



# Liberal News. WINTER 2018.

## Your Voice Matters

On **Saturday 5th January** all Liberal Party members are entitled and encouraged to join our New Year Special Assembly.

We will be discussing a motion tabled by London Liberals over the Northern Ireland issue, obviously we will need to consider the current status of negotiations. I feel the need to say that the issue of the EU has been deeply divisive to every political Party - including our own. It is worth remembering, we as Liberals are unique in supporting members to have the freedom to use and express their own views on issues.

At our last assembly we approved a motion critical of calls for a second referendum as a cynical move to frustrate the outcome of the first referendum, most noticeably by the very people who opposed the public ever having a vote in the first place.

I also have further concern that the debate over the EU has meant the other significant issues have been side-lined.

At our special Assembly we will be:

- looking at options to make our call for the reform of the House of Lords more robust.
- highlighting the need for protection of leaseholders.
- pressing positive ways to protect the environment and avoid the dangers of Fracking.

If you have ideas to table motions or amend those items tabled please e mail us at [northwestliberalparty@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:northwestliberalparty@hotmail.co.uk)

Warmest Regards Cllr Steve Radford

## Time to Replace the House of Lords

We in the Liberal Party have consistently called for the House of Lords to be abolished as it is and replaced by a predominately elected Senate.

We have policy that articulates the view that at least 2/3 should be elected and that there should be provision for elected representation from our overseas territories such as Channel islands, Gibraltar and Falkland Islands.

I would propose we strengthen our case and argue for 75% of this Senate to be elected by STV across the various regions and nations of the UK, with overseas representation being included under the 25% of the non directly elected members of the Senate.

Data compiled by the Electoral Reform Society found 455 Lords claimed more than the average take home pay in the UK during 2016/2017 despite the House of Lords sitting no more than 141 days in that year.

In 2016/17 the allowance and travel costs for the House of Lords came to over £19 million.

It is estimated 33 inactive peers collected £462,510 tax free.

Of the current peers 109 peers had not spoken in one year with claims exceeding £1m.

The most active peers numbering 300 accounted for 84% of votes cast in the House of Lords.



I would propose we should campaign for a new Senate with 400 members of which 300 would be directly elected. Alternatively members may wish to vote for the option proposed by the Electoral Reform Society for a 100 % elected Senate of 300 members.

Lastly I suggest there is no reason why members of the House Of Lords should be tax exempt. Their income should be subject to income tax akin with any other UK resident.

I hope Liberal Party members at Birmingham on Saturday 5th January will vote to make our policy clearer and more robust in providing government fit for purpose and abolish party patronage at a gross expense to the tax payer.

# Leasehold Reforms

As Liberals we believe in fairness and protection for people living in leasehold and those in shared ownership properties.

We attach a copy of a motion which was unanimously agreed by Liverpool City Council at the November 2018 council meeting and we encourage members serving on other authorities to move and seek approval of a similar motion.

## Fair Deal for Leaseholders

This Council expresses its severe dissatisfaction with this Government's failure to adequately regulate the sale of leasehold properties within the UK, and tackle the onerous terms of existing leases.

It notes its concern for the financial burdens suffered by homeowners, due to unregulated developer practices, and the unacceptable terms of leases.

It notes concern for residents, who find themselves unable to sell their homes, except for a considerable discount, following the public's increasing awareness of the struggles affecting leasehold homeowners.

It welcomes pledges to address the matter; however, expresses frustration regarding the extent of this Government's plans, and its commitment to support those already affected by unfair practices, and charges.

This Council resolves that this Government takes urgent action to address:-

a) The soaring ground rent charges that existing leaseholders are obliged to pay to developers, or

the companies to which the freehold has been sold;

b) The disturbing practice of freeholders selling the freehold to third parties, without the knowledge of the existing leaseholders, and without first offering the leaseholder the option of purchasing the freehold;

c) Increasingly unaffordable estate maintenance charges levied against the leaseholders, and spiraling costs;

d) The unclear, and in many cases, excessive cost of the purchase of freeholds by leaseholders;

e) The unfair systems of administration charges imposed via the lease, to the hindrance of (for example) leaseholders who wish to make alterations to the property;

f) The actions of freeholders who continue to claim administration fees, following transfer, through the wrongful practice of including restrictive covenants in transfer deeds, to in an attempt to replicate these shameful terms of the lease.

g) The requirement of existing leaseholders to have owned the lease for a minimum period, before being eligible to purchase the freehold;

h) The lack of advice and adequate compensation schemes available to leaseholders who believe they have been miss-sold, and/or their lease contains onerous conditions.

We also ask all Liberal Party Councilors to ensure that when councils sell land they use their influence to ensure that land sold for houses is freehold.

# Northern Ireland Border Motion

The Liberal Party supported BREXIT at the referendum. Liberals believe that for the Northern Ireland question of the border, a camera system should be installed, similar to the London Congestion Charge system and using a trusted trader status run from DVLA. This would be supported by up to 85% of the people in Northern Ireland, according to a latest survey. With regard to the present arrangements, there is a physical border, the police on both sides and technical borders consisting of VAT, Corporation Tax and personal tax, all working amicably. This is part of the free travel area since 1922. The major concern is smuggling, and the camera system above should help.



# Sustainable Alternatives to Fossil Fuels

The Liberal Party welcomes the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change special report 'Global Warming of 1.5°C, which gives stark warnings about the impact we are having on the earth's climate and the consequences for human and other life systems if we fail to take radical and immediate actions to cut risk of extreme heat, drought, floods and poverty.

With the IPCC report in focus, the Liberal Party calls upon government to implement an immediate ban on all expenditure which supports new fossil fuel initiatives, both at home or overseas. To report and publish all funding already committed to support fossil fuel initiatives both at home and overseas and to review if those projects are consistent with our climate commitments.

Further we call on government to establish an All Party Working Group, with assigned expert advisers from each potentially viable source, to define alternative non-fossil based energy strategies, solutions and

funding requirements to meet 100% of UK energy needs by 2030.

In-line with our demand for non-fossil fuel energy solutions, we call for an immediate ban on all Shale Gas exploration and the full restoration of land already impacted by the industry.



## Why Brexit Draft - Article 132 Must Be Deleted

Article 132 provides an instrument for the EU to extend the transition period for the UK departure from the EU to 20XX. Whilst the XX is not defined or limited, it could mean we are stuck in the EU until 2099 if negotiations are frustrated.

During the transition period we would not have a voice in the EU parliament, we would not have a right of veto, we would continue to contribute to the EU budget at a value that has not yet been defined and we would be unable to invoke trade deals.

Liberals believe that this article is against natural justice and would give an enormously powerful negotiation advantage to the EU. If Article 132 is not deleted the Liberal Party will oppose the Brexit plan.

The people are fed up with divisive discussion and continued uncertainty and now call for Brexit to be brought to a close



### Neil Taylor Fighting Police Cuts in Timperley

I had a chance to do a ride out with our local cops during the summer for a full shift, and what I saw left me in shock. Our local police are doing the best that they can, but the number of officers has been reduced to what I would now call a dangerous level. This really must be looked at so you and I are protected from not just petty crime but also serious crime. Police budgets have been cut to what is now a crisis, alarming level, with some areas in greater Manchester becoming no go areas.



# Hate Crime

Motion by Dominic Allaway

All the so-called 'hate crime' laws should be repealed on the grounds that they are unnecessary, unfair, and divisive.

Opposing Motion by Steve Radford

The Liberal Party has consistently supported hate crime legislation where there has been clear evidence of disproportionate violence and abuse among clearly identified minorities whose quality of life is damaged by the persistence of hate crime. We also recognise research that those committing hate crimes against one minority often abused all such minorities.

(For example Stormbreak Report Liverpool 2006)

We would resist any calls for other social prejudices, to be added to hate crime unless there is a clear evidence of a minority having their life

styles damaged.

We reiterate that magistrates and courts have adequate discretion to consider all those issues.

We support the view of senior police officers that they must and should target those crimes proportionate to the actual harm to individuals and society.

We reiterate our opposition to the damaging levels of cutbacks to police provision which are undermining their ability to combat crime across the UK,



It is with great sadness that we share Cllr Jenny Roach passed away after a short illness.

Her loss will be felt so many people in different ways, she was a staunch champion of Liberalism, devoted to improving the lives of older people in Devon and the new Health and Well Being Centre will be a lasting tribute to her commitment and vision.

For so many of us we have lost a true loyal friend who would always be there to encourage and guide us.

Cllr Steve Radford



Lloyd Knight was elected to Cullompton Town Council in a tightly fought by-election in November 2017.

Lloyd is the Town Council Deputy Mayor and their representative on the Devon Association of Local Councils. He is committed to giving a voice to the people of Cullompton at both the Town and District level.

We are delighted Lloyd will be contesting Town and District seats for South ward Cullompton this May, if you can help please email him on [lloyd.knight@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:lloyd.knight@hotmail.co.uk) or telephone 01884 563 462.

We are delighted Parish Councillor Angie Farrell and Disabled Rights Campaigner will be fighting the Shaw Seat in Oldham.

***why not give Angie a helping hand***

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We always want to hear from Liberals around the country so feel free to send us your articles, letters or news items.

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