

# Reports to Spring Conference 2007 Harrogate

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# Federal Conference Committee

The Federal Conference Committee is responsible for organising the two Federal conferences each year. This includes choosing the agenda from amongst the policy and business motions submitted by conference reps, local, regional and state parties, specified associated organisations and Federal committees, and also taking decisions on topics such as venues, registration rates and other administrative and organisational matters. It works within a budget set by the FFAC.

The FCC has 21 voting members: the Party President; the Chief Whip; three state party reps; two reps from the FE and two from the FPC; and twelve members directly elected by conference reps. It elects its own chair (currently Duncan Brack), who must be one of the directly elected reps.

## Committee

At its first meeting, in November, the Committee elected myself as Chair, and Andrew Wiseman and Ruth Polling as its two Vice-Chairs. In addition to the members listed above, we co-opted (as non-voting members) the Chief Steward (Chris Jennings), a representative from the FFAC (currently subject to FFAC decision) and the Chair of the Campaigns & Communications Committee (Ed Davey).

## Agenda

The Committee continues to experiment with agenda innovations, following generally positive responses to new items introduced in recent years. In addition to the debates and set-piece speeches, the conference agenda at Harrogate includes two presentations, from the Welsh party (following the corresponding presentation from the Scottish party in September, in the run-up to the Scottish and Welsh elections in May) and from the Liberal Democrat group on South Somerset council. We will also see a question & answer session, this time mainly with non-party members, on the subject of policies on crime.

The general topic of tackling crime will be the main theme of the conference; as well as the Q&A session, the rally, on the Friday evening, and one of the main debates, on the FPC's policy paper on crime in the community, will feature on the agenda. The other main debate, of course, will centre on the FPC's proposals on the UK's Trident nuclear missile force.

As in the run-up to Brighton 2006, we are beginning our planning for future conferences further ahead than previously, and in regular liaison with other key parts of the federal party. A Conference Planning Group meets about every two months, comprising the FCC officers and Conference Office staff, FPC officers and Policy staff, the Campaigns & Communications Committee and Press and Communications staff, the Leader's Office and the Commons Whip's Office. Its aim is to ensure that the conference agenda is structured in such a way as to maximise opportunities for spreading the party's key messages and presenting the best image of the party, both to members attending and, through the media, to the wider public.

## Motions

As with last year, the timing of the spring conference early in March meant that the deadline for motions fell just after the New Year. Once again, we have had a relatively low number of motions submitted, probably due to the timing of this deadline. In last year's FCC report, we aimed to do our utmost to put the spring conference later in March in future years. Whilst venue commitments have prevented us from achieving this goal for 2007, we are pleased to report that spring conference 2008 has been shifted back to the second weekend in March and we aim to continue this trend, when possible scheduling for the third weekend in March in future years.

We are continuing to provide a motions drafting advisory service, and would encourage all motion submitters to make use of it - those who have used it in the past have had a higher chance of having their motions accepted. This involves an additional deadline of (usually) two weeks before the normal motions deadline for anyone wanting assistance and advice with drafting their motions; draft should be sent to [motionsadvice@libdems.org.uk](mailto:motionsadvice@libdems.org.uk).

This service is also open to those submitting amendments. I encourage in particular anyone thinking of submitting an amendment to the Trident motion to use the service. This likely to be a fairly complex debate, and we need to make sure that the amendments are as clear as possible.

### **Conference Rally**

The organisation of the rally at the autumn conference in Brighton is open to any party body or group of members to organise through a bidding process. All SAOs, AOs, state and English regional parties, and parliamentary teams, have been written to inviting them to bid but it is open to any group of party members. The deadline for bids is Monday 12 March and FCC will make a decision by the end of March as to who will run the rally. The organisation that wins the bid will receive some support from the Conference Office and FCC, but needs to be prepared to put the time in to make it a good event. The main work is confirming speakers and advertising the event. Room hire, basic audio equipment, backdrop, some free advertising and speakers' expenses are available from the FCC, so no organisation should find itself out of pocket for organising the rally and it is a great way to raise your organisation's profile in the party. If you are interested in running the rally please contact Ruth Polling (r.l.polling-alumni@lse.ac.uk) to discuss further and to receive a copy of the tender document outlining what is required from a bid.

### **Future venues**

We always consider a wide range of conference centres for hosting future Liberal Democrat conferences. The current size of the conference and the scale of public interest it draws make it an attractive event for many towns and cities to host, but also restricts the number of venues with adequate facilities.

The venue for spring 2008 (provisionally 7-9 March) is still being negotiated. In autumn 2008 (13-18 September), conference will return to Bournemouth. We are still considering venues for 2009 and future years.

### **Future Autumn Conferences: potential changes in timing**

In response to significant levels of feedback from Conference representatives on the timing of the Autumn Conference, the FCC has been considering a potential change to the schedule, starting Conference sessions on the Saturday and finishing on Wednesday mid-afternoon. This would make allow greater use of the weekend, which we believe will be welcome to those party members who find it difficult to attend during the week. We also plan to change the registration structure, to allow voting and non-voting reps to register for either the weekend, or the Monday to Wednesday, or for the whole conference.

No changes will be made, however, until we have conducted a widespread consultation exercise, including conference reps and party members more widely. A short paper will be available at conference and also via the party website, and I urge you all to read it and respond. The outcomes of the consultation will be reported to the autumn 2007 conference and, if changes are recommended and approved, will be implemented in 2008.

### **Access**

The Conference Access Group, convened by Catherine Bearder, continues to work on making conference as accessible for all as possible, and specifically on tackling obstacles for people with a wide range of disabilities. As part of conference preparation, an advance site visit by the Group is conducted to check out venues, hotels and routes from public transport stations, and to identify and solve potential problems. The Group meets during the early part of each conference to address any further problems which arise once the event is under way.

As reported to the Brighton conference, FCC has also launched a wheelchair users accommodation assistance scheme. By adding a levy of £1 to the conference registration fee, FCC can provide financial assistance to those who require fully-accessible rooms in the larger, more expensive hotels near the conference centre, reducing this substantial additional cost to that of the average B&B accommodation. This scheme is now being promoted widely across the Party membership and aims

to encourage attendance by those who would not otherwise be able to afford to come. We are aware that this scheme will not help all those with disabilities who incur additional costs, but we believe it will tackle the problem where it is most acute.

More information about FCC's work on access to conference is available via the conference section of the party's website ([www.libdems.org.uk/conference](http://www.libdems.org.uk/conference)).

### **Stewards and security**

Conference simply would not be possible without the vital contribution of the stewards' team. It is these volunteers, led by the Chief Steward, Chris Jennings, who handle the security at conference, look after the exhibition, fringe, information desk, stage and auditorium, and ensure that we, the participants get the most out of Federal conference. As in previous years, they are complemented by SIA qualified security contractors who are conducting the bag searches at the entrances to the Conference Centre.

### **Communications**

We are continuing to develop and expand our use of online communications throughout the conference process. All postal mailings both prior to and following conference are now accompanied by emails (with links to the relevant documents on the party website) scheduled for just before the hard copies land. Conference pages of the Party website are being regularly and frequently updated with relevant information. Short films taken of conference highlights and interviews have been posted on the website during conference.

We are pleased that conference representatives are responding to our efforts in this area. The number of online registrations is increasing, as are the number of participants registering for the more environmentally friendly option of receiving copies of the policy and consultation papers via email only and not via post. When registering for future conferences, if you wish to opt for this email service, please ensure you tick the appropriate box on the registration form or send an email with 'paperless option' as the subject and including your full name to Emma Price at [e.price@libdems.org.uk](mailto:e.price@libdems.org.uk).

We intend to make developments to our use of the website and email service an ongoing project with further innovations always open for discussion - including in particular the inclusion of a range of guides to aspects of conference (such as a first-timer's guide, a guide to writing motions, a guide to procedures, and so on). We welcome any ideas or suggestions you may have for improving the content of the website.

### **Thanks**

I conclude this report by expressing the Committee's warmest thanks to all who make conference possible: Ben Stoneham, HQ Director; the staff of the Conference Office, Carol Caruana, Emma Harris, Emma Price and Jane Stainer; Patricia West for her voluntary help in the Conference Office; the Policy Projects Team, led by Christian Moon, who process the motions and prepare much of the agenda material; and of course to the stewards' team for their considerable contribution, led by Chris Jennings.

I look forward to seeing you in Harrogate.

**Duncan Brack**  
**Chair, Federal Conference Committee**

# Federal Policy Committee

The Federal Policy Committee is responsible for researching and developing policy and overseeing the Federal Party's policy-making process. This includes producing policy papers for debate at conference, and drawing up (in consultation with the relevant parliamentary party) the Federal election manifestos for Westminster and European elections.

The FPC has 29 voting members: the Party Leader, four other MPs, the Party President, one peer, one MEP, three councillors, three state party reps and fifteen members directly elected by conference reps. It must be chaired by one of the five MP members and is currently chaired by the Leader.

## Policy Development

Since the Autumn conference, policy working groups have produced the policy papers *Together We Can Cut Crime* and *Green and Prosperous Communities* which are presented for debate at Harrogate. Policy working groups supported by the Policy and Research Unit have also drafted consultation papers on Health and Better Governance. There will be consultation sessions to discuss these on the Friday afternoon at Harrogate. The working groups will then proceed to develop their final conclusions in policy papers for debate at the Autumn 2007 Party conferences, taking into account the outcome of the consultation sessions and other input from both within and outside the party.

The FPC's group on the Future of Trident has also completed its work and reported to the FPC. The group produced a majority and a minority report. The FPC motion *Future of Britain's Nuclear Deterrent* presented for debate at conference is based on the majority report. The background paper circulated with the Final Agenda gives more detail on the issues and the factual basis on which the conclusions were reached. It concludes with a chapter setting out the recommendations of the majority; but an annex also sets out the conclusions and recommendations of the minority. The background paper is not a policy paper and will not become party policy if the motion is adopted.

The Brighton Conference referred back policy paper 73 *Your Community Your Choice*. The FPC has appointed a group to revise the original paper in the light of the comments made, and produce a new paper for the Autumn Conference 2007. There will be a consultation session at Harrogate to allow conference representatives give views on the issues raised.

Policy Paper 75 *Fairer, Simpler, Greener* identified a number of areas of tax policy which required further work, in particular land value taxation, inheritance tax, and tax avoidance. The FPC has asked the original tax working group to undertake this further work and produce a paper for Autumn 2007.

The FPC is very grateful for the contribution made by Chairs and members of working groups who voluntarily give a great deal of time to assist the Party's policy development.

The Federal Policy Committee has based its decisions on commissioning new policy development work during the last year on the conclusions of the *Trust in People* review. The existing working groups on Inequality & Poverty, Better Governance, Health and Climate Change have all arisen from the extensive consultation that was undertaken through *Trust in People* on party members' priorities for policy development. In pursuing the policy development agenda set out in *Trust in People*, the FPC has recently decided to set up new working groups on the subjects of Further & Higher Education and Europe. These groups will write papers for debate at the Spring 2008 party conference. With these two groups, most of the immediate policy development priorities identified in *Trust in People* are now being delivered.

Nevertheless the FPC will shortly be commissioning some further policy working groups to report to the Autumn 2008. The FPC will consider outstanding issues from *Trust in People*, but will also take into account submissions made by party members and organisations.

The table below sets out the latest schedule of policy development work:

Conference	Consultation Papers	Policy Papers
March 2007	Health Better Governance	Green and Prosperous Communities Together We Can Cut Crime
Sept 2007	Further and Higher Education Europe	Climate Change Tackling Inequality and Poverty Health Better Governance

### General Election Manifesto

Although we are still only in the second year of the Parliament, the FPC is very much aware that we may be facing a General Election sooner rather than later. We have therefore appointed a Manifesto Group to begin work towards the next manifesto. The Group is chaired by Steve Webb MP, one of the Vice Chairs of FPC, and the other members are: myself as Chair of FPC, Sal Brinton (Vice Chair, FPC), Jeremy Hargreaves (Vice Chair, FPC), Vince Cable MP (Shadow Chancellor), Julia Goldsworthy MP (Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury), Edward Davey MP (Chair of Campaigns and Communications) and David Laws MP (Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions).

The principles set out in *Trust in People* will be the starting points for the manifesto work. Steve will be leading a wide-ranging consultation among party members, making considerable use of the internet. More details about this will be announced shortly, but the address of our manifesto consultation website when it goes live will be [www.manifesto.libdems.org.uk](http://www.manifesto.libdems.org.uk).

### Improving the Way Working Groups Develop Policy

The FPC has since the last conference decided to make a number of changes to the way policy working groups are organised and conduct their work. The aims of these changes are to: 1) Improve consultation and membership involvement; and 2) to develop more up to date and politically relevant policy. Specific changes include:

**Recruitment of working groups** - rather than advertise individually for each group, we have moved to a system of having a standing pool of people willing to serve on working groups. This will give the FPC a broader range of possible group members to draw on, and also allow party members to volunteer themselves for future consideration even at times when the FPC is not advertising for specific groups in their won areas of interest. We will actively advertise for applicants annually, but party members may put themselves forward at any time during the year. This approach will also save time in the initial set-up of working groups.

**More internet consultation** - building on the approach piloted in preparing *Trust in People*, in future all working groups will have a dedicated area on the [www.consult.libdems.org.uk](http://www.consult.libdems.org.uk) website, where their consultation paper will be posted and there will be 'bulletin board' facilities for party members and others to input comments. Web consultation will be the first phase of any working group's work. We will retain the face-to-face consultations sessions at conferences, but we intend that these will generally be held at a later stage in group's work, at the conference immediately prior to the one at which the final policy paper is to be debated, so that groups are able to test their provisional conclusions with conference representatives.

**Better management of working groups by FPC** - we have decided to give working groups tighter, more focussed remits concentrating on the most politically salient issues within their overall subject area. We also wish to ensure that FPC is kept better in touch with the development of working groups' thinking, and will therefore be scheduling more interim discussions of the progress of groups at FPC meetings before the final report is completed. We believe this will help ensure policy papers

are delivered on time and address their original remits. We have also formally instituted meetings of the FPC officers between full meetings of the Committee, to act as a first resort for dealing with issues such as overlap of responsibilities between working groups.

**Delivering policy development more quickly** - as a result of these changes, the time between the FPC initially commissioning a working group and the policy paper being presented to Party Conference will be reduced from around 18 months to one year. We also intend that by tightening the schedule for working groups, more policy papers will be ready to be distributed with the Preliminary Agenda for each conference rather than the Final Agenda.

Below is a summary of timelines for FPC working groups under the new system for an Autumn Conference paper.

June	FPC decides in principle to commission group
July	FPC Agrees Remit, Chair and Membership
September-October	Working Group agrees short consultation paper
November-March	Web based consultation Taking Evidence Developing proposals Interim reporting to FPC on proposals
March	Formal Consultation session at Spring Conference
March-April	Policy Paper drafted
May	Formal consultation with Parliamentarians & Audit Groups Communications strategy drafted
Late May	FPC approves final draft
September	Paper debated at Conference

### Regional Links

To encourage policy debate across the party we have as usual this year appointed FPC representatives to take responsibility for promoting policy debate within each of the regions of England and to attend regional conferences where appropriate.

Region	
Devon & Cornwall	Judith Jolly
East of England	Julie Smith
East Midlands	Jeremy Hargreaves
London	Jo Hayes / Geoff Payne
Northern	Robert Adamson
North West	Stan Collins
South Central	Jonathan Marks
South East	Fiyaz Mughal
Western Counties	Theo Butt Phillip
West Midlands	Phil Bennion
Yorkshire & the Humber	William Wallace



### **Policy and Research Unit Staffing**

The Policy and Research Unit (PRU) combining the Policy Adviser team and the Policy Projects Team provides staff support for the FPC and its working groups. The Head of Policy and Research is Greg Simpson. The Policy Projects Team consists of Christian Moon (Deputy Head of Policy and Research), Laura Richards (Senior Research Officer - Maternity Cover) and Ruthe Isden (Research Officer). The Policy Projects Team has also benefited from voluntary work by Sara Patrick and Peter Cornick. Helen Banks, the Senior Research Officer, is currently on maternity leave.

As ever, the FPC is much indebted to the Policy and Research Unit staff and volunteers for all their hard work in support of the FPC.

**Rt Hon Sir Menzies Campbell MP**  
**Chair of Federal Policy Committee**

# Federal Executive

The Federal Executive is responsible for directing, co-ordinating and implementing the work of the Federal Party, including overall strategy, campaigning, organisation and staffing. The Federal Finance and Administration Committee (see below) and the Campaigns and Communications Committee both report to the FE.

The FE has 29 voting members: the Party President (who chairs it) and three Vice Presidents, the Leader, two other MPs, one peer, one MEP, two councillors, three state party reps and fifteen members directly elected by conference reps.

The Federal Executive is responsible for directing, co-ordinating and implementing the work of the Federal Party, including overall strategy, campaigning, organisation and staffing. The Federal Finance and Administration Committee, the Campaigns and Communications Committee and the Campaign for Gender Balance all report to the FE.

The FE has 29 voting members: the Party President (who chairs it) and three Vice Presidents, the Leader, two other MPs, one peer, one MEP, two councillors, three state party reps and fifteen members directly elected by conference reps.

Since August 2006 the Federal Executive has met on 4 occasions: on 17th September (at Federal Conference), 30 October, 11 December and 8 January.

At the 30 October meeting the FE was notified that Sandra Gidley had resigned as Campaign for Gender Balance (CGB) chair and agreed that Jo Swinson should continue as acting chair until elections were held in January, when Jo Swinson was elected unopposed.

At the 8 January meeting the following were also elected unopposed:

- Federal Treasurer: Tim Clement-Jones
- Chair, CCC: Ed Davey
- Chair, IRC: Robert Woodthorpe Browne
- Deputy Chair, FE: Lembit Opik
- Vice-Chairs, CGB: Jane Bonham-Carter & Ros Harper
- ELDR Council Rep: David Griffiths
- ELDR Congress Reps: Phil Bennion & David Griffiths
- LI Exec Reps: David Griffiths & Robert Woodthorpe Browne
- LI Congress Rep: Robert Woodthorpe Browne

There was no initial nomination for the second LI Congress place.

Contested elections were held for the Chair of the FFAC (2 candidates), 5 members of the FFAC (10 candidates), 2 members of the CCC (5 candidates), 2 representatives on the FCC (3 candidates) and 2 reps on the IRC (3 candidates).

The following were elected:

- Chair, FFAC: Duncan Greenland
- Members, FFAC: Ros Scott, Ros Harper, Tessa Munt, Stan Collins, David Rendel
- Members, CCC: James Gurling, Robin Teverson
- Reps, FCC: Tessa Munt, James Gurling
- Reps, IRC: Duncan Greenland, David Griffiths

All the above were elected to serve from January 2007 to December 2008.

At the September meeting the FE agreed to support a proposal for the expenses limit for future federal leader and president elections to be fixed whenever the elections are called.

This meeting followed a joint meeting with the state party executives, which offered the opportunity for discussion and information sharing at Autumn Conference in Brighton. Lembit Opik, as Federal Vice-President, gave a presentation on membership on behalf of Federal officers.

At the time this report was submitted to the printers the diversity and equality review group was due to meet in February; its latest report will be submitted separately to conference. The President will also report orally to conference on the review group's work and progress towards the objective of a fully representative party. It was agreed at the December FE that CGB would have discretion over the use of all of their grant. The CGB is reporting separately to conference. Provision to fund a new diversity and equality officer has been made in the 2007 Federal Party budget and it is hoped a joint appointment with additional English Party funding will be made shortly after Conference. The FE has continued its consultations with the CGB, EMLD and EMETF, LDDA and DELGA, and their views and recommendations were submitted to the strategic planning day in February. The up to date statistics relating to prospective parliamentary candidate selection for the UK parliament will be published separately at conference.

Reports have been received from the Campaign for Gender Balance, the Federal Finance & Administration committee, the Campaigns and Communications Committee, the International Relations Committee and from the President on his activity. It has also received an interim report from the Federal Party & Councillors Working Party, which will report finally during 2007.

The awards sub-committee has met to discuss and decide on the arrangements for the Patsy Calton and the Harriet Smith Federal Party awards. The first of these will be announced and presented at the September 2007 conference. Details of the nomination process from England, Scotland and Wales and other party members will be published in Liberal Democrat News and on the party website as well as notified to state, regional and local parties.

The FE has considered the following issues: the Hayden Philips' review of political party funding, reform of electoral systems and the House of Lords, timing of party conferences, and party stances on Middle East, India and Pakistan issues.

The SAO review group was agreed. AO status was granted to Liberal Democrat Friends of Kashmir, Liberal Democrat Friends of Pakistan and the Liberal Democrat Education Group. It was confirmed that all groups wishing to use 'Liberal Democrat' in their title should be asked to apply for AO status in order to be recognised.

After receiving the Federal Appeals Panel ruling on Deputy Presidents the FE agreed to end the initial 12 month pilot of the positions and agreed to a review and to put new proposals to Federal Conference in September.

The FE reviewed the September conference in Brighton which was well received by everyone attending but did not achieve its net income projections against budget due to costs overspends principally arising from the venue hire.

The FE set the 2007 Federal Party budget at its December meeting (for further information see the FFAC report). The FE considered and agreed the 2007 Headquarters Business Plan, and arranged a special strategic planning meeting for February to agree its work programme for the new FE for its two years of office.

**Simon Hughes**  
**Federal President**  
**January 2007**

# Federal Finance and Administration Committee

The Federal Finance and Administration Committee is responsible for planning and administering the budget and finances of the Federal Party, directing its administration and ensuring its compliance with the provisions of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. It is responsible to the FE, but normally also reports directly to the Federal Conference.

The FFAC has 14 voting members: the Chair (currently David Griffiths), Party Treasurer and five other members (all elected by the FE), the Party President, three state party reps, the Chief Executive and two other members of HQ and Parliamentary staff.

As the incoming Chair of the FFAC elected for two years by the January 2007 Federal Executive, I make this report to conference on the 2006 result and the 2007 budget set by the previous FFAC chaired by my predecessor, David Griffiths.

I ask Conference to join me in paying tribute to David and thanking him for his stewardship of the Party's finances over the past four years.

## A. 2006 results

1. At the start of 2006 the federal party had an overall accumulated deficit on its general fund of £290,000, of which £270,000 related to the deficit on the party's final salary pension scheme (which closed in 1989 and now has 1 active member, 7 deferred members and 11 pensioners) and £20,000 related to its normal operating activities.

The draft figures for 2006 show a deficit on the federal party's general fund of £41,000 against a budgeted surplus of £30,215 so that the accumulated deficit on its normal activities will increase from £20,000 to £61,000.

However it is expected that there will be a reduction in the pension scheme deficit of around £100,000 so that at the year-end its accumulated deficit will be reduced to about £170,000.

The overall accumulated deficit of the pension scheme and normal activities will therefore have reduced, over the year, from £290,000 to approx. £231,000.

2. The campaign fund is expected to produce a surplus of approx. £1,000,000 to add to the accumulated surplus at the start of 2006 of £543,000. Much of the 2006 surplus is due to the receipt of funds from the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust Ltd (JRRT) and is to be used for specific purposes set by them. The remaining accumulated surplus needs to be seen in the context of budgets for recent general elections of £2.5m-£5m and the expectation that a general election could take place within 18 months.

3. The draft out-turn figures for 2006 are attached as appendix 1 to this report. The final accounts will be presented to the autumn conference in Brighton and will include details of the campaign fund.

Overall income was just £32,000 (1.2%) under budget largely due to the adverse variance on conference net income of £92,000. Although conference income exceeded budget the associated expenditure was even greater with the main overspends being on the venue hire for the autumn conference, stewards' expenses and the stage set. Appeals income, telephone fund raising and policy development fund (PDF) income all exceeded budget, though the increased PDF income was the result of a timing difference and should not be expected to recur.

Overall expenditure was £40,000 (1.5%) over budget of which the additional payments to cover the pension scheme deficit accounted for £35,000 and an additional payment to G8 accounted for a further £10,000. There were underspends on grants to party bodies. Interest costs were reduced, due to the cash balance held by the campaign fund, which more than offset the overdraft that the general fund would otherwise have had.

#### B. 2007 budget

Setting the budget for 2007 proved to be difficult. Appeals by other parts of the party for the Scottish Parliament & Welsh Assembly elections together with the largest round of local elections in the cycle will obviously have an impact on the Federal Party fundraising income. At the same time the budget needs to include the full ongoing cost of funding the deficit on its closed final salary pension scheme.

Against this background it did not prove possible to budget a surplus for 2007, but the budgeted deficit of £21,000 is significantly less than the deficit indicated in the outline budget to last autumn's conference.

This closing of the gap was achieved whilst still finding some funding for the Diversity & Equality Officer post. It was also possible to increase the sums spent on communicating with members and on by-elections.

#### C. Grants to Party bodies

	<b>2007 budget</b>	<b>2006 budget</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
ALDC	112,850	123,600
LDYS	16,000	28,000
WLD	4,000	4,000
CGB	20,000	22,500
Diversity & Equality	12,500	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>165,350</b>	<b>178,100</b>

#### D. Staffing levels

The size of headquarters departments at the end of the year was:

Department	31 December 2006 FTE	31 December 2005 FTE
Campaigns	7.00	7.00
Chief Executive, office facilities & training	6.00	5.90
Compliance	1.50	1.50
Conference	3.75	3.50
Finance	3.00	3.00
International	2.70	2.20
Liberal Democrats Calling	6.55	7.20
Membership & fundraising	5.00	4.50
Newspaper	1.20	1.20
Policy*	5.00	5.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>41.70</b>	<b>41.00</b>

*FTE = Full time equivalent established posts*

\* Following the reorganisation of the Federal Party's Policy and POLD's Research functions into one department the Federal Party continues to fund 5 posts.

These figures should be compared with the average number of staff employed by Conservative Central Office in 2005 of 236 (2004 - 230) and Labour of 376 (2004 - 347).

#### E. PPERA

All loans held by the Federal Party and other party bodies have been registered with the Electoral Commission under the voluntary code agreed last year and subsequently again under the requirements of the Electoral administration Act 2006 which came into force on 11th September 2006.

Revised guidance on the effects of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 where it amended PPERA 2001 has been issued to Local Parties.

Consolidated Local Party Accounts (including branches) for the 2006 calendar year that exceeded £17,500 should be approved by the Local Party Executive and submitted to Party Headquarters before 15th March in accordance with the accounting requirements of the Electoral Commission. It is not necessary for these accounts to be 'audited' or 'independently examined' before they are filed though it is recommended that this happens before being presented to the membership at the AGM in the autumn.

The declarations of donations made to the party, statements of accounts submitted and the party's campaign expenditure return can be viewed on the Electoral Commission's website at <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/regulatory-issues/>

## F. Membership and Fundraising Services

The number of staff working on membership has been increased from 3.5 to 4 as part of the on-going aim of improving service. Work is continuing on providing more membership information by electronic means. Changes to the database reflecting the post-boundary change local party structure have now been completed.

The structure of the fundraising team has been re-organised, integrating the previously separate Treasurer's Unit and adding a new post. There is now one team covering direct mail, telephone, supporter networks, events, affinity fundraising products, legacies and major donors. This new structure will support a more integrated approach to fundraising in the run-up to the next general election.

## G. Staff Management

Plans are underway to resubmit for the Investors in People standard in the autumn of 2008. This submission will cover both HQ Cowley Street staff and POLD staff. The coordination of staff management across both organisations has been developed in the past six months to assist this. Appraisal, recruitment and salary award procedures are now following common practice. A new initiative has been launched to determine how better diversity can be encouraged through recruitment practices.

## H. Environmental Performance

Continued vigilance is being maintained to improve the environmental standards in Cowley Street. Good Energy provide the electricity and measures are in place to save water and power, and recycling procedures remain vigorous. Further moves to encourage carbon neutrality are being investigated. Not only does this make for good environmental practice, it aims to save costs as well.

## I. Telephone Performance

Since the late summer telephone performance in Cowley Street has been monitored. New computer software shows that in the final quarter of the year the key performance indicators for the front reception were as follows:

Volume of calls - 8846

Percentage not answered/lost calls - 6.3%

Av answering time - 8.9 seconds

In the coming year monitoring will be extended to individual departments with the objective of making it easier for members to make contact when they need to.

**Duncan Greenland**  
**Chair, Finance & Administration Committee**  
**Registered Treasurer**  
**January 2007**

## Appendix 1

2006 general fund budget and draft out-turn and 2007 general fund budget

<b>Income</b>	Budget 2006 £	Forecast 2006 £	Budget 2007 £
<u>Generated income</u>			
Direct mail appeals & Web	328,000	353,000	340,000
Direct mail costs	(70,000)	(65,000)	(70,000)
Standing orders	173,000	176,000	158,000
	431,000	464,000	428,000
<u>Services income</u>			
Federal levy	824,791	830,500	830,301
Net states parties cross charges	302,754	302,000	344,441
POLD service fees	160,476	160,476	163,337
Regional draws	11,000	11,000	11,000
	1,299,021	1,303,976	1,349,079
<u>Commercial activities (net results)</u>			
Newspaper	5,318	0	(3,846)
LDCalling	152,500	163,500	165,875
Affinity	45,500	46,500	45,000
Conference	276,680	185,000	263,732
	479,998	395,000	470,761
<u>Other income</u>			
International dept income	38,000	40,000	39,000
Policy Development Fund	473,000	486,000	458,000
	511,000	526,000	497,000
<u>Income surplus after income generation costs</u>	2,721,019	2,688,976	2,744,840
<b>Expenditure</b>			
<u>HQ costs</u>			
Chief Executive & HQ department	872,126	883,300	889,769
Finance	152,849	154,000	163,888
Membership	258,339	253,500	278,521
Compliance	51,789	51,500	53,583
Policy	199,697	192,000	204,520
Campaigns	293,700	293,000	305,383
International	78,908	89,000	78,095
	1,907,408	1,916,300	1,973,759
<u>Other expenditure</u>			
G8	30,000	40,000	20,000
Grants to party bodies	178,100	164,500	155,350
Refund of Federal levy to Scotland & Wales	49,276	49,276	49,276
PDF grants to Scotland & Wales	91,420	91,420	91,420
Committee expenses	26,000	22,000	8,000
Target seats, legal costs & By-elections	160,000	160,000	175,000
PPB's	40,000	40,000	40,000
ELDR/LI	15,500	18,500	18,000



Candidates support	10,000	10,000	10,300
Members Communications	43,000	51,000	50,075
Leaders/Presidents grants	10,000	8,500	5,000
Non-recoverable VAT	60,000	60,000	54,000
Net interest payable	8,000	2,000	2,000
	<u>721,296</u>	<u>717,196</u>	<u>678,421</u>
Payments to reduce pension scheme deficit	62,100	96,700	114,000
Total expenditure	2,690,804	2,730,196	2,766,180
<b>Surplus/(deficit) for the year</b>	<u><u>30,215</u></u>	<u><u>(41,220)</u></u>	<u><u>(21,340)</u></u>

# FEDERAL APPEALS PANEL

## **1 Introduction**

The Panel exists under Article 14 of the Federal Party Constitution to resolve internal conflicts falling within Article 14.3. Its composition is as set out in Article 14.1.

The Panel elected me as its Chair in September 2006. I set myself two initial tasks: updating its procedures (which, in the words of Asquith as memorably quoted to one Lib Dem Conference by Roy Jenkins, had the character of “flyblown phylacteries”), and dealing with a case that had - indefensibly - been outstanding for a whole year. Under Article 14.6, these procedures are subject to confirmation by Conference.

## **2 The New Procedures**

These are attached as a Schedule, and are hopefully self-explanatory. In accordance with modern practice, the Panel offers a mediation service in the first instance. The Procedures also permit a case to be determined without an oral hearing where there is no (or no material) dispute as to the facts. Conference is **requested** to confirm these Procedures.

## **3 Officers**

The Panel has appointed three Vice-Chairs: David Ive, Alan Masters (who is also Chair of the Welsh Appeals Panel) and Chris Willmore. It has also appointed David Allworthy as Registrar, and Paul Rustad as Deputy Registrar.

## **4 Federal Election Regulations**

These currently provide that the Returning Officer for Federal Elections shall be the Chair of the Panel. To permit flexibility, it is proposed to amend Rule 1 by inserting the words underlined:

*The Chair of the Federal Appeals Panel (or, if s/he shall be unable or unwilling to serve, a Vice-Chair of the Panel nominated by the Chair) shall be the Returning Officer. The Chief Executive shall be the Acting Returning Officer. The Deputy Acting Returning Officer will be the Head of Compliance and Constitutional Support. Other Deputy Acting Returning Officers may be appointed if required.*

Conference is **requested** to agree this amendment.

## **5 Decisions**

Also under Article 14.6, the Panel is obliged to publish its decisions on its interpretation of the Constitution.

In the case referred to above, the Panel determined that the power to appoint persons to Officer posts not specifically referred to in the Constitution is a collective power of the Federal Executive, and that such appointments may not be made by any Officer acting alone.

PHILIP GOLDENBERG

January 2007

## ***SCHEDULE: Published Procedures under Article 14.6***

### **1 *Mission Statement***

- 1.1 The Panel exists under Article 14 of the Federal Party Constitution to resolve internal conflicts falling within Article 14.3.
- 1.2 In discharging its duties the Panel shall act in accordance with the principles of natural justice; and shall be accessible, transparent and expeditious.
- 1.3 Where appropriate, the Panel will encourage mediation; where necessary, it will make firm decisions by proper process.
- 1.4 In dealing with any complaint the Panel will have regard to the Human Rights Act 1998 and in particular to Article 6 of the European Convention of Human Rights.

### **2 *Officers***

- 2.1 There shall be a Chair of the Panel elected in accordance with Article 14.1.
- 2.2 There shall be not less than two Vice-Chairs of the Panel approved by the Panel.
- 2.3 There shall be a Registrar (and, if thought fit, a Deputy Registrar) of the Panel approved by the Panel. The expression “the Registrar” means either of the foregoing. The Registrar shall normally be an employee of the Federal Party, and the Chair of the Panel shall consult with the Chief Executive of the Party in relation to any such appointment.

### **3 *Initial Procedures***

- 3.1 Any complaint, or request for informal advice, shall be made in the first instance to the Registrar. The Registrar shall contact the Chair, who shall designate himself, or one of the Vice-Chairs, as the Case Manager in respect thereof. The Registrar shall ensure that any complaint is in a form which is both coherent and acceptable to the complainant.
- 3.2 The Case Manager may give informal advice, and may recommend (and, if so, assist) with mediation; however, if the Case Manager conducts an unsuccessful mediation, he may take no further part in the determination of the complaint, and the Chair shall if thought fit appoint a different Case Manager.
- 3.3 The Case Manager, in consultation with the other Officers, will determine;
  - (a) whether or not the case falls within the jurisdiction of the Panel (and the Officers shall have power to determine that a case falls out with such jurisdiction because it is deemed to be insubstantial or vexatious); and
  - (b) the timetable and preliminary procedures for that case.
- 3.4 If the complainant does not comply timeously with such procedures, the Officers may determine the case without any evidence not supplied by a deadline.
- 3.5 The Officers may also determine, in relation to any complaint where there is no (or no material) dispute as to the facts, that the matter should be determined without an oral hearing.
- 3.6 Subject to the foregoing the Case Manager shall have power:
  - (a) to seek further information from the complainant;
  - (b) to determine the appropriate respondent(s); and
  - (c) to determine the procedures to be used, and the issues to be adjudicated, by the Case Panel appointed to determine the case.

### **4 *Determinations***

- 4.1 The Members (and the Chair) of the Panel to hear a particular case (“the Case Panel”) shall be selected by the Chair in accordance with, and subject to, Article 14.4.
- 4.2 Where there is an oral hearing, it shall be conducted as far as possible in accordance with the Appendix to these Procedures, a copy of which shall be given to each party in advance thereof, together with details of any proposed deviations therefrom. If any party fails to attend such an oral hearing, the Case Panel may nevertheless determine the matter.
- 4.3 Following or in the absence of an oral hearing, the Chair of the Case Panel shall produce a draft determination for approval by the other Members of the Case Panel. Such draft determination shall also be sent to the other Officers by way of consultation on matters of law (but not fact), and the Case Panel shall have regard to any comments they make.

- 4.4 Such determination, or a summary thereof, shall normally be made available to all parties, and to all Members of the Panel. In the case of an oral hearing, this shall be within 21 days thereafter.
- 4.5 The Officers shall determine upon any form of publication or other circulation of a determination, and in so doing shall have regard to Article 14.6 and to the desirability of publishing any part of any decision which may be of precedential or other useful effect.

***Appendix: Normal Process during an Oral Hearing***

- 1 Normally, the complainant will speak first, to put her or his case. The complainant may call witnesses as to disputed fact only, although these may also give their evidence in written form. The complainant may be assisted by a friend, who may speak for the complainant at any time. The friend should avoid simple repetition of points already made by the complainant.
- 2 Each respondent or representative may cross-examine a witness, the friend or the complainant, as directed by the Chair of the Case Panel.
- 3 The case for the complainant should not last longer than 45 minutes, unless the Chair believes that the case has not been properly put in this time.
- 4 The respondents have equivalent rights as to witnesses, a representative to aid her or him and time limit.
- 5 The complainant may also cross-examine as directed by the Chair.
- 6 Members of the Case Panel may ask for clarification or cross-examine at any time.
- 7 Each side may sum up, taking no more than five minutes.
- 8 The Case Panel will then consider their conclusion.

# Parliamentary Party (Commons)

## Introduction

There have been just eleven weeks of Commons business since the last report I made to Conference and the preparation of this one for Harrogate. In that time we have seen this Labour Government prevaricate on crucial issues such as Iraq and Afghanistan, even as it has become more deeply mired in sleaze. At the same time, David Cameron's Conservative Party have demonstrated their inability to escape the past, with 'U-turns' on environmental commitments and embarrassment over the misuse of House of Commons facilities to raise Tory funds. 2007 promises a testing parliamentary environment in which the Liberal Democrats have every opportunity to capitalise on the mistakes of their opponents.

2007 also sees crucial elections, which will test public opinion in Scotland, Wales and England, ahead of Tony Blair's retirement. The parliamentary party is seized of its key role in delivering the best possible result for the Liberal Democrats across the United Kingdom, whether it is in support of our colleagues in Scotland, Wales or English local authorities.

## Leading the Opposition

We were finally granted our last Opposition Day of the 2005-2006 Session on the 16th of October last year. We chose to debate the Green Tax Switch, which had formed the centre piece of our Autumn Conference, and the ongoing threat to our post offices.

No Liberal Democrat secured a slot in the Private Member's Bill Ballot. However, Liberal Democrats were out in force on 16th January to support the Sustainable Communities Bill, introduced in the last Session by Julia Goldsworthy, to ensure it completed its second reading. Furthermore, Members such as Nick Harvey, keen to pursue the issue of cluster bombs, are already making creative use of procedure to put on the record Bills they would like to see introduced.

There have been many notable efforts by colleagues to highlight important issues. Norman Lamb has repeatedly tackled both the Government and the Conservative Opposition on their record on health, determined to ensure that neither escapes blame for the running down of the National Health Service, whilst David Laws has signalled some significant concerns at the likely direction of Government policy on pensions. Nick Clegg has also been relentless in his tackling of the Home Secretary over political and organisational failures at the Home Office, many of which have led to risks to public safety. Jo Swinson has worked vigorously to promote the Campaign for Gender Balance to parliamentary colleagues in her capacity as Acting Chair.

Continuing concerns over corruption have led Liberal Democrats to continue to question the Government over international arms deals. We have sought to maintain the pressure on the Government over the Al-Yamamah controversy, tabling a motion daily to gain access to the suppressed memorandum from the Public Accounts Commission and asking questions of the Prime Minister.

It has also been a deliberate strategy to maintain a focus on Iraq, forcing the Government and Tony Blair to accept responsibility for the most calamitous foreign policy decision since Suez.

## Organisation of the Parliamentary Party

With Steve Webb's promotion to chair the manifesto process, and Matthew Taylor's decision to step down, Menzies used the opportunity to make some fresh appointments to the Shadow Cabinet. Norman Lamb, Menzies's Chief of Staff, assumed responsibility for health from Steve Webb. Edward Davey was promoted from Trade and Industry to Chief of Staff. Susan Kramer was promoted from International Development to Trade and Industry. Lynne Featherstone was appointed to the Shadow Cabinet for the first time as Shadow Secretary of State for International Development. Finally, Danny Alexander was promoted to the Shadow Cabinet, incorporating social exclusion into his existing brief as part of David Laws's Work and Pensions team.

As I mentioned in the Autumn report, the Whip's Team have been looking at ways of helping colleagues maximise their impact in Parliament and out in the country. Planning is well under way for our next Away Day in March, which provides a focused opportunity for discussing our impact in Parliament. We have also begun a series of "Master Classes" in which MPs can share best practice tips in terms of their organisational, media and campaigning setups.

Finally, a number of colleagues have indicated that it is not their intention to stand again at the next General Election. Paul Keetch, Mark Oaten and Matthew Taylor, who has represented Truro and St Austell for twenty years, have all announced their intention to retire at the next election. Over the years they have provided tireless service for the party, in a wide variety of portfolios, and it is only appropriate that I offer them a vote of thanks on behalf of all of us.

### **Parliamentary Office of the Liberal Democrats (POLD)**

The POLD Business Plan was signed off in Autumn of last year, with input from all POLD staff, and now forms the basis for each department's work objectives in 2007. Planning is already underway for taking forward the 2008 Business Plan and the process will be a useful opportunity to ensure we are maximising the utility of limited financial and human resources.

As always, there are a number of staff changes, and I would like to record particular thanks to David Norman, Mike Zorbas and Matt Waldman. David Norman's careful leadership was crucial to ensuring the implementation of the POLD review in the Media Centre. Our thanks are extended to Olly Grender, former Director of Communications, for assuming the role of temporary Director of Policy and Communications whilst a replacement for David is recruited. Mike Zorbas was a popular member of the Media Centre who has now returned to his native Australia. Matt Waldman, Foreign Affairs Adviser, has left POLD to work for Oxfam in Kabul.

POLD's statement of accounts can be found on the Electoral Commission's website at <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/regulatory-issues/soalibdemau2002.cfm>, listed as Parliamentary Office of the Liberal Democrats.

### **Conclusion**

As the end of the Blair era approaches, the Liberal Democrats must prepare for a fundamental change in the British political landscape. We must be adept and nimble political operators, capable of mounting quick and effective attacks on both the Government and the Conservatives, at the same time setting out a longer term and credible programme for Government.

**Paul Burstow MP**  
**Chief Whip**

# Parliamentary Party (Lords)

**Tom McNally** continues as Leader of the party, his two deputies are **Navnit Dholakia** and **William Wallace**. **David Shutt** continues as Chief Whip, with **Dominic Addington** as Deputy Whip. **Robin Teverson**, **Angie Harris**, **Jamie Mar** and **Kellie** and **Roger Roberts** are in the Whips' team. Lords' reform continues to be a hot topic, with two committees of both Houses set up, one examining the conventions of the House of Lords, which has now reported, and the other, chaired by Jack Straw, looking at powers and composition, due in to report in February. **Tom McNally** and **Paul Tyler** represented the party on the former, and Tom on the latter. Although much important work is done by colleagues at Question time, in general debates and serving on committees, much of our work of lasting value is in examining bills prior to their becoming acts. The bills considered since last reporting to you and our principal speakers are set out below: -

## Animal Welfare Bill (now law)

**Sue Miller**, **Navnit Dholakia** and **Tony Greaves** handled this bill, which we broadly welcomed; Unsuccessful attempts were made to ensure that the degree of domestication of an animal is taken into account when assessing an animal's needs.

## Armed Forces Bill (now law)

**Tim Garden** and **Martin Thomas** handled this. We voted, without success, (due to lack of Conservative support) on issues including the exclusion of under 18s from being prosecuted by a Court Martial, prohibiting under 18s from being put into combat, preventing the use of military airfields for extraordinary rendition and reducing the maximum sentence for desertion from life imprisonment to 10 years.

## Civil Aviation Bill (now law)

**Bill Bradshaw** and **Jamie Mar** and **Kellie** were in charge of this bill, which makes various changes to the law to do with airports. The Government conceded on one issue - that of night flights, which was won in the Lords and not overturned in the Commons.

## Companies Bill (HL) (now law)

**Tim Razzall**, **Colin Sharman**, **Lindsay Northover**, **John Lee**, **Eric Avebury** and **Jenny Tonge** took part in proceedings on this bill. The only issue on which we had Conservative support and on which we defeated the Government twice was that of the Freedom of Information Act applying to Government appointments to the Audit Independent Supervisor and Public Oversight Board. The Government went on to accept this amendment in the Commons, taking the total number of concessions achieved by the Lib Dem Peers on the Bill to over 20.

## Consumers, Estate Agents and Redress Bill (HL)

**Tim Razzall**, **Sue Miller**, **John Lee** and **Celia Thomas** have been involved in this bill that brings Energywatch, Postwatch and potentially the Consumer Council for Water under the new National Consumer Council and creates a redress scheme for Estate Agents.

## Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Bill

**Tim Razzall**, **John Lee**, **Brian Cotter** and **Jamie Mar** and **Kellie** are representing the Lib Dems in the Lords on this Bill, which creates the new offence of corporate manslaughter when an individual's death can be attributed to the gross negligence of an organisation.

## Commons Bill (HL) (now law)

**Richard Livsey** and **Sue Miller** took part in this bill, which we generally welcomed. It updates the registration, management and protection of common land in England and Wales.

## Concessionary Bus Travel Bill

**Bill Bradshaw**, supported by **Ros Scott** and **Jamie Mar** and **Kellie**, gave a general welcome to this Bill, which puts in place a national scheme to provide free transport on the bus network to older people.

### **Education and Inspections Bill (now law)**

**Joan Walmsley, Margaret Sharp, Shirley Williams and Ros Scott** all took part in this bill. We were the sole opposition to the Government's plans to create new unaccountable foundation schools and tabled (unsuccessful) amendments on accountability to local communities, fair access to schools and co-operation amongst schools rather than competition.

### **Further Education and Training Bill**

**Joan Walmsley, Margaret Sharp and Sally Hamwee** are all taking part in this bill, which is largely technical and tidies up details arising from the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and the Learning and Skills Act 2000, streamlining and updating the role of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

### **Legal Services Bill**

**Martin Thomas and Bob Maclennan** are leading on this bill, which reforms the regulation of legal services in England and Wales, puts in place a new complaints structure and provides for non-lawyers to work with lawyers to deliver legal services.

### **Legislative and Regulatory Reform Bill**

**Willie Goodhart, Bob Maclennan, Tim Garden and Richard Holme** all spoke at the Second Reading of this bill which greatly extends the power of Ministers to make law by orders rather than primary legislation, and achieved considerable concessions through the publicity generated in the media.

### **Mental Health Bill**

We are opposed to many of the Government's proposals in the Mental Health Bill and a five-strong team of **Liz Barker, Julia Neuberger, Alex Carlile, John Alderdice and Joan Walmsley** are half way through Committee stage, having defeated the Government overwhelmingly once already. The Bill introduces, amongst other things, a new definition of mental disorder, with fewer exclusions than at present, and removes the old 'treatability' test, replacing it with a definition of a person who has a mental disorder for whom there is 'appropriate treatment'. We will be voting at the next stages of this bill to amend it further.

### **Police and Justice Bill**

**Navnit Dholakia, Angie Harris and Veronica Linklater** worked on this Bill which establishes a new National Policing Improvement Agency and makes changes to the structures of police authorities. The bill also made changes to street bail arrangements, conditional cautions, parenting contracts, the 2003 Extradition Act and strengthened protections against computer hacking. Part 4 of the Bill contained proposals to create a new all-encompassing inspectorate, replacing five existing ones. Outright victories and concessions on most of the controversial issues (police force mergers, the new inspectorate, the nature of conditional cautions, and the power of the Secretary of State to give directions to chief police officers) mean that the bill was radically changed. The only substantial issue - that of the terms of extradition from the US was defeated at the last stage due, once again, to lack of Conservative support.

### **Tribunal, Courts and Enforcement Bill**

**Martin Thomas and Bob Maclennan** gave a general welcome to this Bill, which reforms the tribunals system by creating a new two-tier system to replace the current one. The bill also expands the eligibility requirements for judicial appointments, revises the procedures for enforcement of civil debts, introduces measures to assist debtors and provides immunity from seizure for cultural objects lent to the UK for temporary exhibitions.

### **Road Safety Bill (now law)**

**Bill Bradshaw and Jamie Mar and Kellie** handled this bill, which makes provision for a range of road safety matters, including drink-driving, speeding, and some new offences to do with dangerous driving. Although several important votes (to do with use of the surplus income from safety camera enforcement, retro-reflective markings on lorries, and making death by dangerous driving a non-



mandatory offence) were won in the Lords, as it 'ping ponged' between the Houses, in the end few concessions remained.

**Violent Crime Reduction Bill (now law)**

**Martin Thomas** generally supported this bill which introduces a range of measures to tackle the problems associated with alcohol-related violence and disorder, as well as measures to tackle aspects of violent crime involving weapons, particularly the misuse of air weapons, imitation firearms and knives.

**Private Members' Bills introduced by Liberal Democrats: -**

EU (Information) Bill - Hugh Dykes  
Forced Marriages (Civil Protection) Bill - Anthony Lester  
Public Demonstrations (Repeals) Bill - Sue Miller

**Debates introduced by Liberal Democrats: -**

The Eurozone - Hugh Dykes  
Population growth in Africa - Dick Taverne  
Permissible Social landlords - Eric Avebury  
Elections in Bangladesh - Eric Avebury  
Rehabilitation of Offenders Act - Navnit Dholakia

As always, I wish to pay tribute to our prodigious staff, Carolyn Rampton, Elizabeth Hanna, Tom Kiehl, Neil Balmer and Anne-Marie Christoffersen-Deb, whose assistance to all our peers is invaluable.

**David Shutt**  
**Chief Whip (Lords)**  
**15th January 2007**

## Parliamentary Party (Europe)

In 2006, MEPs voted some 5,500 times! Over the last few months these votes have included the final stages of some substantial pieces of legislation. They include the Services Directive which seeks to eliminate the obstacles to a proper free movement of services between the Member States and REACH, for which Chris Davies led the negotiations for the ALDE group. The largest-ever item of EU legislation, replacing some 40 existing texts, REACH is intended to ensure that the 30,000 chemicals in daily use present no long term threats to human health or the environment. Chris Davies has also worked on the Framework Directive on Waste Policy, intended to place a legal obligation on member states to curb the growth in waste where his amendments at first reading were supported by the Parliament. An ALDE seminar he organised on curbing the importation into the EU of wild birds has since been followed by the announcement by the Commission of a permanent ban. Currently, Liberal Democrats are taking a lead in trying to toughen proposed legislation to curb CO2 emissions from new motor vehicles.

Diana Wallis has become the first Liberal Democrat and British female vice president of the European Parliament. She is ALDE's Spokesperson on the Legal Affairs Committee and has been continuing her work on improving access to justice and facilitating the process of making cross border claims in relation to civil torts such as road traffic accidents (the so-called "Rome II" report). Diana is a substitute member on the Internal Market Committee and is joint rapporteur on the European Contract Law project. This remains potentially the biggest project facing the EU legislator in the field of civil and commercial law. She is also the rapporteur on the committee of inquiry into the insurance company Equitable Life, which is set to report in mid-2007.

Andrew Duff has published his Plan B for the EU constitution ([www.notre-europe.eu](http://www.notre-europe.eu)) to a warm reception. He continues to work for an early renegotiation of the 2004 constitutional treaty with a view to its acceptance by 2009. He has also been prominent in forming the Parliament's view of the 'absorption capacity' of the Union and in sticking up for Turkey (and North Cyprus) during these difficult months for the Turkish EU accession process. Andrew is much involved in the debate on the setting up of a European Institute for Technology, a decent home for which could be found, he believes, in the East of England - although each of us have our own ideas as to where would make a decent home!

Saj Karim was rapporteur on EU-India Trade and Economic Relations. The report was adopted by an overwhelming majority of the house in September and formed the basis of negotiations at the 7th EU-India Summit in Helsinki in October. Saj is the draftsman for the European Parliament WTO Steering Group to the Inter-Parliamentary Union. In response to the Commission's Communication: "Global Europe: Competing in the World," Saj presented a paper on "Multilateralism and Bilateralism" at the WTO IPU's Annual Conference in December. Saj successfully concluded his six-month cross-party campaign, involving MPs, MEPs, Peers, EU External Relations Commissioner, Benita Ferrero Waldner, and Prince Charles, for the release of Mirza Tahir Hussain, a British national from Leeds, who had spent 18 years on death row in Pakistan.

Emma Nicholson has continued her work on the Foreign Affairs Committee. From August to December Emma served as Chief Observer of the EU's Election Observation Mission to the Presidential Elections in Yemen. The elections were judged to be democratic and were well received by the international community. Having been the Parliament's rapporteur for Romania between 1999-2004 and the ALDE's shadow rapporteur since 2004, Emma witnessed many years of hard work come to fruition on 1 January 2007 when Romania finally became an EU member state. In her current capacity as the Parliament's rapporteur on Kashmir, Emma submitted her draft report to the Foreign Affairs Committee in November following her two fact-finding visits to Pakistan and India in June 2006. The draft report is currently undergoing the parliamentary process and Emma continues to consult with an extensive range of parliamentary colleagues and interested parties outside the Parliament on all the issues concerned.

Bill Newton Dunn is rapporteur on 'the Fight Against Organised Crime' in the parliament's Justice & Home Affairs committee. The problem is that international gangs, based mainly outside the EU, cross Europe's open internal borders with impunity, trafficking drugs, immigrants, prostitutes, children, fake goods and tobacco, VAT carousel fraud, phishing, etc. But Europe's police forces are all national and cannot cross borders in pursuit nor fight them effectively. The Home Office says that each kilo of imported heroin leads to over 200 crimes in our streets. Bill concludes therefore, as Britain's most pro-European party, that Liberal Democrats could reduce crime in Britain dramatically by creating a European FBI. His website [www.organisedcrime.info](http://www.organisedcrime.info) tells all. His other website shows people how to check what data is held about them by government and big business at [www.protectyourpersonaldata.eu](http://www.protectyourpersonaldata.eu)

Sharon Bowles was appointed the rapporteur for the Parliament's report on fiscal fraud and is pushing for reform to curb the estimated £8bn billion lost through carousel fraud in the UK (the equivalent to 4p on income tax) and 250bn lost through other frauds across the EU. As shadow rapporteur on payments Sharon continues to negotiate with the Commission and the Council Presidency to reach an urgent single reading agreement. She is also shadow rapporteur on Solvency II, dubbed one of the most significant pieces of financial legislation of this mandate, for which work has already begun to modernise EU legislation on life and non-life insurance, winding-up and reinsurance. It will revise 14 existing directives. Sharon also played a vital role in the Television Without Frontiers directive getting through her amendment on advertising times by a single vote to ensure British producers are able to raise funds for good quality productions.

Liz Lynne was recently the Parliament's draftsman for the EU's Disability Action Plan 2007-2008 and has continued to campaign on issues such as human rights, Guantánamo, Kashmir, trafficking in human beings and antidiscrimination policy, as well as health issues including Cancer and Asthma. Liz, as the employment spokesperson, led the ALDE party's response to the revision of the EU's Working Time Directive, in addition to leading for the Lib Dem's in the Employment Committee for reports on Professional Football, the Services Directive and the Posting of Workers Directive.

Graham Watson was re-elected to lead the EPs Liberal group (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe) which now has 106 MEPs. He is the first leader ever to be elected to a third term of office. He has recently published two new books: 'Liberty in Art' (Mondadori, Ed) and 'The Power of Speech' (Bagehot Publishing).

Fiona Hall produced a report in the Industry Committee on radio spectrum policy, calling for a freeing up of frequencies across Europe, on the Ofcom model. In the European Energy Package she has pushed for full liberalisation and unbundling, clear and binding targets on renewables and energy efficiency and climate change targets compatible with achieving a 2°C limit on global warming. In the autumn she met with local people severely affected by climate change in the arid North West of Kenya, worked on wider environment/security issues such as illegal logging and observed the successful second round of the elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In her role of vice-chair of the temporary committee on alleged CIA 'extraordinary rendition' activities in Europe, whose report is due to be adopted in February, Sarah Ludford led a delegation to London where MEPs met alleged victims, lawyers, MPs, and Europe Minister Geoff Hoon. She is steering to a conclusion in the Civil Liberties Committee a key piece of legislation concerning EU border security, the Visa Information System which is a huge database of visa applicants including fingerprints, and has successfully fought for strong data protection safeguards. Sarah has regularly demonstrated in Parliament Square with campaigning comedian Mark Thomas against Labour's restrictions on the right to protest.

As Fisheries Co-ordinator, Elspeth Attwooll's recent work in the Fisheries Committee has included holding an ALDE hearing on Fisheries Partnership Agreements with countries outside the EU, which will lead to a new Group policy in this area. Elspeth is also Parliament's Rapporteur on the enhancement of the role of Regional Advisory Councils. As Vice Chair of the Regional Development Committee, she is involved in continuing structural funds discussions at local level, and is leading the Group's opinion on developing a European strategy for islands in the context of regional policy.

There are also a number of important issues on the horizon. Earlier this year the European Commission adopted a package of non-legislative measures to establish a new Energy Policy for Europe. The package focuses on combating climate change and boosting the EU's energy security and competitiveness. There is an overall target to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% by 2020 with three areas to achieve this: creating a true internal energy market; speeding up the shift to a low carbon economy with a target of 20% of the EU's energy to come from renewables; and energy efficiency with a target of saving 20% of total primary energy consumption by 2020. The proposals stated that the actions will need to be underpinned by a coherent and credible external policy and that the EU needs to work with both developed and developing countries. As true Lib Dems we will be following this very closely.

Other issues for the next six months will include the revival of the constitution, a strong united EU position on the future of Kosovo, the troubled relations between the EU and NATO, as well as Parliamentary efforts to take a coherent view on the reform of the financial system.

**Sharon Bowles MEP**  
**Chief Whip (European Parliament)**  
**January 2007**

# Campaign for Gender Balance

The Campaign for Gender Balance was established by the Federal Executive in October 2001, in response to the conference debate on gender balance among parliamentary candidates in September 2001. Its role is to achieve the targets agreed by conference for increases both in the number of women on the list of approved candidates, and in the number of women candidates fighting target seats. It implements a range of training, mentoring and support activities for women standing, and considering standing, for parliament. It is currently chaired by Jo Swinson MP.

Current Situation (at 15 Jan 07)

**Approved list - 24% women** (207 out of 861 approved candidates - England only)

**Selected PPCs - 39% women** (26 out of 67 seats - MP reselections not included)

39% is a healthy figure, up from 29% in Autumn 2006. Without a big increase in approved candidates the % will fall as we run out of women, hence the importance of objective 1.

Objective 1: 150 extra approved women candidates by the next GE

- 35 new women on approved list so far - good, but still 115 to go!
- 39% of newly approved candidates since GE are women
- 4,000 women Councillors and new members mailed with letter, leaflet and reply slips to encourage them to think about approval - 22 responses, including 6 requests for candidate approval forms
- Training day held in Scotland on 6 Jan with SWLD (25 attendees), more planned for English regions and Wales to encourage women to apply to be PPCs
- Recruitment sessions in Parliament planned for female Lib Dem researchers and for women students (with Lorely's office)

Objective 2: 40% of our new MPs to be women after the next GE

- Research shows only 29 approved women candidates in our 63 held seats; 44 held seats have no approved women candidates
- Letter sent to all MPs enlisting their help in identifying and encouraging women
- Mailing to Councillors being followed up by telephone in held seats
- In-depth training weekend for potential women MPs was held in February
- 20+ women supported in selections (campaign advice, telephoning, DTP support)

Additional projects

- Full training programme at conference in support of both above objectives
- Fundraising initiative set up via Pledgebank to raise an extra £5k+ per year
- While our goals focus on MPs, mentors and training are also highlighting the opportunities at the European level, and other levels where appropriate
- Always expanding our database of helpers, in particular assisting people with the approval process and doing artwork for selection manifestos
- Work alongside other organisations including: ALDC, WLD, Leader's Office, Chris Rennard, Candidates Office, Lorely Burt MP, Campaigns Dept, EMLD, Diversity Fund, LDYS & others.
- Website being developed to help women seeking approval and going for selection with a dedicated resource centre for registered users
- Improving communication with party through LDN, regional & SAO publications and letters to party officers, as well as through external media to project a positive image of the party tackling the gender balance issue

Thanks go to former Chair Sandra Gidley and former Vice-Chair Candy Piercy who both stepped down at the end of 2006. Both remain very much involved however! And a warm welcome to new Vice-Chairs Rosalyn Harper and Baroness Jane Bonham-Carter, as well as Ellie Cumbo, who started with us as our campaign organiser at autumn conference.

**Jo Swinson**  
**Chair, Campaign for Gender Balance**  
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