

Gareth Willis
Liberal Democrat Candidate
for Sevenoaks



1 December 2019

Dear SSTIE Member,

Once in a generation we face an election with profound choices for the future of Britain. This election will set the tone for the next few parliaments. Our decisions on Brexit and Climate Change will reverberate across the next couple of decades and who we elect will become the defining issue as to whether this country is equitable and prosperous or whether it continues to fall into decline and be marginalized on the global stage.

It has been a pleasure meeting so many of you canvassing on the High Street or on Peoples vote marches. **It has become clear that the Lib Dems offer the only real opposition to the Conservatives in Sevenoaks and a vote for the Lib Dems whether it is out of conviction or a tactical vote is the only way to Remain in Europe and continue to live the values we cherish.**

The Conservative government has run out of ideas and been hijacked by "No Deal" Brexiteers determined to remove us from the EU without a mandate, despite the damage to our economy, society and global status. Estimates of **lost GDP in the next decade vary from -4% to -9% depending on the final deal reached. Operation Yellowhammer paints a disastrous picture for the UK and Kent in particular.** The Union is in its greatest peril for centuries. Conservative representatives have also failed to attend Climate Change events both locally and on national television showing a lack of understanding about the gravity of the situation and the depth of feeling among the public. Labour cannot articulate a position on the crucial Brexit issue and it is increasingly clear that their fantasy budgets have not gone down well with the electorate.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies recognise that the Lib Dems' budget is the only realistic and financially credible budget that the country can follow. History will judge that we have the right policies, championing Remaining in Europe which will enable us to freely trade and to use the **£50 Billion Remain Dividend to adequately fund policies on the NHS, Education and Housing.** We will work to end child poverty and homelessness at the same time as supporting the Green Economy and

making Britain a world leader in renewable energy in the run up to hosting COP 26 in Glasgow.

Andrew Rawnsley in comparing the 3 main party manifestos describes the Conservative's as a "desperately thin sales brochure" Labour's "fantastical wish lists in a gift catalogue." He goes on to say that the Lib Dems offer "plausible and progressive reforms. They present the most convincing plan for decarbonising the economy. The Lib Dems are more honest than their rivals when they say we will have to raise taxes for the majority if we wish to put substantial extra sums into public services".

My top three priorities for the constituency are:

- 1) **Remain in Europe** - The investment that flows from the £50b Remain dividend will be vital to our community's public services including Health and Education.
- 2) **Environment** - We are in a climate emergency and we need to achieve carbon neutrality through addressing transport, renewables and energy efficiency.
- 3) **Housing** - Build appropriate, affordable and energy efficient housing to help the young, elderly and the environment.

Sevenoaks and Swanley Liberal Democrats have a robust strategy, focusing on three key issues: Europe, Environment and Housing. It is clear that in this constituency the Liberal Democrats are the only realistic opposition to the Conservatives.

I am the local candidate. I have had the pleasure to have taught in Kent for many years. As a Sevenoaks Weald governor I am a keen supporter of our local primary schools. With my partner I have raised two daughters here making lasting friendships across the generations. Local football and cricket are my main sports and I can often be seen running in Knole Park. I am passionate about this beautiful area and that we have historic town centres that are worth fighting for. Whether it be the bi-weekly market where you can chat to Billy, Richard or Alice, or the Stag where Anne, Rachel and the volunteers work so hard. This is our community and we need an MP who is a supporter of the town community.

I welcome the opportunity to serve the community I call home as Member of Parliament for Sevenoaks and Swanley.



Gareth Willis