

EVENTS

Wednesday 16th November

BINGO & SOCIAL EVENING at the United Services Club,
Maltravers Rd, Littlehampton - 7.15pm Eyes down at 8.00pm
Tickets £1.50

This is an enjoyable evening shared with our friends of the British Legion. This raises a great deal of money for our party funds, and it's a fun evening, even if you don't like bingo.

HELP WITH REFRESHMENT, SUPPLYING SANDWICHES & SAUSAGE ROLLS
WOULD BE APPRECIATED!!

Please ring Cllr. David Jones on 01903 722957,
10 Joyce Close, Littlehampton BN17 7JG

Thursday 17th November 7.00pm (Note time!)

**A.G.M. at Bognor School of Music, Sudley Road, Bognor Regis
- full details enclosed.**

Saturday 19th November 7.00pm

JAPANESE MEAL at the home of

Cllr Dr James Walsh, The Laurels, Ash Lane, Rustington.

This event returns by popular demand at the 'value' price of just
£8.00 each !

Please contact either Cllr. Francis Oppler - 01243 583906 or
Dr James Walsh - 01903 773771 to reserve your place,
.... but please, do it straight away as the event is so soon.

Saturday 26th November 2.00pm

Christmas Fair at Bersted Green Court, Hazel Rd, Bognor Regis.
Bric-a-Brac, New Condition Clothes, Books, Raffle, Cakes etc.,
Tombola, Teas & light refreshments etc., all staffed by members.
You are ALL urged to come and support their efforts.

Opens at 2.00pm. **(Helpers 12.30 pm please)**

Details from: Cllr. Francis Oppler - 01243 583906

A MIXED YEAR

The Chairman looks at the ups and downs of 2005



As expected, the focus in the first part of the year was on the general and county council elections. Both nationally and locally we did well, as the July issue of our newsletter highlighted. BUT we did not do well enough by any means to allow us to rest on our laurels. We underestimated the Tories' campaigning powers; these have certainly not diminished in our neck of the woods and, once they have got themselves yet another leader, they may well strengthen overall.

Labour is a problem for us here mainly insofar as they run 'spoiling' campaigns and do not hesitate to play dirty (as evidenced in the town council by-election in July). This was, of course, fairly successful (for them) nationally, when Blair frightened the electorate with the "vote LibDem and you get a Tory" scam.

Earlier in the year we suffered (if that's the word) a few defections from disaffected members, mostly councillors who owed their positions to the hard work of their LibDem erstwhile colleagues. Blown up out of all proportion by our opponents and the local media, we need not waste any more time on this.

We have seen that Labour, certainly the Tories, and even UKIP seem to be able to call on good numbers of members to do the essential doorstep and letterbox work. **Here is our challenge: we must get out and begin recruiting (NOW) more footsoldiers** to reinforce our candidates' strenuous efforts and get out our good literature. During the recent Felpham by-election I had called for a "mass canvass" – on the day there was the candidate, one Executive member and me.

Though we may not have won the seat in any case, It is certain that the lack of coverage through lack of manpower made the result much worse than it could have been.

The AGM will be the opportunity to breathe new life into what seems to have become a stagnant local party. We need a new chair (my statutory three-year period of office has now come to an end, though I will be prepared to stand for the post of secretary). We need active recruitment officers in both parts of the

constituency. We need a treasurer. We may need a new membership secretary. We need a new vice-chair. We need new blood on the Executive.

So please, fill in those nomination forms in a positive and helpful frame of mind, send them to me before the AGM or bring them along on the evening.

Nationally, the party is going from strength to strength. In addition to our 64 MPs, we came second (often very closely) in another 189 seats. We **could** be the official opposition next time – at the very least. In 2007 we have the chance to win more council seats.

The slogan may be old, but it's so very true:

WHERE WE WORK, WE WIN

Christmas Draw

It is time to remind you about our Christmas Draw. Let's hope you too can be successful this year.

Most of you will receive a book of tickets with this newsletter, please try and sell them to your friends and family. The money and stubs, with cheques made payable to: **Liberal Democrats** should be sent **only** to:

Alan Fletcher, 32, Henty Close, Walberton BN18 0PW.

No later than Saturday 25th November.

N.B.

THIS YEAR THE RETURN TIME IS VERY SHORT, sorry!

Please attend to the matter right away..... thank you.

The Local Party earns a good commission for every book sold; we have a limited number of books to sell and there is usually a waiting list for extra books - so, if you think you will be unable to sell the tickets give Alan a ring on 01243 551010 as it is most important that unsold books are returned A.S.A.P. so that they can be redistributed in time.

THE MORE BOOKS SOLD, THE MORE CHANCE OF WINNING AND MORE INCOME FOR THE LOCAL PARTY.

Good luck, everybody.

The way forward: 'localism'

The concept is not new, but has now been seen as the way to recruit new members.

As LibDems we are skilled in being involved in local issues, but this concept takes it further. We need to be recognised as people with up-to-date knowledge and skills in areas of local interest and concern, eg, housing matters.

At the recent autumn conference in Blackpool a fringe meeting held by Shelter produced a joint survey by themselves and the Association of Mortgage Lenders which showed that only 77% of those surveyed actually wanted to buy their own home; moreover, some of this group were not intending to buy in the next few years.

We should therefore not only be campaigning for more affordable houses to be built *to buy*, but also for housing units of a reasonable standard *for rent*. This goes hand in hand with the urgent need to consider the impact on the local environment of large local building projects – a matter of much local concern and on which our recruitment effort should focus.

Cllr Ros Kissell

Newsletter:

We are missing our former Editor, Barbara Roberts already...

Sorry if this edition of the Newsletter is very late and not up to our usual standard, but we hope to improve on things by the next time we publish, when we hope to have a new Editor appointed following the AGM.

CONFERENCE REPORTS

A GOOD CONFERENCE



Reading most of the press and listening to some of the radio and TV reports, I always come to the same conclusion after a conference. Where have I been? Surely at a quite different conference from that reported in the media.

This time they had an obsession with alleged murmurings about Charles' leadership. Even quite recently a newspaper (now, of course, caught up in the real leadership crisis of the Tories) referred to Charles' "lacklustre" speech in Blackpool. Well, what it lacked was the yah-boo element. What it had in buckets was a positive statement of what we stand for and what we want to achieve. But the positive is rarely news. And we did discuss basic policy, with many excellent speeches. And - as is proper in a traditional liberal conference - the platform did not have it all their way.

Next year's spring conference will be in Harrogate (3-5 March) and the autumn conference will be in Brighton (16-21 September). I *think* we are still entitled to have 5 voting representatives, though with recent losses in membership, this may be a close call. There is space on the nomination forms to try to get elected as a voting representative, but even if not, please attend at least one of the conferences: it will be good for your morale and, of course, good for the party.

I S M

CONFERENCE NEWS

'They seek him here, they seek him there'
While at Conference I, among others, was interviewed by the press after having run the gauntlet of strict security measures. What did they want to discuss? Was it that we had polled an extra 1 million votes in the General Election? NO! Was it that we came second in over 160



seats which had we had P.R. would have been reflected in our total no of parliamentary seats? NO!

Was it that the no of women elected was the largest that the party had ever had? NO!

The media, having been preparing for the Tory leadership contest, wanted us to follow suit and tried to steer interviews towards this theme. We did not play ball and tried to explain that what we were doing was changing our constitution so that, in event of a leadership contest we would not have the fiasco that the Tories were having of large numbers of candidates without realistic backing. With no real story (although several possible future contenders were using the conference to raise

their profiles) they tried to label our conference as dull. Not a bit of it We had debates where we did not always agree with senior members of the Party - sorry Simon (Hughes that is) and a number of fringe meetings and training of a very high standard. Martin Bell, Martin McGuinness and Claire Raynor were alround - to name a few and evenings were spent catching up with party friends (did I say party)

For those of you who have not yet been to a Federal Conference give it a try.

It's at Brighton next Autumn so not so far to travel as Blackpool. You can go for a day, but I recommend staying as you then can join in some or all of the extra-curricular activities !!!!!

See you there.....

Cllr Ros Kissell

Conference Highlights

Sunday: agenda included consultative sessions on tax, devolution and children and families, general election debrief, speech by Steve Webb and motions on tax credits and equal pay

Monday: agenda included speeches by Sir Menzies Campbell, Simon Hughes and Seif Shariff Hamad, Charles Kennedy Q&A, and motions on Europe, small arms, Millennium Development Goals, dentistry and mental health

Tuesday: agenda included speeches by Graham Watson MEP, Vincent Cable and Sarah Teather, motions on local government Standards Board, 16-19 education, post offices and Royal Mail, school discipline, and consultative session on 'Meeting the Challenge'

Wednesday: agenda included speeches by Mark Oaten and Jim Wallace MSP, environment Q&A session, and motions on constitutional reform, road user pricing and sustainable energy

Thursday: agenda included motions on anti-social behaviour and civil liberties, and leader's speech from Charles Kennedy.

A Cheap Stunt

One session of the Blackpool conference was devoted to a question-and-answer period with Charles Kennedy, chaired by the editor of *The Independent*. Eight representatives managed to get on the list of those invited to ask questions, with our Catherine Morrish eighth on the list.

One of the questions was a little ill-judged. A (failed) PPC wondered why, during his campaign, he had to spend so much time “defending the leader” instead of getting on with policy. Charles answered this very effectively (our party is now a big player and therefore gets big stick and the leader gets most of that). The media, of course, lapped this up as evidence of disaffection with Charles.

Then the next question was announced – which should have been Catherine’s, and she was, indeed, ready at the microphone. However, the editor pulled a cheap journalistic stunt by pretending to have had an e-mail from Mrs Kennedy asking where her husband was and Charles dealt with this in a good-humoured manner. But time had run out, Catherine was effectively told to go away, and was never able to ask her brief question. If that PPC had not been given the time for his negative contribution, Catherine would have rounded off the session in a positive and constructive manner.

CONGRATULATIONS to our latest winners of 3 draws:



1st Prize: (£21.00) to Philip Wildsmith

2nd Prize: (£9.00) to A.E. Haffenden

1st Prize: (£21.00) to Cllr Dr James Walsh

2nd Prize: (£9.00) to Cllr Simon Mc Dougall

1st Prize: (£21.00) to Philip Wildsmith

2nd Prize: (£9.00) to Alderman Catherine Morrish

There are many shares still available which provide a good income to the Local Party and worthwhile winnings to the lucky ones.

Details of how you could become a regular winner from Cllr Nick Wiltshire or ring the Membership Secretary on 01903 716582.