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☐ Electoral  
☐ Reform  
☐ Society

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# 2018 Annual Report

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Electoral Reform Society  
*December 2018*



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# Introductions



Darren Hughes,  
Chief Executive,  
Electoral Reform Society.  
Photograph Gus Palmer.

As a sense of crisis dominates national life, electoral reformers offer an alternative to the way we do politics in the UK. The shadow of the last three general elections is cast wide over Westminster, a voting system that no longer works on its own terms.

The Society has energetically pointed out these failings. We draw on our strategic goals for this parliament – building alliances for electoral reform; deepening public involvement in democracy; winning victories for voters – which have driven our work this year and the team will look for further opportunities in 2019.

The ERS have been at the forefront of calls for a fairly-elected House of Lords in 2018 – stymying attempts to make the debate solely about the size of the chamber.

Throughout the year, we held the government to account for their mandatory voter ID plans – a ‘sledgehammer to crack a nut’ as we termed it, making it a top election issue in the May locals. We know this touched a nerve given ministers’ frequent responses.

Pioneering work among trade unions has helped make democratic reform a talking point in the labour movement, paving the way for substantive change in 2019 and beyond.

In Scotland, the ERS have played a major role shaping the government’s local democracy review, putting deliberative democracy at the heart of it through their Democracy21 conference, the inspiring Act as if We Own the Place project and through direct meetings with ministers. It is safe to say this work will have a lasting impact on the future of local government in Scotland.

And in Wales, ERS Cymru has driven the legislative agenda, ensuring votes at 16 and 17 will be a reality for Wales’ young people and making steps towards a fairer local voting system. At the same time, ERS Cymru have been tirelessly working to

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improve the democratic debate: tackling abuse in politics through their *New Voices* research and ensuring young people shape their own political education.

All this work is only possible through the help of thousands of members and supporters, our hard-working elected council, and a staff team dedicated to securing real democracy. With your support, we can look forward to taking on the challenges and opportunities of 2019.

Darren Hughes  
**Chief Executive**



John Walsh,  
Chair,  
Electoral Reform Society.  
Photograph Anna Gordon.

In many ways, debates over ‘democracy’ have dominated 2018.

From the Cambridge Analytica scandal to the Brexit negotiations, the question of how the voices of voters are heard, used and interpreted by the powerful has been centre-stage.

As the UK’s leading pro-democracy organisation, the ERS is in a prime position to speak up for fairness and political equality. Amid growing distrust in mainstream politics, it has been the Society which has kept democratic reform firmly on the agenda – shaping conversations on campaign regulation, House of Lords reform, diversity in politics and more besides.

The ERS team have consistently stood up for voters in otherwise top-down debates. When the government sought to raise barriers to voters, the ERS led the coalition to stop the dangerous voter ID plans. When the government was intent on packing the House of Lords with more unelected appointees, the ERS gave fresh momentum to demands for real reform. And when parties might have ignored the elephant in the room – Britain’s constitutional crisis – the ERS made it talking point this conference season.

In all this, the Society has been both dynamic and impassioned: ensuring our long-standing aims were heard in new debates. Our Wales and Scotland offices in particular have done pioneering work on this front, from embracing new forms of democracy to stamping out abuse in politics.

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One point has rung true for me: these debates on the future of our democracy are far bigger than Brexit. It's time for a political framework that works for voters for generations to come: from the voting system we use to how the campaign 'Wild West' is reined in.

It has been a pleasure to work with such a committed Council and energised staff team: they give me great confidence that the ERS can help clear a route through these choppy constitutional waters. Going into the new year, the Society is in excellent shape to do so.

Jon Walsh

**Chair**



# POLLING STATION

SECRET SKINS  
BRISTOL



In another tumultuous year for politics we have continued to highlight where our democracy is failing citizens and how it could be better. From exposing the failings of the Westminster system to highlighting the new threats posed by online campaigning, we have ensured that we continue to build new alliances for democratic reform and make a compelling case for change.

## **Undermining First Past the Post**

Following our General Election report last year which highlighted the increasingly dysfunction and erratic operation of Westminster's electoral system, we have continued to highlight the failing of First Past the Post (FPTP) across the remaining UK elections still using this out-of-date system. This year we also re-established the APPG for Proportional Representation with a new Chair and will continue to use the group to further the case for PR within Westminster.

At the beginning of the year, our research into 'seat blocking' showed that the safe seats created by FPTP were holding back efforts to secure more equal representation (see *Suffrage Centenary*, page 11)

After May's local elections we highlighted the 'One Party States' created by using FPTP for local elections in England and Wales. The results this year saw a number of councils in dominant one party control. This gave us the opportunity on London's BBC Sunday Politics, on social media and elsewhere to highlight the relationship between one party control and poor funding decisions.

In Wales, we made the case for the Single Transferable Vote (STV) for the Welsh Assembly through responding to the Expert Panel on Electoral Reform and subsequent Assembly consultation. We encouraged our members and supporters to respond as well and provided the tools for them to do so. In Welsh local government we've been working with the Welsh



Branding for Politics for the Many



Politics for the Many: The Trade Union Case for Political Reform, April 2018



Politics for the Many Event at The World Transformed Conference

Government's Electoral Reform Board to ensure STV is considered in their wider plans for local government reform.

And in Scotland, we repeatedly flagged the dangers of First Past the Post producing 'wrong winner' results, as part of the Politics for the Many campaign.

## Politics for the Many - Working with Trade Unions

The movement for electoral reform in the trade union movement is growing. We continued this year to work closely with unions supportive of reform, and in February officially launched a trade union facing project named Politics for the Many.

Politics for the Many is a campaign supported by the Electoral Reform Society and run by a steering group of active Trade Unionists. The Campaign Coordinator is Nancy Platts, ex Lead on Trade Union Liaison in the office of the Leader of the Opposition. The objective of the campaign is to support discussion and debate within the Labour and trade union movement around constitutional reform.

In April of this year the campaign launched at STUC in Aviemore with a key report entitled *Politics for the Many: The Trade Union Case for Political Reform* – examining how First Past The Post has a negative effect on workers' conditions and the influence of organised labour. The developing asks for the campaign are based around a trade unionists' Charter for Democratic Reform.

The campaign is active on social media and in the trade union and Labour media promoting its message around the positive outcomes of a reformed British State for working people. Our BMG polling in the run-up to Labour conference showed overwhelming Labour support for an 'overhaul' of Westminster, making democracy a conference issue. The campaign had stalls at both Unite and Unison conferences and a successful reception and fringe meeting at TUC, as well as a packed out event on radical democracy at The World Transformed conference (fringe of Labour Party Conference) in Liverpool.

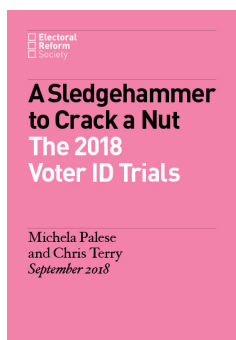
The campaign is growing in supporter numbers and in its recognition across the Labour and trade union movement.

## Labour and the Trade Unions

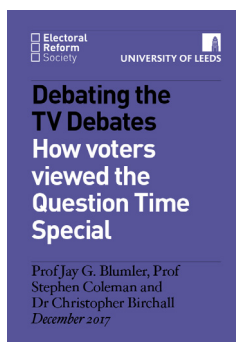
Building on the Politics for the Many report which explored the systemic problems with the Westminster model, we convened a roundtable on constitutional and democratic reform in October. The roundtable was attended by prominent members of the trade union and Labour movements, academics, and members of civil society organisations. We debated core constitutional issues such as House of Lords reform, devolution and the role of a constitutional convention. The findings from the roundtable will feed into our ongoing work and the work of the Politics for the Many campaign.



**Voter ID Billboard in Bromley**



**A Sledgehammer to Crack a Nut, Palese & Terry, September 2018**



**Debating the TV Debates, Blumer, Coleman & Birchall, December 2017**

## Opposing Voter ID

The government trialled mandatory voter ID at the 2018 English local elections. In Bromley, Gosport, Swindon, Woking, and Watford, voters were required to bring along a form of photo or non-photo identification in order to vote at the polling station.

In the run-up to the pilots, the ERS led a coalition of over 40 leading charities and academics, and urged the government to reconsider running the pilots, highlighting the unequal impact the pilots would have on already disadvantaged and excluded groups. Despite clear warnings of potential disenfranchisement and discrimination of requiring ID in a country with no universal, free provision of ID, the government pressed ahead with the pilots. During the elections, we monitored the pilots and ensured that the voter ID requirements were a key issue in the news agenda.

We also convened a roundtable of key academics working on electoral integrity to consider the potential problems and worked with Exeter University to extend the evaluation and research base on the pilots. This enabled us to provide robust evidence of many aspects of the pilots and strengthened our case. This work culminated in September 2018 with the publication of *A Sledgehammer to Crack a Nut: The 2018 Voter ID Trials* – our in-depth evaluation of the voter ID policy and the five pilot schemes, which we presented at a Liberal Democrat conference fringe event.

## Campaign Regulation

At a time when our democratic processes face huge threats (from ‘dark ads’ to misinformation and dodgy donations), the ERS has established itself as one of the leading organisations in the field of regulating online campaigning.

Following the Cambridge Analytica scandal in March, the ERS launched a call for a review of campaign rules and regulatory powers. In July, we hosted a parliamentary event on campaign regulations and political finance with Stephen Kinnock MP and Fair Vote UK, among others. The event coincided with the Electoral Commission’s decision to fine Vote Leave and attracted widespread interest and media coverage.

We responded to the government’s consultation ‘Protecting the Debate: Intimidation, Influence, and Information’ with regards to intimidation of candidates (in relation to ERS Cymru’s New Voices report), imprints for digital campaigning, and online campaigning issues. In an intervention related to our campaign rule work, we endorsed Sky News’ ‘Make Debates Happen’ campaign, calling for a guaranteed framework for election debates. This followed up our December 2017 report on the role of TV debates in the last general election.

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We will soon publish a report on campaign regulation, which will highlight the problems and potential solutions around digital democracy, online political campaigning, and campaign finance from a range of contributors across academia, Westminster and the civil society sector.

### **House of Lords Reform**

At the start of the year the ERS were credited with delaying Theresa May's plans for appointing potentially dozens of new peers, after our polling showed widespread public opposition.

The eventual appointment of 13 new peers in May 2018 and frequent by-elections for hereditary peers have provided us with ample opportunities to renew our calls for House of Lords reform and for a democratically elected second chamber. Each time these issues have surfaced, the ERS have been a lead commentator pointing out the undemocratic nature of the current Lords set-up.

Throughout the year we have conducted and commissioned new research, including analysis of how many peers take the party whip, a BMG survey of public opinion on the House of Lords, and analysis of peers' regional representation and occupations. Furthermore, we released parliamentary briefings ahead of debates on abolishing the House of Lords and on hereditary peers' by-elections.

In line with our strategy and Politics for the Many work, our campaign for reforming the House of Lords has been our key source of coverage alongside voter ID this year, and has put us in an excellent position for continuing this work in the year ahead (see Media Reach and Focus page 19).

An elected second chamber would naturally lend itself to the use of STV and mean that every citizen in the UK would be using proportional representation for at least one of their votes, eliminating the claim that Commons reform would be 'too confusing'.

### **Suffrage Centenary**

The representation of women in our democracy was a key theme in 2018, with two important milestones in the long campaign for political equality. This year marks one hundred years since some women in the UK were given the right to vote and later, through the Qualification of Women Act, the right to stand as MPs.

We started the year with research on seat blockers, showing that of the 212 current MPs who were first elected in 2005 or earlier, 80% are men. This highlighted the huge bloc of long-standing MPs who are unlikely to budge anytime soon - largely due to safe seats created by First Past the Post.

Throughout the year we have also worked closely with fellow

# Centenary Action Group



Branding for Centenary  
Action Group



Roundtable discussion with  
Nicky Morgan MP, Jo  
Swinson MP, Dawn Butler  
MP and Helen Pankhurst,  
Centenary Action Group  
Convener

members of the Helen Pankhurst's Centenary Action Group coalition. Through this coalition we have led work on women's political participation. We have focused on campaigning for the enactment of Section 106 of the Equality Act which would require parties to make public who applies to become candidates – much like businesses now have to report on their gender pay gaps. This small step could have a huge impact on women getting through selection processes.

In November, we brought together politicians including Nicky Morgan MP, Jo Swinson MP and Dawn Butler MP – as well as the Greens, Lib Dems and SNP – to support the campaign. This work was picked up by the Press Association, ensuring it reached millions of people.

Our success in achieving broad cross-party support for the campaign followed meeting with officials and ministers to discuss the legislation, as well as involving supporters in writing to their MPs, securing parliamentary questions and ensuring it became a key news angle. We hope the Equalities Minister will join us in making the centenary of women's suffrage about deeds as well as words, and enact this important piece of legislation soon.

## Votes at 16

Throughout the year, we have continued to campaign in favour of votes at 16 and 17. With 16 and 17 year olds being able to vote in Scotland and legislation proceeding in Wales, England is looking increasingly out of touch.

This year's campaign culminated with the publication of *Civic Duty: The Conservative Case for Votes at 16 and 17*, a collection of essays by leading Conservative representatives and supporters who made the persuasive case for the Conservative Party to endorse votes at 16. We worked with Dr Jan Eichhorn, who shared research on the success of votes at 16 in Scotland.

We are supporting bids for new research in this area and continue to work closely with key academics in the field. We also garnered UK coverage for the fantastic work of ERS Cymru in ensuring votes at 16 goes forward for local elections.



## Civic Duty The Conservative Case for Votes at 16 & 17

Edited by Charley Jarrett  
July 2018

The Conservative Case for  
Votes at 16 & 17, edited by  
Jarrett, July 2018



Branding for Our Democracy

### Local Governance Review

It is five years since our Democracy Max programme led us to focus on local democracy as the best way to begin to build a Scottish democracy fit for the 21st century. This led to the establishment of the Our Democracy coalition of interested organisations and the resulting Act as if We Own the Place campaign for people to have more say in their local place.

In spring of this year the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) jointly launched Democracy Matters - a review of local democracy. The consultation is considering how powers, responsibilities and resources are shared across national and local government institutions and how there is much greater integration of the institutions with people.

The conclusions of the consultation will inform a Local Governance Bill to be introduced into the Scottish Parliament in 2019. ERS Scotland are on the steering group for Democracy Matters and are in the process of setting up a cross party working group of MSPs within the Scottish Parliament.

We have been focusing a large amount of our efforts on helping as many voices as possible to be heard in the review by encouraging deliberative community conversations to inform responses. Interim reports suggest that the consultation has heard from a wide range of Scottish communities and most of the responses fit in with our calls for devolution of power and greater use of deliberative democracy in local decision making.

### Democracy21 Conference and Declaration on Local Democracy

As the lead organisation of Our Democracy, we designed and ran a process of civil society and community engagement consisting of a number of events for 'problem definition',





**Audience at Democracy21**

‘shared learning’ and ‘solution proposition’. This culminated in a ‘Declaration on Local Democracy’.

We launched this declaration at a major national conference – Democracy21 – which was attended by over 600 people committed to building a democracy fit for the 21st century. It brought together citizens, activists, community groups, campaigns and unions to think about the challenges for democracy in the current political, social, and technological context and to attempt to collectively imagine the evolution of our current institutions and practice of democracy.

The declaration is a source of principles and values for the reform of Scottish local governance and we think it informed many of the responses to the Scottish government’s consultation.

### **Deliberative Democracy and Act as if We Own the Place**

Closely connected and in parallel to the above we worked with Coalfields Regeneration Trust (CRT) to run a series of nine successful deliberative community planning and participative budgeting events across three communities. These are of course worthwhile activities in themselves, but we also used them to experiment with tools and techniques of local deliberative democracy so that we could show and inform the consultation on the reform of local governance.

These sessions, which we attempted to recruit for so that they matched the demographics of each area, produced 5 year community action plans designed by and for the community with partial funding for elements of the plan. We have noticed that these democratic processes help build active communities and so have a role in social cohesion as well as more meaningful decision making.

There will be a full report on the work we have done with CRT in an imminent publication. We are currently in the middle of being funded by CRT to do similar work in another two communities.



**An Act as if We Own the Place event**

### **Politics for the Many in Scotland**

As detailed in campaigns section (page 9), we launched this campaign at Scottish Trade Union Congress in April this year and provide ongoing support for Politics for the Many campaign by working with STUC and the Scottish elements of the various trade unions.

As part of this we have been regularly highlighting the absurdities of First Past the Post in a Scottish context, including the prospect of a ‘wrong winner’ result – Labour securing more votes than the Conservatives but fewer seats at Westminster.

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The last twelve months have seen real progress on electoral reform in Wales and a seismic shift in the political landscape to go alongside it. None of the party leaders who started the year in the Assembly are still in place, with a new First Minister as well as new leaders of Plaid Cymru, the Welsh Conservatives and UKIP.

### Progress on Electoral Reform

Fundamental to the progress we've seen this year was the vote in October, which saw the Assembly overwhelmingly back legislating on Votes at 16 for Assembly elections. That legislation will be introduced next year in conjunction with a bill to see the franchise extended in local government elections. The bills will also consider voting in different places, on different days and automatic registration.

We continue to campaign on other areas of reform, such as the size of the Assembly and moving to STV for Assembly elections.

### New Voices

In July we launched *New Voices*, a project that examined diversity in Welsh politics. In addition to exploring the proportion of women, people from black and ethnic minority backgrounds and the diversity of age groups in Welsh politics, the report undertook an extensive survey of politicians on their experiences. It found a staggering 45% of politicians who took part in the survey had suffered abuse and harassment in their roles. For women, the figure was 54%.

The report made 17 recommendations for improving diversity in Welsh politics including; introducing legislative



**New Voices: How Welsh politics can begin to reflect Wales, Blair & Mathias, July 2018**

**Jess Blair, Director, ERS Cymru & Kirsty Williams AM, Cabinet Secretary for Education (pictured left)**

quotas, parties having to develop diversity action plans, increased political education and a change in the voting system.

### Our Voices Heard

Over the past few months we've been working hard on *Our Voices Heard*, a project which has worked with young people across Wales to co-produce recommendations to improve political education in Wales. Throughout October we worked with nearly 200 young people in Wales asking them for their ideas on how to boost their understanding of politics. In each school we visited the young people voted on their favourite ideas and the recommendations were taken to a panel of experts, people working in politics, teachers and young people, to be refined.

We then presented the final ideas to the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams AM, at an event at the end of November. Our hope is that these ideas will feed into both curriculum reform ongoing in Wales and reforms to the way democracy works including the delivery of votes at 16 in Wales.



**Our Voices Heard: Young people's ideas for political education in Wales, Blair & Mathias, November 2018**

**Year 9 pupils participating in an Our Voices Heard session**





# Members, Supporters and the Wider Public

Our paying membership now sits at approximately 3,000 members, a slight decline on last year. Like many membership-based organisations are experiencing in a changing NGO climate, many supporters wish to support us through one-off donations to specific campaigns or fundraising asks, rather than be tied to a regular membership subscription. This is illustrated by the modest rise in income we received this year from membership and donations.

The number of our registered subscribers now stands at 76,000. We have seen throughout the year that many of our supporters are increasingly getting more involved with our work. Across the year we have seen an increase in the number of our active subscribers rising by about 7,000.

## Campaigns

This year our supporters remained active in supporting our campaigns work. We received over 15,000 signatures supporting our call to halt appointments to the Lords, and over 8,000 supported our petition calling to end 'dark ads'.

Approaching the centenary of the first women MPs, nearly 900 supporters emailed their local MP to ask them to lobby for action on implementing Section 106 of the Equality Act for our suffrage centenary campaign.

We have also kept our supporters engaged with our key issues by regularly posting up-to-date comment pieces and articles on our ERS Blog. This is supported by a blog roundup by email, keeping our supporters updated with our work.

We have had a good year for campaigns-based fundraising. Towards funding our reports, our supporters helped us raise over £500 for *Civic Duty: The Conservative Case for Votes at 16 and 17* and over £2500 for our report *Sledgehammer to Crack a Nut: The 2018 Voter ID Trials*. We also started a new fundraising endeavour earlier this

year by launching the Electoral Reform Society online shop.

A huge ‘thank you’ to all of our members and supporters who have donated to our campaign asks or taken actions on our campaigns.



Enid Lakeman

## Lakeman Fellowship

This year we launched a fundraising ask to help support the new Lakeman Fellowship. Starting in 2019, the Lakeman Fellowship will enable us to increase our capacity for cutting-research, by recruiting the first Fellow to join the team and support the campaign in achieving a stronger democracy throughout the UK.

Since we launched the Lakeman Fellowship in April of this year, we have raised nearly £8000 towards this project.

## Media Reach and Focus

Our work on voter ID around the May elections ensured it became a major election topic, with Darren Hughes appearing on the Today programme, BBC Breakfast, LBC Radio, Radio 5 Live and more. The comms and research team led the voter ID coalition in outlining overwhelming civil society opposition to the plans, with the ERS putting out several exclusive stories we had received: including pro bono legal advice, raising concerns from electoral returning officers, highlighting incorrect government claims, and revealing the hidden cost of the policy.

The dominance of Brexit has in some ways crowded out key democratic issues. However, the ERS has used the opportunity to promote the need for an update of campaign regulation, noting that the current framework is a ‘cheater’s charter’ in urgent need of updating. Our narratives on a ‘Wild West’ in online campaigning have helped set the tone, with Willie Sullivan appearing on Sky News and media outlets adopting our framing of the issue. We have consistently noted that Westminster’s voting system leaves the UK particularly vulnerable to manipulation, given small swings in a handful of seats can change entire national results, while highlighting the risks of an undemocratic cut in backbenchers – something that had not been raised by other organisations previously.

We have been proactive in the debate on diversity in politics, including framing First Past the Post as the worst system for gender equality. This has included working with the research team to publish ‘seat blocker’ research (with Jess Garland appearing on Radio 4’s Women’s Hour) and being designated the lead communication team for the Section 106 campaign, during the centenary of women’s right to stand for Parliament.

On the House of Lords, we led a communication and research plan at the start of the year, amid rumours that May was planning



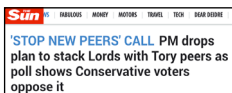
Metro, 11th September 2018



Willie Sullivan on Sky News, 20th March 2018



Independent, 13th February 2018



The Sun, 15th February 2018



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## Media Hits

The Electoral Reform Society received nearly 1,900 pieces of coverage in the media this year.

In 2017, the figure was around 4,000 due to the General Election and more research projects on the House of Lords.

### Approximate print/online media hits per campaign/issue referenced (% of total):

- Brexit – 27%
- House of Lords – 26%
- Women in politics / Centenary of women's suffrage – 24%
- Electoral reform / voting systems – 23%
- Voter ID – 11%
- Campaign regulation 4%
- Votes at 16 & 17 – 2%
- Boundary review – 1%

(Please note, some pieces of coverage relate to multiple topics – therefore, the figures amount to more than 100%)

to appoint dozens of peers (we worked with the Times to secure a front page on the issue in January). In addition to being credited with delaying the plans, we ensured the story was not buried amid the Royal Wedding and drew attention to the need for change. The ERS has been the leading critic of the Burns Committee's 'tinkering' changes on the size of the second chamber, and the continued presence of hereditary peers.

While bringing the need for a fair voting system into each of our major interventions, in line with ERS strategy a priority for communications in 2018 has been promoting the work of Politics for the Many. This includes its launch in April, making democracy a key debate over Labour party conference, and securing features in key trade union magazines. This has helped lay the groundwork for hoped-for union conference motions in 2019.

This year saw parties ranging from the SNP (on campaign regulation), the Labour Party (voter ID and boundary changes) and the Greens (electoral reform) put out UK-wide press releases based directly on our research, while our call for Lords reform received a response from former Chancellor George Osborne in the Evening Standard – highlighting the ERS' strong reputation in the democracy field.

## Looking Ahead

In the new year the ERS will be launching new messaging on electoral reform and the House of Lords, as part of a major research project with BMG. This will ensure our messaging is evidenced-based and even more effective at convincing the public and politicians of the need for a better democracy.

## Social Media

Our Facebook audience now stands at 41,800. Our most popular posts were around our campaign opposing the voter ID trials in the Local Elections across England. A link to a BBC news article in April outlining our voter ID campaign reached 58,000 people on Facebook.

Our Twitter feed is followed by 36,100. Topics that gave our tweets the best responses were around the disproportionate results of the Local Elections in England, the voter ID trials, and boundary reforms. Our tweet that demonstrated how results can change under First Past the Post when boundaries change reached just under 200,000 people and was retweeted over 1,100 times.



**Darren Hughes,**  
Chief Executive

The Society's team is based in our offices in London, Edinburgh and Cardiff.

We were pleased to welcome several new team members this year. Rob Cox, Communications Assistant and Lizzie Lawless, Community Assistant joined us in January. Michela Palese, Research Officer, joined us in May.

Thanks to all current staff for their hard work and dedication. Thanks also to Chris Terry, Research Officer, and Charley Jarret, Policy and Public Affairs Officer, who left us during the year after nearly 7 and 3.5 years at the Society respectively.

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## Current staff

### **Chief Executive**

Darren Hughes

### **Campaigns, Research and Policy**

Willie Sullivan,

*Senior Director*

*(Scotland, Campaigns)*

Jess Garland,

*Director of Research*

*and Policy*

Josiah Mortimer,

*Head of Communications*

Michela Palese,

*Researcher Officer*

Doug Cowan,

*Digital Communications Officer*

Rob Cox,

*Communications Assistant*

Lizzie Lawless

*Community Assistant*

### **Operations**

Kate West,

*Chief Operating Officer*

Stuart Thomas,

*Operations Officer*

Daniel Anderson,

*Finance Officer (part time)*

### **ERS Scotland**

Phil Connor,

*Campaigns Officer*

*(part time)*

Alice Kinghorn-Gray,

*Campaigns Organiser*

*(part time)*

Jonathon Shafi,

*Campaigns Organiser*

*(part time)*

### **ERS Cymru**

Jess Blair,

*Director*

Matthew Mathias,

*Campaigns and*

*Projects Officer*

## The Council

The Council is the Electoral Reform Society's governing body. It is made up of 15 members who are elected by our membership every other year and serve for a two-year term. Elections took place last year and a newly elected Council will took office at the close of last year's AGM on 2 December 2017.

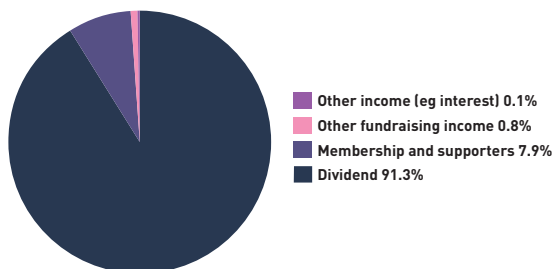
Between 2 December 2017 and 1 December 2018, the following members served on the Society's Council:

- Jon Walsh, Chair
- Justina Cruickshank, Vice Chair (Management)
- Ruth Kelly, Deputy Chair (Campaigns and Research)
- Andrea Marcelli (Treasurer)
- Philip Cole
- Abigail Emery
- Victor Chamberlain
- Lisa French
- Kerri Prince
- Chris Finlayson
- Andrew Copson
- Ken Ritchie
- Keith Sharp
- Joe Sousek
- Owen Winter

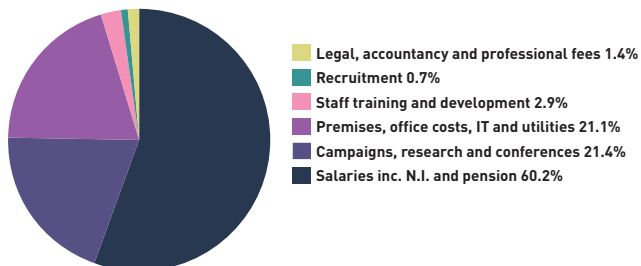
No Council member received any remuneration for services as a Council member during the year.

# Finance

Income (2017)  
£1.31m



Expenditure (2017)  
£1.14m



Campaigns, research and  
conferences breakdown  
(2017)

£243,007



We saw another modest rise in membership income and donations from members and supporters in 2017, attracting just over £100,000 in total. We are extremely grateful for the continued support from our members which is invaluable to our work.

We also received a small amount of project funding from the Economic & Social Research Council to support our constitutional convention work and from Spinwatch raised by ERS Scotland, funding work into the inquiry into lobbying in Scotland.

On our expenditure, people costs remain our most significant outlay, with the majority of our campaigns and research work being generated in-house. We have also provided a more detailed breakdown of our campaigns, research and conferences spend this year, in response to requests from members at the previous AGM.

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### **Our New, Permanent Home**

On 20 July 2016 we used the proceeds from the sale of our building in Chancel Street, Southwark, London to purchase a new building in Borough, near London Bridge. The new property comprises an office building arranged over ground, mezzanine and first floors and is in a prime location, just off the highly desirable Bermondsey Street in SE1.

Over the past year we have been continuing to work with property consultants, designers, architects, neighbouring parties and planning consultants at Southwark Council to implement our plans to extend and completely refurbish the building, adding two floors to the existing structure. This is a crucial part of our strategy to diversify our future income sources.

Contractors were formally appointed and started on site in November, with a 53-week programme to completion. We intend to occupy a small part of the new building and to sublet the remainder and are working towards a completion date of November 2019.

### **Temporary Home**

At the start of 2018, we moved from Blackfriars Road into a slightly larger – but more cost-effective – serviced offices in London Bridge while we wait for our new premises to be completed.

### **In Memorial of Colin Rosenstiel**

Following a long battle with lymphoma, former Society Chair and stalwart campaigner for electoral reform Colin Rosenstiel sadly passed away in May. His expertise on how STV operates was even mentioned at his memorial service, at which Darren Hughes represented the ERS. Colin's depth of knowledge and his dedication to the cause will be very much missed by all who knew him.





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