



# ANNUAL REPORT



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# LGBT+ CONSERVATIVES TEAM

May 2021 – May 2022

## OFFICERS

**CHAIRMAN – Elena Rose Bunbury**  
**DEPUTY CHAIRMAN – Dr. Ross Hills**  
**HONORARY SECRETARY – John Gray**  
**HONORARY TREASURER - Sean Anstee CBE**  
**VICE-CHAIRMAN CANDIDATES' FUND - Scott Collins**  
**VICE-CHAIR OUTREACH – Pierre Andrews**  
**VICE-CHAIR MEMBERSHIP – Marcin Pisanski (inactive and declined to submit report)**

## GENERAL COUNCIL

**Luke Robert Black**  
**Xavier White**  
**Owen Meredith**  
**Joe Porter**  
**Morgan Walton Women's Outreach Officer**  
**Suraj Bhanot – BAME Outreach Officer**  
**Will Fletcher (declined to submit report)**  
**Aaron Boasman-Patel (declined to submit report)**  
**Dr. James William Noble (declined to submit report)**

## REGIONAL COORDINATORS

**Tom Hulme**  
**Niall McDougall**  
**Rhy McKavanagh**  
**Andrew Jarvie (declined to submit report)**  
**Simon Davies (declined to submit report)**  
**Barry Flux (declined to submit report)**  
**Dillon Hughes (resigned)**

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# REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

## Elena Rose Bunbury

It has been a privilege to be Chair for another year, and I am incredibly proud of the work our group has gotten up to.

We have continued to fundraise and distribute funds through our Candidates Fund scheme. This allows us to help the elections of many amazing LGBT+ candidates, helping us to increase representation for our community, and in turn ensure our voices remain firmly at the table.

We have pushed diversity, through the creation of the BAME and Women Outreach Officers. This was something I brought in, in the hope that it would show these are groups we know we need to do more outreaching to, not only in terms of membership, but in terms of policy also. Thank you to the fantastic people who took on these roles.

Policy has still been a hot topic, mainly with a focus on the Conversion Therapy Ban, and also discussions into the GRA, Blood Donation and even asylum seeking. I feel it's important that we use our voice within the party to feed into these issues and lobby when appropriate.

There is still a lot of work to do, but we have remained strong and active in the representation of our members.

Conference was a great success. Our programme was the biggest it's ever been, and I think it's fair to say our Stonewall reception was the hottest ticket in town!! We received over 50 pieces of media coverage around the events we put on, helping to not only highlight our work, but signpost it to other members who may wish to join.

On top of this we ran a pledge board programme, inviting MPs, AMs and more to come down and sign our boards and take a photo showing they will remain strong allies and supporters of our community.

We also ran our 'Queeries Bar', allowing MPs to come down and have a chat with our volunteers over any issues or questions they might have. This led to numerous MPs who had not engaged with us before, coming down and seeking advice, which was lovely to see!

Membership communication has also been a key priority, trying to ensure our members not only stay informed, but that we can offer them exclusive content. We have conducted many interviews this year with a range of political 'celebrities', which has allowed our members to take a peek behind the curtain of these interesting people.

I finally want to thank all of you. Without the amazing work of our council members, regional coordinators, and members, we wouldn't be able to do any of this.

So, thank you for engaging with us, supporting us and holding us accountable.

Here's to another great year!

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# Deputy Chair

## Dr. Ross Hills

It has been an absolute delight serving as the Deputy Chairman of LGBT+ Conservatives over the past year. Being a year where covid restrictions eased, I was particularly happy we were able to start hosting our face-to-face events once more. I'd also like to take this opportunity highlight the hard work of the volunteers that run LGBT+ Conservatives, it has been a pleasure working with the rest of the Council.

Below is a summary of some of the key things I have worked on over the last 12 months:

- For the first time, our group produced a general leaflet highlighting the achievements of the Conservative government with regards to recent LGBT+ initiatives and policies on one side and then an advert for our organisation on the other. I wrote and designed the leaflet which has been really handy to use at events we have attended. Crucially it is also available as a free download on Toolkit for general Party members to use.
- The political highlight of every year for me is conference and this year was no difference. I may be biased but I think our 'production' in Manchester last October was the best we've ever had. Beyond manning the stall, I was able to offer background support such as recruiting volunteers, providing the pledge boards, getting the t shirts made, collecting prizes etc.
- I had organised for our group to attend a number of Prides this year in person but they were subsequently cancelled. Generally only Prides towards the end of the summer actually went ahead. This was rather frustrating as I wanted to show off the shiny new marching banner I designed and made for the group. It seemed that smaller, more local Prides had success in going ahead and I was glad to be able to send out LGBT+ Conservative Pride care packages to a number of groups and MPs for them to use. These included correx boards, stickers and the leaflets mention above (not sure what this is supposed to say) all with our branding on it. I have my fingers crossed that next year will see us attend more Prides than last, I've already submitted our bid to march in London.
- Last year I attended the West Midlands Conservative conference giving a speech to the 50+ attendees on the work our organisation does and also sat on a panel discussing outreach and answering audience questions.
- Whilst the shop is never a big breadwinner for our group, I've kept it ticking over this year with new designs.
- It is also within the Deputy Chairman's remit to deal with disputes and complaints within the group. Thankfully this year there were barely any!
- Looking ahead to the next 12 months I am currently organising our Pride plan, trying to get our group represented at as many events as I can across the UK as widely as possible and also an event with the CCHQ Candidates team to encourage more LGBT+ people to run as Conservative candidates.

I hope that by reading the annual reports contained here you will realise how diverse the work of our group actually is - from hosting in depth policy discussions to parties fundraising for our candidates there really is something for everyone to get involved with. Fingers crossed the next 12 months are even bigger and better.

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# Honorary Secretary

**John Gray**

I took on the role some way through the year, having been inspired by the group's work at the October Party conference in Manchester. Being part of the team there was wonderful.

Helping man the stand brought me into contact with a wide range of members and MPs. I attended as many LGBT+ Cons events as I could and had a blast at the Stonewall reception and Cruz 101 party.

Since then, I've been involved with the small but very successful social media team including writing content about some of our patrons. An absolute highlight of the year was interviewing one of them, Lord Guy Black of Brentwood who was incredibly candid and very patient with a novice interviewer!

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# Honorary Treasurer

## **Cllr. Sean Anstee CBE**

Overall income for the year rose considerably against 2020, across all our income lines but especially due to a one-off donation secured at CPC21 towards the Candidates Fund. As we learnt to live with COVID and host fundraising events, we did so with vigour and each were profitable.

There was a correlating rise in expenditure although it should be noted that there is no income usually associated with costs relating to Candidates Fund pay-outs or members events at events such as party conference. Excluding these lines of expenditure demonstrates an ongoing commitment to remaining in financial surplus annually and value for money to members.

This leaves us in a very strong position for the next year to continue to fund candidates and provide great events and value for money to our members.

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# Vice-Chair Candidates Fund

## **Scott Collins**

As we have emerged from the lockdown, we were able to convene a fundraiser back in October which was a great success. Hosted in central London we had a great turnout and a lively auction as well as Lord Herbert as our speaker in his role as the UK Government LGBT+ Envoy.

As well as helping at conference to arrange our main party night, we landed a significant donation from a Party Donor and following conference I met online with them to discuss the use of the funds and how they would support our work on candidates. All in all, another slower year due to the pandemic but one in which we thrashed our plans for 2022 and which we hope to start rolling out to further bolster our candidate funds ahead of 2024's GE.

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# Vice-Chair Outreach

## Pierre Andrews

As Vice-Chair Outreach of LGBT+ Conservatives, over the last twelve months I have put a clear emphasis on building up our profile, both internationally with our sister-party organisations, but also domestically by making clear to the Government our interest in standing up for LGBT+ people during major conflicts. On a local/regional level, I made sure that regional coordinators all have ways to get in touch with local members, and have encouraged them to get a lot more active now that COVID is receding.

At Conservative Party Conference 2021, I helped man the stall in the conference centre, prepared the room for our champagne reception, ran the door at the nightclub, but most rewardingly prepared the speaking notes for, and took part in, our policy panel, on what the Government's priorities should be for the 'Safe To Be Me' conference taking place later this year. LGBT+ Conservatives Chair Elena Bunbury, Andrew Boff AM, Nicola Richards MP, Flo Coleman from the Tory Reform Group, and Minister Mike Freer all answered questions that I had prepared and collected on healthcare, civil liberties, and marriage and adoption for LGBT+ people around the world, and how the UK can use its soft power to promote freedom to love in countries where these rights are not always acquired. It was a serious, yet also warm and light-hearted discussion, where everyone felt on the same page: for a Conservative Party Conference event, a definite success!

In early 2022, I also organised a panel between LGBT+ Conservatives and several of our sister-parties from around the world: with LGBT+ Conservatives Chair Elena Bunbury, Sophia Ahlin, International Secretary of Öppna Moderater in Sweden, Helge Ytterøy L'Orange, Chair of Åpne Høyre in Norway

Alexander Vogt, Chair of the Lesben-und-Schwulen-Union in Germany, and Fredrik Saweståhl, Chair of the European Centre-Right LGBT+ Alliance. This was a 'best-practice' event, where we all shared with each other tips on fundraising, media relations, and campaigning, both within centre-right parties for LGBT+ rights, and within the LGBT+ community for conservatism.

And lastly, on the international level, I have made sure that we spoke out for LGBT+ voices during two of the most tragic humanitarian crises we have seen in over a decade: the takeover by the Taliban of Afghanistan, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. I felt it was important to make a clear signal to the UK Government that we expected, given clear statements of intent from the Taliban and Kremlin to reverse civil liberties, them to act fast to protect and save all at risk, including LGBT+ Afghans and Ukrainians. The Foreign Office has kept us up to date on their strategy in these situations, making it clear to us they are acutely aware of the risk LGBT+ people are at in these territories.

On a local level, I made sure that every one of our Regional Coordinators had set up Facebook groups, which we invite local members to join, and also invited RCs to start organising campaign dates in the run up to the local elections in May 2022, now that we have resumed to normal life. To set an example, I organised a campaign day in Carshalton and Wallington for our patron Elliot Colburn MP, and I'm glad to say that other LGBT+ Conservatives officers have now picked up the baton and are organising campaign and social events in their own areas too.



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# Communications Lead

## Luke Robert Black

This year on the General Council, I have been working predominantly as the LGBT+ Conservatives' Head of Comms, supported by the Deputy Tom Hulme. I was also Conference Lead for LGBT+ Conservatives this year, helping with the delivery and coordination of LGBT+ Conservatives' events and initiatives at the Conservative Party Conference.

In terms of communication and social media, over the last year, Tom (Deputy Comms Lead), the Social Media team and I, have overhauled LGBT+ Conservatives' comms and social media. In doing so, we have increased exposure across all three platforms (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) as well as setting up a LinkedIn platform to ensure we are reaching as many different groups as possible. We have also created new strategy for more organisation-focussed content, increased interaction with patrons and allies, as well as marking LGBT+ history events and milestones

Impressions, engagement and followers up on all four platforms, including:

Impressions up 406% (Unique user views of tweets)

Retweets of tweets up 125%

Link conversion up 263% (i.e. people are more likely to click on a link we post)

Likes of tweets up 69%

Replies to tweets up 146%

We have also created a new brand image, colour palette and font for LGBT+ Conservatives alongside creating graphics templates for Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram, using bespoke templates for each platform to maximise quality and resolution (i.e. sizing graphics to fit for Instagram stories). Graphics creation tools such as Photoshop and GIMP have been upskilled across the team, with weekly meetings to train, schedule and craft content.

The team has generated our own content to assist with the low pipeline of content by creating key new assets such as graphics generators, comms schedules and comms policies to support this.

We delivered new projects such as Patron Spotlights, increasing membership communication and also created all graphics for events, initiatives and campaigns across the organisation to help signpost.

Live tweeting of all events where possible, offering pre and post event comms support across social media omnichannel to allow all members to engage. We also managed the inboxes of all four channels, escalating correspondence where necessary to VC audience and responding to all positive engagement online. Alongside this we improved BAU process for comms, speeding up publication time and reducing demand on the team.

In terms of LGBT+ Cons business management I set up a new file sharing and team collaboration tool on Microsoft Teams and created a central file depository for photos to reduce reliance on royalty free images for the councils use.

As the conference lead, I helped Elena to deliver the Conference agenda and managed press interactions, patron interactions and events where Elena was a speaker. I managed the guest list for high-profile Carrie Johnson event and LGBT+ Cons after party, including liaising with security protocol for cabinet ministers.

I also managed and created a bespoke conference strategy for comms and created all graphics for virtual and physical collateral, e.g. pledge boards.

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# General Council

## Suraj Bahnot

This has been my first year back with the LGBT Conservatives and it has been great to reconnect with the group and provide my perspective of being from an ethnic minority background and LGBT.

Over the past year, I supported with conference preparation as well as attending meetings on the work of our patrons. It has been great to be part of the team this year and I am excited on what more can be done by the organisation in 2022/23.

2022/23 gives our organisation the chance to hold the government account on their Inclusive Britain action implementation. The intersectionality of being LGBT and from an ethnic minority background is complex, and I will use my role to ensure this perspective is understood and incorporated into the implementation of the plan. We must also continue to partner with other organisations with the party to ensure they hear the LGBT perspective and how cooperation and collaboration with us can benefit the party.

## Morgan Walton

I joined the general council mid-term and soon after assumed the role of Head of Women Outreach, in these roles, I focused on quickly catch-up with the procedures and policies of our group.

During my short tenure, I joined our social media team and aided in the creation of social media imagery which has been and still is being public on our platforms. In addition to this, I have aided in the building and adoption of Microsoft Teams as a primary source of file sharing and communication within our general council and its divisions.

During CPC21 I volunteered at the stand every day and for almost the entirety of my time at CPC21, I spent this time helping our members and speaking to guests, informing them of the benefits of joining us as well as speaking with and taking photos to be published of our patrons and MPs with our pledge boards.

I helped set up and run the joint Stonewall event and did the same with our after-party; spending the time at our party, interacting with our valued patrons and members.

As head of women outreach, I proposed many ideas but sadly did not see them come to life as I had hoped due to lack of a manifesto from myself due to the mid-term appointment, lack of an overarching goal and disagreements within the group on how to best optimise our time and effort.

My key focus now and what will remain my key focus until my term ends is the fulfilment of my plans.

## Xavier White

This year I've been a part of the Membership, Women, Policy, Patrons, and BAME working groups. Within these I've made sure our work represents our minority members. I've had a focus on supporting the trans community and looked at the actions we can take internally, across the party, and externally. I've advised our Chair on trans and other minority issues and supported the committee where I can. Additionally, I wrote a guide to Christmas and being LGBT+ for the newsletter.

## Owen Meredith

It's been another challenging year as we've faced further upheaval resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. But thankfully, despite the challenges, we were able to get together in person again, which meant the opportunity to raise much needed funds to support the LGBT+ Conservatives Fund.

In October, we hosted a hugely successful in-person event with guest speaker Lord (Nick) Herbert, a long-standing friend and patron of our organisation. Nick has taken on the hugely important role of Prime Minister's Special Envoy on LGBT+ Rights and shared his plans for the forthcoming 'Safe to be Me: A Global Equality Conference' – a world first. The event raised several thousand pounds, with huge thanks to our generous hosts and everyone who attended and bid in the auction; money which is now being put to good use supporting parliamentarians to build their incumbency.

Outside my work helping raising funds for the organisation and supporting candidate development, I have focussed on outreach and supporting the Officers with work across the organisation. I've also been supporting the team in London with the reintroduction of regular social events, which are now generating new interest and members for us, as well as providing networking opportunities for all our members.

## Joe Porter

As a General Council member, I have sought to be a strong voice for rural LGBT+ people and local government within the group. As we have seen during the pandemic, isolation and loneliness have been major issues across society, but particularly for many LGBT+ people. As a local councillor who represents a rural Staffordshire Moorlands council seat, I have seen this first hand.

I have supported LGBT+ Conservative events and stand at Party Conference and attended the online virtual events we have held over the last year. Throughout the year, I regularly go out campaigning for Conservative candidates locally and across the country where I try and represent LGBT+ Conservatives. Both within the group and externally, I have campaigned for conversion therapy to be banned and promoted the Government's consultation. In the Christmas newsletter, I shared one of my recipes for Christmas cookies to spread some festive cheer (I hope at least a few of you tried the recipe!) In the run-up to this year's group elections, I contributed a comment on why people should stand and get involved. My highlight of the year was organising our first ever official stand at Stoke-on-Trent where all three Stoke MPs and lots of councillors attended, and all the local Conservative Associations clubbed together to celebrate Pride in Hanley Park. We had a fun time in the parade, and it was such a wonderful community atmosphere!

Thank you to everyone in our team and the membership who help make us a wonderful organisation that campaigns for LGBT+ equality, freedom, and opportunity. Although I will not be part of the General Council and core team next year, I will continue to be involved and support the group where I can and wish the new team the best of luck for the future.

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# Regional Team

## Joe Pattinson

It has been a privilege to have been the LGBT+ Conservatives regional co-ordinator over the last year.

I will however not be re-standing. With that in mind, I do therefore wish my successor the very best of luck. Those best wishes also extend to those elected going into next year also. I've no doubt that they will bring a lot of the necessary guile, spirit, and dedication in their respective roles.

Going forward, it will be crucial to maintain the pressure on the government re. policy, namely gender recognition, and using the platform of Global Britain to enhance LGBT+ rights across the world. We are the party of freedom and of liberty. We should always strive for that wherever we can do so influence. The hesitancy from government figures over the years would suggest an overall inability to adhere to those basic, fundamental Conservative values.

## Niall McDougall

The COVID restrictions have limited activities in the capital in the earlier part of the year, but I have now successfully launched the London monthly social which meets on the last Wednesday of every month in Soho. We currently reside at the upstairs in Little Ku, and the events have been well attended considering recent events. We continue to see the group growing, and I hope to see more members coming along and bringing those who are interested in joining LGBT+ Conservatives.

I have written for the monthly newsletter, a thought piece on PrEP and the emerging trends in sexual health in the capital. As a Public Health professional it's been a challenging year, and the marked effect to sexual health has been significant.

London Pride was unfortunately postponed this year past, but I hope that in 2022 we shall have an event in London to celebrate its return.

I've acted as the main liaison point for Londoners, and for candidates looking for representation, promotion and support in their campaigns. I am very much looking forward to 2022 when we can start to stretch our wings once more.

Finally I have launched and manage the London LGBT+ Conservatives Facebook group which you can join here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/lgbtconslondon>

## **Tom Hulme**

Unfortunately, I came into the role of East Midlands Coordinator while Covid restrictions were still in place, meaning it was virtually impossible to host regional events, especially in largely rural areas like Lincolnshire.

To make up for this, I've put my full energy into working on the group's communications and social media output; I was made Deputy Communications Lead and awarded Council Member of the Month for my social media work within a few weeks of being appointed last summer.

Along with our brilliant Comms Lead Luke, I've helped to completely refresh our approach to social media with more streamlining and forward planning; within a few weeks of joining the team, I started to put together a social media calendar consisting of LGBT+ anniversaries and commemoration days, as well as notable dates for the party, which allowed us to plan our content way in advance and focus more on day-to-day responses to news stories and patron activities.

I've also put a lot of work into our interview series; I really enjoyed my interviews with our friends Edwina Currie, Caroline Nokes, Crispin Blunt and Andrew Bowie and have had some really positive feedback from inside and outside the group, with some content even being picked up by journalists from large publications such as The Spectator.

This has been my first year on the LGBT+ Conservatives Executive and I've absolutely loved it!

## **Rhys McKavanagh**

This year as North-West Regional Coordinator, I set up and maintained the North-West Regional LGBT Conservatives Facebook Group highlighting events as and when they occurred.

I played a supportive role in the Salford Local Association approval process for council candidates ensuring that diversity and inclusion was a central characteristic that was sought after in candidates- at the request of Adam Kealey, the Chair of Salford Conservatives at the time.

I attended Manchester Pride ensuring we had a presence at Pride. I also presented Councillor Jill Houlbrook with a Community Outreach award on behalf of the LGBT+ Conservatives at the Cheshire and Wirral Area Conservatives Conference.

Additionally, I wrote on a couple of occasions for the LGBT+ Conservatives newsletter, in particular I wrote an article on trans healthcare in the United Kingdom.