

LDEA NEWSLETTER June 2019



Dear Member,

As chair of the Liberal Democrat Education Association, I send you my greetings at a time of optimism for our party. I thought you would be interested in receiving a little news of what we have been doing.

Before I do that, we are asking for contributions to the Autumn Conference booklet. These can be articles up to about 800 words and if you have a really good small photo to enhance it, then include that additionally. It would be particularly good if you write on something related to FE and vocational education or education in relation to employment. However, any story of real experience in any part of education would also be welcome. They need to be sent to Helen Flynn, at helenflynn@me.com by 18th July.

We are pleased that during the Spring conference, Baroness Margaret Sharp agreed to be our President. She has done so much on Education over so many years and is particularly concerned about vocational education.

This ties in very well with the publication of the first report from the LIFE-LONG LEARNING COMMISSION set up by Sir Vince Cable last year. This recommends a government subsidised learning account and a motion is being prepared in party HQ for the Autumn conference on this; we have been assisting and the motion will not only present the commission's proposals but will also focus strongly on the need to improve funding for all 16+ education, especially focussing on FE and those who do not go to university.

You may also know that the government's AUGAR REPORT came out a few weeks ago and we are not at all happy with its recommendations for students paying back tuition fees; most will pay significantly more than they do at present. The proposed lowering of the fee is a con and could badly affect university funding. We hope to produce a motion on HE for the next Spring conference. Layla Moran MP has suggested a proper graduate tax as worthy of consideration.

We are preparing two fringe meetings for the Autumn conference. One is on EDUCATION 19+ on the Saturday and so will hopefully precede the proposed motion on Life-long learning. The other is about LOCAL EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS as a means of getting all schools to work together with the local authority. More about these will appear later.

At a time when the country needs improved skills of various kinds, FE is extremely badly funded, teachers and schools are under strain and more people are realising the emphases of our education system need changing, now is the time for us as a party to work out a vision for the way forward.

So let's have some good short article for our booklet and I hope we see many of you at the Autumn conference.

Nigel Jones
Chair, LDEA