

Welsh Party President

The period since the last conference has been busy for the Welsh Board and for me as President.

Summer Shows

The Welsh Party had a strong presence at two major national events over the summer. The Royal Welsh Show took place in July and the party had a large stand which was well attended throughout the event. This also provided an opportunity for members of the public to meet with Jane Dodds and David Chadwick.

In August, the National Eisteddfod was held in Wrexham and the we had a distinctive booth close to the main entrance. The stand was staffed throughout the week-long event and Jane was present for several days.

Across both events, the party gathered well over 1,200 several hundred petition signatures and contact details for future e-mail campaigns. These events also provided an opportunity for several rounds of media interviews for Jane and David.

Getting ready for Senedd Elections

Candidates

Thanks to the fantastic work of Welsh State Chair of Candidates Julian Tandy and his team of returning officers, we now have a full slate of candidates for the election. This has been a huge effort, thanks to everyone who has agreed to stand and to all those in local parties across Wales who have been involved in running the selections and backfilling for each seat.

Messaging

The party has been working hard to develop campaign messaging. In May, a messaging meeting took place in Brecon. This was an opportunity for lead candidates and party officers and staff to come together to consider how we handle the other parties and how we frame the election to our target demographics. Since then work has been ongoing to develop and refine our message, to frame a distinctive position and identity for the Welsh Lib Dems.

Oversight

Earlier this year, the Welsh board approved the establishment of a Senedd

Election Campaign Team (SECT) to provide oversight, monitoring and supervision of the overall Senedd campaign. The team consists of several board members including the President and Leader, plus one experienced former MS.

While the Staff team under Mike O'Carroll are responsible for the management and delivery of the Senedd campaign across Wales, in coordination with local parties, SECT monitors campaign activity and ensure that resources and assistance are directed where most appropriate. This includes making decisions with regard to spending allocations and changing seat priorities as the campaigns unfold.

Strengthening the Staff Team

In preparation for the Senedd elections, our Chief Executive Mike O'Carroll has taken on an additional role as Head of Campaigns for Wales, reporting to the Federal Party Campaigns Team. This allows the Welsh Party to tap in to more of the Federal Party resources and means that Mike is now part of the national campaigns team, ensuring better communication between the Campaigns team in Wales and the Federal campaigns team.

Ryan Priest has joined as our new Head of Communications and in May we welcomed Gaya Ramachandran to the team as Social Media Officer. In the Spring we appointed Lea Davies and Hayden Lewis as campaign coordinators in Cardiff and Swansea, respectively. This month Lloyd Watts joined the team as Campaigns Manager for Wales and Michael Price becomes the new campaign coordinator in Brecon, Radnor and Cwm Tawe. We are currently recruiting for two further campaign organisers. Together with our existing staff, this gives us the strongest campaigns team in many years to ensure the best chances of electoral success.

Appointment to Federal Appeals Panel

The Welsh party appoints members to the Federal Appeals Panel from time to time, at this point we are asking Conference to approve the appointment of Robert Charlton, Chair of Brecon Radnor and Cwm Tawe local party, to the Federal Appeals Panel.

Welsh State Chair of Candidates

2025 has been a busy year for Candidates with Senedd selections. We finished creating a completely new set of Selection rules for the new Senedd system. Welsh Candidates Working Group is up and running and I can't thank enough the members of that new committee for a year of hard work. Constitution rule changes for WCSC and WSCC were finalised at the Spring Conference.

The year started with me running a full day training session for ROs in Wales. I now have a team of ROs with 6 or 8 actives ones up from the two I had. This has massively helped with the full on Senedd selections this year.

The Candidates review from the GE 2024 was completed and I re-appointed 45 candidates to the List in January. There was also the implementation of the Federal GE review which lead to a federal motion F10 in the Spring which was passed 80%-20% at Spring conference which brought all candidates and the processes, staffing etc. under a Federal umbrella. This meant that as WSCC, I have a fully equal say on JCSC with my equivalents in Scotland and England and all Candidates Office staff were now Federal staff not English staff giving us far more access to resources. Wales has ratified this but disgracefully and undemocratically the English CC did not and this has hampered all candidate's work on a UK level since. The ratification is going back to them and I hope that body respects the will of the membership at Federal Spring conference and passes it this time. We still maintain complete control of Senedd selections in Wales.

We started the 5 primary Senedd seat selections for the lists and we completed those selections and declared the results at Spring Conference, which resulted in 10 candidates being placed onto the lists in those seats. We then ran selections for the other 11 seats which led to a further 18 approved candidates added to the other seats.

The unfortunate death of a Senedd member meant we had to quickly sort out and select a candidate under the old FPP rules in August/September but that was done and the campaign in Caerphilly is well underway.

In the Summer the Welsh Board agreed that we must fill all 96 Party List Seats for the Senedd in 2026 in order to gain maximum coverage, maximum spend, maximum credibility and that we needed those names in place asap. The problem was/is we don't have 96 approved candidates in Wales (the Law requires all names on List to be registered voters in Wales), constitutionally all

candidates have to be fully vetted and risk assessed and this increased each deposit from £500 to £1500

WCSC and I drew up a system (then approved by the board) whereby we could backfill the lists with Councillors and Local Party Exec members. Budget was found to cover the extra £16000 of deposits (hopefully most refunded) and the approx £8000 cost of vetting from WLD party funds rather than Local Party funds.

These Backfill processes started in August and will be completed by Autumn Conference. At the time of writing this report, 10 out of 16 Super Constituencies have 6 lists candidates plus a reserve finalised (subject to vetting), 2 have submitted 5 candidates each so far and the other 4 Super Constituencies have 4+ candidates found and will be submitting the final lists to RO's and myself before Conference. This was a massive undertaking and a lot of work for RO's and Party Chairs but we will by the time I present this report have well over 100 List candidates in place.

It is not going to be easy going after conference either as I have been instructed to start the Selection Process for the next Westminster Elections. In addition all those 100 List Candidates for the Senedd need vetting and each full check takes 1 person about 8 hours to do properly. Candidates will also need support and training and WCSC have whole day sessions booked for November and December in each region to start that process.

As always I will be attending all JCSC meetings representing Wales as I have for a number of years. This year I have been to 9 JCSC meetings (3 in person in London). JCSC agreed priorities of its work including looking at the whole candidate approval system and how candidates can then be graded, plus recruitment and training of now Federally run ROs, and agreeing tweaks to the new Selection Rules for Westminster and sorting out By-election and Mayoral/PCC rules. This is hampered by the non ratification of F10 by ECC but we are moving forwards and hope that this can be the priority in 2026.

I humbly submit this report to Conference.

Cllr. Julian Tandy - Welsh State Chair of Candidates.

Conference Committee

During the Past year, **Conference Committee** has organised the **Spring Conference** in the **Holiday Inn, Cardiff** & we are now in the middle of organising this **Autumn Conference** in **The Ramada Plaza Wrexham**.

At our **Spring Conference** in **Cardiff**, we debated a number of areas of key concern to us as a Party & indeed of concern to the wider electorate **including urging an end to the National Insurance rise, boosting Cancer treatment in Wales & more help with Childcare**, all issues of great concern to the People of Wales. We also heard at the **Spring Conference Dinner** from **Tom Gordon MP** for **Harrogate** & as some of you will remember a former member of staff here in the **Welsh Liberal Democrats**.

For this **Autumn Conference** we, again, will be discussing issues of concern to many people including transforming **Social Care in Wales**, improving **Health prevention & helping flood risk communities in Wales**, all vital areas.

Aside from the actual organising of **Conference**, the **Committee** has also introduced a new system for conference registration fees, which we think is more flexible & meets the needs of members attending.

As a committee, we meet regularly, as we have to, to meet deadlines, & I would like to put on record my thanks to the other members of the Committee for their invaluable help, **Cllr Alistair Cameron, Chloe Hutchinson, Matt Palmer, Cllr Pete Roberts & Claire Waller**. I would also like to pay a special thanks on behalf of both myself & the wider committee to **Elgan Morgan** for all his hard work in organising our conferences. The success of Conferences is down to his hard work & commitment & the Welsh Party owes him a great deal.

Our **Current Autumn Conference** is the last in this cycle & it will be my **last as Chair**. I have decided to step down & not seek election to further term. I have enjoyed my time as Chair, but all good things come to an end & I would like to wish my successor all the very best of luck for the next three years.

I am happy to answer any questions throughout Conference weekend.

Jon Burree

Chair Welsh Conference Committee