

# Vote for **RACHEL BARKER**

A critical friend from the viewpoint of  
the ordinary member

## For Federal Council

*I am a typical member. I support my local Party in leafleting, campaigning, and events. I joined the Lib Dems because its aims and values align with my own. We need these values to be the loudest, proudest part of our campaigning*



## Why I am standing

As an ordinary member without personal political ambition, I bring a grassroots perspective, able to challenge group-think that can lead to narrowing of 'acceptable' views and so ensure the needs of women and other vulnerable groups such as the elderly or disabled are genuinely considered.

## As part of Federal Council I will

### Challenge ...

... the Federal Board to operate in a way that is in accordance with our liberal values, to enable the party to promote policies that make sense and resonate with the electorate.

### Scrutinise ...

... decisions made by the Board to make sure the Board is transparent, that dissenting voices are heard and, as Liberals, we do not shy away from robust debate.

### Verify ...

... that internal processes and policies are compatible with equality law and that we consider the consequences for all protected groups, avoiding costly legal cases we can't win.

**From our Party's preamble:** "We exist to build and safeguard a fair, free and open society, in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, equality and community." The key word is balance. We are a liberal party, not a libertarian one.

Rights and freedoms must end where they infringe upon the rights of others. For example, while we advocate for the homeless, we also defend the rights of the homeowner.

We risk losing this balance if special interest groups are allowed to impose on the rights of others — whether by restricting freedom of belief (or freedom from belief), impeding freedom of speech, or suggesting only one viewpoint is permissible on certain topics. This undermines our traditions of tolerance and diversity of thought.

Federal Council needs diversity of opinion just as much as it needs diversity in other dimensions. As someone without personal political ambition, I am free from the fear of losing position — and therefore able to challenge constructively when needed.

As J.K. Rowling observed: "It takes more courage to stand up to your friends than to your enemies."



## **My personal priorities:**

- Addressing wealth inequality in an era of in-work poverty, while the wealth of the richest grows exponentially — informed by my experience as a public health analyst in Sheffield.
- Overhauling the care sector, having seen first-hand the challenges caused by its fragmented structure — as a voluntary carer for elderly members of our community.
- Tackling youth unemployment and social division, listening directly to the challenges faced by young people — through my volunteering at a grassroots football club.
- Protecting free speech, defending the principle that we have the right to ridicule the ridiculous — and that there is no right not to be offended.
- Countering politically and religiously motivated violence, from online threats to clashes between demonstrators — drawing on my own experience of aggressive tactics used to thwart women's rights to meet and discuss issues that affect us.

**[rachel.barker.shefhallam@gmail.com](mailto:rachel.barker.shefhallam@gmail.com)**