



ANNUAL REPORT



LGBT+ CONSERVATIVES TEAM

July 2020 – May 2021

OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN – Elena Rose Bunbury
DEPUTY CHAIRMAN – Cllr. John Cope
HONORARY SECRETARY – Cllr. Jed Dwight
HONORARY TREASURER - Cllr. Sean Anstee CBE
VICE-CHAIRMAN CANDIDATES' FUND - Scott Collins MBA FInstLM
VICE-CHAIR MEMBERSHIP – Niall McDougall
VICE-CHAIR OUTREACH - Cllr. Joe Porter

GENERAL COUNCIL

Jessica Zbinden-Webster
Ben Joce
Owen Meredith
Joe Pattinson
Will Fletcher
Cllr. Dr. Ross Hills
Luke Robert Black
Druv Rajkoomar (declined to submit report)

REGIONAL COORDINATORS

North East: Cllr. Barry Flux
Scotland – Andrew Jarvie
Wales – Dillon Hughes
North West: Tom Harris (declined to submit report)
South East: Odette Lattimer-Gittins (declined to submit report)
South West: Simon Davies (declined to submit report)
Yorkshire and The Humber: Cllr. Jacob Birch – Resigned



CHAIR

Elena Rose Bunbury

Strap in for an unfiltered, brutally honest report... This year has been a busy one. It has been disappointing as your Chair to have not been able to meet members physically, but that did not stop us from pushing out one of the most interactive years yet!

I have faced challenges both internally within the party, and externally winning the support and engagement of charities and MPs. But I am proud of how our organisation has stood firm to ensure our communities needs were at the forefront of every decision – even if it did land me in a spot of bother on occasion...

I started this year by conducting a skills audit of all of our elected council members, which then lead to a structural uphaul. I wanted to make the organisation more efficient, a campaigning machine. To do this I broke down every possible area we work within, from press to policy, our newsletter to patrons, the list goes on. I then set about assigning elected members as lead and deputy lead of those portfolios. This was to allow multiple projects, fundraising and campaigns to be happening at once, and to empower volunteers with big ideas to put them into reality. In previous years, the general council did not always have set roles. This year I ensured that every single member had at least one group they were working within. My view is that being elected to represent all of you is a privilege and we should have to put the work in to serve you. This ruffled some feathers initially with some members seeing themselves as elected in name only, however through accommodating members interests, we reached a solid structure that we have carried out throughout the year. With 1000 WhatsApp groups to go with this...

I will admit, I am a taskmaster. I expect people to work hard, and if they commit to something, to get it done. But this year has taught me to be softer with my approach, intending to position myself in a more approachable manner.

From the start, I have pushed for open communication. I have no problem if people do not have time to do work, we are all volunteers after all. But this must be clearly communicated. My biggest frustration this year was contending with multiple ghosting's when work was due and being left on read more times than I can count, resulting in myself and other key members picking up the slack.

I feel all of this is a valuable experience in how to run a voluntary organisation, and I have a lot of learnings I will be taking into the new term.

When I was first elected there were concerns. These ranged from my age (23), my gender and even my sexuality as a proud bisexual. But I did not let that stop me, if anything it fueled me to deliver. I have gone head to head with senior politicians, represented the group on a national and global level, all whilst keeping down a full-time job. Having put in over 700 unpaid hours this past year for the organisation, I am hopeful that I have proved myself.

The team has worked so hard this year and I am grateful for how receptive and accepting they have been of my leadership.

Please see below a list of some of my proudest work this year as your chair:

- Launched our mentoring platform with Pushfar.
- Organised, hosted and directed our charity 'Tory Lip Sync Battle' which received national press coverage and a visit from the Prime Minister and the wonderful ally Carrie Symonds. This event also raised significant funds which then went on to fund candidates.
- Organised and hosted our cross-party event on women's engagement.
- Wrote our strong stance GRA statement.
- Planned and implemented our GRA lobbying both within the party and externally.
- Partook and organised a round table event with CCHQ and our members on trans issues.
- CT letter.
- Hosted an MP Zoom briefing on the GRA with help from Stonewall, the APPG and Mermaids. This was the best attended Conservative MP LGBT+ briefing ever to date, and we are proud to have an open-door policy to all Tory MPs, regardless of if they support us or not.
- Hosted the first-ever 'MEET THE COUNCIL Q&A' allowing members to hold us accountable.
- Supported the VC Candidates Fund in funding LGBT+ Conservative candidates.
- Hosted and organised an event around HIV with Terrence Higgins Trust, along with multiple articles and social media postings from Tory MPs to support this.
- Advised both Mermaids and Stonewall with their approach to engaging and working with Tory MPs and members, which assisted them with the already amazing work they do.
- Provided policy advice and communication support to the GEO Secretary of State, her team and many other MPs, both backbench and with portfolio.
- Introduced the first-ever LGBT+ Conservatives BAME representative and supported him in all his wonderful work.
- Introduced the first-ever LGBT+ Conservatives Women's representative and supported her with her campaigns.
- Supported Will Fletcher as he represented us at a cross-party mental health event.
- Introduced the 'Council Member of the Month' award scheme, to help motivate and reward our hardest working volunteers.
- Spoke on numerous national broadcasting stations as a representative for the group and community.
- Hosted an MP drop-in week, where MPs could book phone calls to speak directly to our members and help gain more understanding of the issues our community faces, and our members lived experiences.
- Lead the negotiations with CCHQ regarding our affiliation and working relationship with them.
- Assisted various MPs with over 30 separate articles, comments, speeches, statements, and social media content in support of our campaigns and group.
- Many more things that I've probably forgotten...

This has been a great year for our diversification and representation, with our voice louder than ever. I only see this continuing to grow in the years to come.

I am delighted to be returned for another year so we can continue to push for what we know is right.

I want to reaffirm that my door is open. If you ever have an idea for projects we can do, campaigns we can support, people we can help, then please let us know. Alternatively, if you are ever unhappy or think that we've missed the mark, then please let me know and hold me accountable.

I am here to represent and fight for our community the best that I can, thank you for allowing me another year to do that.



Deputy Chair

Cllr. John Cope

Over 2021, I have prioritised building our relationships with parliamentarians and journalists, especially in relation to our strong stance against conversion therapy and tackling the discrimination trans people continue to face. This has included ghost writing articles, ensuring LGBT+ Conservatives is positioned well on delicate and difficult topics, and being interviewed on the BBC and radio.

Alongside these priorities, I have refreshed our Patrons, enjoyed being a mentor in our mentoring scheme, and spoke on behalf of LGBT+ Conservatives at various events, including to the European Centre-Right LGBT+ Alliance and several briefing sessions for Conservative MPs. The highlight however was judging our lip sync battle - fabulous and slightly bizarre in equal measure.



Honorary Secretary

Cllr. Jed Dwight

I would like to sincerely thank everybody who has supported the LGBT+ Conservatives, and particularly the e-newsletters that I've produced during my time as Secretary. It has been an absolute honour to serve in this role over the past year, and while I'm stepping down due to a series of other commitments, I will absolutely continue to support the work of the group moving forward.

I really hope that our newsletters – always bringing a splash of colour to your inbox – have been of benefit to members over the past year, including the new addition of interviews with some of our new MPs and Patrons, which I hope gave an insight into the work this group supports through the candidates fund, as well as more generally.

I've been pleased to support members of the group, including Ross Hills with the LGBT+ Conservative Mentoring Programme, in promoting our virtual events and merchandise, as well as the work of our Chair Elena, who has done so much for the group during her first year in the role, and been an excellent voice for the LGBT+ community.

I know that the incoming team have big and exciting plans both for this role, as well as the LGBT+ Conservative Group more broadly over the coming year, and I really look forward to seeing those plans develop as a member.

Thank you again for all of your support, and I very much look forward to seeing many of you in person at Conference this autumn, if not before!



Honorary Treasurer

Cllr. Sean Anstee CBE



Final Accounts

Year ending 31 December 2020

Sean Anstee CBE, BA (Hons) – Honorary Treasurer



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Profit & (Loss) 2020

Income	31.12.20	31.12.19
Membership Fees		5247.13
Other Fundraising Events		642.93
Interest		1.98
Candidate Fund		1980.00
Other Income		1.00
Total Income	7,872	11,601
Expenditure		
Direct Publicity Expenses		0.00
Administration Expenses (Website / Post)		410.00
Pride (inc postage and travel)		0.00
Conference		0.00
Cost of Events		1,234.96
Candidates Fund Payout		0.00
Other Expenditure		0.00
Total expenditure	1,645	11,091
Gross Income	6,227	510



Balance Sheet 2020

Balance Sheet	31.12.20	31.12.19
Bank Account	1,032.95	3,407.85
Candidates Fund	13,066	4,464
Reserve Account	7,569	7,569
Assets	21,668	15,441
Profit and Loss Reserves Brought Forward	15,441	14,931
Profit and Loss Current Year	6,227	510
Liabilities	21,668	15,441



Remarks

- We have seen consistent membership income in 2020, despite the exceptional circumstances.
- There is a direct correlation between reduced expenditure and cancellation of Pride events and Conference.
- A highlight in in Q1 was the establishment of the Patrons Club to support the Candidates Fund. We took the pro-active decision to pause contributions in March, however there was income of £1980. The full year effect was forecast to be £8k so important to revitalise this.
- Very minimal expenditure throughout 2020, main costs being the website.
- Limited election activity and so no Candidates Fund applications in 2020



Vice-Chair Candidates Fund

Scott Collins MBA FInstLM

With the pandemic it has been impossible to run the planned programme of fundraising events and we stood down the Donor Club as a reflection of the financial pressures many faced.

We have spent some of this year looking at how the fund operates and how we can rebuild the support base over the year ahead. We have lined up an initial function pre recess for the Donor Club as well as working with the Chair on the conference Pride Event.

We have also been active with the allocation of funding to various campaigns having the submissions from London and the regional assemblies. We look forward to seeing the results on 6th May.

Our key approach for the year ahead is to:

- Refocus the support for the fund through the Donor Club and a general fundraising event
- Establish the key event dates for the year
- Set some targets for the fund over the next three years



Vice-Chair Membership

Niall McDougall

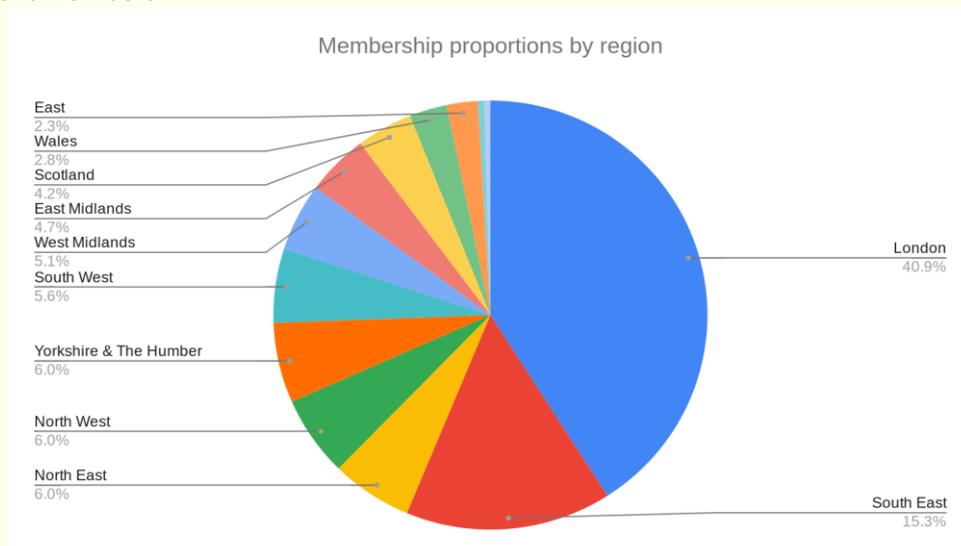
It has been an extraordinary year, and I am pleased to report that our organisation goes from strength to strength, with membership climbing up again after the Q1 lull.

We have seen an increase in members signing up by direct debit and standing orders, and this gives the organisation a stability that ensures the robustness of our accounts, membership and future outlay. Also there has been an increase in Family memberships recently offered by the organisation. Our younger members numbers continue to increase, and I believe this demonstrates the changing and modern approach we take, as well as the general transformation of the Conservative party, in meeting our members needs and requirements.

I have worked through the year with our board members on a number of varied projects including CCHQ affiliation, AGM planning, our recent elections, the HIV strategy, THT relations and contributed to our newsletter an article on routine PrEP commissioning. I have been a contact point for our members, responding to various queries around membership, the opportunities we provide, mentoring etcetera, and ran a membership campaign in January aimed at getting people signed up (during the lockdown) to continue our work. I have and continue to provide support and counsel to my colleagues, working together to deliver on our agenda and aims.

Membership details

219 current members



Whilst I have been unable to host any social events in London during the pandemic, I have remained a contact and sign poster for queries in the London region.

Moving forwards I shall be standing down from my Vice Chair role so that I can focus on work. I shall remain as the regional coordinator for London, and shall be setting up some post-lockdown socials. I look forward to meeting you at one of our events soon.



Vice-Chair Outreach

Cllr. Joe Porter



Banning Conversion Therapy
By Joe Porter

Conversion therapy has been one of the headline issues in politics over the last few weeks. It is a widely discredited practice that seeks to erase, repress, cure or change someone's sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

The need to have so-called "conversion therapy" banned has been debated a lot in Parliament and the Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Equalities Minister Liz Truss have both publicly committed to not only end the abhorrent practice, but introduce a ban. But the proof will be in the pudding when the Government announces the official legislation introducing that ban.

BECOMING A REGIONAL COORDINATOR

- Cllr Boris Black - Regional Coordinator for the North East and Northumbria County Council
- Cllr Joe Porter - Vice Chair for Outreach and Sport/Active Moorlands District Council
- Neil McDougall - Vice Chair for Membership and Regional Coordinator for London

MEET THE COUNCIL

Rainbow Pride Cake Recipe
By Cllr Joe Porter

A stunning celebration cake of six or seven colourful layers with soft cheese frosting – an impressive showstopper that's perfect for the Pride season or afternoon tea!

Prep: 2 hrs
Cook: 1 hr
Cuts into about 18 slices

- Hosted a recruitment event on becoming a Regional Coordinator
- Recruited 4 new Regional Coordinators in Scotland, Wales, South West and South East and hosted welcome event
- Attended two group meetings with Party Chairman Amanda Milling MP to discuss outreach and working together
- Contributed to group newsletter, including a special Pride cake recipe!
- Wrote a blog about why conversion therapy should be banned
- Supported our new International Coordinator in establishing links with sister parties
- Spoke at our 'Meet the Council' event about my priorities
- Spoke at our LGBT+ candidates event about local council elections
- Social media campaigning on banning conversion therapy, trans rights and Pride Month

Regional Co-ordinators



Scotland – Cllr. Andrew Jarvie

Covid-19 brought many challenges to what was planned for the year. Undeterred, I have started drafting plans for a Scottish LGBT+ Conservatives Team to drive membership, events and fundraising. These discussions have, Scottish Conservative Central Office and the Candidates Board where there was strong support. I hope to submit formal proposals to General Council later this year and even if Pride's won't go ahead, I plan to still have some informal socials over our own at the very least.



Wales – Dillon Hughes

"I was appointed as Wales Regional Coordinator in late November 2020, this was the first time I have joined and stood for election for the RC Role with the LGBT+ Conservatives, it's been a challenging months with this role during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown after lockdown so most of what have done is making plans for future ideas once it was COVID safe to do so. One of the main priorities for me is making sure that the LGBT+ individuals voices are heard outside of the capital area of Cardiff and urban areas but those in rural communities, many people in the rural communities such as myself face a lot of homophobic abuse. I have worked closely with the Vice Chair Outreach on the issues LGBT+ individuals face in rural communities such as discrimination and there were plans in place to organise a led panel discussion on this in the future. Conclusions. During the months of being RC for Wales it was very difficult during this COVID-19 pandemic as a frontline NHS worker myself. I personally agree there is much to improve for the RC Wales role once restrictions are lifted such as planning for more Regional Pride Events such as North Wales and Mid & West Wales and making sure our voice of LGBT+ Conservatives Wales are heard on social media so making our very own Facebook page would be an excellent idea to gain more members and to help bring out many of our closeted LGBT+ Conservatives. "



North East – Cllr. Barry Flux

It goes without saying for all regions, that activities have been extremely limited due to the covid pandemic. However, it is pleasing to state the progress over the past year the activities of LGBT + Conservatives and the Conservative Party in general in the North East region.

This has included LGBT + Conservatives running as candidates, getting elected to local councils and being representatives on local party associations and federations. It is pleasing to see progress in all parts of the region, from Northumberland, through Tyne & Wear to County Durham and the Tees Valley.

As an organisation we will be poised for Pride events when they eventually resume, particularly with Northern Pride (Newcastle) due to be the national pride eventually. We also will be poised to meet socially, have fundraisers, signpost policy forums and other lobbying functions within the national LGBT + Conservatives and engage with LGBT + members in the North East once allowable.

General Council



Cllr. Dr. Ross Hills

This year my time spent serving the group as a General Council member has been split between co-leading our mentoring platform LGBT+ Leaders and running the shop.

Since its launch just after conference last year I am particularly proud of how LGBT+ Leaders has gone from strength to strength.

In the planning stages we were always clear that it is not just for people who aspire to be MPs of the future, as fab as that is, but rather for our members that want help in achieving any political role. To that end, as far as I am aware, we have a mentor for every role out there – from a parish councillor to a Lord. Feedback for the scheme has been positive although we are aware not all mentors have been as responsive as others and so we are looking into ways to ensure more active mentor participation.

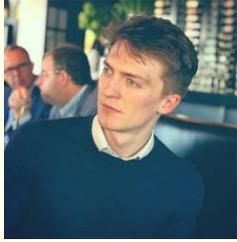
As LGBT+ Conservatives charge for membership I believe we need to ensure we are offering good value to money, I hope that the chance of participating in this free mentoring scheme goes some way to achieving that. It is also important to note that thanks to Scott and Elena's perseverance we are able to partner with PushFar and use their platform at no cost to our group where other organisations are charged.

Looking to the future we are aiming to include one-off training sessions as part of the LGBT+ Leaders scheme to help more of our members get elected to roles and ultimately represent our community.

Other than the mentoring scheme, this year I have been in charge of our shop which provides our group with a modest income when compared to other revenue streams. My personal favourite project was our Christmas jumper competition judged by Dr. Luke Evans MP. We also released a range of topical and inclusive face masks helping members be fashionable and safe.



Our best sellers this year as always however have been classic items such as mugs and t shirts. Depending on what our future Pride plans are I am hoping we can release limited edition Pride merchandise for members to wear when representing our group.



Luke Robert Black

I was co-opted onto this team last year and have acted in a mostly supporting role over the last year, assisting Elena and the wider team in an administrative capacity.

I am excited to now take on a more delivery-based role as an elected member but happy to have contributed to this great team, particularly on Calls to Action comms, a Comms Twitter boost function, graphic assistance on internal and external Comms and submissions to the newsletter.



Owen Meredith

Given the pandemic year that has reshaped all our activities and lives, we have not been able to do the usual level of fundraising for the Candidates' Fund which is my normal focus for the organisation, supporting Scott Collins.

Having launched the Donor Club with Scott last year to help bolster our regular funding activity and build long-term revenue streams, we paused the membership at the start of the pandemic as the core offer was orientated around in-person events and opportunities which became impossible to deliver. We look forward to relaunching the Club this year.

I have therefore focussed on outreach and supporting the Officers with work across the organisation. Equally, ensuring LGBT+ candidates who stood in this year's elections knew about the Candidates' Fund support and how to apply – and I am delighted that several of those we directly supported were elected earlier this month, demonstrating the power of the fund to help LGBT+ candidates secure elected office.



Will Fletcher

This has been my first year as a member of the General Council. During the past year I've provided support to the Chair and the Executive and sat on the policy, candidates fund and patrons sub-groups. I was also particularly proud to represent LGBT+ Conservatives at a cross-party panel on LGBT Mental Health that was organised in December by Out for Independence, the SNP LGBT group.



Jessica Zbinden-Webster

Over the last year I've had the pleasure of collaborating with passionate campaigners, both within LGBT+ Conservatives and across sympathetic party groups and organisations.

In my role as Women and Comms lead, I have:

- Produced social media graphics, posts, videos, animations and other content
- Created posters for LGBT+ Conservatives' internal and collaborative events
- Promoted LGBT+ Conservatives events across social media and to stakeholders
- Lobbied the Government Equalities Office on improving provisions for bullied LGBT+ children in schools
- Co-hosted the 2020 Party Conference Lip Sync Battle
- Joined the 'Meet the Council' event virtual panel
- Represented the organisation at meetings with CCHQ
- Produced a viral video content of the LGBT+ Conservatives' party conference event which got over 400,000 views on Twitter
- Represented the organisation in meetings at the 2020 virtual party conference
- Supported the Chair in recruiting cabinet ministers to the LGBT+ Leaders scheme
- Provided editorial counsel to campaigns and open letters
- Supported the cross-party women's virtual event, 'Bloody Difficult Women'
- Produced a promotional video featuring MP support for GRA reform
- Liaised with the press and the media directly, and offered counsel regarding press relations

It's been a wonderful experience, and I hope to return to an official role in the future, when I have scope to offer more time to the group's day-to-day business.



Ben Joce

Although the past year has, unfortunately, been a challenge due to the "physical" restrictions on events and meetings, the wider council should be applauded for continuing to provide an opportunity for us as LGBT+ Conservatives to come together to socialise, support each other and progress our shared vision on improving LGBT rights.

I have supported the exec team, in my role as general council, by providing advice and guidance, at various council meetings on topics such as advancing and improving membership and the constitutional change / affiliated reforms.

Although I will not be part of the council next year I will continue to be involved and support the group and wish the new council the best of luck for the future.



Joe Pattinson

The very purpose of a general council member is to provide general support to the executive and indeed be a form of counsel to ideas that arise, namely that regarding policy, campaigns, outreach, and socials/events.

The theme of this year has of course been the pandemic and the challenges that have been. LGBT+ Conservatives has been no different.

Whilst buoyancy may be felt in slowly overcoming the pandemic, we can be buoyant going forward.

Policy first and foremost.

As I write, the Queen's speech has been read in Parliament. There are good elements included. They will bolster and help the lives of LGBT+ people across the UK. Some examples include: the ban on conversion therapy; the fairer rulings for blood donation; and the reduced fee on gender recognition certificates. We find ourselves in better place on policy matters than we did this time last year.

Stumbling blocks remain over gender recognition. I'm however confident valiant efforts will be maintained so that progress can and will be made. In return, I sincerely hope these continued valiant efforts are reciprocated from ministers and ministerial teams with the proper decency and respect they deserve.

Outside the remit of policy, buoyancy can be felt in the efforts which help towards mentoring, outreach, and in social/event elements.

The mentoring scheme took off, co-ordinating with sister parties took off, and lip-syncing ignited a frenzied joy throughout the political world. These are solid foundations for the upcoming year (well, we did have an array of invaluable lip sync masterclasses!). With next year in mind, I personally look forward to applying these foundations in Yorkshire & the Humber and indeed building on them where applicable. I'm sure that sentiment is echoed by colleagues in their respective fields and areas.

To conclude, I wish to give a HUGE thanks to those leading from the front on the exec, to fellow council members, and to regional co-ordinators over the last year. I look forward to working with you this coming year in whatever that capacity may be. Your help and expertise has truly been invaluable. Newly elected members: you are going to be a great success too! Onwards and upwards!

END