

# Liberal News.

Summer, 2017.

## Ready for Realignment?



Over the last year rumours had surfaced about possible new political groups being created by moderate members of the Labour Party with money from wealthy donors, supported by former Cabinet Ministers and assorted bigwigs. Often the suggestion has been that these efforts would supplant the role of the Lib Dems or in some way include them as part of a new and significant realignment of the pro-EU, anti-Brexit Centre of British politics. In the last few weeks a couple of newspaper articles have appeared along these lines and with an eye to the rise in France of Emmanuel Macron and his La République En Marche Party. Recently, Cllr Steve Radford had a call from a BBC journalist doing some background research which at first appeared to be on the problems of small parties but the main thrust turned out to concern our response to the possible creation of a new Centre party. Cllr Radford's reply much surprised the BBC hack since, he indicated that the Liberal Party would welcome it if the Lib Dems formed a new party dropping the Liberal name.

Cllr Radford pointed out that developments in both Parties make such an evolution natural. **The Lib Dems have long since departed from the central tenets of liberalism towards an establishment focused EU-fanaticism.** Lib Dems are often so at odds with conventional understandings of democracy that for example their failed former leader Nick Clegg has been suggesting an end to one person one vote in favour of an ageist system in which the under the 30s would have two votes. The Liberal Party has over the last few years been working to develop mainstream Liberal Policies in tune with large sections of society. **We have been working to bring our constitution up to date,** making us more politically coherent and relevant. At our last Assembly we had what might be called a 'Clause 4' moment when **we dropped the anachronistic aim of World Government** and opted for the more realistic objective of strengthening institutions of international co-operation and governance such as the UN and the Commonwealth of nations (know as British Commonwealth).

**The Lib Dems have failed to reverse their collapse in traditional Liberal areas like the West Country and mid-Wales.** Their opportunistic flip flops on austerity, referendums and tuition fees have left them with a credibility problem where it matters most. If they decide to form an alliance with moderates from Labour or anywhere else it is our duty as real Liberals to carry the banner for Liberalism without suffix, prefix or dilution. We must continue the task of making our Party as credible and presentable as possible. This is a work we carried forward at our recent NEC meetings and in the policies passed by the Assembly. **Every member of the Party** can contribute to this great work so we can make the most of the opportunities whatever the future presents.

## Cornish Liberals Open New Hall: First since the Refoundation of the Party!

The Cornish Liberal Party, thanks to the generosity of a local member, have purchased the old Salvation Army Fortress in Camborne and after many months work on it have opened the building, renaming it Camborne Liberal Hall. The Salvation Army built the Church in 1890. Our first Public Opening was on 29th April which was Camborne Trevithick Day (the main Festival day of the year in Camborne celebrating Richard Trevithick - inventor of the Steam Railway System). In the evening there was an "Any Questions" event which was successful. Labour, UKIP, Mebyon Kernow and the Liberal Party were on the platform with Cllr. Paul Holmes, Leader of the Cornish Liberals, fighting our corner. We are now hiring out the hall with some success. In the recent General Election a Hustings of all four Parliamentary Candidates was held with a good attendance by the Electorate, with some lively debates!

The main Hall is named after David Lloyd George, MP, and at present can seat 150 with potential for a further 100 when the Gallery is brought up to Health and Safety Standards (but this is too expensive at the moment). The refreshment room is named after Henry Campbell-Bannerman MP, former Liberal Prime Minister. The 1960's extension is named after the much loved Cornish Liberal MP, the late David Penhalligon and will be used as the Liberal Party office and Committee Rooms.

**The address of the Hall is: Camborne Liberal Hall, Vyvyan Street, Camborne. TR14 8AS Contact number 01209 714275.**

All the new Hall's signage is Bi-Lingual and in the Cornish Liberal Party Colours of Black & Gold with the Liberal Party National Logo - so you can't miss it because it is so impressive!  
Good Wishes to Liberals everywhere from the Cornish Liberals.

## Mrs May's Bubble Goes Pop in June's Opportunist General Election:

If you wanted to see a monument to the failure of the Tory/LibDem Coalition's constitutional agenda the recent General Election is a fine example, since the **2010 Fixed Term Parliament Act was supposed to stop a Prime Minister having a snap election** because the polls appeared in their favour and they felt like getting an increased majority while the going was good. Despite no crisis or prospect of the Government falling due to a lack of confidence in the House of Commons the Tories got the election they wanted and as the proverb says 'be careful what you wish for, you may get it'.

We also had further proof of the ramshackle nature of our electoral system, since twenty two million votes failed to have any influence on the outcome. We ended up with a weak Government without a majority, kept in office by a fringe Party who sold their support for millions of pounds of pork barrel projects. The outcome is in fact a model of the often presented caricature of the likely results of using a fair voting system. We have another hung Parliament after only two years when the first past the post system is said by its supporters to mean clear outcomes and strong governments, just not apparently in this decade. FPTP is not delivering its supposed merits: surely it is time to look at systems that turn votes into seats proportionally not randomly since our democracy should be transparent, not operated on the principals of a casino.

### Liberal candidates reflect on their campaigns during the election.

**Neil Taylor from Trafford, Greater Manchester.** The snap General Election came as quite a surprise to many, though not unexpected to me, as I commented on way back in December 2016.

As a relatively new person to The Liberal Party, I had been putting things into place in preparation for the 2018 local elections, where I will be standing in my old ward (lost by 56 votes, as a Lib Dem in 2014).

The snap election spring boarded everything, and within a very short time a brand new web site was constructed: [liberaltrafford.org.uk](http://liberaltrafford.org.uk).

A quick YouTube video done and rather roughly edited, and despite prior commitments, I managed with some help from some friends to get out just shy of 10,000 hand delivered flyers in just one week.

Most local people scoffed that The Liberal Party wouldn't get more than 50 votes . This was proven wrong with 299 being cast.

Now I know this may not seem a lot, but the Green Party only got 1k so in proportion, from a standing start, this was a good result.

I did a local media video mini interview, along with a full 90 minute husting, which went down very well.

I am a well known local former Councillor and community ambassador - chairperson for the Altrincham Festival, the biggest free event in Trafford, also chair of a more local event, The Timperley Country Fair (Google them), and known in the area as the person that was responsible for a full size bronze statue of "Frank Sidebottom". The June election has helped to promote a Liberal Party here in Trafford. I am looking forward to the challenge of a possible forthcoming General election as well as getting things in place for the 2018 locals.



### Cllr Jenny Roach reports from Devon:

We stood in the Central Devon constituency for the first time so our existence was unknown! Lloyd is an excellent candidate, very mature for his years and very keen to get The Liberal Party back on the map.

We are extremely grateful to the people who supported us financially, elections are expensive and having a General Election declared during a County Council campaign was a nightmare! It also affected the County result, we were doing very well until the GE was called. Then the doorstep debate became one of getting rid of the Tories or stopping 'that' Jeremy Corbyn. Holding local elections at the same time as a general does have a negative effect on small parties and independents. It happened in 2015 and the money spent by central parties did affect the outcome.

On election day, Lloyd and I went to visit Liberal Party veteran, former Councillor & Parliamentary Candidate, David Morrish, in his care home in Exeter. David was very pleased to see us and sends his best wishes to all his friends in the Liberal Party.



## Cllr Steve Radford, Liverpool, West Derby.

Across the UK the trend was for third parties to be squeezed by the Tory/Labour Confrontation. This was widespread and devastating for anyone outside of the traditional big two parties.

In Liverpool during the last two weeks there was almost a panic vote for Labour to get the Tories out. This feeling affected many of our traditional supporters in **Tuebrook**, which is one of the ten most economically deprived wards in the City. So whilst it was disappointing to see a modest 0.2% reduction in our vote share our actual voters numbers went up by 151.

In contrast the Lib Dem vote plummeted to an all time low of 545. We resoundly beat the Lib Dem candidate in Knotty Ash Ward where he had previously been a City Councillor.

In the last week of the campaign we made a tactical decision to target areas of the constituency where there was a historic non Labour vote. We did extensive canvassing in West Derby ward and to a lesser extent in Knotty Ash, This helped compensate our loss of votes in Tuebrook to Labour.

The need for candidates to adjust their campaigns taking account of national trends and where soft votes may be is vital for us to consider.

We also had good feedback that our manifesto was an easy read with clear policy bullet points rather than glib slogans.

We used social media extensively but it was knocking on doors with quality flyers that helped us beat the trends.

I was really pleased with the BBC Daily Politics interview where I did not react to Nick Clegg's cheap shots but stuck to positive messages of what we stood for. This was commented upon by many residents canvassing.

My extensive use of local radio interviews and the letters pages of local newspapers gave us credibility across the constituency. A message for all branches is that it is of great importance to keep up the publicity outside of election time as it gives us far greater recognition when seeking votes. Both social media and the local press don't require any significant resources or finance to be used. These forms of media almost certainly reach your locality and can be used to inform the electorate about our existence and approach to politics. Social media and locally based media are potentially open to our use with a level of ease never found with the large media outlets such as television or the national press.

## Liberal News Opinion.

The General Election was a serious trial for the Liberal Party, since our reconstitution in 1989, we have seen the four or five year cycle without any snap polls. For any minor Party fighting top tier elections is difficult, and this year was especially problematic given the highly divisive nature of the issues and the limited opportunity to prepare. Not only the somewhat unexpected nature of the poll but also it being called when local elections campaigns had already begun presented issues with decision making and the allocation of always scarce resources of time and money. The Liberal Party made the best of these problems and came through with credible results that will help us build up our local government base in the future.

The last few years have been a time of great instability and change around the whole world and this has been reflected in our domestic politics. It looks unlikely to become any more stable in the foreseeable future. As Liberals we must welcome the possibilities that change can bring but also look to making our Party fit and able to meet the challenges of the future. Liberalism without compromise or equivocation is needed as much today as in the past.

The Liberal Party is not and must not be an historical curiosity devoted to ever revisiting our distinguished past. Our values of liberty, peace and reform are enduring. These values are universally applicable and worthy of our support for all of those of goodwill who wish to see them put into practice with care, consideration and reason, wherever they find themselves.

In practical terms this means keeping up our efforts across all the forms of media both old and new. It means working to keep our policy programme modern and vital. It means looking to take opportunities as they arise and make the most of them. Be ready for the unexpected & another General Election!



# Assembly News: Autumn 2017.

The venue for Assembly will be the Novotel 'Bristol Centre' whose address is Victoria Street, Bristol, BS1 6HY. The date is now Saturday 14th October 2017. The Party is negotiating a reduced rate for members who want to stay at the Novotel. Details will be circulated on the email loop when they are known but if you are interested please contact Daniel Wood using the details below as soon as possible since some idea of numbers would be very helpful.



## Motions for Assembly:

The modernisation and introduction of new policy is the life blood of any political party. The Assembly is your opportunity as a Party Member to shape the policies of our Party. Please send your motions either on paper electronically using the details below.

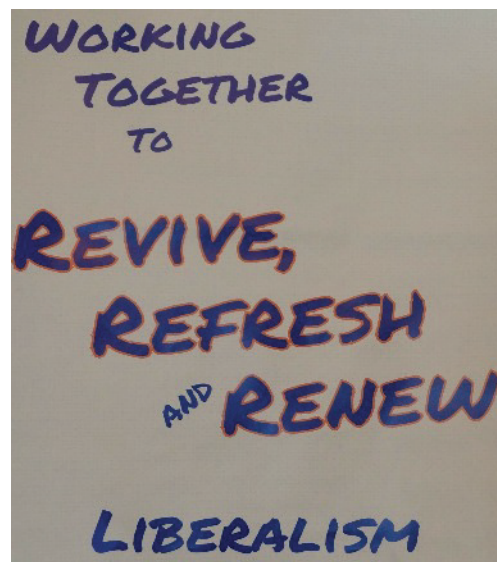
## Motions will be taken for consideration up to noon on 25th August 2017.

They can be sent via email to: [liberalassembly@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:liberalassembly@hotmail.co.uk)

### Or by post to:

**Daniel Wood**  
**26 Archers Green Road**  
**Kingswood**  
**Warrington**  
**WA5 7XS**

We always want to hear from Liberals around the country so feel free to send us your articles, letters or news items. Liberal News is your forum to reach every other member of the Party. The next edition will be out towards the end of the year so please send any items by the 1st of November 2017. Liberal News can be contacted at: [northwestliberalparty@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:northwestliberalparty@hotmail.co.uk). By mail at Liberal Party, 41 Sutton Street, Liverpool, L13 7EG.



## Assembly feedback: Summer 2017.

For those who could not join us for the half day Summer Assembly in Birmingham on 24th June, all the details of the motions amended and passed can be found on our website at [www.liberal.org.uk/library/index.htm](http://www.liberal.org.uk/library/index.htm). The Assembly included much good natured and vigorous debate. Motions on subjects such as Water Privatizations, Fracking and Employment Rights were given forensic consideration. Most importantly some key Party Constitutional matters were passed as part of a project to keep our Party in step with contemporary thinking and accessible. The NEC has taken on a renewed role in terms of the review of historic policy. During the NEC session a commitment was made that in future, when possible key Party policy documents such as the General Election Manifesto will be made available as audio recordings for those with visual impairments.

**We always want to hear from Liberals around the country so feel free to send us your articles, letters or news items. Liberal News is your forum to reach every other member of the Party. The next edition will be out towards the end of the year so please send any items by the 1st of November 2017.**

**Liberal News can be contacted at: [northwestliberalparty@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:northwestliberalparty@hotmail.co.uk).**

**By mail at Liberal Party, 41 Sutton Street, Liverpool, L13 7EG.**