



# Stevenage Liberal Democrats

www.stevenageliberaldemocrats.org.uk

Members' Newsletter Spring 2011

## The Campaign is in Full Swing

Hi Everyone,

Stevenage Borough Council elections are due in less than a month. On the same day there will be a once in a lifetime opportunity to change the UK's broken electoral system for the better, so we are all very busy at the moment. Below are details on how you can help.

Any time or support you can give to either cause will be appreciated.

Regards

Tim Neale, Branch Secretary

## Have you Received a Political Leaflet?

If so we would like to see it. Please post a copy, with a note of your address and the date it arrived to the address below., or scan it and email us a copy.

If you are canvassed by any other political party we would like to know as well. Send me an email with details of time and place to [campaigns@stevenageliberaldemocrats.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@stevenageliberaldemocrats.org.uk)

## Be Our Eyes and Ears in Stevenage

# I Want to Help Win in Stevenage

### I can help by:

- Delivering FOCUS for 1-2 hours per month
- Door to door canvassing
- Standing at a stall and talking to potential voters
- Putting a poster in my window
- Folding leaflets and stuffing envelopes
- Putting up a sign in my garden
- Making a donation of  £25  £10 Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Sitting outside polling stations and recording voters
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Return to: Stevenage Liberal Democrats,  
8 Cameron Close, Stevenage, SG2 0HG**

**Or via the website: [www.stevenageliberaldemocrats.org.uk/contact-secretary/](http://www.stevenageliberaldemocrats.org.uk/contact-secretary/)**

**Or email us: [campaigns@stevenageliberaldemocrats.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@stevenageliberaldemocrats.org.uk)**

# Making a Difference

## Five key Liberal Democrat Achievements in Government

### 1 Scrapped Labour's intrusive ID cards plan

Lib Dems in Government have followed through on the pledge to scrap Labour's ID cards scheme.

Described by Lib Dems as "expensive, intrusive, and ineffective", Labour's ID cards plan became increasingly unpopular as

it emerged it could cost up to £300 per person.

Now thanks to Lib Dems in Government, British citizens will no longer need

to have their details added to a massive Government ID database just to get a passport or a driving licence. ✓

### 2 £2.5bn "pupil premium" to benefit schools

Lib Dems recognise that education in the first few years of life is the most important.

We've increased free early years education for 3 and 4 year olds. Now we're extending it to 2 year olds from poorer families.

What's more, now disadvantaged pupils will get a "pupil premium" that follows them from school to school.

The funding – worth £2.5bn – could help head teachers to reduce class sizes, or to provide more one-to-one tuition. ✓

### 3 Tough new rules to curb "garden grabbing"

Tough new planning rules brought in by Lib Dems in Government will aim to protect communities

against so-called "garden grabbing". The phenomenon - where developers build homes on existing gardens because

they are classified as "brown field" sites - is a concern of many people who wish to protect the character of their locality.

Now gardens are to be reclassified as "Greenfield" sites, making it much more difficult to build on them. ✓

### 4 More low earners to be taken out of income tax

After 13 years of the gap between the richest and poorest increasing under Labour, Lib Dems

are making a real difference for hard working people on low incomes.

By increasing the personal tax allowance up to an

eventual £10,000, Lib Dems will cut the income tax bill for millions of people.

And millions more will be taken out of tax altogether.

The plans will make it much more worthwhile for people to get out of unemployment and back into work. ✓

### 5 No more Post Office closures

After years of Post Office closures under both Labour and Conservative Governments, the

Coalition Government has announced that it will not close any further branches for the duration of this Parliament.

Instead, Lib Dem minister Ed Davey will help to invest £1.3 billion in modernising and improving Post Offices.

Post Office branches will be helped to offer more banking and local Council services to make them more viable. ✓

**Liberal Democrats - In Government Working for you**

## Report by Tim Neale

Being part of the government changes everything: not least our conferences. This was our first spring conference as part of the government.

On Friday, Julia Davies drove us to Sheffield. After settling into our respective hotels we went to the City Hall to register. Security was tight, similar to boarding an international flight. Once registered we picked up our goodie bags and headed to the exhibition hall. This was worth a visit. Lots of stalls with a wide variety of interests.

We went to the main hall for the evening rally. This was fairly uplifting. Setting the tone for the rest of the conference nicely.

The various fringe events in the evenings were worth attending, and it was nice to be addressed by "the Government minister for..." Instead of "the spokesperson on..."

I was staying quite a long way out from the City Hall and travelling in by taxi. On the way in on Saturday morning I had an interesting chat with the taxi driver. He was telling me how great British democracy is. He comes from Ethiopia where the government gets 98% of the votes. This put me in a good mood to face the protesters outside the conference hall.

It turned out there were none, but there was a concerted lobbying effort in favour of Shirley Williams' amendment to the NHS policy statement. This polite engagement was very effective.



The business that stood out in the morning was when we added amendments to the NHS motion, changing its meaning entirely. Conference did not like the nature of the reforms being proposed. A stirring speech by Shirley Williams telling people to stand up as Lib Dems carried the day and we made headline news.

The pick of the afternoon's debates was the motion to set up a Leadership program in order to improve the diversity of MPs. As Nick Clegg had said during the rally "We are still too pale and too male". This was passed overwhelmingly. I was one of the few to vote against (as I had

agreed to do). Those arguing against any kind of quotas in principle have diminished over the past



20 or so years in the face of the hard fact that of the three main parties in the UK, we are still the least representative of the population of UK today.

Only about 2000 of the expected 10,000 demonstrators turned up. Most left once the drizzle set in. I doubt if chanting abuse through a megaphone influenced anyone in any way. The morning lobbying was much more effective.

After the fringe meetings, Saturday evening spent at traditional sing along in the main hotel. Was a time to meet up with some old friends and make some new ones. This all gets a bit hazy.....

The centrepiece of Sunday morning was Nick Clegg's speech. These show pieces are my least favourite parts of conference. Particularly cringeable is when we all chant "NO" when Nick Clegg asks "Would that have happened if the Lib Dems had not been in government?" I felt like shouting out "He's behind you." Surely we can do better than this?

I enjoyed my first national conference. It was a good mixture of politics, learning and socializing. I was impressed by Tim Farron, who will make a great party president or, if that fails, a superb stand up comic.

One complaint was that due to the small size of the City Hall, fringe events were held at other locations. This is fine for the evening events, but made attending day time events very time consuming, especially as there was the need to pass security on the way into the City Hall. This meant that I did not attend any training events.

Still I will be going to the Autumn Conference and would recommend anyone else to do so.

# Saying Yes! On 5th May Means...



## 1

### MPs WORKING HARDER

Your next MP would have to aim to get more than 50% of the vote to be sure of winning. At present they can be handed power with just one vote in three. They'll need to work harder to get - and keep - your support.

## 2

### A STRONGER VOICE

Ranking candidates gives you more say - in who comes first and who comes last. If your favourite doesn't win, you can still have a say. It's as easy as 1,2,3...

## 3

### TACKLING 'JOBS For LIFE'

Too many MPs have their 'safe seats' for life. Force complacent politicians to sit up and listen, and reach out to the communities they seek to represent.

## Could You Deliver 50 AV Leaflets to Your Neighbours?

We are delivering "Yes to Fairer Votes" leaflets throughout Chells and Manor wards along with other election material. If you do not live in either of these wards and are willing to deliver 50 leaflets to your neighbours, then get in contact with Cllr Graham Snell on 01438 238399

## "Yes to Fairer Votes" Stall in the Town Centre

There will be a "Yes to Fairer Votes" stall in Stevenage Town Centre on 16 April 2011. It will be outside the new Barclays Bank between 10 am and 5 pm. If you would like to come along for an hour or so to put the "YES" case to shoppers then get in contact with Tim Neale on 01438 217075.

## For Your Diary

- 9 April 2011, Campaign Stall, Wilkinsons, Stevenage Town Centre
- 16 April 2011, Campaign Stall, Former Littlewoods, Stevenage Town Centre
- 16 April 2011, Yes to Fairer Votes Stall, New Look, Stevenage Town Centre
- 23 April 2011, Campaign Stall, New Look, Stevenage Town Centre
- 30 April 2011, Campaign Stall, Wilkinsons, Stevenage Town Centre
- 5 May 2011 Polling Day
- 'Thank you' party (TBA)
- 19 May 2011 Executive Meeting, Daneshill House
- 26 May 2011, General Meeting, Daneshill House
- 16 June 2011, Executive Meeting, Daneshill House