

Celebrating Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

We all have our own special memories of the Queen's Jubilees. For me, they have spanned my entire life. So it is with great pleasure that I will join the entire nation in celebrating seventy years of Her Majesty's reign – on this Platinum Jubilee bank holiday weekend.

In her coronation speech, the Queen said: "Throughout all my life, and with all my heart, I shall strive to be worthy of your trust." I think the whole country will agree that our Queen has more than fulfilled her promises made to our nation.

Her service; her sense of selflessness; her steadfast commitment to the nation. These values and her service have defined Her Majesty's seven decade reign, and will continue to define her.

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That unwavering nature of service is made all the more remarkable by the length of Her Majesty's reign. She is the longest-reigning female monarch in history – not just of this country, but of anywhere in the world. **Ever.**

The Queen's gentle but strong presence throughout those years has been ever-constant. In challenging times, she is always a source of calm and comfort. Her Majesty movingly described the Duke of Edinburgh – whose presence will be greatly missed at these Jubilee celebrations – as her "strength and stay." But truly, Her Majesty is the strength and stay of our nation.

And through it all, she has remained above the fray of politics – something which is so valuable.

Across our country, we will inevitably disagree on so many issues. There are, and should be, many shades of opinion. But because of Her Majesty, being patriotic and proud of your country is not about your political allegiance. It is not grounded in what the Government of the day may be doing – and I am very thankful it's not!

Because of the Queen, we can come together this long weekend and reflect on the many things we actually have in common. That sense of pride in our nation is something we can all celebrate and share.

One of the particular joys of any royal Jubilee is seeing how it brings people together.

Of course, there is no better occasion to celebrate than that of the Jubilee. In 1977, in 2002 and in 2012, we have been fortunate enough to celebrate jubilees – with street parties, commemorative mugs and, of course, the unforgettable sight of Brian May playing guitar on the roof of Buckingham Palace.

I was at school when we celebrated the Silver Jubilee – and to be honest, my strongest memory of that Jubilee is of the Queen's smile and personal delight as Virginia Wade won Wimbledon.

Then for the Golden Jubilee in 2002, I was honoured to meet Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh when they visited my constituency, in the Royal Borough of Kingston. Back then, the Queen unveiled a stone commemorating the one thousand, one hundredth anniversary of the coronation of King Edward the Elder, crowned in Kingston – one of the great Anglo Saxon Kings.

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And of course, the highlight of the Diamond Jubilee in 2012 was watching the film when the Queen parachuted down to the opening ceremony of the Summer Olympics. **Her Majesty has always been central to our lives – and it is always a privilege to celebrate her reign at Jubilees.**

For the Platinum Jubilee, special memories are already being made. The other week, I channelled my inner Mary Berry while judging a Jubilee bake-off at Ellingham Primary School in my constituency. Amongst the mountains of the children's sponge cakes and strawberries, I was struck by two things in particular.

First, a huge temptation to cheat on my diet! But second was the palpable excitement and enthusiasm the young children had for the Queen and her Jubilee.

One of the particular joys of any royal Jubilee is seeing how it brings people together. In every corner of our country from Caithness to Cornwall, communities will be coming together this weekend – which will be extra special, given how we weren't able to gather during the pandemic.

So whether for a concert, street party or parade, I hope we can all share in the joy and festivities – together.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

Richard Foord is our Tiverton and Honiton by-election candidate

Richard Foord will be our Liberal Democrat candidate for the upcoming Tiverton & Honiton by-election.

I was proud to serve my country in the Armed Forces for ten years and now want to serve my community in Westminster.

Richard Foord

Richard lives in Uffculme with his wife and family. He grew up in the West Country and served for ten years in the army after graduating from Sandhurst, reaching the rank of Major and receiving three campaign medals for service in Iraq and the Balkans.

Living locally, **Richard is active across the community.** He volunteers at two scout groups in the area and has raised thousands of pounds for charities, including running the London Marathon for the Royal British Legion.

Richard has pledged to be a strong local voice for Devon if elected, by fighting for urgent action on the cost of living, cutting ambulance and GP waiting times, and getting a fairer deal for Devon farmers.

This by-election will be a two-horse race between Boris Johnson's Conservatives and hard-working Liberal Democrat local champion, Richard Foord.

Ed Davey

In April, the Liberal Democrats won the Cullompton South by-election against the Conservatives. They have also been winning across the UK, gaining neighbouring Somerset Council at the local elections and winning two successful parliamentary by-elections against the Conservatives, including the rural constituency of North Shropshire.

Announcing his candidacy, **Richard said:**

"Boris Johnson's Conservatives are taking rural communities in Devon for granted. Towns and villages across the constituency are being hit hard by unfair tax hikes and receiving no help with spiralling energy bills and rising prices at the fuel pump.

"This Conservative Government has run our local health services into the ground. Ambulance waiting times across Devon are soaring, and thousands are

left waiting for weeks in pain, for a GP or dentist appointment.

“I was proud to serve my country in the Armed Forces for ten years and now want to serve my community in Westminster. We need politicians who listen to the needs of local people and work tirelessly to deliver for our area.

“This by-election is a chance to send a message that it’s time for a change. Towns and villages in our areas have been ignored for far too long. If elected, I pledge to take no-one for granted and stand up for our local communities in Parliament.”

Commenting on the announcement Liberal Democrat Leader **Ed Davey said:**

“Richard is an incredible candidate, whose dedication to others has shone not only through his career, but also in his voluntary roles in the community.

“This by-election will be a two-horse race between Boris Johnson’s Conservatives and hard-working Liberal Democrat local champion, Richard Foord. This Conservative government has taken Devon for granted with local health services being neglected and botched and with trade deals undercutting farmers at every turn.

“The Liberal Democrats are the clear challengers to the Conservatives in Tiverton & Honiton. On 23rd June, you can elect a strong local champion who will stand up for our communities and help kick Boris Johnson out of Number 10.”

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

[Overriding the Northern Ireland Protocol would be deeply damaging](#)

Here we find ourselves again. It is now coming up on two years since the Conservatives’ first threatened to break international law over the Northern Ireland Protocol. Then, this time last year, we heard the continued threats over Article 16 which threatened to overshadow the G7 summit in Cornwall. And now, we are awaiting a rumoured announcement from the Foreign Secretary regarding legislation which will, reportedly, unilaterally rip up the Protocol.

Make no mistake, this would play into Putin’s hands.

This Conservative Government has presided over terrible decision after terrible decision – but going ahead and scrapping the Protocol really would represent a new low.

It would be an egregious breach of international law.

At a moment when we should be working with our European allies in face of Russia's aggression, it would ignite a diplomatic firestorm and serve as a wedge which will divide us.

Make no mistake, this would play into Putin's hands.

Liberal Democrats stand on the side of international law. We always have done and we always will do. It is a tragedy that in 2022 this has become a point of distinction between major UK political parties. Shame on the Conservatives – they are dragging our country's reputation through the mud.

The consequences of overriding the Protocol would also be deeply damaging.

The Conservatives risk plunging the country into a trade war with our closest neighbours, and largest trading partners.

It's time for the Conservatives to stop grandstanding

This would be a bad move at any time. But right now, with inflation soaring, bills skyrocketing, and the Conservatives failing to provide the support which families desperately need, a trade war would turn a cost of living emergency into a nightmare.

From small businesses to scientists; from farmers to fishers, this would be a disaster, and one entirely of the Conservatives' making.

No responsible government would ever countenance taking such steps.

Yet the Conservatives' ideological approach means they are incapable of seeing the obvious solutions on the table.

Solutions such as a veterinary agreement and alignment on food standards. Pragmatic discussions on those options between the UK and the EU is where a resolution lies. And the Northern Ireland Assembly elections – in which our sister party Alliance saw the largest increase in votes and seats – made clear that a pragmatic approach is the way forward.

It's time for the Conservatives to stop grandstanding – and start putting the people of Northern Ireland, and of the whole of the UK, first.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

[Autumn Conference Update – back in-person!](#)

Since Spring Conference, most members will have been focused on the Local Elections which took place in many parts of the country – and rightly so: the hard work has paid off, with some truly fantastic gains made from both the Conservatives and Labour. Particular mention should go to **our amazing Chief Steward at Conference, Mike Ross, who is now the Leader of Hull Council!** Massive congratulations to Mike and the whole team.

Yet, while the focus has of course been on the Locals, your Committee has also been hard at work reviewing member feedback from Spring Conference and planning for the Autumn.

I know so many of us are really looking forward to our **first in-person conference since 2019**. It's been three long years, and we've all been through the mill. The absence of the conference bar has been keenly felt, I know – and for some, so has the absence of Glee Club, the conference quiz, Alistair's whisky tastings (although the virtual ones during lockdown were also excellent)... the list goes on and on. For me and many other members of FCC first elected late in 2019, this will be the first in-person conference as a member of the Committee!

Yet, however much we all miss gathering every autumn at what is usually a south coast venue, one thing we have learnt during lockdown is that virtual conferences work. As a result, FCC was adamant that we had to provide **some form of hybrid attendance at this Autumn Conference**. Now, I'm not going to promise all bells and whistles: there are a large number of factors the Committee needs to consider, but one thing we are all united on is the desire to make sure as many people as possible can participate in our Conference.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

[Lib Dems pick Sarah Dyke for Somerton and Frome](#)

The Liberal Democrats have selected Cllr Sarah Dyke as their candidate for the Somerton and Frome constituency.

Sarah lives in the constituency and is from a Somerset farming family which can be traced back over 250 years to the local area. Sarah worked in the agricultural industry and is Portfolio Holder for the Environment on South Somerset District Council where she is spearheading rewilding programmes, investment in electric vehicle charging points and the council's zero-carbon targets.

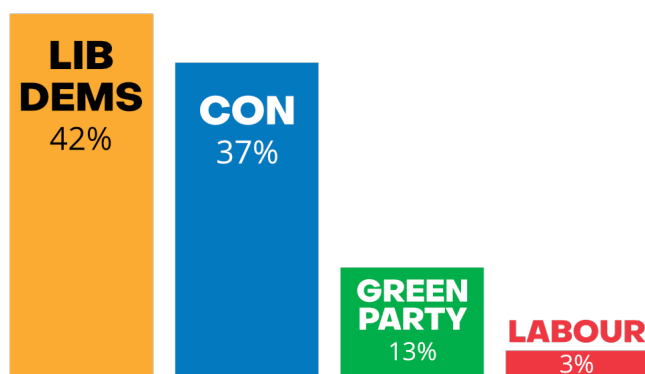
Last week Sarah was elected to Somerset County Council to represent Blackmoor Vale, beating the head of the Conservatives' dedicated anti-Lib Dem unit.

In Somerset, the head of the 'Lib Dem unit' at CCHQ has been defeated by, er, the Lib Dems <https://t.co/mKiTswrQLl>

– James Heale (@JAHeale) [May 6, 2022](#)

The Somerton and Frome election will be a **close two horse race** after the Liberal Democrats finished in a clear second in the seat at the last general election and this month gained control of Somerset County Council from the Conservatives.

The impressive results during the local elections saw the Liberal Democrats win 61 council seats across Somerset, almost double the number of Conservatives seats and with Labour in a distant third with just five seats. **The Liberal Democrats also won the popular vote in the Somerton and Frome constituency.**



2022 local election result in Somerton & Frome

Leader of the Liberal Democrats Ed Davey MP said:

“Sarah is a passionate campaigner who is determined to fight for a fair deal for communities across Somerton and Frome, who have been badly let down by the Conservative party.

“Sarah’s track record of protecting the local environment and standing up for local farmers shows she would make an excellent MP.

“I have heard loud and clear from local people that they are fed up with being taken for granted by Boris Johnson’s Conservative Government. There is real anger in Somerset at a Conservative Prime Minister who is hiking taxes on hard-working families and let GP waiting times spiral out of control.

“At the next election it will be a two horse race between Boris Johnson’s Conservative party and a committed local champion in Sarah Dyke.”

Liberal Democrat parliamentary candidate for Somerton and Frome Sarah Dyke said:

“I am delighted to have been selected and will fight for a fair deal for communities who have been ignored for too long by Conservative politicians.

“Villages and towns across Somerton and Frome have been taken for granted by the Conservative party. Our communities suffer from dangerously long waiting times to see a GP or NHS Dentist and disgusting sewage being dumped in our rivers.

“As someone from a farming family I understand the outrage at botched trade deals and the shambles over essential payments. I will stand up for our farmers who deserve a strong voice for them in Westminster.

“Local people voted for change when the Conservatives were ousted from Somerset County Council and it will be a two horse race to win Somerton and Frome at the next election.”

[Go to Source](#)

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