

Luke John Emmett - Speech For Council AGM - 21/05/2019

Thank you for allowing me to speak here tonight. Firstly, I would like to say a huge thank you to all the candidates and to all of the staff who worked hard behind the scenes on the Local Elections. A huge congratulations must be given to the Liberal Democrats for their outstanding victory, but also commiserations to the outgoing administration.

To say this change of administration is solely down to Brexit is disingenuous to both residents and all of the opposition party candidates who stood for election.

For the past four years residents have approached this council with their concerns. These have all fallen on deaf ears. In contrast, the other parties have consistently engaged with residents in an open and meaningful way. They have actually *listened* to our concerns. They have looked at our evidence, and they have consistently campaigned with us to hold the Council to account. We thank them for that.

We never set out to fight the previous administration. We would have preferred to work with them for the benefit of residents but our offers were constantly ignored. Your failure to acknowledge the damage of the negative campaigns you've run, topped with the attacks on residents by the anonymous troll behind your Twitter account, and your failure to answer questions and concerns when requested have all added fuel to the fire. And this election is the result of that – a result which is entirely of your own making.

I sincerely hope that Bath Deserves Better can now wind-down. However, the Lib Dems have seen the level of scrutiny we have applied to everything, the amount of research we carry out and the vast amount of support we can rally behind us. We expect the same level of scrutiny from this new administration and residents will, if needed, hold this Council to account in exactly the same way we have done with the old one.

Our hope is that we will not need to. I make the Lib Dems the same offer we made the Conservatives. We would love to work with you to make Bath better for everyone. We want to help – please continue to engage with us. You cannot do everything alone. Think what we may be able to achieve together.

Being an elected representative of your community brings with it great power and a great responsibility. But residents also have power. And over the last four years the expression of that power has reverberated around the walls of this chamber, around the streets of Bath in protests, on social media & more recently in the voices of the young.

I would like to remind the Liberal Democrats of four key points:

1. The safeguarding of Bathampton Meadows
2. The safeguarding and investment in our Libraries
3. Continued pressure on Curo to ensure they do not renege on their promises to Foxhill residents to refurbish their homes

4. To work with arts and cultural organisations to see what more can be done to help support them and find external sources of funding

We know that you don't have access to Theresa May's magic money tree. All we ask is that going forwards you do so with transparency and honesty. If you don't know the answer – be brave and admit that. Be honest about the challenges you face rather than sugar-coating the truth. If you can continue to do that, we will be there to work with you, support you, and help find creative solutions to make our city be all it can be.

Bath no longer deserves better. Bath Demands Better. Thank you for your time.