



JOIN US FOR THE FEBRUARY PRE-ELECTION SPECIAL ASSEMBLY IN LONDON

SPECIAL ASSEMBLY IN FEBRUARY

With the General Election – and many Local Elections – only a few months away, we’re holding a **Special Assembly on Saturday 7th February 2015 in London.**

This Assembly will debate the detailed proposals contained in the Health and Wellbeing paper written by Dr. Eddy Estlin, which we did not have time to discuss at the 2014 Assembly in Exmouth. You can find this document via the home page of the Party Website (www.liberal.org.uk), following the ‘Special Assembly’ link on the left hand side. If you don’t have internet access – or have a problem downloading the document – please phone the Liberal Party Office on 01245 347 411 and we will arrange for a paper copy to be sent. In addition to this debate we will, of course, also be discussing plans and arrangements for the General Election.



The Special Assembly venue is The Civil Service Club, 13 – 15 Great Scotland Yard, London, SW1A 2HJ. Phone: 020 7930 4881 Their website is www.civilserviceclub.org.uk where you can find full details of the location and a variety of public transport links.

You are welcome to join us for tea or coffee from 10.30 am, ready for the **Assembly start time of 11.00 am**; we will finish no later than 4.30 pm. A free buffet lunch will be provided, courtesy of the same company that sponsored the food for the Exmouth Assembly.

There is no registration fee but we need to know how many people will be attending, for room preparation and catering arrangements. **Please see overleaf for details of how to register.**

LIBERAL NEWS

January 2015

Elections Special

PARTY PRESIDENT AND NATIONAL EXECUTIVE ELECTIONS

Elections for the post of Party President and 15 members of the Party National Executive Committee are now due.

Nominations for President require 20 signatories and those for NEC members require 5 signatories each.



In all cases, the person nominated needs to confirm that they are willing to stand and the supporting nominators’ contact details need to be supplied for verification.

Jim Halcrow has kindly agreed to act once again as returning officer and **nominations should be sent to him by 6.00 pm on Friday 23rd January 2015.** Jim’s email address is: jimhalcrow@waitrose.com and his phone number is: 0131 661 5398.

LIBERAL NEWS WELCOMES YOUR NEWS AND VIEWS FOR PUBLICATION. PLEASE SEND THEM TO:
LIBERAL NEWS, 315 DURRANT COURT, BROOK STREET, CHELMSFORD CM1 1UE or EMAIL: sir.henry@ukliberals.org

LEE SPRAGG ON 'COMING HOME'



On 15 July 2014, the vast majority of Labour MPs joined most Tories and LibDems to rush through emergency legislation, named "DRIP", giving the security services access to everyone's phone and internet records. I ought not to have been shocked as it was totally consistent with how civil liberties were eroded under previous Labour governments. For me, though, this was the last straw as a member of the Labour Party. However annoying and frustrating, it was also a useful step in self-realisation.

The last General Election was so depressing that I had thought that the only way to defeat the Tories was through a revitalised Labour Party so I joined. I had been persuaded, mainly by reading a number of books by Social Democrats, that Socialism is really "Liberalism applied." Such books didn't mention that globalisation renders unfeasible many traditional social democratic measures. Membership brought little that enthused but, then, the burning zeal of the Labour Party to fight injustice had long ago departed to be replaced by what is largely a machine to try to win elections. Day after day, I would receive e-mails and tweets from the leadership which lacked any radical view of Britain's problems.

I gradually came to see the importance of that word "radical". Over time, I began to realise that, no matter how much wishful thinking I employed, the argument for Socialism being Liberalism in action just wasn't true. They are completely different political philosophies and view the human person and society in very different ways. Socialists tend to view people en masse and try to apply top-down "solutions", whereas Liberals attempt to get to the root of problems and how they affect each individual. Additionally, Socialists do not always accord primacy to the freedom of the individual – as DRIP shows. Liberals believe that people should not be forced into conformity and that economic systems exist to serve people, not the other way around.

In that the Labour Party doesn't always adhere to a consistent political philosophy, with its mixture of Socialism and Neoliberalism, it can sometimes resemble a bring-and-buy sale of "a few of our favourite things" – rather like the LibDems. In its authoritarianism and paternalism, Labour can also mirror the Tories.

For years, there has been a belief that firm political beliefs put off the voters. This wrong view has resulted in all three "main parties" offering varying shades of the same thing, often called "what works". It doesn't work, but that's another issue. I am pleased to have come home to a party with a firm political philosophy which inspires and always acts as a firm guide for discussions and working alongside others in a pluralistic society.

Quakers sometimes say that you don't really become a Quaker, you gradually come to realise that you always were one. This is probably also true for many Liberals. I believe that it is true for me. Liberalism is more than just a political philosophy; it is a way of life.

SPECIAL ASSEMBLY: HOW TO REGISTER

If you wish to attend the
Special Assembly on
Saturday 7th February 2015
please register by 6.00 pm
on Friday 30th January

To register, simply send your name, address and contact details by post to:

Sir Henry Boyle
The Liberal Party
315 Durrant Court
Brook Street
Chelmsford,
Essex CM1 1UE

or by email to:

sir.henry@ukliberals.org

Please don't forget to download (or request by post) the Health & Wellbeing paper that we'll be debating. Agendas will be available at the Assembly.

FUNDING FOR THE GENERAL ELECTION

The National Executive has agreed to consider funding the £500 deposit required for our Party's approved candidates who stand in May's General Election.

Clearly, central funds are limited and candidates will need to demonstrate that they will be able to mount an effective campaign in their constituency, using additional local funding.

For details of how to apply for deposit funding, please contact Sir Henry Boyle (see Liberal News address below - or call him on 01245 347 411).

Parliamentary Candidate approval application packs are also available from the Liberal News office.

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