



# Liberal News.

**Winter 2017/18**

**CANZUK & Commonwealth:  
A Global Future Beyond Europe?**



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# CANZUK

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Internationalism has always been central to Liberalism: speaking to the 2017 Liberal Party Assembly, Cllr Steve Radford urged Liberals to change the Commonwealth of Democracies policy to the more pragmatic approach of broadening the membership and entry criteria for the Commonwealth of Nations (formerly the British Commonwealth).

The concept of a Commonwealth of Democracies implied another layer of international organisation, without any lead country calling for it. Ever since the Kampala Conference the Commonwealth has already been open to exceptional cases of countries joining without the strong, historic link of having been formerly part of the British Empire. Previous examples were Mozambique, Rwanda, and the case of predominately French Speaking Cameroon (even though the country had a former British territory in the north).

The Commonwealth has a proven track record of supporting growing democracies and taking action against countries which failed to support these ideals, such as Apartheid South Africa and Fiji.

By removing the exceptional basis, Commonwealth membership could and would expand and the well-respected benefits of Commonwealth co-operation would be extended to other democracies and most importantly those countries seeking to strengthen their democratic institutions.

This policy would progress the same objectives as the Commonwealth of Democracies policy but could be immediately implemented and uses an established network internationally known and respected.

We need Liberal policies such as this to be tailored both to illustrate our idealistic vision and to be presented to the public as realistic to implement.

The text of the two motions as supported by the Bristol Assembly are produced in full on the next page.

## **Launch of new Liberal Birmingham Group!**

A short inaugural meeting of a new Liberal Party group in Birmingham will be held at noon on 6th January 2018 in the meeting room at The Briar Rose Hotel, Bennetts Hill prior to the Special Assembly and NEC meetings.

2018 is a big year for politics in the West Midlands County with elections across all 7 local authorities and 100 Council seats on the new boundaries up for election in Birmingham.

It would be great if all local members could meet up on the 6th January. However if you can't make the meeting but want to know more, please get in touch with Mike.

**Telephone: 0121 777 1752 or email [smithswood@gmail.com](mailto:smithswood@gmail.com)**

# A Personal View on the Bristol Assembly, 2017

*By Mike Sheridan.*

I've been active in politics for nearly 40 years, going to lots of party conferences over the years. To be honest I've not enjoyed most of them. I find they are often unpleasant with bitter argument and warring factions. I was therefore less than enthusiastic when it was suggested I attend the Liberal Assembly this year as an observer.

However, I was pleasantly surprised. Members were friendly and welcoming. Assembly was relaxed and without constant reference to procedural matters and the party constitution. Also, whilst people spoke passionately about issues that concerned them, where disagreements did emerge, there was always respect for other opinions. The Assembly was very sensible and mature.

I always associate the Liberal Party with community politics, bring everyone together and building consensus, then working together constructively to benefit all but recognising the needs of the individual. I saw a practical demonstration of this at the Assembly. The warmth, encouragement and support at the Assembly has led me to join the Liberal Party and I am already looking forward to coming along to the 2018 Assembly as a member.

**All the details of the motions carried can be found on the Liberal Party Website:**

**<http://liberal.org.uk/assembly/2017/motionscarried2017.pdf>**

## **SUPPORT FOR 'CANZUK'**

In the light of the British people's decision to leave the European Union, the UK must seek out new trade deals as part of the country's post-Brexit economic policy.

With this in mind Assembly supports the campaign by 'Canzuk International' to forge closer links between Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the UK.

Such links would include:

- i. Free Trade between these countries (including mutual recognition of each country's national standards);
- ii. Free movement of people between the countries (based on the Trans-Tasman Travel Agreement between Australia and New Zealand);
- iii. Greater co-operation in Defence and Foreign Affairs; Assembly believes that it is essential that the constituent member countries of any 'CANZUK' grouping remain independent, autonomous sovereign states.

## **THE COMMONWEALTH.**

The Liberal Party rescinds its support for a Commonwealth of Democracies' on the basis that there is no such international demand at present, and no existing structures in place around which such an organisation could be built. Assembly does, however, believe that the Commonwealth of Nations could and should develop into a broader structure by changing its criteria to welcome and include countries who do not have a historical link to the former British Empire but share the other key criteria established at the Kampala Review, specifically:

- i. An applicant country should accept and comply with Commonwealth fundamental values, principles and priorities as set out in the 1971 Declaration of Commonwealth Principles and contained in other subsequent Declarations;
- ii. An applicant country must demonstrate commitment to democracy and democratic processes, including free and fair elections and representative legislatures; the rule of law and independence of the judiciary; good governance, including a well-trained public service and transparent public accounts; protection of human rights, freedom of expression, and equality of opportunity;
- iii. New members should be encouraged to join the Commonwealth Foundation, and to promote vigorous civil society and business organisations within their countries, and to foster participatory democracy through regular civil society consultations.

The Liberal Party welcomes the inclusion of Mozambique and Rwanda into the Commonwealth of Nations.

### **LIBERALS: LLOYD KNIGHT WINS BY ELECTION IN TORY HEARTLAND**



On Thursday 30 November 2017 Liberal Party candidate Lloyd Knight won the Parish Council seat of Cullompton North where the Tories had expected to fill the seat uncontested.

**KNIGHT**, Lloyd The Liberal Party Candidate 148

**SNOW**, Christopher Terry Ind. 102

**TROAKE**, Aisha The Conservative Party Candidate 129

Lloyd had terrific support from Devon Cllr Jenny Roach who represents the next valley.

## Little Bits of History Repeating?

By Steve Graham.

*"History repeats ... first as tragedy, then as farce" Karl Marx.*

Late October 2017 marked the 100th centenary of the Russian Revolution and the rise of Soviet power. It also marked another milestone in the long saga of Russia's historical failure to develop into a robustly democratic and Liberal society.

In the autumn of 1917 the beleaguered provisional government of Kerensky was adrift, unable to produce a workable legislative programme, attempting to accommodate a troublesome minority party, the Kadets, and fast losing its grip on power.

Lenin was later to claim he found power lying discarded in the street and simply picked it up.

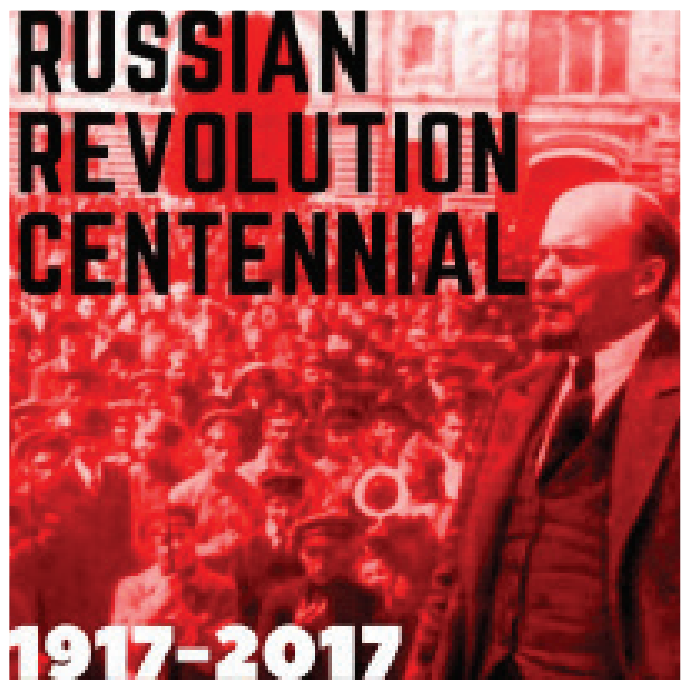
Today we have an increasingly direction-less Conservative administration, fast losing Ministers and potentially MPs to scandal, tentatively relying on the DUP for power, its legislative programme tempered by its lack of a workable majority.

May's ill-conceived June snap election, like the provisional government's summer military campaign, the Kerensky offensive, has done more damage than good, and it has seen its authority questioned after its indifferent response to tragedy, Grenfell for May, the July Days insurrection and the Kornilov affair for Kerensky.

There are even parallels with Kerensky and Mays' abrupt rise to power after the loss of their predecessor as leader, Prince Lvov/David Cameron.

Will May go the same way as Kerensky, this time round deposed by Corbyn and his vocal Momentum movement?

Where Kerensky failed to grasp the situation, Liberals need to be ready to seize the middle ground and advocate a moderate course of government, be it on the economy, a modest redistribution of wealth or the protection of vital public services in the face of austerity.



## Liberal News Opinion.

*"Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable." John F. Kennedy, March 1962.*

These words appear highly appropriate as we look back a hundred years to the horrors of the Soviet Communist revolution of October 1917 that would see Marxist-Leninism given the space to expand and claim around 100 million lives. This tragedy was the product of previous revolutionary failure in both 1905 and earlier in the year of 1917. The political forces of moderation, reform and good will, failed or proved unwilling to take measures that provided for peace, democracy or any degree of material justice among the great mass of the Russian population. The failures of the forces of moderation opened the door to the ghouls of socialist oppression and new heights of mass tyranny.

In our present time such horrors are hardly close at hand but we should take care not to glibly dismiss the real dangers that are never totally removed from even the most stable system of government. In Syria and across the Middle East we have seen democratic uprisings fail before new forces of tyranny and oppression. Proof if it was needed that history does not travel in any single direction or towards some inevitable peaceable reconciliation of diverse perspectives.

Even in a mature democracy such as Spain the established patterns of democracy can falter when put to the test. While it is unlikely that the issue of Catalan Independence will shatter the peace that has been the general norm of Spanish political life since the 1970's it clearly is under pressure due to a lack of flexibility. When an issue commands significant support, even if that is a minority it should be given a respectful hearing because to do otherwise allows the issue to fester. In the case of the Catalans that requires a constitutional option to be open to independence via a legitimate democratic process. To turn a deaf ear to the legitimate desire for independence of a historic people or to disregard the real concerns of many people about the growing disparities of wealth and power in our ever changing world is to fail to practice the democratic spirit and therefore call into question the values that must bind together a legitimate policy.

Democracy is best protected by its vigorous practice and the active participation of as many citizens as possible so that no perspective is left silent in the public square. This lofty aim should be the guiding principal of any true Liberal.

## **Assembly News: New Year Special Assembly.**

The venue for the Special Assembly will be the Briar Rose Hotel, Bennett's Hill, Birmingham on Saturday 6th January 2018, from 12 Noon - 3:30pm. This is a highly accessible location that we have used previously with great success. The Briar Rose is close to Birmingham New Street Station and has lots of central Birmingham parking within walking distance.

### **Liberal Party News.**

President of the Liberal Party, Cllr Steve Radford spoke to the non-partisan Durham University Liberal Association on the 16th of November. The panel of speakers also including Mark Littlewood from the Institute of Economic Affairs. The discussion was on the subject of liberalism and Brexit. Steve was able to introduce the Liberal Party's particular take on world affairs especially our desire for further international cooperation after the UK leaves the European Union and why a critical perspective on the EU can be a solidly Liberal perspective.



**If you know of any other groups that might wish to include a Liberal Party speaker please contact us on the information below as we will always try to provide an engaging presentation of the Party's policy & philosophy.**

On the 6th of November former Tuebrook Councillor Chris Lenton was awarded his medal of office as an Honorary Alderman of the City of Liverpool at the Town Hall. His two Ward colleagues Hazel Williams and Steve Radford attended with Cllr Radford speaking at the ceremony to congratulate all the newly minted Honorary Alderman for their past services in local government and their continued commitment to the City.

***Alderman Chris Lenton, second from right bottom row.***

***Cllr Steve Radford first right second row.***

***Former Lord Mayor Hazel Williams centre second row.***

***Lord Mayor of Liverpool Cllr Malcolm Kennedy second from left.***

### **Could You Help Out In Trafford?**

The real Liberal Party is back in Trafford, Greater Manchester, thanks to the efforts of Neil Taylor and his team. They need your help because in May 2018 Trafford goes to the polls to elect its' Councillors and Trafford needs a Liberal Councillor to take a lead. That could be Neil as he is a local born & bred, has a real record of action and represented Timperly on the Council from 2006-2014. Take a look at the website: [liberaltrafford.org.uk](http://liberaltrafford.org.uk) or email: [info@liberaltrafford.org.uk](mailto:info@liberaltrafford.org.uk)



You can also get in touch with the Trafford Liberals by mail to:

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or Tel: 0161 9805473 Mob: 07825077204

*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 in the New Year so please send any items by the 15th of January 2018.*

*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.*