

A Liberal councillor who made LGBT+ history

Sam Green didn't set out to make history.

In 1972, he stood as the Liberal candidate for Crossgate ward in the City of Durham for the same reason our candidates stand for their local communities across the country: because they want to get things done. As Sam put it, he wanted to "get things moving in the city".

When he decided to put his membership of the Gay Liberation Front on his election manifesto – just five years after homosexuality had been legalised for over-21s – he told his local party.

He said "I'd better not stand in Crossgate", assuming that the revelation would hurt the party's chances. But he told how a retired schoolteacher – "a little old woman" as he put it – said "Well I think Sam should stand because he lives in the ward and people know him." So he did.

And Sam won through the traditional community politics that was the hallmark of Liberal candidates – and still sets Liberal Democrat candidates apart today.

He went door to door, delivering thousands of leaflets. Canvassing tirelessly. He asked people what they thought about the local area and the local council. He listened to their concerns, and he acted on them.

But Sam did make history. In 1972, he became the first openly gay man to be elected as a councillor anywhere in the United Kingdom. Possibly even the first anywhere in the world.

And on Sunday, I was delighted to visit Sam's former home and join City of Durham Parish Councillors and local residents to unveil a blue plaque commemorating Sam Green as the trailblazer he was.

It is a testament to his courage. Because it took a huge amount of courage to come out to his whole community, to face the hostility and homophobia so prevalent in those days, and to campaign openly as who he was.

And it's also testament to the people of Durham, who – more than 50 years ago – were open-minded and accepting enough to see Sam for who he was: a dedicated local campaigner who would be a hardworking and principled councillor.

Thinking about what Sam faced then – and the fact that before 1972 no one anywhere had won election as an openly gay candidate – made me reflect on how far we've come as a society.

There are now 75 out LGBT+ MPs in the House of Commons. Just this week, our party elected one of them – Josh Babarinde – as our President. And perhaps

the most remarkable thing was that no one found it remarkable that he's gay.

But there is still far more work to do.

Because, more than half a century after Sam was elected, LGBT people still sadly face far too much hostility and discrimination, just for being who they are. Too many people still don't feel they can be open about their identity. Too many candidates feel the need to hide it – despite the trail blazed first by Sam and followed by so many others.

So I hope that remembering the courage and dedication of Councillor Sam Green will also serve to spur us on to continue to champion equality, respect and the rights of all people – to be who they are, to serve their communities with pride, and to get things moving.

ITV News covered the unveiling of the blue plaque for Sam Green and interviewed Ed about it – you can watch the report [here](#).

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

Trans Awareness Week

Many trans and non-binary people – in the UK and across the world – face unacceptable barriers to healthcare, employment, education, and public life. In the UK, an estimated 62% – 73% of trans people have experienced harassment and violence because they were identified as trans. Hate crimes have risen sharply, nearly doubling in the past five years and access to NHS gender-affirming care remains painfully slow at best. No one should have to fight this hard to be treated with basic dignity and respect.

The Liberal Democrats have a proud legacy of leading the fight for LGBTQ+ equality. From repealing Section 28 – the Conservatives' law which prohibited the "promotion of homosexuality" by local authorities – thanks to a clause moved by Ed Davey, to Lynne Featherstone's tireless efforts to legalise same-sex marriage, and the former Liberal Democrat MP John Leech securing pardons for those unjustly criminalised for their sexuality, our party has always stood on the right side of history. That same commitment drives us now as we work to ensure that trans and non-binary people enjoy the same rights, respect, and recognition as everyone else.

We recognise and thank our trans members past and present for their invaluable contributions – giving their time and energy to run for elected office and campaigning to make our party and country a more inclusive place.

As we set out in our policy paper Free to Be Who You Are, passed at this

year's Spring Conference, we believe that everyone should be free to live authentically, without fear or prejudice and have full and equal access to healthcare, education, workplaces, and the protections and freedoms every citizen enjoys.

That is why we remain steadfast in our commitment to:

- Reduce the unacceptable waiting times for gender-identity services and ensure access to timely, compassionate healthcare through an informed consent model.
- Reform the gender recognition process to remove the requirement for medical reports, recognise non-binary identities in law, and remove the spousal veto.
- Ban all forms of so-called “conversion therapy” and practices.
- Protect trans people from discrimination in law, workplaces, schools and public services so they can live safely and confidently as themselves.
- Implement a new LGBTQ+ Action Plan to coordinate cross-government work on delivering LGBTQ+ equality.

This Trans Awareness Week, we stand proudly alongside trans and non-binary people across the UK – celebrating their strength, creativity and courage, while recognising how far Britain still has to go. Our fight continues for a country where everyone, without exception, is free to be who they are.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

Josh Babarinde elected as the new President of the Liberal Democrats



We are pleased to announce that our Members have elected Josh Babarinde, MP for Eastbourne, as the new President of the Liberal Democrats.

Josh Babarinde will assume the role on 1 January 2026 for a three year term, with current President, Mark Park remaining in post until then.

“I’m so grateful to Liberal Democrat members for electing me to serve as our next Party President.

With the traditional parties failing to stand up to Reform’s division, I’m fired up to help ensure our party is ready to be the last line of defence against them.

I’ll be working across the party to broaden our reach, apply my youth work experience to engaging young voters ahead of votes at 16, and get battle-ready for next May’s elections for the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Senedd and councils and Mayors across England.”

Josh Babarinde MP

President-Elect of the Liberal Democrats

“Huge congratulations to Josh Babarinde on his election as President of the Liberal Democrats. Josh has already achieved so much as an MP, including securing a landmark change in the law to protect victims of domestic abuse.

He has also worked tirelessly to stand up for the people of Eastbourne,

demonstrating that Liberal Democrat community politics is the best antidote to Nigel Farage's dangerous, divisive politics. I have no doubt Josh will be a tremendous President and together we will take the fight to Reform UK and stand up for a decent, caring Britain.

I also want to thank Prue Bray for her spirited campaign and dedication and commitment to the party, and Mark Pack for the brilliant job he's done as President of the Liberal Democrats, helping us to deliver our best ever election results."

Ed Davey MP

Leader of the Liberal Democrats

Following a Federal Appeals Panel hearing yesterday, there will be a delay to the counts for the party's committees. We will let you know the results of these as soon as they are confirmed.

The full results of the Federal Internal Elections will be available here once they have been announced:

Internal Elections

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

[Remembering Ming](#)

Ed Davey's tribute to Ming Campbell in the House of Commons on 14th October 2025

I want to let the House into a secret about Ming Campbell: he was obsessed with sport. As you might expect from someone who was the captain of the Scottish men's team at the Commonwealth Games.

I remember Ming talking about how he had been captivated by the 1948 London Olympics at the age of seven – listening to it with his mother. And how he'd

decided back then that he wanted to run at a future Olympics.

It's a dream so many young boys and girls have had at one point or another. But Ming, thanks to his determination, drive and work ethic, actually made it happen. He represented our country at the Tokyo Games in 1964.

For a man once known as the Flying Scotsman, who set a new British 100 metres record at 10.2 seconds, and who was probably the fastest person ever elected to this House – Ming was never one to brag about his sporting accomplishments.

In fact, he was such a gentleman – so averse to boastfulness – that it could be hard to get him to talk about them at all.

I remember when Wayne Rooney broke a metatarsal in his foot ahead of the 2006 World Cup. Ming had told us a story about how he had suffered an injury before the 1964 Olympic Games and how hard he'd worked to overcome it.

We were all begging him to go on the radio and tell that story and encourage Wayne Rooney – a rare chance for the Liberal Democrat Leader to break into the biggest sports story of the day – but Ming wouldn't do it.

I have to admit it was frustrating at the time, but it was also a mark of why he was so respected and admired. That level of modesty is rare in anyone – especially in a politician. But those of us who knew Ming knew that it was simply the kind of man that he was.

It says a lot about Ming's many and varied accomplishments that his extraordinary sporting achievements – being Britain's fastest man and representing his country at the Olympics – won't be what he is most remembered for.

Nor will he be most remembered for his law career – though he excelled at that too. He was even offered the chance to become a judge on Scotland's High Court in 1996. But he turned it down because by then – as he put it – politics had got in his blood.

And so, what Ming will most be remembered for is his enormous contribution to British politics. A parliamentary career spanning five decades, including 28 years representing North East Fife.

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Ed Davey

I got to know him early during his first Parliament, when I was the party's economics adviser based in our whips' office.

Even then, he already had so much gravitas. He was so charming, so thoughtful and so respected. Ming was among those few MPs who was genuinely a grandee from the first day they are elected.

But his calmness, reasonableness and intense decency masked a radical politician.

A man who never forgot his roots growing up in a Glasgow tenement, and who was driven by a deep commitment to social justice.

A man who said it was his role – and the role of Liberal Democrats – to “rattle the cage of British politics”. And he did.

Especially when it came to foreign affairs and defence – on which he led for our party for over 18 years. Including, of course, in the lead up to, and after, the Iraq War.

I remember how difficult a decision it was for us to oppose that war. It felt like we were going, not just against the government, but taking on the full might of the British state – and the United States too.

The way Ming tackled it – with his typically steady, forensic, lawyerly approach – gave us both the confidence and resolve to speak up strongly for what we believed. He made our position firmly rooted in respect for international law.

At a time when the world was in turmoil, following those horrific terrorist attacks of September the 11th, Ming provided principled leadership with his trademark combination of morality, courage and wisdom.

And he continued to do so – whether as Leader of our party, a respected member of the Intelligence and Security Committee and the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, and in the other place.

I benefited greatly from Ming’s advice and guidance over more than 30 years, and turned to him often about foreign affairs in my own time as Leader. I will miss his wise counsel, as I know many of us will.

But more than that, he was an incredibly warm and caring friend and colleague, with such generosity and humour.

He called his late wife Elspeth his rock, and she was always by his side – mostly with a cigarette. And they were such good fun and great company.

It was once said of Ming that "He runs the risk of giving politicians a good name". Well, he certainly did that.

Ed Davey

His passing is a moment for us to consider how we all are viewed as politicians and what changes we could make, both individually and collectively, to further the cause of good, decent, hopeful politics – something that Ming embodied entirely.

Ming Campbell was a dedicated public servant, a tireless champion for Fife, St Andrews and the United Kingdom, and a true Liberal giant

I know all of us in the Liberal Democrat family and across this House will miss him terribly.

My friend Ming Campbell had so many strengths. Olympian, statesman, party leader.

At St Andrews, where he was Chancellor for almost twenty years, he gave so much to generations of students. [@wendychambLD](#) and I were proud to honour his legacy in the place he loved.
pic.twitter.com/09B3gNfPH5

– Ed Davey (@EdwardJDavey) [October 15, 2025](#)

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

[Marie Goldman marks the start of Black History Month 2025](#)

This year's theme, 'Standing Firm in Power and Pride', speaks to a long and ongoing history of courage, resilience and leadership – of driving change in the face of injustice – and to the pride, purpose, and strength found in Black communities around the world.

We owe an enormous debt to the Black British community. From the Windrush generation's foundational role in building the NHS to the countless trailblazers who pushed boundaries in politics, the arts, science, and activism, their legacy is woven into the fabric of this country.

Yet, the work is far from done. Too many people still face daily injustices, from racism and hate speech to unequal opportunities and barriers that prevent full participation in society. Prejudice continues to harm lives, communities, and trust. We must acknowledge that reality and act to change it.

I am proud that the Liberal Democrats are committed to standing firm in this fight. We reject racism in all its forms and are determined to drive meaningful change.

That is why we remain stalwart in our commitment to:

- Fully implementing the Windrush Lessons Learned Review and ensuring Windrush victims receive the justice and compensation they deserve
- Tackling inequalities in health, education, justice, and economic opportunity, especially where Black and minority ethnic communities are most affected, through a comprehensive Race Equality Strategy
- Promoting diversity and representation in public institutions, workplaces, and communities – not as a token gesture, but by ensuring real access to power

This Black History Month, as we honour the pioneers, the activists, the unsung heroes, and the next generation, our message is clear: We stand with you. We will stand firm in your power and pride, and we will continue working for a more just, equal, and inclusive Britain.

Marie Goldman is the Liberal Democrat MP for Chelmsford. She currently undertakes the role of Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Women and Equalities.

[Go to Source](#)

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