

EVENTS

72

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

FRIDAY 17th NOVEMBER 7.30pm

Aldwick Parish Council Offices

Pryors Lane, Aldwick, Bognor Regis.

DETAILS & AGENDA CIRCULATED

Saturday 18th November

Bingo Afternoon at the Wick Hall, Wick Street, Littlehampton.

Doors open 1.30pm for "Eyes Down" at 2.30pm

Please ring Cllr. David Jones on 01903 722957,

Saturday 25th 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 824382

Christmas Draw

Let's hope you too can be winner 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, so why not do it right NOW?!

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, everyone.

CONFERENCE REPORT

by President, Barbara Roberts.

“A Proper Statesman...” were the words echoed all conference week. Leader, Rt. Hon. Sir Menzies Campbell Q.C. M.P. really stamped his authority and credibility on our Party during Conference at Brighton. No spin, no floss, no gimmicks but honesty, integrity, excellent debates and solid good policies. This is what stunned the media, who were hoping to cause mischief and report conference as some second rate soap opera. A robust debate on the Party’s tax policy, which Ming had courageously, in true Liberal principle spelt out, was overwhelmingly, by 2 to 1, carried in a packed debate. This is what democracy and politics is about, not like the Tories and Labour, whose conferences turn out like back-slapping rallies. Our front bench spokespeople were outstanding, all winning much applause. There is so much new, young, bright talent on the front bench complimented by our statesman-like Leader. What really made us fed up was the media’s obsession with the age of political leaders. No other country has this hang up. I was always taught ‘there is no substitute for experience’. Ming certainly proved that. I challenge any of the gutter press to sprint down the ‘prom’ like Ming did that week!

Many policies, from families and children, international law to human trafficking were all well debated and voted on. Something for everyone, and at the fringe meetings also. Good to see Paddy (Lord Ashdown) back from his ‘job’ in Bosnia taking part in an excellent fringe meeting. I will never forget the monologue he told at the “Glee Club” in the early hours of Thursday morning, he was hilarious!! Many MPs and MEPs did ‘turns’ or sang (Oh, dear!) at the “Glee Club”. No TV crews there, thank goodness. A memorable moment for me was the visit and speech from Grigory Yavlinsky, Leader of the Russian Democratic Party, Yabloko. What a difficult and frustrating job he has, struggling to speak for Liberalism in Russia.

Yes, an excellent week. The sun shone all the time. It was great meeting up with friends and colleagues to have a drink and meal with in the evenings. Good to see Alderman Catherine Morrish speak in an intervention during the tax debate.

Liberal Democrats have definitely set the agenda and scared the Tories with our defined tax policy and pollution tax proposals. ‘The meat is on our bones’, David Cameron!! Stop dithering and posturing and tell the electorate what your real policies are and what they cost. If you can!! A week to be proud to be a Lib Dem. We left Brighton with a spring in our step, with good policies that are fair and costed to take to the doorsteps and print in our ‘Focus’s’.

GREAT TO SEE AND HEAR CHARLES

Our former leader, Charles Kennedy was very warmly received when he spoke at Conference. In what has been an immensely difficult year for him, he was made aware of how much he is warmly admired and respected. We wish him well and hope to see him back on the front bench when he is well and ready.
B.R.

Ian Menzies

Cllr Dr. James Walsh, Cllrs Simon McDougall, Martin Lury, Ros Kissell, Alderman Catherine Morrish, President Barbara Roberts and Alan Fletcher attended Ian's funeral service.

Thanks to Simon and James for taking and bringing back two cars full in time to hear the Health Debate at 5.30pm back in Brighton. How Ian would have loved this Conference especially the Transport Debate, ironically, the afternoon of his funeral.

We can only but recall the astounding result when Ian took the safe Tory Arun District Council seat for Yapton on General Election day. This echoed the high esteem in which Ian was held locally and in the Five Villages. It must not go unrecorded how much effort Ian put into the Local Party, both as it's Chairman, oft-time Secretary and representative at national level.

*A tribute to Ian by Councillor Ros Kissell
appears later in this Newsletter.*



WINNERS of the DRAW will be notified.

The 100 Club is a very beneficial source of fundraising for the Local Party and you have a chance of winning the prizes. Some of our members who own a number of shares have regular wins!

The more shares you have - the more times you win!!

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

A CONFERENCE STORY TO AMUSE YOU

(I think!)

On the Wednesday of conference week some of our friends from Sutton came down for the day. Cllr Sue Stears (who was there all week with me, the empty sherry bottle proves it!!) and I met up with her fellow Councillor, Roger Thistle for a meal. We decided on an 'alresco' Italian restaurant as the weather was warm and wonderful. Isn't it always for Lib Dems? A young waiter approached our table - this is how it went;

Waiter: "Are you ready to order as we are not so busy tonight? Don't know why."

Us: "Haven't you any of those conference delegates coming in? We think it's a political party in town but don't know who they are!" Keeping our faces straight and our badges and paperwork out of sight. We were ready for a light-hearted joke.

Waiter: "Don't talk to me about them, they are so boring, they came in last night discussing their speeches and debates and what they were doing today. I think the Lib Dems are so serious, dull and boring. But you people look nice, whoever you are."

By now we were well into this pretend game!

Us: "Perhaps it is serious stuff they have to debate, I really don't know." I lied. "I promise we will not be boring and serious, you will enjoy having us and we are normal fun-loving people." By this stage we were well into a bottle of house white.... big spenders us Lib Dems (not!!)... The banter continued.

Waiter: "I can see you are not at all like boring politicians."

Us: "Well, actually," Roger took his security pass out of his pocket and I quickly grabbed my agenda out of my bag with Ming's face on the front. We stuck them into the mortified face of the young waiter, enjoying his discomfort of course.

Waiter: "Oh no! Oh God! What can I say? Do you want to report me? I am so sorry. Oh, dear!" He shifted from one foot to the other as we chuckled and told him it was fine. We had a lovely evening and many a laugh and policy discussion with this young man after all.

When we left he declared, "You Lib Dems are great people, I was wrong before." Could it have been the tip or did he really change his mind?!

The moral of the story: 'Beware, the Lib Dems always have the last laugh!'

Our close colleagues in Rustington are part of the neighbouring West Worthing Local Party and are known as East Arun Liberal Democrats. Although it is technically another constituency, we are joined through the Arun District Council and WSCC where wards and divisions overlap, and, of course they work together in the Councils; in addition we help each other at election time wherever possible. They are great supporters of *our* Local Party and we are always made welcome to their functions and events too, so please feel free to go along.

EAST ARUN EVENTS

Saturday 4th November 10.00am

Coffee Morning & Table Sale

at The Scout Hall, Church Road, Rustington Admission 50p

Friday 8th December 7.30pm

“Punch n’Pies’ Party - Very popular annual event.

Spike Lodge, The Street, East Preston. - £5.00

Details and bookings - Patricia Capon, 01903 783558

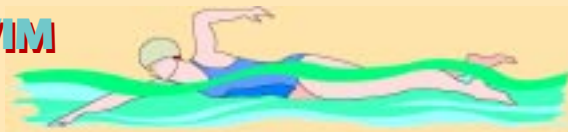
WEB-SITE news

Mark Foster has been working hard to update and maintain our Local Party Website. You can now be assured that you will hear it first there!!

There is information about what’s going on in both Bognor Regis and in Littlehampton areas. Political views, fundraising events, links to other related sites and up-to-the-minute national Liberal Democrat news and press releases. Visit the site and bookmark it NOW, better still, put a shortcut on your desktop or even make it your ‘homepage’ when firing up your browser.

www.brl-tonlibdems.org.uk

ALDERMAN CATHERINE MORRISH'S SPONSORED SWIM NOVEMBER



Once again our ‘water babe’,

Catherine will be swimming for Local Party Funds.

Her ‘marathon’ will be held on Tuesday 28th November.

She may well be approaching you very soon with her sponsorship form.

If you miss Catherine, please contact her on 01243 263989.



TRIBUTE TO IAN MENZIES

On September 12th this year the Liberal Democrats lost one of its stalwart members in Ian Menzies. A man of many talents who used them to create projects and ideas throughout the Party. Many people, including myself, have lost a friend, mentor and political confidant. His networking however spread beyond the political area although right to the end he never lost his interest in politics.

A good illustration of this was a day we attended at the London School of Economics - one of the homes of academic study in economics and politics. Originally this day had been to bring together the work on the 'Meeting the Challenge' paper which had been designed to take the party forward for the next set of elections. 'Meeting the Challenge' could easily have summed up Ian's approach to life and on that day I saw many of his skills come into play. The day had been somewhat highjacked by the start of the campaign for a new leader of the Party and we went into the hall for the speeches. Ian chose seats for us in the third row at the front. As the hall filled up we were sandwiched between a sea of press (Ian was a journalist and had worked behind the scenes at conferences preparing and writing speeches) and two Lords (Rennard and Razzell) behind us. The best part of that section was to hear from a Professor from Essex University that in his study of the last election (2005) our leader has come out top.

After this session we went out into the hall and did some networking and Ian also was collecting signatures for one of the candidates for the leadership. Little did we know that we were being filmed and appeared on late night TV!!!!

At this point we decided to escape the crowds and have our lunch somewhere in the local area. Not for us the crowded pubs (although Ian liked them) but to a boutique cafe where we grabbed a snack and shared a plate of profiteroles. Refreshed we returned to the workshops and went to one run by ALDES (Association of Liberal Democrat Engineers & Scientists) - an organisation for which Ian, being an engineer, had done a lot of work with and probably led to his involvement in the planning of 'CROSSRAIL' - a transport system

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for London. This was chaired by Lembit Opik with whom I had had a word about his future ambitions (as well as marrying Sian Lloyd). Unfortunately some of the ideas we had discussed and planned to write about were interrupted the following month, on February 14th, when Ian had a bad stroke which confined him to a wheelchair and left him paralysed down the right side. This was a new challenge but Ian still was interested in playing a part in local and national politics. I gathered the information he needed including a copy of the Federal Conference agenda and he planned to get his daughter to e-mail his comments. Among the people he most wanted to contact was his friend, Vince Cable. Eventually I managed to get his personal e-mail address and passed it on to Ian. I don't think he succeeded but on 14th September I attempted to contact Vince to tell him of Ian's death and to put a question which I think Ian would have asked about his tax proposals. I received a personal reply to both parts of my e-mail. It says something that such a busy man could still find time to remember Ian.

IAN'S LEGACY

There are many more stories I could relate about Ian who was a husband, father, grandfather and friend to many. A man who enjoyed life, worked hard and believed in fairness, social justice and negotiation rather than more confrontational tactics (he was a founder member of Amnesty International). His ability to see the best in people stood him in good stead and coupled with good political judgement enabled him to advise people who perhaps needed some guidance. We talked of how proud he was of his daughters but Ian always encouraged women to achieve things in their own right. Someone once wrote to me and said "memories are like poppies - you cant kill them off". It is our memories of Ian and his wish for us to continue to fight for those principles that we hope will make the world a fairer and safer place to live in that makes it possible to believe that his spirit lives on. In this way we can celebrate the life of a remarkable man.

Cllr Roslyn Kissell

Vice Chair of Local Party.

South East Region Policy Officer.

Vice-Chair of WACUNA (Women's Advisory Council to United Nations Association).

Chairman's Thoughts



When you are interested in politics, either actively or from the armchair, it is often difficult to keep on top of all the stories, latest initiatives and new policies that we are bombarded with constantly. Those involved in community activities are generally very busy people already and therefore always seem to have a huge reading pile by the settee, which never seems to get smaller, despite constantly allocating time to it. I know you will all think that I'm really sad, but I take some of this pile to France each May as it is one of the few times in the year when there is no radio, television, computer or meetings to occupy my *spare* time. You can imagine me sat outside the caravan, glass of cheap wine in one hand, some new corporate priority strategy document in the other....

However, back to the point. The trouble with us all being too busy is that there are often other things that are also very important that could have wide ranging effects, but because they are not of great interest to the media, they slip through the net of public scrutiny. Two such government *initiatives* will potentially have a really negative effect on our locality.

Firstly, the proposal from the Lyons Inquiry on Local Government Finance to have a so-called *Bed Tax* on holiday accommodation. I accept that there should be no *sacred cows* when it comes to looking at ways of raising income for any organisation, and the argument in favour of this, apparently, is that councils in tourist areas have to spend more on tourist-related services eg public toilets, parks and gardens, events, TIC's etc. This is all very well, but the potential damage that this new tax will have on the local economy will more than outweigh any extra financial benefit to some local authorities. We all know how many hotels and B & B's have been lost in the Arun District in the last few decades; this new tax really will be the final nail in the coffin for many of our accommodation providers who often already live a hand to mouth existence. The decision to convert to flats will be even less of a difficult one for them. So much for government trying to help tourism and the renaissance of the British seaside resort. The proposal, I suspect, is so that the amount that government gives to local councils to help them provide tourism facilities can be stopped. Yet another case of shifting the burden of local government funding from central government to local people, in this case, local businesses.

Secondly, is the proposed government raid on developers' contributions. At present, if a developer of residential units cannot provide, say, the requisite open space on

Chairman's Report contd/.

the development site itself, he instead pays a contribution *in lieu* to the local council who can use them to provide new open space elsewhere or enhance existing local facilities. Although I don't think that Arun have been the most dynamic council to gain developers contributions to improve local facilities, compared to say East Hampshire, nonetheless, ADC has improved/provided many children's play areas, skate parks etc with such contributions. So, what is going to change you ask? Well, you've guessed it: the government wants to get its grubby hands on it. It is still consulting on the proposals (!!), but it thinks that in future, if contributions can't be used directly to provide facilities on the development site itself, *in lieu* contributions should go into a central pot. I think that you have probably already worked out where they will go. Yes, you're right, to the same areas that probably already get the most generous support for local council or health services – Labour held constituencies. It is ironic that the region that is having to bear the brunt of this government's housing quota, but has the most creaking infrastructure, is going to have one of the lifelines that helps improve local facilities, cut off. In a nutshell, this means that councils like ADC will in future have to fund improvements to your local park from council tax or not at all.

When this government first came to power, in fairness, it did a lot of good. In its dying days, it seems quite keen to do the opposite.

Greg Burt

“ QUOTES ”

SEE WHAT THE TORY PRESS SAY ABOUT YOU, DAVE!

I found this piece in the *Sunday Times*, 2nd October. It was an article in the business section by David Smith on the economic outlook.

“ ... it is a blank sheet of paper. Asked to fill a postage stamp on Tory economic policy, I would have room left over.”

Magic, isn't it? Cameron's honeymoon may be coming to an end. B.R.

“Others, surprisingly the Liberal Democrats, could seize the headlines by putting forward proposals for reducing the basic rate of income tax and lowering the threshold at which the top rate is levied.”

Editorial, The Times, 30th September

“Of the ‘green’ tax proposals put forward by Britain's three main political parties, the most credible come from the Lib Dems.”

Editorial, The Independent, 5th October

IF I WAS IN NUMBER

10

This month Barbara Roberts is our latest "P.M."!

- 1 I would bring back bus conductors. This would speed up journeys by not having the bus stopping for long periods whilst people fumble for their fare. Also, it would be extra security for the driver especially on double-deckers.
- 2 I would make all householders have letter boxes a standard size in the middle of the door. So as postmen (and Lib Dem Focus deliverers!) do not have to scramble on their hands and knees to post things in those absurd letter boxes at ground level.
- 3 If I was in number 10, we would have Lib Dem tax policies, however, some changes would have priority. Pensioners with their own property should have a much higher threshold before they pay any tax as home maintenance is so expensive and uses up their savings and pensions. Also, (here I declare an interest!!) widows under 60 years of age should have a higher tax threshold before becoming a tax-payer, currently at £5,000. After losing a husband's income, a widow still has to pay the same bills as before.
- 4 All volunteers e.g. charity workers, voluntary groups, un-paid fund-raisers and school governors who receive no expenses; to be given concessions in their local community. Discounted fares on public transport and discounts for local leisure services. Many volunteers are out of pocket whilst doing good and helping others; this would enable more less well off people to do voluntary work.
- 5 In hospitals I would scrap mixed wards immediately and ban visitors sitting and sprawling on patients' beds! This must spread germs, coming in from the outside. I would widen the criteria for free prescriptions so more chronically sick and disabled people who are at the moment not eligible would not have to pay over £6 an item on a prescription. Some of these patients need life long medication to make life bearable.
- 6 Take away and destroy bicycles that are being ridden on pavements and in precincts. Without a bell to ring the cyclists put we pedestrians in peril just walking legally on a pavement!
- 7 Tighten up the laws and sentences for animal cruelty. This is an increasing crime with the RSPCA powerless sometimes to get rightful punishments for the perpetrators.

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- 8 In supermarkets, stop children (especially) and their parents from “scoffing” the goods around the store before they are paid for. Also, any recalcitrant child who is creating mayhem should be put in a creche at the back of the store until their parents have finished shopping. (I love kids really!) (Really?? This is sounding more like “Grumpy Old [oops, sorry] ‘Middle-aged’ Women”!) - Ed)
- 9 Regarding Christmas, force the Royal Mail to have a special 2nd class stamp at a reduced price for Christmas mail. Ban the people from celebrating Christmas who want to ban fibre-optic trees. Ha! Ha! Chairman Greg Burt (August Newsletter on his list of 10!)
- 10 On noise pollution, I would ban the Thump! Thump! noise of so-called music which emanates from car windows when travelling along the road deafening everyone else. Still on noise, ban some of the absurd noises coming out of Labour and Tory mouths!! OK, perhaps not really democratic of me to suggest that!!!
Who will vote for my manifesto??
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If you would like to write one of these, or comment about an article in the Newsletter, or write about policy, or write an complete article or even a ‘Letter to the Editor’ please feel free to do so, all contributions welcomed.

Contact the Membership Secretary,
Paul Graydon, 4 Selborne Road, Littlehampton, BN17 5NN
or via e-mail: newsletter@brl-tonlibdems.org.uk

FUNDRAISING NEWS

The Politics & Pasta evening hosted recently by Dr James Walsh at his home in Rustington raised just over £300. Well done, and thank you James and all those who attended.

**DON'T FORGET,
YOUR RAFFLE BOOKS
MUST BE RETURNED BY
SATURDAY 25th NOVEMBER**

Why not do it NOW ??



Responding to reports that Britain is now the top target for al-Qaeda, **Liberal Democrat Shadow Home Secretary, Nick Clegg MP** said:

“This troubling warning highlights the difficulties our security services face in reaching those groups of people where home-grown terror is most likely to take root.

“At a time when ministers have been falling over themselves to posture on the sensitive but highly specific issue of the veil, this assessment suggests we need a much more intelligent and thorough approach.

“We need to engage with those Britons who are now highly disaffected by both foreign and domestic policy.”

Applicability: this item refers to the UK. - 16/10/2006



Commenting on the EU Commission’s Energy Efficiency Action Plan published on 19th October **Chris Huhne MP, Lib Dem Shadow Environment Secretary** and former MEP, said:

“The EU Commission needs to set clear priorities in what is a comprehensive wish list.

“The EU has a key role in setting the standards for products sold throughout the single market, and it is right to tackle both the need for proper energy labelling and the use of wasteful innovations such as stand-by buttons.

“Most importantly, the commission should stop talking, and start acting. It stands the best chance of success if it picks key priorities and does them better.”

Commenting further, **Lib Dem Shadow Communities and Local Government Secretary, Andrew Stunell MP** said:

“I welcome this push to improve the energy efficiency of buildings and to see new standards in place from 2009.

This is particularly welcome given The Government’s commitment to see the quality of new UK homes become the best in Europe in 10 years.

“The Government’s lack of dynamism will have serious consequences for our climate and our energy bills. We should be making our homes warmer, cutting our fuel bills and saving the planet now, not in 2016.”

- 19/10/2006

