics.

Core elements of the new deal should include:

- ❖ A commitment to rejoining the European Union
- ❖ A new economic model that could be thought of as a revival of Keynesianism, one that moves away from the economic orthodoxy prevalent since around 1980,
- ❖ A restructuring of government, both in terms of returning power to local levels, and ensuring that all votes have equal value
- ❖ Pragmatic policy offerings for young adult voters, notably on housing, environment, and defence
- ❖ Eye-catching policies, such as teaching critical thinking in schools as a core life skill, a commitment to protect personal data through everyday IT functions, and an open acknowledgement of the benefits people born overseas are making to British society.

All this should be communicated using a narrative that appeals to people's better instincts but looks to understand the difficulties many people are facing in today's Britain. And it should hint at what the Liberal Democrats will want in return for supporting any government formed after the next General Election.

Underpinning this new deal is a recognition that democracy itself will be at stake in the 2029 election via the threat from right-wing populism, so the Lib Dems need to make it easy for those opposing Reform UK to put their cross alongside the Lib Dem candidate in constituencies where it makes sense to do so.

1. How did we get here?

The Liberal Democrats are in many ways a product of the tactics required to game the first-past-the-post (FPTP) voting system. Modern British Liberalism as a platform has always existed, and found expression in several successful Liberal governments in the years from the mid-19th century to the First World War. But with Labour eclipsing the Liberals as the 'left wing' alternative to the Conservatives in the 1920s, the Liberal Party in Britain declined significantly until a modest revival began in the 1960s.

In the late 1980s, two significant developments took place: the Liberal Party merged with the Social Democratic Party to form the Liberal Democrats, and the new party adopted the approach to elections that became known as 'Rennardism'. Shortly after the merger, Chris Rennard became the Lib Dems' primary election strategist, gaming FPTP very tactically by implementing a strategy whereby, whenever a seat was deemed winnable, the Lib Dems would 'squeeze' the votes of the parties who could not win in order to turn the election into a Lib-Con or Lib-Lab battleground. That proved remarkably successful as an election tactic, enabling the new party to go from 20 seats at the 1992 general election, to 46 in 1997, 52 in 2001, and 62 in 2005, rising to a (then) high-water mark of 63 in early 2006. In 2005 and 2010, the Lib Dems polled over 20% of the popular vote.

However, this turned the parliamentary party – and many Lib Dem council groupings – into an uncomfortable mix of members elected as anti-Tory champions in some areas and as anti-Labour champions in others. That awkward mix was always likely to cause difficulties if the Lib Dems ever got into power, and these contradictions added tensions to the 2010-15 coalition. The situation at the 2015 election was exacerbated by the fact that the growing reach of social media meant conflicting statements by Tory-facing local parties and Labour-facing local parties could not remain as easily hidden as hitherto. For these reasons and others (notably a strong perception of broken promises), the Lib Dems suffered a hammering at the 2015 election, falling from 57 seats to 8.

Despite a minor revival in 2019 when pro-EU sentiment looked like it might be strong enough to prevent Brexit or at least force a second referendum, the Lib Dems remained at no more than a dozen MPs, with the party's popular vote having fallen to below 10%.

The 2024 election strategy

The party's astonishing revival in the 2019-24 parliament was broadly down to two factors: the growing and ultimately calamitous distrust and unpopularity of the Conservative government, and a shrewd tactical operation by the Lib Dem leadership. Neither should be

overlooked in assessing the highly impressive total of 72 MPs elected in 2024, nor should the fact that the perceived ‘threat’ of a Labour government led by Keir Starmer was sufficiently low that many disaffected Conservatives were not worried about voting Lib Dem even if it meant a Labour prime minister (as had happened in 1997, 2001, and to some extent in 2005).

While all parties in government for a long period get tired and lose what allure they first had in the eyes of voters, the decline of the Conservatives was phenomenal for a party that had been so successful at winning elections. At first they seemed to be handling the Covid-19 pandemic well, but descended into cronyist and nepotistic awarding of contracts to friends, and a blatant disregard of rules that most of the country had worked hard to respect. Boris Johnson’s chaotic leadership gave way to Liz Truss’s reckless mini-budget, and Rishi Sunak never seemed to have any plan to turn things round; even his timing of the July 2024 election seemed to have an air of “I’ve had enough of this” about it. This created a climate where unprecedentedly large numbers of voters – including some who until shortly before would have considered themselves core Conservatives – were willing to vote for anyone but the Tories.

The Lib Dem approach to the 2024 election learned many lessons from previous defeats, notably the 2010 general election. Then the party had the gift of a massive ‘Cleggmania’ bounce after the first televised leaders’ debate, but a failure to focus efforts on the seats which would most likely go Lib Dem, allied to the momentum from the TV debate running out before polling day, meant the party actually fell from 62 seats (2005) to 57, making Cleggmania feel rather wasted. At first a very small number of seats were targeted for 2024, with secondary operations in promising seats, just in case conditions were favourable for widespread Lib Dem gains. Messaging was limited to three topics that the voters in those constituencies were most concerned about (the cost of living crisis, the NHS, and the environment, specifically sewage being pumped into rivers), with all candidates encouraged to fight on local issues and adopt a low profile on national policy other than the three core topics (and definitely not bring up Brexit).

The Yorkists

The 2024 results show the strategy to have been remarkably successful, at least in exploiting favourable conditions, but it went so far as to risk making the party so bland that it didn’t appear to stand for anything. This was the catalyst for the founding of the Yorkists.

There were several dozen activists (probably many more) who all felt they were surely not the only ones to think that the party had to be seen to provide a clear alternative, even if it was playing a low-key game tactically. By 2023, the popular view was that Brexit had proved bad for Britain, so the Yorkists pushed for a bolder party line on Europe. They also organised a fringe meeting at 2023 federal conference in Bournemouth, entitled ‘Shouldn’t we be doing

better?’ in which John Curtice illustrated why the Lib Dems’ popular vote was unnecessarily low. Ultimately, both the Yorkists and the leadership were proved right – the 12% the Lib Dems polled at the 2024 general election was disappointingly low, but the ‘seats over votes’ strategy meant it was distributed more effectively than ever before, contributing to 72 seats (almost proportional to its share of the popular vote).

Within months of the election, the political landscape had changed dramatically. Any feeling of relief that, after the chaos of the 2019-24 Conservative administration, the grown-ups were finally in charge again lasted barely a few weeks. Labour’s overemphasis on stressing the (factually justified) poisoned economic legacy left by the Conservatives, coupled with a cut to the winter fuel allowance not trailed in Labour’s manifesto, ate into Labour’s poll ratings very quickly, with Reform UK the apparent beneficiaries (in terms of the popular vote – many of Labour’s lost votes went to the Greens and Lib Dems, but Reform’s rise coincided with Labour’s fall). While euphorically celebrating their 72 seats at the Brighton conference in September 2024, the Lib Dems needed to recognise that a completely new set of circumstances awaited them at the next general election.

2. Why the 2029 general election will be different

There is always a sense of public disappointment about politics. “They’re all in it for what they can get out of it” and “They’re all corrupt” are regular gripes about politicians. But at every election in recent years, there has either been an alternative government the public is happy to trust, or, more often, there has been enough grudging acceptance of the incumbent government to vote it back into office.

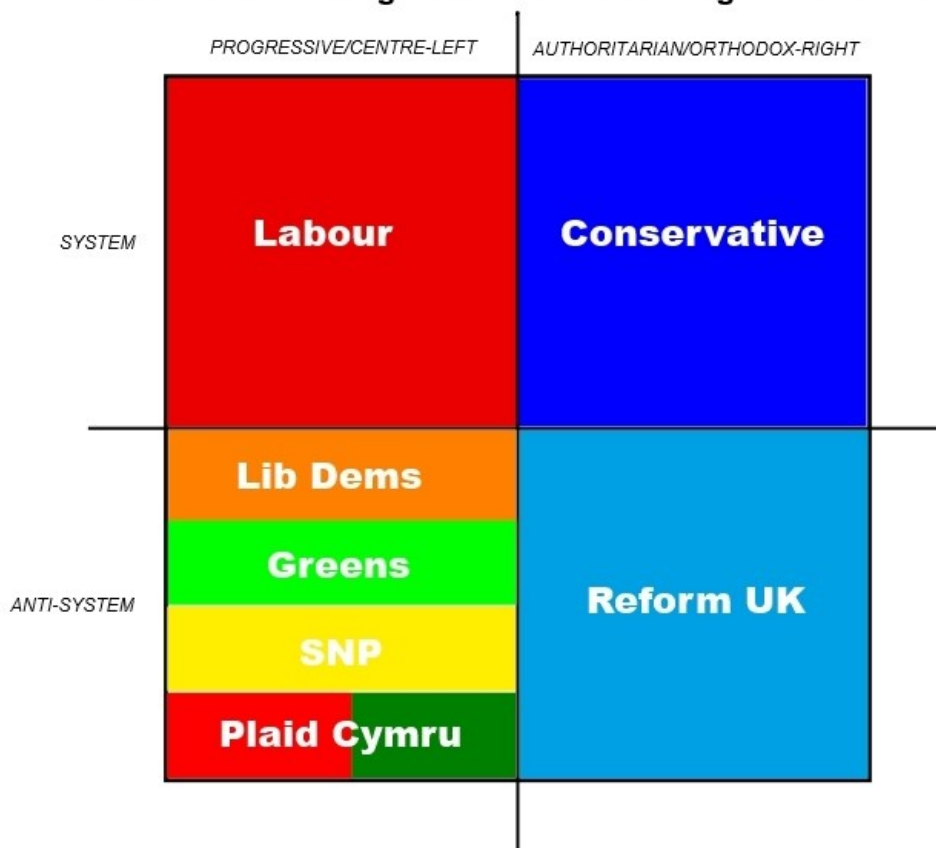
It is not just possible but quite likely that 2029 will be different. By then, the Conservatives will not have revived their fortunes, or at least not by much, judging by current trends (in the 2026 local elections, they polled below 20%). In the 22 months since they were ejected from government, they appear not to know what they want to be. A move back to ‘One Nation’ Conservatism seems to be totally off the Tory agenda, yet they seem to believe their chance of remaining the principal party of the right lies in cuddling up to Reform UK’s agenda while maintaining – at least in public pronouncements – that they would never do a deal with Reform. The result has been a largely ineffectual leader, leading a party that seems to want to assuage Reform voters, and therefore ends up merely doing Reform’s work for it. Although Kemi Badenoch has grown somewhat into her role, it is quite possible the Conservatives will change their leader before the 2029 election, yet looking at the available personnel, it is hard to see how that could signal any meaningful change in direction that would make the Tories more popular. And while voters often have short memories, such was the catastrophic nature of the Johnson/Truss/Sunak period that the Tory brand is likely still to be lacking widespread confidence in 2029.

That may be enough for people to hold their nose and vote Labour again, but Labour has had a crushing two years in power, and even with a new leader is likely to be unpopular in 2029. Some of that is out of its control – the economic and social legacy it inherited from the Conservatives left it with very little room for manoeuvre. But it has made some visible mistakes even on those issues where it does have control, and it has given the impression that, while it has very few funds for critical social services, it is happy to maintain reasonably favourable terms for the most affluent. That means there are many natural Labour supporters who feel betrayed by the current party, and many of them have taken to voting Green, especially as Zack Polanski has taken the Greens economically to the left since becoming party leader in September 2025. While the terms ‘left’ and ‘right’ are fraught with danger these days, it is fair to illustrate Labour’s problems by saying it is losing support from both the left and right of the party.

Of course a week is a long time in politics, and “events, dear boy” may conspire to improve Labour’s – or even the Conservatives’ – popularity by the next election. But the current mood of the times is for two simultaneous realignments: a re-grouping of the left/right spectrum

with multiple parties on each side of the divide, and a rejection of much of the post-war wisdom such that both major parties will be unpopular in 2029. And that brings ‘anti-system’ alternatives to the forefront of UK politics.

Two simultaneous re-alignments for the 2029 general election



System v anti-system

There is always a market for protest votes in politics. That market tends to be bigger at council elections and by-elections than at general elections (it was always big in European Parliament elections), but the temptation for disaffected voters to use their ballot paper to make a protest is always latent. And with many people losing confidence in the democratic system’s ability to find answers to society’s problems,¹ the scope for them to vote for an anti-system party at the next general election is considerable.

At least one anti-system party, and possibly two or three now exist: Reform UK, the Greens, and possibly the SNP in Scotland, Plaid Cymru in Wales. The Lib Dems always used to be the anti-system party in three-party politics, but we are in danger of being seen to be staid.

¹ There have been a number of polls taken on this subject, but with differing formulations of the question asked; the most quoted is the John Smith Centre Youth Poll in July 2025 which suggested 27% of respondents aged 16-29 somewhat or strongly agreed they’d prefer to live in a dictatorship (<https://www.johnsmithcentre.com/news/research-are-britains-young-people-really-falling-for-dictators/>)

Reform UK has done a good job of articulating the discontent experienced by many voters. To what extent that discontent is at least partly manufactured by Reform's clever and well funded messaging and Nigel Farage's undoubted charisma is open to question, but it's not really relevant. Reform is doing very well at being the go-to place in the political landscape for voters disenchanted with the main parties. The fact that it has virtually no policies, certainly none that have passed any economic stress tests, might prove its Achilles heel. Alternatively, there may be sufficient dissatisfaction with governance that people are happy to vote Reform even if they know the policy offering is a mixture of the paltry and the dangerous (the way Americans voted for Donald Trump in 2024 knowing what they were likely to get).

In his eight months as leader, Polanski has turned the Greens into a left-wing anti-system party. His stance on Gaza has offered a home for many Britons uncomfortable with the traditional parties' willingness to maintain the UK's post-war support for Israel when images of human rights violations and war crimes by Israel are regularly in news bulletins. He has attacked big money, and he has also done something the Lib Dems should have done: reintroduced the concept of hope in British politics.

Because Reform and the Greens are more clearly defined than the Lib Dems, the new narrative in British politics in the winter of 2025-26 has become that the traditional main parties (Labour and Conservatives) are being eclipsed by anti-system insurgents, Reform and the Greens. Where does this leave the Lib Dems? Even with 72 MPs, there is a risk that we could become irrelevant. Should the Lib Dems strive to be a third anti-system party (as shown in the graphic above), should we be a traditional party, or should we try to straddle both the vertical and horizontal divides (so half-system, half anti-system)?

The Yorkists believe the Lib Dems are currently in the traditional box but need to make themselves far more clearly defined in the eyes of the electorate as an anti-system party (as per the graphic). The obvious role for the Lib Dems would be as the anti-system party that offers hope and decency, and a decentralisation of power to local levels, even if it doesn't promise as much of a shake-up of the system as Reform or the Greens.

There were initial signs of this in the 2024 election campaign. Lib Dem canvassers were often shocked to hear voters say, "Well I haven't made up my mind yet, but it's between you and Reform." At first that seemed crazy, given that the Lib Dems and Reform seem diametrically opposed on most key policies. However, there were enough of these to indicate a wish to protest against the two main parties, with the decision being only between the positive, tolerant, community-minded engagement of the Lib Dems, or the no-nonsense, anti-immigrant angry-brigade offering of Reform. With Reform having established a poll rating of between 25% and 30% since the 2024 election (at which Reform polled 14%), the number of 'plague on both your houses' voters in 2029 is likely to be greater than in 2024.

This is the **opportunity** for the Liberal Democrats – if we are willing to embrace it. With lots of voters likely to be seeking an anti-system option on their ballot paper, there is immense scope for a positive, tolerant, community-based – and above all optimistic and hopeful – option which the Lib Dems can provide. But while we have traditionally been the recipient of protest votes, we now have competition from Reform and the Greens. Given the damage that Trump, Salvini, Meloni, Orban, Duda, Fico and other figures from the modern-day far-right have done to democracy in their countries, there is likely to be a willingness to vote for a reasonable and reasoned offering that seeks to protect democracy. This is the **responsibility** for the Liberal Democrats – to offer an anti-system alternative to the traditional parties that doesn't involve voting for Reform UK.

However, there are two main obstacles. Firstly, such a platform has to offer change but also be credible, and there are questions about the Lib Dems' offering on both. At present, we seem to be less of an anti-system alternative than a third version of 'more of the same' alongside Labour and the Conservatives. Our political pronouncements have been very mainstream, yet at the same time we have not been clear where the funding is coming from for our policies that require public spending. There is enough cynicism about political parties already, such that any anti-system offering has to be plausible, or it will just add to the cynicism. That's why the economics underpinning a Lib Dem offering have to add up – and be seen to add up.

Secondly, the Lib Dems aren't a neat 'fourth party' in a four-party political landscape. As the graphic above shows, the Greens are in the 'progressive anti-system' square and will see the same opportunity for themselves; and the picture is complicated in Scotland and Wales by the presence of the SNP and Plaid. This paper does not get into the mechanics of dealing with the Greens, SNP, Plaid, and others, but the Greens cannot simply be ignored, and in places we will have to accept that they have a better chance of keeping Reform out than we do. They have not just made a very dynamic start under Polanski, but they are threatening to take over the UK-wide 'progressive anti-system' role unless the Lib Dems dig into the Liberal tradition and start producing some eye-catching radical policies. The Greens' presence is a cause of some irritation to the Lib Dems, but if the 2029 election is to be fought on the basis of two system parties and two anti-system parties/groupings, the Greens will be seeking to inhabit a similar space to the Lib Dems (even if they are economically a long way to the left), and have already started to establish a brand that includes hope and optimism. That means we Lib Dems must up our game between now and 2029 and become an anti-system party that can attract Labour and Green votes where we are best placed to beat the Tories or Reform; if we don't do that, we risk being swamped by the backlash against the established parties.

Some may balk at the idea that the Liberal Democrats could be an anti-system party, given that we have vastly more history than the Greens and Reform, and there was the 2010-15 coalition with the Conservatives. It's therefore important to be clear what 'anti-system' means in this context. It doesn't mean destroying everything – most voters don't want

everything turned on its head. But it does mean saying that the current system isn't serving us, and therefore radical (not revolutionary) change is needed, particularly to tackle inequality, speed up progress in tackling climate change, and give people a sense of belonging. In slightly different ways, Labour and the Conservatives are both looking to preserve the status quo, whereas anti-system parties look for deep-rooted change.

The threat to democracy is particularly important here, as liberal democracy (lower-case) has been the bedrock of freedom and economic success since 1945, yet factors like inequality and alienation from one's own communities are fuelling the undermining of confidence in liberal democracy. That's why the Liberal Democrats need to have a clear message that the current system is not working for most people – and that we have some answers – in order to have any purchase in the political landscape, and why the Greens, SNP, and Plaid Cymru can also claim to be anti-system. When we were the third party in a three-party system, it was taken as read that we were the anti-system alternative, but now there are five or six parties, we have to be careful not to be lumped with the mainstream, where we will get squeezed or ignored. In policy terms we are more a 'change large parts of the system' party, but in the current political climate we have to be seen as part of the progressive anti-system square.

'Seats over votes' strategy

So where does this leave the 'seats over votes' strategy that was so successful in 2024?

The former Liberal Democrat president Mark Pack, who was a member of the leadership team that championed the 'seats over votes' strategy, indicated in his *The Week in Polls* analysis of 5 October 2025 that what worked in 2024 would work again in 2029: "In fact, the sort of voter coalitions that did so well in target seats when there was an unpopular Conservative government are pretty similar to the sort of voter coalitions that the party needs to do well in a new era of an unpopular Labour government." When challenged on this, he pointed to the similarity between those who voted Labour in 2024 and those who voted Lib Dem in 2024 – and thus: for the Lib Dems to win seats from Labour by winning over Labour voters does not require having to appeal to a group of people with significantly different policy preferences or values from those we won over in 2024. He also said the biggest obstacle to many people voting Lib Dem was a fear that the Lib Dem candidate had no chance of winning in the voter's constituency.

This analysis is questionable, as it misses two important points. Firstly, it assumes that all else is the same, but if Labour is less popular in 2029, will some Conservative voters who voted Lib Dem in 2024 return to the Tories out of fear of prolonging an unpopular Labour government? And if voters felt the Lib Dems had no chance of winning, this might indicate a good level of tactical awareness of how to beat the Conservatives or Reform, which we should applaud as part of the big picture. With 72 MPs as against a dozen, Lib Dem candidates in 2029 might be

given a better chance of winning in some constituencies, but the same applies to Reform – with Reform’s popular vote likely to be considerably higher in 2029 than it was in 2024, some voters may well be tempted to vote Reform knowing it could win in vastly more seats than it did last time.

Secondly, and more broadly, the threat to democracy posed by Reform – in particular the similarities it has with far-right parties across the developed world who have gained power and gone on to chip away at democratic institutions – means that Lib Dem votes might well be important to the overall result of the 2029 election, *even in seats which the Liberal Democrats have no chance of winning*. For example, in seats where ‘anti-system’ voters are mulling over whether to vote Lib Dem or Reform, voting Lib Dem would remove a potential vote from Reform which might take Reform further away from power. Or to put it another way, efforts to enhance the Lib Dems’ profile that pay dividends by attracting votes in unwinnable seats might yet be valuable to give the seats the Lib Dems do win more traction in a new parliament that might well have no overall majority.

This does not make the ‘seats over votes’ strategy redundant, but it is too blunt. Votes will be important to complement seats won, so the election strategy must include a higher-profile national Lib Dem policy platform than in 2024. Target seats are always vital, especially for a party that relies more on shoe leather than big money and whose voters are distributed more evenly across the country, but upping the national Lib Dem vote share might be crucial to the overall picture in 2029. Adopting the same strategy as in 2024 could lead to the Lib Dems getting a good result, but one that leaves democracy in a terrible mess because Reform UK are the biggest party.

So where does this leave us?

The question is therefore: do the Liberal Democrats want to step up and make a major statement as a clearly defined progressive party, pleading the case for a 2030s-relevant continuation of liberal democracy as well as for their own parliamentary benefit, or do they just want to play safe and try to protect as many of the current 72 seats as possible?

If the latter, stop here. If the former, read on.

3. Criteria for the Lib Dems' 2029 election offering

For any party at a general election, two things are necessary:

- A narrative, or story to tell
- A policy platform that encapsulates that narrative, ideally with one or two flagship policies that capture the public imagination (even if not everyone agrees with them)

The kind of narrative the Liberal Democrats need has to be the antithesis of Reform UK, but appealing to the person in the street the way they like to see themselves. And it has to be anti-system, as defined in this paper. Nick Clegg always worked on the premise that up to 70 per cent of British people would say they are liberal in outlook, so the Lib Dems should poll much more than one in every five votes. That 70 per cent may well be too high, but whatever it is, it still requires a narrative that liberal-minded people can identify with to turn the liberal mindset into votes for the Lib Dems. That narrative could be emphasised via a slogan, but it has to resonate sufficiently that voters feel they can sum up what voting Lib Dem means.

For the Liberal Democrats to maximise their electoral opportunity, and carry out their responsibility to protecting democracy, their policy offering at the 2029 general election needs to meet the following criteria:

- It has to be hopeful and optimistic, commodities in very short supply in British (and global) politics.
- It has to offer something new that promises a form of improvement to life and a national renewal but without being so revolutionary that it frightens people away.
- It has to be grounded in sound economics, though that doesn't necessarily mean Thatcherite economics.
- It has to suggest to people that democracy still offers a framework to solve intractable social problems.
- It has to embrace Liberal values without being so progressive as to make some genuinely liberal people feel we don't understand them.
- It has to be presentable as a message or story that can easily be digested and passed on, with a strong appeal to emotions rather than the intellect.
- It has to be electorally viable (however that is calculated), in the sense that the party has to end up with a decent number of seats to have parliamentary influence and enough of a vote share to enjoy a national political presence.

This will present a difficult balancing act on several levels, but we cannot please everyone all the time, so knowing what our overall aim is, and having a set of filters to test it by, is the best way of achieving the strategy that will do the best job for the party. This approach works on

the basis that not taking risks is itself risky, and therefore it will involve taking a leap of faith and doing something that can't be proved in advance by focus groups. That may frighten a few people away, but attract more when people see the Liberal cause. Above all, it is a call for the party to take a gamble on authentic Liberalism.

To put some flesh on the bare bones of these criteria, tests or filters:

Hopeful and optimistic ... British politics is universally drab, in fact Nigel Farage is thriving because he has a seemingly unending well of pessimism to draw on. Yet the broad mass of British people generally think of themselves as a cheerful bunch, even if it means putting the kettle on and having a nice cup of tea, rather than complaining. This suggests there is a massive gap in the political landscape for an offering that offers something hopeful, indeed Zack Polanski has already done very well with his 'Make Hope Normal Again' slogan, so the Lib Dems need to ensure he's not the only one peddling hope in British politics.

National renewal ... The Lib Dems have to represent something different, something that gives people confidence that a vote for the Lib Dems means things may well change for the better. But people are also frightened about too much changing at once. Therefore, the challenge is to have an overall message that conveys a sense of national renewal without a massive upheaval. The Lib Dems need to advocate much of the change that Labour promised in 2024 but hasn't delivered, which means reflecting the optimism of national renewal without making people feel the Lib Dems will repeat the disappointment of Labour's failings.

Sound economics ... In order to tackle the cost-of-living crisis and fund the NHS, there will have to be money to spend. Voters would love to vote for low taxes and high-quality public services, but most are wise enough to know that such a combination doesn't exist. However, such is voters' desire for improved public services, coupled with their aversion to paying higher taxes, that the Lib Dems have to display where the money will come from. We were very successful in the 1990s with the 'a penny on income tax to fund education' mantra, but this time it may need more than just a tweak to one or two taxes but a new economic model that puts people and communities ahead of big money. A campaign strategy doesn't have to be based around the minutiae of a new economic model, but the economic projections do have to be explained well enough for independent arbiters (such as the IFS) to say the numbers add up and it's not fanciful economics.

Politics can solve social problems ... The alarming opinion polls that say around 25% of voters would be happier with a dictatorship than democracy have been slightly misinterpreted, especially the numbers of young people who seem to be included in this 25%. But there's no question people are doubting whether democracy can still provide the framework for good governance. Any Lib Dem offering in 2029 must convey the message that democracy is not just a bulwark against despotic rule but actually offers the foundations for Britain to be

governed fairly and effectively (including making it clear that the most economically successful and tolerant countries have been liberal democracies).

Liberal but not overprogressive ... The creed of Liberalism embodies a lot of progressive elements, in particular tolerance. But progressive philosophies are always vulnerable to going beyond the Overton Window and laying the foundations for a reactionary backlash. The gender agenda is an obvious example, where the Liberal instinct is to let everyone be who they choose to be, but elements of tolerance can go so far that potential liberals end up thinking the world has gone mad, and forcing the majority to bend too far in accommodating minorities can leave many reasonable people feeling the tail is wagging the dog. The Lib Dem manifesto in 2029 has to be very careful to find the right balance on such issues.

Easily digestible; emotions not intellect ... Political battles are won on emotions, not on arguments. Brexit is a classic case of this, which is why the essence of what the Lib Dems stand for has to be distilled into an easy message that appeals to the heart strings, not the intellect. An obvious element to appeal to is Britons' sense of fairness and decency – a slogan such as “this isn't who we are” might be powerful as a way of pulling marginal voters away from Reform UK and towards the Lib Dems. Or perhaps “there *is* a better way” to indicate that democracy hasn't exhausted all possible approaches. And if we advocate going back into the EU, it must be done on emotional arguments (“Do we really want to turn our back on our neighbours?” “Didn't we help set up the EU to ensure war is kept out of Europe?”), rather than on improving GDP or for trading benefits.

Electorially viable ... We obviously don't want to slip back from our 72-seat high water mark in 2024, but there are different forms of viability. For example, the 57 MPs we won in 2010 were far more powerful than the 72 we won in 2024, simply because of the make-up of the two parliaments. Clearly the more Lib Dem MPs we have, the more clout we would have in a parliament with no overall majority, but *we must know what we would do with our MPs if we hold the balance of power*. That does not mean we should be cavalier in our approach to parliamentary seats, but if stating a more defined identity for the Lib Dems costs us a few seats in one place, it might not damage our influence, as we could well pick up other new seats because we are authentically Liberal and get rewarded for being credible. In 2024, there were a number of people who were so desperate not to vote Tory that they voted Lib Dem; some of these may return to Conservative ranks in 2029, regardless how badly the Tories are doing. At the same time, there will be some who are desperate not to vote Labour out of disappointment at the current government, and who feel the Lib Dems would be a better option than voting Green – as long as they can be sure the Lib Dems are a progressive party. All this means we have to pitch our offering differently in 2029 than in 2024. Psephologists who have analysed the 2024 election say the 57 Lib Dem gains were largely a result of vote-switching within the progressive centre-left grouping rather than disaffected Tories voting Lib Dem, which emphasises the importance of the Lib Dems presenting themselves as a progressive party. Part of electoral viability is being clear what we would be our asking price if

our support were sought for a government in the 2029-34 parliament, so we don't fall into the same traps as in 2010. We don't want to show all our cards before the polls open, but stating our main priorities would allow us to say that every vote for the Lib Dems will make us better able to pursue these aims.

If we don't adopt a clear, national, anti-system message, then effectively our election strategy in 2029 will be to rely on the Tories to seem more awful than the continuation of a widely loathed government. That is both dangerous and far too passive for a party that is supposed to be motivated by strong values and convictions.

So if these are the criteria for the Liberal Democrat offering in 2029, what might that offering look like?

4. The New Deal

Saving liberal democracy at a time of massive public debt and severe inequality – and with the vagaries of advancing AI and rumbling geopolitical tensions – will not be easy, so any offering from a hopeful and optimistic political creed will have to level with voters about where the money will come from. Britain’s public debt is not the biggest in the G7, and there is enough wealth to create a prosperous society, but that wealth is too unevenly distributed. That means being open about the need for those with the broadest shoulders to pay a bit more, and it’s why the idea of basing a Liberal Democrat policy platform on the concept of a ‘new deal’ offers the most likely route to respect and success.

There’s an uncomfortable truth about the current crop of Liberal Democrat MPs: many of them were elected with the votes of affluent people in previously Conservative strongholds. Therefore, any move towards being true to the social justice side of British Liberalism in the 2029 election risks alienating some of the voters who helped take the party up to 72 seats in 2024. It is hard to see enough money coming into state coffers to improve public services without people earning upwards of around £50,000 paying more in tax. But these earners should not carry all the burden, as much can be gained from clamping down on the massive use of tax evasion schemes and off-shoring, as well as shifting taxation from labour to capital.

And yet there has to be a serious addressing of wealth inequalities in the Lib Dem offering at the 2029 election, which means some form of redistribution has to feature in the manifesto – with palatable ways for this to be sold to affluent voters. This can include increasing taxation of *excessive* wealth and profits. Keynes and Beveridge understood that you don’t build a successful strong economy based on high levels of inequality and failing public services and infrastructure (and they recognised this at the height of the Great Depression). Some of our target voters may not accept this, but many will share a sense of unfairness about the way the economy has been run, especially as average living standards have remained static since 2008 (soft Tories in particular feel this).

That’s why the Lib Dem offering has to be in the form of a deal. This deal effectively says to the comfortably well-off and above: yes, you will have to pay a bit more, but you’ll get a better country for your extra taxes and charges. The deal could be verbalised graphically through rhetorical questions such as, “What’s the point in having that lovely new car if you frequently have to take it for repairs because the quality of our roads is so bad?” or “Why spend a high percentage of your income on security when that income would be better spent reducing social inequality and thus the threat to your property posed by crime?” It could appeal to their children and grandchildren: “Grandpa, what were you willing to pay for us to afford to live?” Or it could simply be an appeal to social justice: “There’s no problem with differences in wealth, as long as the discrepancies don’t become so big that the richest and

poorest fall off the ends of the scale.” Franklin D Roosevelt’s New Deal of 1932-33 was an attempt to pull America out of a financial crisis and build hope for ‘a better tomorrow’, so the historical concept of a new deal is rooted in fairness.

Making a new deal more palatable could well include promising a review of all government spending, so we are seen to tackle public spending that could reasonably be considered wastage. We should come up with at least a couple of tangible examples of where we think public money is not well spent.

The new deal needs to permeate our own thoughts. We are a tolerant and compassionate party, so we are right to be tough on Reform UK – as long as we are also tough on the causes of Reform UK. That means addressing inequality, improving public services and housing, and emphasising Liberalism’s pillar of community to encourage people to have civic pride in where they live and be patriotic about our national sports teams (albeit making the distinction between patriotism and nationalism/jingoism).

If the idea of Brexit was to repatriate powers from Brussels to Westminster, we might even be able to paint localism as an extension of that: taking powers from Westminster and giving them to local representatives. However, Liberalism’s belief in localism – while remembering that transnational cooperation within Europe has a crucial role to play – must come with sufficient money to fund local government, education and social care. That agenda must be communicated not in technocratic terms but as giving power back to the people.

Will a new deal frighten off voters who put their cross alongside the Lib Dem candidate in 2024? A few, yes. But if we get our messaging right, it will be a challenge to the moderately affluent not to abandon us out of selfish reasons. The premium from being authentically Liberal stands to gain us a lot more votes among people on the progressive centre-left who will be as frustrated with Labour in 2029 as they were with the Conservatives in 2024. And switching within the progressive centre-left bloc will be key to us retaining former-Tory seats and winning a few more.

The narrative

It has become recognised that political battles are won not with arguments but with emotions. The Liberal Democrats therefore need a story to tell, or a narrative. The kind of narrative we are seeking for use over the next three years should run something like:

“We are a better country than this! We are a kind, welcoming people, proud of our traditions, keen not to be taken for fools, but happy to be a modern, compassionate civic nation. We believe in a helping-hand role for a benign state, but one that doesn’t

encroach any more into private lives than is strictly necessary. We believe in giving power back to the people, and in making all votes of equal value.”

This narrative will not do the work by itself, and it may need to have different phrasings to capture more of the ‘common voice’. It will also need to be complemented by slogans, such as “there *is* a better way” or “proud to be the compassionate people we are”. But with enough reinforcement in speeches, interviews, literature, etc, it will create the message both that we are a positive and hopeful party, and that populists on the far right do not speak for us as a nation.

The economics

Economics is often treated as a single category among the sub-headings of government, as if it is a discrete policy area. But it isn’t. Like the environment, it permeates every area of life, and therefore every area of government. While the Liberal Democrats must have certain specific economic policies as part of the manifesto for 2029, such is the level of social inequality that the broader question of the party’s approach to economics must be at the centre of the 2029 offering.

The economic model that John Maynard Keynes developed in the 1930s, and which still often carries the name Keynesianism, requires the state to be interventionist. But this should be limited to areas where leaving everything to free market forces would lead to exploitative behaviour that conflicts with the needs of a coherent society, and creates artificial patterns of development (like practices which damage the environment because environmental damage is not a cost levied in monetary terms). That approach has been, to varying degrees, out of fashion since the Reagan/Thatcher era that began around 1980; Reagan and Thatcher believed in the laissez-faire ‘monetarist’ economics of Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, which sought to roll back state involvement and leave both ownership and enterprise to the private sector. Following the financial crash of 2007-08, there was a minor revival in Keynesianism, but this never took hold, and in the 2010s and 2020s, the trend has been for governments to cut back public services, while the richest in society have largely flourished. This effectively means the poorest in society, those who rely most on public services, pick up the tab for the errors of the richest.

The Lib Dems need to be unashamedly Keynesian in their approach to the 2029 election. This will not be an easy task, as it means challenging the orthodoxy that has taken root in both the Treasury and the Bank of England. It will also involve strengthening provision for national well-being so it cannot be sacrificed at the altar of shareholder dividends – it will mean companies will have to fulfil certain social and environmental responsibilities before they make payouts to shareholders.

The Lib Dems' new Keynesian economic policy will not involve abandoning the idea of growth, but it must enshrine environmental safeguards so that any growth must be ecologically sustainable – and this must be clearly communicated to dispel understandable scepticism among some progressives that growth is by nature anti-environment. Ways of measuring that growth must also change. GDP is such a blunt instrument that closing a school or hospital that then requires people to travel much longer distances for everyday education or emergency medical assistance will show up as a positive, when it is clearly bad for quality of life. A Lib Dem manifesto must therefore commit to requiring well-being and environmental indices to be used in place of GDP. High levels of inequality across social groups and regions are unsustainable and economically damaging, so any index of a country's economic health must not ignore – and certainly not reward – social and regional inequalities.

Investment must be central to a Lib Dem economic strategy. In the past 45 years of monetarist thinking, investment has been largely left to the private sector, but even the private sector has not done much investing. The result has been a failure to perform basic maintenance on key areas of the economy (everything from national transport to local government services), with the result that these are now collapsing. The mantra of investment has been that you spend now to get the benefits later, yet we are expecting the economy to deliver money for public services without the investment! This is an opportunity for the Lib Dems to bang the patriotic drum – for example, most of Britons' pensions are invested in overseas companies, so we should commit to eradicating tax breaks that effectively benefit foreign companies when they should be benefiting UK companies.

Liberalism's belief that the state must intervene in those branches of life where a free market economy would distort fairness, equality, environmental protection, etc, means any Lib Dem manifesto for any election will have spending commitments. But spending commitments in the 2029 manifesto must be backed up by explanations of where the money will come from.

Core elements of the 'new deal'

In terms of the political platform, this needs to have certain core elements of which three or four need to be highlighted as the party's red lines in the event of no overall parliamentary majority. And election campaigning needs to make clear that these would be the red lines (even if the term 'red lines' is not used), so that any questioning about willingness to go into cooperative arrangements can be answered with variations of, "This is what we want to do, every vote for the Liberal Democrats will be a vote for this agenda, and we will work with any reasonable party that will help us achieve our most important policy goals."

There is no point in the Yorkists trying to set out a full manifesto, nor is that the aim of this paper. The party's manifesto group will be on top of this, but the manifesto needs a handful of eye-catching policies that will garner public attention. Here are ten ideas for inclusion in

the new deal, of which the first three are the most important. They are not exclusive, and if there are strong objections to any of them, they can be modified or removed, but the need for the package and parallel messaging to comply with the seven criteria in section 3 remains paramount.

- ❖ **Rejoin the EU** ... This has been party policy since the UK left the EU, albeit as a nebulous long-term aim to be completed when we have won the battle for hearts and minds, and when the EU is willing to have us back. Both may be closer than we think, and a policy of starting the process of rejoining can be presented as, “We have to face the elephant in the room – Brexit hasn’t worked, and won’t ever work!” We can dress up rejoining as the simplest way to have more money to spend on public services (we need to spell out how much re-joining the EU could boost the UK economy), but we should also sell it in defence terms – “Trump has made it essential that Britain is in the EU!” Yes, we will lose some voters to Reform, but how many of them would have voted Reform anyway? And there will be many more we stand to gain from erstwhile Tory and Labour voters who recognise the stupidity of the 2016 referendum result and would love to rectify it. We need to be honest that we will not get the same deal we had when we left the EU, and it might make sense to impose one condition, such as rejoining only if we can keep the pound.

- ❖ **A new economic model** ... Part of the new deal can be the ‘New Deal economic model’, a new approach to economics that looks at how the country makes money and then what it does with it. This would be a significant move away from what has counted as economic orthodoxy since around 1980. If we are willing to be really bold, we could say UK taxation is a mess, and the whole tax system needs an overhaul. At the very least, we need to have an economic model that incentivises investment (as much by the private sector as the state), and looks to further the following goals:
 - a country that works for everyone, everywhere.
 - success and progress being about more than GDP, including measures of social well-being and the environment
 - the wealth of the country – private and public – invested across and in the interests of the whole country
 - public services, transport, and housing seen as an essential basis for a healthy economy
 - power and resources distributed to where they can be most effectively deployed
 - a greater degree of resilience in a volatile, changing world – from personal to national levels
 - markets working for society rather than society being there to support markets
 - democracy being transparent, proportional, and free from the influence of powerful and wealthy groups
 - as much power as possible returned to local level, with a suitable funding settlement for local government to go with it.

- ❖ **Local is good** ... With so many people disenchanted with politics and politicians, the Lib Dems have the advantage of hundreds of local champions who can repair some of the damage. This localism strategy must be made national, with policies to boost local government, more decision-making at local level, perhaps provision for Citizens' Assemblies, and a national strategy to make the most of local assets. But this will only work if the financial resources underpin it.
- ❖ **Citizens taking control** ... The Lib Dems should have no qualms about banging on about a proportional voting system for Westminster and council elections (it is part of shoring up the future of democracy to have a voting system that makes votes count and forces parties to cooperate with each other), but it must be talked about in terms that people can relate to. 'Fair votes' or 'equal votes' are much better than 'electoral reform' or 'proportional representation', and fair voting must be linked to some form of bottom-up democracy to allow citizens to generate legislation, and to take more control over their local affairs.
- ❖ **Protecting ourselves and our neighbours** ... The Liberal tradition has never been keen to make a splash about defence, but the changes in Europe and America over the past decade mean it's no longer an option not to have a coherent defence policy. Today, this means linking it to rebuilding our relations with Europe, not so we manipulate the defence necessity to press our European credentials, but because every pound spent on defence will go further if it's part of a transnational initiative. The 2024 election delivered a handful of Lib Dem MPs with experience of serving in the forces – their knowledge should be maximised in the formulation of a credible defence policy, and their past involvement should be publicly deployed to show the Lib Dems are in the forefront of patriotic defence. There is scope here for us to link defence to a restoration of the UK's foreign aid budget, on the basis that investing (not giving) aid overseas helps strengthen our international relationships, creates friends rather than foes, and potentially reduces the amount of immigration.
- ❖ **A roof we can afford** ... The biggest practical issue for young adults is being able to afford a place to live. A Lib Dem policy on this has to be two-pronged: what we can do in the short term to allow more twentysomethings to leave their parental home, and how we can embark on a long-term solution to land and property ownership that addresses inequalities that are holding the country back. The long-term task is a massive topic, encompassing planning, housing finance, tax, interest rates, money creation, social housing, and land ownership (especially when it comes to the Royal Family, the Church of England, and certain landed aristocrats). For the short term we need to focus on rented accommodation, on getting developers to build one- and two-bedroom flats rather than executive homes, and on doing up the housing at the bottom of the ladder which is a health hazard for many of those living in it. The provision of housing should not see the Lib Dems engage in the usual unseemly auction of which party can promise to build most new

houses but more creative ideas about bringing vacant housing back into use so the solution doesn't have to be all with new builds. A good slogan could be, "Housing is for living in, not a means to make loads of money from investment."

- ❖ **Protecting our children's inheritance** ... With the Greens having somewhat abandoned the environment, the Lib Dems need to step back into territory that was always a cornerstone of the Liberal tradition. We should confidently oppose the idea of rolling back environmental protections in the face of geopolitical conflicts and economic downturns, trumpeting the advantages of being ahead of the game in readiness for the post-fossil-fuel age. We need to be the party that says that any economic growth must also be genuinely sustainable/ecological or it doesn't count as it takes us backwards. The latest Middle East conflict may have fizzled out by 2029, but there will be some other crisis in the oil world, which allows us to highlight the security benefits of decarbonisation. In addition, the economic aspects and opportunities of the original Green Deal have not been fully exploited, leaving scope for new industries and high-skilled jobs. And there is opportunity for a rurally strong party to campaign for farming to play a bigger part, as long as the agribusiness sector is doing its bit to cut out harmful chemicals and other environmentally damaging practices.
- ❖ **Appreciating valued contributors to society** ... This is more a messaging priority than a policy as such, although it will force us to have a clear position on how we are going to deal with immigration. Aside from that, we need to champion the contribution legal immigrants have made and are making to British society. This particularly involves asking where our medical and care services and hospitality would be without people from overseas, but it also involves highlighting some of the more high-profile national heroes not born here, like Mo Farah, Freddie Mercury, Judith Kerr, and others. In policy terms, we should focus on an assessment of what skills we need, which in time will allow us to push back against the argument that we only need high-skilled well-off immigrants.
- ❖ **Tomorrow's citizens must think for themselves** ... Education has always been central to Liberalism, as it is the gateway to equality of opportunity. The area of education that most lends itself to the Lib Dems catching the imagination is to focus on teaching critical thinking as a core life skill. There is ample evidence that the ability to think critically reduces the attractiveness of far-right parties, but it is also a valuable tool for everyday tasks like spotting email scams and questioning whether someone is taking us for a ride.
- ❖ **Technology and personal freedom** ... Given the Liberal tradition's value placed on the individual and individual freedom, the Lib Dems must have clear policies on social media, AI, and data creep. We need to monitor the results of the Australian attempt to limit social media among under-16s and form our own policy based on emerging good practice. AI has to be regulated in ways it is currently not, but this can only happen transnationally – our internationalism allows us to make this case, but we have to show we're on the side

of people who are being scammed by AI fakes. And while a lot of progress has been made on reducing abuse of personal data, there are still holes in the system, for example a failure to respect 'unsubscribe' requests when sent outside the country. A policy to end the requirement for people to set up a personal 'account' when buying products or services online (a ruse for companies to capture more personal data) could be an eye-catcher. Ultimately, people are deeply worried about social media, AI, and data creep, so the Lib Dems need an offering that shows we hear the concerns and are taking them seriously.

Political considerations

This paper has been written in 2025-26 when the prevailing wisdom is that Labour is way off track, the Conservatives are stagnant (if not falling backwards), Reform UK is posting consistent poll ratings around 25-30%, and the Greens have laid claim – for now – to being the progressive anti-system party. The local election results in May 2026 have confirmed these trends, with Labour doing so badly that a change of leadership between now and the 2029 general election seems likely (how much that will affect its prospects is hard to gauge, given that the global economy seems unlikely to help Labour in the short term). As for the Liberal Democrats, there were some good results, but the overall picture was one of the party's strategy of saying little nationally and fighting a series of local elections possibly running out of steam. Some sort of restatement of national purpose is necessary.

What if Reform and the Greens are not a factor by 2029? What if the Reform storm has blown itself out? What if Polanski's economic and defence Achilles heels have been publicly exposed? Perhaps Labour will be surging having proved itself a capable government, whether through a more dynamic leader, some long-term policy coming to fruition, or by a Falklands-like stroke of luck that allows it to shine? Perhaps the Greens will be shining even brighter, or some other 'left of Labour' force will have caught the imagination?

None of these possible scenarios invalidates the content of this paper. The Liberal Democrats will still have to stand or fall on a policy offering and narrative that inspires people to vote Lib Dem out of conviction and excitement, or at the very least tactically to prevent another party from winning. With the Greens re-energised, and possibly other activity to the left of Labour, the political marketplace is becoming very crowded. The only parties that survive will be those that are well defined in the voters' eyes.

That's why the Lib Dem strategy from 2024 will not work in 2029. The Lib Dem identity in 2029 will have to stress both how we are different from others, and where we agree with those we may have to work with if the 2029-34 parliament is hung.

Tell a simple story and stick to it

2029 presents a massive opportunity for the Liberal Democrats, but to seize it the party needs to have a simple story to tell about what we stand for, and how this resonates with the broad mass of people in this country, and stick to it – even telling it over and over again. If we've heard the party leader tell a story six times, the chances are most people have only heard it once or twice, if at all. Repetition of the agreed line works, as long as we believe it and can represent it with confidence.

That is likely to be the best way to save the UK's beleaguered democracy – and do justice to Liberalism.

Acknowledgements

The Yorkists are an informal group of party activists who came together at the Liberal Democrats' 2023 spring conference in York, united by a frustration that the party didn't appear to stand for anything and was leaving the tenets of Liberalism behind. The unifying feature of the Yorkists is not that they are for any one strand of thinking within the party but that they believe that, if an individual is to give time, money and shoe leather to campaign for a political party, that party must express its ideals – otherwise, what is it for? And if we are trying to persuade people to vote Lib Dem when it might be partly tactical, they need to know what that vote means in broad policy terms.

The Yorkists have no formal structure and are not an affiliated body. The group exists primarily as a WhatsApp group, augmented by meetings in-person and online. This paper was compiled and reviewed by a number of members of the Yorkists, and others who are sympathetic to the Yorkists' broad aims. In alphabetical order, they are:

Chris Bowers
Duncan Brack
Paul Fox
Edward Lucas
Ben Rich
Roz Savage
Robin Stafford
Gill Travers
William Wallace
John White

Anyone wishing to contact the Yorkists should go through either Chris Bowers (cbowers@gn.apc.org) or Duncan Brack (duncan@dbrack.org.uk).