



## Report of Ipswich Chair Martin Pakes for the 2024 AGM

It did not take much prescience to predict that 2024 would be a turning point year, as I did in my first email to members this time last year. We finally got rid of a toxic Conservative excuse for a government and had a record 72 Lib Dem MPs voted in nationally.

Now rather overshadowed, but nonetheless important were the Borough Elections on 2<sup>nd</sup> May. Oliver Holmes retained his Borough seat in St Margaret's ward, polling an emphatic 51% of the vote, a majority of 872 over *Labour*, with the Conservatives in third. This is more remarkable as there was no Reform candidate in the ward and so the right-wing vote was not split.

My own candidature in Castle Hill suffered a setback from a lot of Labour work. We and Labour ended up splitting the anti-Tory vote and so they sneaked back in there. I finished third with 345 votes, about double the Green Party total.

Elsewhere in the town, we did little to no work and ended up coming fourth behind the Green Party.

There are reports already available describing our General Election effort for both Central Suffolk and North Ipswich (current Whitton, Whitehouse and Castle Hill wards) constituency and Ipswich (remainder of the town) constituency. Neither was a target seat so we ended up exporting much of our effort to our nearest ones, South Cambridgeshire and Chelmsford.

Both sets of elections resulted in several new people coming forward to help by standing as Council candidates, delivering leaflets, talking to electors and campaigning digitally. Our ability to do better is closely related to the numbers of people we can get partaking in all these activities.

This coming May 1<sup>st</sup> we have the County Council elections, being fought on new boundaries so there are no longer any two-Councillor electoral divisions in Ipswich. In May 2026 we have a once-in-20 years rarity, a Borough election where all 48 councillors are up for re-election. More people doing more things means we get our distinctive Liberal Democrat message across to more people in more wards – If not already doing so, I'd encourage you all to get involved in some way.

A definite area for improvement for the forthcoming year is more social events. We had one post-election party event that was well-attended, but we do need to do more on this front. Once again, assistance would be much appreciated.

We have a lot to be proud of and much we can offer to Ipswich – let's work together to achieve it!