

Reports to Spring Conference 2008

Liverpool

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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.

Liverpool

We are delighted to be the first political party to host a conference in Liverpool's brand new venue, the Arena and Convention Centre Liverpool, and to be in the city during its year as the European Capital of Culture. Due to the popularity of the city for weekend visitors (not least the football fans), we have worked hard with our accommodation partners to secure as good an allocation of accommodation for conference reps across as a wide price range as possible. As with other city venues, however (as opposed to smaller towns and resorts), there has been less cheap accommodation than we would have liked. Our advice is to book through our accommodation partners, whose details can be found on the conference section of the party website.

Please let us know what you think of Liverpool – both the Centre and the available accommodation and other aspects – in the feedback form that will be available on the Sunday of conference, and also on the party website. Your views will be key in deciding whether we return to Liverpool for any future conferences.

Agenda

The main theme of the Liverpool conference, and the main FPC policy paper, is on health policy. We have also selected four policy motions from conference reps and local parties, and left a good allocation of time for emergency motions and 'urgent issue' discussions.

In addition to the debates and set-piece speeches, the agenda includes two presentations, from our London Mayoral and Assembly campaign, and from Liberal Democrat-run Eastleigh council. It will also include one of the popular Q&A sessions, on schools policy, which we hope will help start the process of developing a full policy paper on the issue, for debate in spring 2009. On the Friday afternoon, four consultative sessions will take place, three on FPC policy papers in preparation (UK response to globalisation, security, and transport) and one organised by the Party Reform Commission.

The Rally

The 'Winning for Britain' rally will be held in the conference centre at 18.30 on the Friday evening of conference. Hosted by Sarah Teather MP and Warren Bradley, Leader of Liverpool Council, and featuring Nick Clegg, the focus of the event will be Lib Dem success, ambition and inspiration. There will be a welcome drink beforehand for all reps from 17.45 in the centre, kindly sponsored by the North West Development Agency. I hope everyone will be able to take part in the rally.

The Committee has also considered the future of the conference rally. In recent years the organisation of the rally has often been tendered out to internal party groups. Although on several occasions this has worked well, on others it has failed to attract enough attendance and has not tied in well enough with the themes of conference and the wider political situation. For the time being, then, we are suspending the tendering process, though we may still approach particular party groups to run future events. We will keep the function and organisation (and timing) of the rally under review; let us know your views through the feedback form.

Introduction for first-time reps

In recognition of how daunting the first visit to party conference can be, the FCC will be running a training session on how to get the most out of conference, both inside and outside the conference hall. This will be held at 12.30pm on Friday 7th March in the Brunswick Suite in the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The session will include information on all aspects of conference, plenty of time for questions and a guide to conference for first-time reps for each new rep to take away.

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.

2008 venues will be:

- Autumn: Bournemouth, 13–18 September

2009 venues will be:

- Spring: Harrogate, 6–8 March
- Autumn: Bournemouth, 20–24 September

Policy debates at conference

Liberal Democrats are rightly proud of the fact that we remain the only major party to be internally democratic. Party policy can only be decided by the vote of the representatives of the party membership, after debate at the party conference.

Despite this, however, the number of policy motions submitted to conference has steadily fallen over the last ten years or so. Federal Conference Committee want to hear your views on why this may be so, and what – if anything – we should do about it. To this end, FCC is consulting as widely as possible with members through a short consultation paper included with this mailing; it will also be available online. Please take the time to let us know your views on this issue.

We continue to provide a motions drafting advisory service, and would encourage all motion and amendment 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.

New timing for autumn conference

Following last year's consultation with party members, the Committee is implementing major changes to the timing of the autumn conference, starting this year with the autumn conference. Essentially, the conference moves forward a day. Consultative sessions will take

place on the Saturday morning, and the sessions in the hall will start after lunch on the Saturday. The conference will finish with the leader's speech on Wednesday mid-afternoon.

By creating a fuller conference weekend, FCC aims to offer more of conference to party members who cannot attend during the week. A new registration structure is being introduced to reflect this change; it will enable party members to register for the weekend, for the rest of the week, or for the whole conference. The changes will be on trial for a two-year period, so, as usual, let us have our views on how they work.

Access

Following her election to the South East list of Euro candidates, Catherine Bearder has had to step down as convener of the Conference Access Group. The Committee expresses its warmest thanks for all her work in this role over the last two years. We welcome Robert Adamson in her place, and under his convenership, the Group will continue to work on making conference as accessible for all as possible. If you are interested in the work of the Group, please feel free to contact Robert on Robert@Robertadamson.info.

The FCC's accommodation assistance scheme for wheelchair users supports members who use wheelchairs to attend conference by subsidising the cost of their wheelchair-accessible rooms. The CAG is now keen to expand its work to tackle obstacles facing a broader range of disabilities.

Stewards and security

As always, conference can only take place due to the contribution of the volunteer stewards' team. Led by the Chief Steward, Chris Jennings, and Deputy Chief Steward, Adrian Beavis, the stewards handle 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 supported by SIA-qualified security contractors who are conducting the bag searches at the entrances to the Conference Centre.

Following slight problems at the beginning of last year's autumn conference, we are making it clearer to conference reps what they can expect in terms of security checks, and what cannot be brought into the Conference Centre. Please see the relevant section in the Agenda & Directory.

Communications

Much to our relief, we are now finally able to make progress on merging the conference database with the party membership database (we had to wait until the candidates database had similarly been merged in). We are expecting to go live with the new system later this year and expect it will eliminate much of the duplication and inconsistency that unfortunately features in our mailings due to the current dual operation.

Our electronic communication and registration operations are continuing to expand, however, with nearly half of all conference registrations being processed online and similar numbers choosing the environmental option to receive their policy and consultation papers electronically rather than in print. We are pleased that conference representatives are responding to our efforts in this area.

At the Committee's request, a small group, convened by Jeremy Hargreaves, has been considering ways in which we can make it easier for party members who do not attend conference both to feed in to the process and to follow what happens at conference. I encourage you to read Jeremy's article in the Agenda & Directory.

The conference pages of the website are frequently updated with the latest conference news and deadlines in the lead up to conference, as well as the highlights during and post-conference. The party website is currently under development so expect a new look to

www.libdems.org.uk soon. As always, we welcome any ideas or suggestions you may have for improving the content of the conference section of the website.

Federal Conference Committee

FCC members are here to help you make the most of conference – do feel free to ask us any questions you may have relating to the agenda and how to speak in debates, Q&A sessions, etc. You can identify us by the larger badges we wear, with 'FCC' prominently displayed; there are also pictures of us (to varying degrees of flattery) on the inside front page of the Agenda.

FCC members are also assigned to a state or English regional party to liaise with them during the year, provide advice and assistance on submitting motions or otherwise getting involved in conference, and appear at regional conferences to answer your questions. See the contact details at the end of this report, and don't hesitate to get in touch.

Thanks

I conclude this report by expressing the Committee's warmest thanks to all who make conference possible: to all my colleagues on the Conference Committee; in Cowley Street, to Ben Stoneham, HQ Director; the staff of the Conference Office, Carol Caruana, Chloe Griffith, Emma Harris, Sunena Moti, Emma Price and Jane Stainer; and 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 Liverpool.

Duncan Brack
Chair, Federal Conference Committee

FCC state and English regional liaison 2007–08

Region	FCC member	Email	Phone
Devon & Cornwall	Ruth Polling	ruthpolling@hotmail.co.uk	07949 651 669
East Midlands	Sue Garden	sue.garden@blueyonder.co.uk	07778 282 790 020 7435 2796
East of England	Sal Brinton	salbrinton@cix.co.uk	07768 821 187
London	Dee Doocey	deedoocey@blueyonder.co.uk	020 8941 2283 020 7983 4417
North West	Jon Ball	jonball@cix.co.uk	020 8810 1078 07860 247 589
Northern	Robert Adamson	Robert@Robertadamson.info	01845 501 058
South Central	Gareth Epps	garethepps@cix.co.uk	07950 035 836
South East	Catherine Bearder	cbearder@cix.co.uk	07786 170 949 01865 792 960
West Midlands	Arnie Gibbons	arnie_gibbons2004@yahoo.co.uk	01926 339 822
Western Counties	Justine McGuinness	justine.mcguinness@ googlemail.com	07801 099 065
Yorkshire and the Humber	Robert Adamson Duncan Brack	Robert@Robertadamson.info duncan@dbrack.org.uk	01845 501 058 020 8674 0612
England	Andrew Wiseman	adwiseman@btinternet.com	07976 258 664
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Wales	Ian Walton	ian@ianwalton.net	07879 630 595

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 conference, a policy working group has produced the policy paper on Liberal Democrat proposals for health, *Empowerment, Fairness and Quality*, which is presented for debate at Liverpool.

Policy working groups, supported by the Policy and Research Unit (PRU), have also drafted consultation papers on *Transport, Security* and domestic responses to the impact of *Globalisation*. There will be consultation sessions to discuss these on the afternoon of Friday 7th March at Liverpool. The working groups will then proceed to develop their final conclusions in policy papers for debate at the Autumn 2008 party conference, taking into account the outcome of the consultation sessions and other input from both within and outside the party.

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 FPC has recently set up two new working groups on Schools policy and the Natural Environment, which will produce policy papers to be debated at the Spring 2009 Party Conference. These groups will all be producing consultation documents which will be available on the www.consult.libdems.org.uk website.

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

Conference	Consultation Papers	Policy Papers
March 2008	Security UK Response to Globalisation Transport	Health
Sept 2008	Schools Natural Environment	Europe Security UK Response to Globalisation Transport Further and Higher Education Pre-Manifesto

March 2009		Schools Natural Environment
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A conference motion *Making Planning Local* was referred back to the Federal Policy Committee by the Brighton Conference. The main proposal of this motion was the introduction of Community Land Auctions (CLAs). The conference motion *Homes for All* on the agenda for the Liverpool Conference and the accompanying spokesperson's paper further explain the CLA concept and propose its piloting. The relevant sections of both motion and paper have been discussed and approved by the FPC.

General Election Manifesto

The Manifesto Group is now chaired by Danny Alexander MP, and the other members are: myself as Chair of FPC, Sal Brinton (Vice Chair, FPC), Jeremy Hargreaves (Vice Chair, FPC), Steve Webb MP (Vice Chair, FPC) Vince Cable MP (Shadow Chancellor), Susan Kramer MP (Families Spokesperson), Edward Davey MP (Chair of Campaigns and Communications) and David Laws MP (Shadow Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families).

The FPC and the Manifesto Group will continue to seek to involve party members as fully as possible in the development of the next manifesto. The FPC recently organised a one day conference based on the development of the manifesto. Over 460 members participated. The plenary sessions covered political challenges and opportunities, and reform of public services. There were also parallel sessions on wide range of more specific topics.

There is also a members-only website www.manifesto.libdems.org.uk, with a range of discussions on specific policy issues and on themes for the manifesto such as freedom and fairness. You can subscribe for e-mail updates by sending a blank email to manifesto-subscribe@lists.libdems.org.uk Please also feel free to write in with your views to Danny Alexander MP, House of Commons, SW1A 0AA.

The FPC plans to produce a full Pre-Manifesto document for debate at the Autumn Conference this year, which will be circulated with the Final Agenda.

Improving the Way Working Groups Develop Policy

At the beginning of last year, the FPC made 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) develop more up to date and politically relevant policy. These changes will have been in place for a year by the Spring Conference and we therefore intend to review their effectiveness shortly. We would welcome any views from members on how we could make further improvements.

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 own areas of interest. We advertised for applicants in January this year. Nevertheless 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*, all working groups now have a dedicated area on the www.consult.libdems.org.uk website, where their consultation papers are posted and there are '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 been giving 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 therefore are scheduling more interim discussions of the progress of groups at FPC meetings before the final report is completed. This helps 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.

Regional Links

To encourage policy debate across the party we have 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), Ruthe Isden (Acting Senior Policy Officer) and Emily Cornborough (Policy Officer). The Policy Projects Team has also benefited from voluntary work by Monica Williams and William Nelson. Helen Banks, the Senior Policy Officer, is currently on maternity leave.

The Policy Adviser team consists of Chris Saunders (Economy & Treasury), Allan Wright (Business & Enterprise), Carys Davis (Environment, Food & Rural Affairs), Katie Waring (Work & Pensions), Ben Jones (International Affairs & Defence), Steve Lotinga (Cultural & Constitutional Affairs), Marianne Sladowsky (Health), Alice Douglas (Communities &

Transport) and Sam Cannicott (Education). The Policy Adviser team has benefited from voluntary work by Nick Davies and John Hood.

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.

Nick Clegg 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 wishes to record its grateful thanks to Ming Campbell for his strong and principled leadership of the party in 2006 and 2007, and to Vince Cable for his very effective time as Acting Leader in the autumn of 2007.

Since the last Federal Conference the Federal Executive (FE) has changed its focus to take a more strategic view of party activity.

These changes have resulted in the FE developing a regular key indicator paper for each meeting to track changes in key areas within the party (membership, political support, candidates, conference, finance & other resources). As well as this tracking the ongoing changes within the party, a significant part of each meeting is dedicated to scrutinising the party's work on key areas of activity. Recent areas given time for this new process include fundraising and membership.

Scrutiny training has been provided for both staff & committee members by Sal Brinton who has also kindly given her time to act as an advisor for this process.

The Federal Finance and Administration Committee (FFAC) has regularly reported to the FE, concentrating on finances, staffing and ensuring that all resources within the party are used to maximum effect by all. Alongside the 2008 budget (which was approved by the FE at its December meeting) it considered the 2008 Business Plan at the same time. This plan incorporates all activity taking place through Federal Party headquarters and federal party staff within different areas of the party (Federal, English and the Parliamentary Office). Discussion of both documents together has been valuable for coordinating the work of the party for 2008.

The FE has also submitted a proposal to this Conference recommending a separation of the role of Party President & Chair of the Federal Executive to allow Presidents in future to be able to focus on the President's role in the wider party.

The Councillor-FE working group reported back, taking on board the comments received during the consultation period. The group is now producing an action plan to ensure this piece of work is implemented in the course of 2008. The FE would like to thank Chris White for all his hard work and effort in producing this excellent piece of work, which will improve working together between different levels of elected representatives of the party.

One of the key responsibilities of the Federal Executive since the last report to conference was to decide on the arrangements for the recent leadership election and the FE has also reviewed the 2007 Welsh elections and lessons learnt from them.

The SAO Review Group has met and the FE has approved their recommendation for the party to recognise the Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel as an Associate Organisation & has agreed to recommend to Conference that the Liberal Democrat Lawyers Association should be recognised as a Specified Associate Organisation. There is a motion from the FE before this Conference to implement this recommendation. Richard Clein has been co-opted on to the SAO/AO Review Group.

Diversity

The party has now invested in achieving its equalities and diversity aims by appointing its first National Diversity Adviser - Issan Ghazni was appointed in October 2007. He is currently completing a report reviewing all aspects of the diversity challenge facing the party which will be discussed at FE in March. The intention will be to establish priorities for the coming year and to set a timetable for more specific action plans for all sections of the Party.

One of the preliminary recommendations Issan will make is that we review what monitoring data we collect and how we collect it, to bring it in line with best practice in the public sector. He has also recommended that we run an awareness raising campaign to encourage members, and in particular approved candidates, to submit monitoring information. We currently have up-to-date monitoring information for only 35% of approved candidates. These recommendations have both been included in the Candidates' Office Business plan for 2008.

As reported to Conference in September, detailed diversity statistics are currently only available for England. We anticipate being able to roll out the collection and analysis of monitoring information across the 3 states under the co-ordination of the Joint States' Candidates' Committee once the format has been adequately tested in England.

The figures set out below show the figures for England, Scotland and Wales combined for gender analysis. But the ethnicity and religion figures are from the database for England only. Please bear in mind that these may not tally exactly with the figures supplied by the Campaign for Gender Balance as data is exported "live" from the database and the CGB report was put together on a different date.

A. Approved Candidates

A1. Gender – England, Scotland and Wales

Full monitoring information is as follows:

Total candidates	Men	Women	% Women
1014	756	258	25.44%

A2. Ethnicity – England only

The current monitoring information is for approximately 35% of approved candidates:

Not supplied	Asian	Black	Mixed White & Asian	Mixed White & Chinese	Other mixed	White
565	17	2	4	1	2	273
% of total supplied	5.7%	0.7%	1.3%	0.3%	0.7%	91.3%

A3. Religion – England only

The current monitoring information is for approximately 35% of approved candidates:

Not supplied	Buddhist	Christian	Hindu	Humanist	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	None
567	1	170	1	2	7	14	1	101
% of total supplied	0.3%	57.2%	0.3%	0.7%	2.4%	4.7%	0.3	34%

B. Selected Candidates

B1. Gender – England, Scotland and Wales

Full monitoring information is as follows:

Total selected (not including MPs)	Men	Women	% Women
184	128	56	30.43%

B2. Ethnicity – England only

The current monitoring information is for approximately 63% of selected candidates:

Not supplied	Asian	Black	Mixed	White
78	8	1	1	75
% of total supplied	9.4%	1.2%	1.2%	88.2%

Please note: the above percentages should be treated with extreme caution, as it is likely the non-respondents are not from a BME background. BME selected candidates, as a percentage of the whole, are 6.1%.

B3. Religion – England only

Full monitoring information is as follows:

Not supplied	Christian	Jewish	Muslim	None
79	46	2	6	30
% of total supplied	54.8%	2.4%	7.1%	35.7%

Simon Hughes MP

Federal President, January 2008

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 Duncan Greenland), 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.

A) 2007 results

1. At the start of 2007 the federal party had an overall accumulated deficit on its general fund of £169,000, of which £133,000 related to the deficit on the party's final salary pension scheme (which closed in 1989 and now has 1 active member, 6 deferred members and 12 pensioners) and £36,000 related to its normal operating activities.

The draft figures for 2007 show a deficit on the federal party's general fund of £79,000 against a budgeted deficit of £21,340 so that the accumulated deficit on its normal activities will increase from £36,000 to £115,000.

Due to changes in actuarial assumptions it is expected that the deficit on the pension scheme will significantly increase, though it is unclear at the moment by how much.

2. The campaign fund is, as expected, forecast to produce a deficit of approx. £500,000 as a result of spending the donations received in 2006 from the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust Ltd (JRRT) for the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly and local elections in May 2007. This will reduce the accumulated surplus on the fund to around £1.2m, which 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. In the meantime the party also needs to spend at least £1m a year to maintain its present campaign capacity.

3. The draft out-turn figures for 2007 are attached as appendix 1 to this report. The final accounts will be presented to the autumn conference in Bournemouth and will include details of the campaign fund.

Overall income was £75,000 (2.7%) under budget largely due to lower than expected direct mail and LDC appeals income. Although the Leadership Ballot appeal produced a net surplus of approx. £50,000 allowing for the costs of the actual ballot, this was less than the amount budgeted to be received in the period anyway. Appeals income was under pressure throughout the year due to the somewhat lower than expected membership numbers, which also adversely affected federal levy income.

Net conference income was better than budgeted due to a combination of higher attendance and better cost control. Most other areas performed in line with the budget.

Overall expenditure was £15,000 (0.5%) below budget with variances in all areas generally quite small.

B) 2008 budget

Due to the continuing deficit on the pension scheme and the need to maintain the additional contributions being made to eliminate it, it was again not possible to budget a surplus in 2008.

However the budgeted deficit of £42k is much less than these additional contributions and there is therefore an underlying surplus if these payments could be eliminated.

The deficit is also less than the total amount of depreciation and provisions made in the budget with the result that the budget is broadly cash neutral.

The budget is included in appendix 1 attached.

C) Grants to Party bodies

	2008 budget	2007 budget
	£	£
ALDC	112,850	112,850
LDYS	16,000	16,000
WLD	4,000	4,000
CGB	24,000	20,000
Diversity & Equality	18,500	12,500
EMLD	2,000	-
Total	177,350	165,350

Despite the very tight budget for 2008 the above table shows that it was still possible to increase grants to party bodies by over 7%. **NB** the Campaign Fund contributed £10,000 towards the cost of the CGB grant in 2007.

D) Staffing levels

The size of Headquarters departments charged to the general fund at the end of the year was:

Department	31 December 2007 FTE	31 December 2006 FTE
Campaigns	7.00	7.00
Chief Executive, office facilities & training	5.75	6.00
Compliance	1.50	1.50
Conference	4.00	3.75
Finance	3.00	3.00
International	2.35	2.70
Liberal Democrats Calling	6.35	6.55
Membership & fundraising	5.00	5.00

Newspaper	1.30	1.20
Policy*	5.00	5.00
Total	41.25	41.70

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 2006 of 226 (2005 – 236) and Labour of 240 (2005 – 376).

E) PPERA

The subject of donations was back in the headlines again for most of the end of 2007 with the proxy donors issue for the Labour Party and the individual problems of the Peter Hain and Wendy Alexander Deputy Leader and Scottish Leader campaigns.

The main development during 2007 was the new tougher enforcement policy adopted by the Electoral Commission after its work was reviewed by the Committee on Standards in Public Life at the end of 2006. This new policy has already led to £96,071 being forfeited to the Treasury by four different parties (Liberal Democrats, Conservatives, UKIP and Socialist Labour Party) due to people not being on the relevant electoral register. A further £349,216 donated to UKIP and the £663,975 given to Labour by proxies is still under legal challenge by the Electoral Commission.

Consolidated Local Party Accounts (including branches) for the 2007 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. Don't forget that the Electoral Commission can fine anybody who is late (starting at a minimum £100 for being a day late) and £2,600 worth of fines have already been imposed.

Campaign Expenditure Returns were submitted on time for the Scottish and Welsh elections in 2007.

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 main membership activity since the autumn conference revolved around the leadership ballot. There was the usual surge in renewals and some new members ahead of the deadline for entitlement to vote. The ballot mailing went to 64,700 members. Membership data was also supplied to the two leadership campaign teams.

As part of the preparation for the 'phantom' general election, a large amount of work was done on integrating election and campaigning data into the main HQ database. This work is now largely complete. It will aid communication with those involved in running campaigns and improve the flow of information about candidates and Parliamentarians onto the new website.

Work has begun on the next step in improving the way we handle data, which is to integrate the conference office with the main HQ database. At present it operates on a separate

system. Integrating these two systems will be more efficient and reduce the opportunities for data errors.

Since the leadership election, we have updated all our membership and fundraising materials. The Treasurer and fundraising team have embarked on a new programme of fundraising activity for the next general election.

G) Diversity Initiative

A new National Diversity Adviser - Issan Ghazni - funded jointly by the Federal and English Parties was appointed and took up his position in October. He has been meeting a large number of people as part of an initiative to prepare a Diversity Action Plan for the Party. This report will be considered by the Federal Executive at their March meeting.

H) Preparations for the 2007 General Election which never happened

Following the September 2007 Autumn Conference Cowley Street was transformed within two weeks in anticipation of a General Election, which Gordon Brown in the event never called. An Election War Room was set up in the Boardroom. Provision was made to accommodate extra staff and all the logistical plans for a General Election Campaign were put in place. The good outcome from this operation is that we now have a detailed plan in place for when the Election should come which we will have more time to refine and make better.

I) Environmental

There are now two bicycles kept at Cowley Street to encourage staff to get about central London in an environmentally friendly way.

J) Personnel

A new computerised personnel system has been purchased and installed to improve the personnel administration systems in Cowley Street and POLD.

K) Office Modernisation

Routine decoration work has been undertaken to maintain and improve conditions in Cowley Street. Significant work to improve meeting facilities, increase office general facilities and improve the kitchen is currently underway.

Duncan Greenland

Chair, FFAC

January 2008

Appendix 1

2007 general fund budget and draft out-turn and 2008 general fund budget

	Budget	Forecast	Budget
	2007	2007	2008
Income	£	£	£
<u>Generated income</u>			
Direct mail appeals & Web	340,000	313,000	309,000
Direct mail costs	(70,000)	(55,500)	(70,000)
Standing orders	158,000	161,000	147,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	428,000	418,500	386,000
<u>Services income</u>			
Federal levy	830,301	803,500	818,550
Net states parties cross charges	344,441	342,000	347,847
POLD service fees	163,337	163,500	176,688
Regional draws	11,000	11,000	11,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1,349,079	1,320,000	1,354,085
<u>Commercial activities (net results)</u>			
Newspaper	(3,846)	(11,000)	(332)
LDCalling	165,875	116,000	165,875
Affinity	45,000	39,000	41,500
Conference	263,732	292,000	258,687
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	470,761	432,000	465,730
<u>Other income</u>			
International dept income	39,000	38,500	45,000
Policy Development Fund	458,000	457,000	454,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	497,000	495,500	499,000
<u>Income surplus after income generation costs</u>			
	2,744,840	2,670,000	2,704,815

Expenditure

HQ costs

Chief Executive & HQ department	889,769	894,000	877,144
Finance	163,888	163,500	167,249
Membership	278,521	269,500	262,859
Compliance	53,583	53,500	54,837
Policy	204,520	202,500	195,863
Campaigns	305,383	303,000	315,066
International	78,095	74,000	78,839
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1,973,759	1,960,000	1951,857

Other expenditure

G8	20,000	40,000	20,000
Grants to party bodies	155,350	156,000	177,350
Refund of Federal levy to Scotland & Wales	85,696	85,500	85,696
PDF grants to Scotland & Wales	55,000	54,500	35,000
Committee expenses	8,000	10,500	18,000
Target seats, legal costs & By-elections	175,000	175,000	175,000
PPB's	40,000	40,000	40,000
ELDR/LI	18,000	18,000	18,000
Candidates support	10,300	10,000	12,300
Members Communications	50,075	47,500	39,552
Leaders/Presidents grants	5,000	2,500	5,000
Non-recoverable VAT	54,000	54,000	54,000
Net interest payable	2,000	1,500	1,500
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	678,421	675,000	681,398
Payments to reduce pension scheme deficit	114,000	114,000	114,000
Total expenditure	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	2,766,180	2,751,000	2,747,255
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	(21,340)	(79,000)	(42,440)

Parliamentary Party (Commons)

Introduction

“At the time of writing there have been just eighteen weeks of business in the House of Commons since I wrote my last report, but in that time the political kaleidoscope has been shaken and the new pattern is just beginning to emerge. As the Blair era fades and Gordon Brown stamps his authority on the Government the parliamentary party is gearing up to meet the changed political environment.”

Parliamentary Report Autumn 2007

As the quote above shows, you never know what is just around the corner!

The political kaleidoscope was shaken again when Sir Menzies Campbell decided, with his characteristic personal courage, to step down as our Leader, after the threat of an immediate General Election had receded. He deserves our thanks for his leadership of the party in the last two years. His legacy is a united parliamentary party, the promotion of a new generation of talented parliamentarians, and a greater professionalism in the way we do business and in our staff team.

The Blair era may have faded but so too has the golden glow of Brown's first 100 days. Now it seems as if Gordon Brown spent the last 10 years planning for his first 100 days. That might have worked if he had called an autumn General Election but has left the Government without a clear sense of direction for a long haul.

We all owe a huge debt of gratitude to Vince Cable for the way he conducted his interim leadership. His incisiveness and wit (*from Stalin to Mr Bean*) at Prime Minister's Questions set a high bar that our Labour and Conservative opponents and our 'friends' in the media were determined Nick Clegg would fail. It has been to our benefit and their disappointment that Nick has made such a confident and surefooted start.

Nick Clegg's election as Leader has reinvigorated our parliamentary team. The leadership election culminated with a reshuffle of the Shadow Cabinet and new challenges for MPs. We returned to Westminster in January with a renewed sense of common purpose. Nick's determination to offer a distinct Liberal view on the issues of the day and a Liberal alternative to authoritarian and centralising Labour Government, has inspired confidence amongst his colleagues.

Leading the Opposition

When Gordon Brown became Prime Minister he said that he wanted to put Parliament back at the heart of our democracy. It soon turned out to be the same old spin with ministerial statements continuing to be spun before presentation to the House, MPs' questions unanswered and Ministers evasive and contemptuous of the democratic processes.

During the debate on the Queen's Speech in November we called a vote on our proposal for a referendum on Britain's continued membership of the European Union. Labour and Conservative MPs joined forces to vote against our proposal. In 2005 we called for a referendum on the proposed EU Constitution, a document that would have allowed the British people to decide on our future membership of the EU. The Lisbon amending Treaty does not provide that opportunity.

At the time of writing this report the Parliamentary Party has voted unanimously for the Second Reading of the European Union (Amendment) Bill. Our Shadow Foreign Secretary, Edward Davey, and his team are determined to mount a constructive and reformist position on the EU in contrast to an opportunistic and Eurosceptic Conservative Party.

In December Vince Cable used the first of our three opposition days to challenge the Government's handling of Northern Rock. He made a powerful case for temporary

nationalisation of the bank to secure the taxpayers interest in the company. Vince has continued to be the most effective opposition critic of the Government on Northern Rock offering substance in contrast to a Conservative front bench which lacks any proposals.

Vince also challenged the Government in its human rights record by refusing to attend the state banquet thrown for the King of Saudi Arabia in his capacity of acting leader.

As well as challenging the Government on Northern Rock our Shadow Defence Secretary, Nick Harvey used our first opposition day to lay bare the Government's failure to honour the military covenant with our armed forces.

Simon Hughes and David Howarth both secured slots in the Private Member's Bill Ballot and will see their bills introduced later in this session. Greg Mullholland secured the first of our seven 10 Minute Rule Bill slots and will shortly be introducing his bill.

Organisation of the Parliamentary Party

In addition to appointing his Shadow Cabinet and Shadow Ministerial Team Nick Clegg asked Ed Davey to continue as Chair of the Campaigns and Communications Committee and appointed Andrew Stunell to the new role of chair of the Local Election Campaign. Tom Brake has been appointed Chair of Brian Paddick's campaign for the London mayoralty and Willie Rennie has been asked to work with parliamentary colleagues to strengthen the campaigning impact of the parliamentary party as a group and individuals in their regions.

Congratulations are due to Lorely Burt who was elected Chair of the Parliamentary Party at the beginning of the session. My thanks also to Paul Keetch and Sir Robert Smith who have joined the Whip's Team, bringing with them the benefits of considerable parliamentary experience.

Finally, Nick Clegg asked me to join the Party Reform Commission chaired by Chris Bones.

Parliamentary Office of the Liberal Democrats (POLD)

The second POLD Business Plan was signed off by the POLD Council just before Christmas, with a new Council and Board being elected at the start of this year. Once again, there was full consultation with all staff and planning is now underway for taking the planning process forward into 2009 and an attempt to secure Investors in People.

In terms of staff changes, I would like to record particular thanks to Puja Darbari and Mark Webster for their communications work on behalf of the Campbell and Cable Leader's Offices.

As Chair of the POLD Board and with the election of Nick Clegg as Party Leader the opportunity was taken to reorganise the media function. For the first time there is a single media operation serving the Leader, front bench team and wider party.

As part of the restructure Hannah Gardiner has been appointed as Director of Media and Leader's Press Secretary while Lena Pietsch has been appointment as Head of Media. I would also like to welcome Hollie Voyce to the Whip's Office as Deputy Secretary to the Parliamentary Party. We also marked 10 years of service by our hardworking and indispensable Secretary to the Parliamentary Party, Ben Williams.

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

We start 2008 with a renewed sense of optimism and purpose. I am determined that a confident and determined parliamentary party will do all it can to assist the party in the local elections and Brian Paddick's mayoral campaign.

It is likely that this is the last parliamentary session before a General Election. Critical to our success will be establishing Nick Clegg as the voice of Liberal opposition to Brown's out of touch authoritarian Government and Cameron's shallow Conservatives.

The message is simple: Three party politics is here to stay.

Paul Burstow MP

Chief Whip

January 2008

Parliamentary Party (Lords)

The Lords team is still headed by Tom McNally as Leader; there has been a re-shuffling of team spokespeople and teams; details are available on www.libdems.org.uk. Jamie Mar and Kellie stepped down as a Whip during the autumn.

The following legislation was debated in the session between October and November.

Legal Services Bill

During Consideration stage of the bill **Martin Thomas and Bob Maclennan** received Government concessions to narrow the exemptions of trade unions from the regulatory regime and to prevent the arbitrary use by the Legal Services Board of its powers of intervention. Concessions were also made to ensure that the consultation process between the Lord Chancellor and the LCJ would be detailed and rigorous.

Offender Management Bill

Although our team, **Veronica Linklater, Navnit Dholakia and William Wallace** were unsuccessful in ensuring that local commissioning was written on to the face of the bill, we did achieve an amendment from the Government to ensure the delegation of the commissioning of services to the appropriate person, and received reassurances that, in practice, the Secretary of State would delegate his commissioning responsibilities to the local probation trusts.

UK Borders Bill (last session)

Eric Avebury, Navnit Dholakia and Roger Roberts pressed the Government on a number of issues of concern during committee and report stage of this unpopular bill. Due to lack of support from the conservatives, we achieved no victories, although we did achieve an important concession on the treatment of children.

When the new session started on 6th November, 23 new bills were presented.

Child Maintenance and Other Payments Bill

Archy Kirkwood and Dominic Addington are participating in this bill, which has been “carried-over” between the two Houses from the previous parliamentary session. Its principle aim is to replace the Child Support Agency and operate a new system of child maintenance under a new body, the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission (C-MEC), which, with the right safeguards, we support.

Children and Young Persons Bill

Joan Walmsley and Margaret Sharp are leading on this bill, to which **Liz Barker and Sue Garden** have also contributed, and which aims to improve the delivery of local authority services for children and young persons, especially with regard to children and young persons in care. We have been broadly supportive of the bill but have led debate about the Government’s wish for local authorities to pilot ‘Social Work Practices’ in this area.

Climate Change Bill

Robin Teverson, Rupert Redesdale, Sue Miller, Lindsay Northover, Eric Avebury, Tony Greaves and Hugh Dykes have all been involved on this bill. The bill introduces legally binding targets for the reduction of carbon emissions as well as establishing a Committee on

Climate Change to monitor progress made by the Government in reaching these targets. While being very supportive of the principle, the Lib Dems in the House of Lords are tabling a series of amendments to strengthen what is basically an enabling Bill.

Crossrail Bill

Bill Bradshaw, Jamie Mar and Kellie, Patrick Glasgow, Robin Teverson and Robert Methuen spoke at the Second Reading of this Bill, the principle of which they broadly supported. Because it is a 'hybrid' bill, it will now go to a joint committee of both houses before it starts its legislative stages.

Dormant Bank and Building Society Accounts Bill

Dick Newby, Graham Tope and I (David Shutt) are leading for the Lib Dem Peers on this bill, which we welcome. It sets up a system where financial assets which lay dormant for at least 15 years can be transferred to good causes.

Employment Bill

Tim Razzall, Brian Cotter and Anthony Lester are working on the Employment Bill. The bill aims to simplify employment legislation in the area of dispute resolution, employment agencies, national minimum wage and trade union law. Yet this is the 29th employment related bill since Labour have come to power and the Lib Dems have called for this bill to be used as an opportunity to consolidate all employment legislation so it is a genuine simplification process.

House of Lords Bill

During Second Reading of **David Steel's** Private Members Bill, our spokesperson **Paul Tyler and Dominic Addington** while supporting an elected House of Lords, welcomed the opportunity to discuss the obvious weaknesses and anomalies of the current House. The bill provides for the establishment of a statutory Appointments Commission that would be responsible for all appointments to the Lords and the restriction of membership to the House by virtue of hereditary peerage. Moreover, the bill grants permanent leave of absence from the House of Lords as well as the ability to exclude any members for particular circumstances. In light of this, our team expressed concern over the Appointment Commission's ability to redress political developments with regards to the composition of the Commons or Lords Chambers and urged David Steel to amend his Bill to include a sunset clause to time-limit the provisions of the bill.

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill

Liz Barker, Jenny Tonge, Julia Neuberger and Shirley Williams have spoken in the debates on this bill. **Susan Thomas and Alex Carlile** have also been contributing. The bill aims to reform the 1990 bill of the same name by updating legislation on assisted reproduction and embryo research in the light of developments in technology and social attitudes. It contains a range of emotive and ethical issues such as inter-species embryos, access for same-sex couples to fertility treatment, and amendment of the 1967 Abortion Act has been raised in debate. Many of the votes will therefore be free votes.

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill

Ros Scott, Sally Hamwee, Tony Greaves and Julia Neuberger pressed the Government on a number of issues of concern during Committee, Report and Third Reading of this bill, which removed the need for the Secretary of State's consent for new byelaws, created parish councils and introduced a new category of "appointed" parish councillors.

Local Transport Bill

During the Second Reading and Committee Stages of this Bill, our team (**Bill Bradshaw, Ros Scott, Jamie Mar and Kellie, Patrick Glasgow**) pressing the Government on a number of issues relating to the delivery of local transport services and many concessions were achieved.

Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Bill

Tim Razzall and Sally Hamwee are working on this bill, which establishes the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO) to co-ordinate local authority regulatory enforcement, the creation of civil sanctions for regulatory offences and the reduction and removal of regulatory burdens. Although mainly supportive, they will be putting forward amendments to various parts of the bill

Other areas where Liberal Democrats have been involved

Short Debates introduced by Liberal Democrats

Tim Clement-Jones – motion to disapprove guidance under the Licensing Act 2003

Eric Avebury – Alcohol harm reduction strategy

Sue Miller – Restorative justice schemes

Alex Carlile – Criminal Justice

Richard Livesy – the Severn barrage

Archy Kirkwood – the Social Fund

Debates introduced by Liberal Democrats

William Wallace – UK participation in the US missile defence system

Tony Greaves – the *Action Plan for Community Empowerment*

Once again I pay tribute to our staff – Carolyn Rampton (Head of Office), Elizabeth Hannah, Tom Kiehl and Anne-Marie Christoffersen-Deb. In October, we welcomed Tim Oliver to replace Neil Balmer. They do a good job for us.

David Shutt

January 2008

Parliamentary Party (Europe)

With only 15 months to go until the European Parliamentary elections, Liberal Democrats MEPs are working exceptionally hard to get numerous dossiers through before the end of this mandate. Many of these are important in establishing our record of action in legislation that is beneficial to the UK. Due to the enlargement of the European Union, the number of British seats in the Parliament will be cut from 2009 and Lib Dems, like all Parties risk losing seats. So our record is important for our campaigns.

As Leader of LDEPP, **Andrew Duff** is taking an active role in preparing the wider ALDE Group for the 2009 electoral campaign. Andrew represented the Parliament at the Intergovernmental Conference, which drafted the Treaty of Lisbon, and participated at the signing ceremony on 13 December. He is in big demand to speak to national parliaments, academic conferences and political meetings about the new Treaty, and in helping to prepare the Parliament itself to shoulder its large new responsibilities once the Treaty comes into force. His *True Guide to the Treaty of Lisbon* is published on www.andrewduff.eu. He has also been appointed rapporteur on the reform of the electoral system of the European Parliament.

Bill Newton Dunn, East Midlands, follows four active committees – the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, Justice and Home Affairs, Budgetary Control and Climate Change and, is already focussing on the June 2009 European election. Despite the parliament's considerable powers to legislate directly, and to shape the future for our corner of the globe, he regrets the unceasing lack of understanding and information about Europe among the British public. Liberal Democrat candidates are already actively repeating the message that every single vote will count and we all look forward to working closely with our Westminster colleagues, local activists and party members to get this message across.

In the environment field **Chris Davies** has been leading for the Liberal Democrats on climate change issues. In particular he drafted and negotiated Parliament's opinion on reducing CO₂ emissions from cars, has been closely involved in the debate on plans to include aviation with the EU's emissions trading scheme, is taking a lead on the development of carbon capture and storage policy, and is working on the draft legislation to revise and develop the emissions trading scheme for the long term. In addition to his overarching role as ALDE coordinator on all EU environment issues he has been closely involved with the Pesticides' Reduction legislation, seeking to promote the use of non-chemical alternatives where these are feasible and available at an acceptable cost.

As a Vice-Chair of the European Parliament's Fisheries Committee, **Elsbeth Attwooll** has been heavily involved in recent negotiations on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, including a current report on Rights Based Management. Elspeth has also been working closely on the Committee's report on Discards, a highly emotive issue that has been a priority for the Fisheries Commissioner. She has also been made an ambassador for the EU's Maritime Policy. Where Regional Development is concerned, she is taking the lead on planning a joint seminar with the Committee of the Regions on Natura 2000 and economic development. Recently, she has been working as ALDE shadow on economic cohesion and the 6th Environment Action Plan. Elspeth was also the ALDE shadow for the Regional Development Committee's contribution to the final Report of the Temporary Committee on Climate Change.

In the Industry, Research and Energy Committee, **Fiona Hall** was the rapporteur on the Commission's Energy Efficiency Action Plan. Her criticism of the Commission and Member State governments for failing to enforce existing energy efficiency legislation gained wide cross-party support. In preparing her report Fiona met energy efficiency companies from across Europe, discussed National Energy Efficiency Action Plans with national parliamentarians and officials and hosted an energy efficient lighting event in the European Parliament.

Since December Fiona has been the rapporteur on the Mobile Satellite Services Decision, which will lay down the framework for selecting and authorising operators of Mobile Satellites Services such as satellite broadband and mobile TV across Europe.

In October 2007 Fiona led the European Union's Election Observation Mission to Togo in West Africa, overseeing the first peaceful and internationally acceptable elections there for decades and recommending measures to further improve the democratic process.

As Parliament's draftsman in the Legal Affairs Committee and the shadow for ALDE in the Economic and Monetary Affairs committee, **Sharon Bowles** is at the heart of continuing discussions on Solvency II, which in part follows up the Equitable Life Enquiry and is considered one of the most important financial dossiers of the current mandate.

Again leading on behalf of the ALDE group, Sharon is a key figure in the ongoing debate on hedge funds and private equity, where she supporting moves of self regulation and more transparency rather than calls for regulation as that in practical terms cannot be met. She has also been at the forefront of monitoring the EU's response to the credit crunch. In addition, Sharon is the Parliament's ECON draftsman on the transparency of institutional investors, and Rapporteur for a report on fiscal fraud.

On the legal affairs committee, Sharon continues to follow matters of company law, most notably the simplification of company law, and patent policy.

In her constituency in the South East, Sharon has been very active in calling for mandatory water management and protection for homes developed on floodplains so that people can continue to have affordable insurance.

Diana Wallis continues in her role as a Vice President of the Parliament chairing debates, particularly Question Time with Commission and Council where she has overseen the introduction of innovations to make the sessions more interactive. She has also chaired a number of key voting sessions.

In her role as Vice President responsible for transparency she is dealing with the sensitive issue of media requests for disclosure of the detail of MEPs' expenses. This is likely to be a big issue in the approach to the next elections.

Diana authored a key opinion on 'Lobbying in the European Union' informed by an autumn trip to Washington. She has been leading for the ALDE group on the Consumer Credit Directive where after seven years of discussion it is hoped we will finally have a directive, which could be so important to consumers during the uncertainties of the current global credit crisis.

Diana is also about to publish an own initiative report on the role of national judges in EU legislation, a project which has involved the receipt of thousands of questionnaires from the judiciary all across Europe and is creating a lot of interest. She remains a member of the Parliament's delegation to Switzerland, Iceland and Norway and as a Vice President of Parliament was a key note speaker at the Baltic Assembly meeting in Riga in November.

As employment and social affairs spokesperson, **Liz Lynne** has continued to lead the ALDE party's response to the revision of the EU's Working Time Directive and the proposed Temporary Workers Agency Directive. Liz was recently the European Parliament's draftsman for a key report reviewing social policy across the European Union and is currently draftsman for a report stocktaking antidiscrimination legislation. Liz has also been actively feeding into the CAP health check, in particular the need to reform the rules on set aside and has led campaigns on fairer prices for farmers and better recognition for British products. Liz has continued to campaign on issues such as Guantánamo, Gaza, Kashmir, trafficking in human beings, as well as health issues including Cancer and Asthma. Liz was instrumental in initiating and then supporting the UK's successful bid for EU aid in the aftermath of serious flooding last summer across the West Midlands region.

Graham Watson continues to lead the largest ever Liberal Democrat group in the European Parliament. Comprising 100 members, the ALDE group holds two Vice Presidencies of the Parliament and three Committee chairs in Justice and Home Affairs; Transport and Tourism, and Fisheries. Graham has been active in promoting global democracy this year, both

through his involvement with the E-Parliament, of which he is Chair, and by compiling a booklet, with cross-party support, to campaign for a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly. He continues to serve on the European Parliament's delegations to China and to the Korean peninsula, and has led Liberal Democrat delegations to Hong Kong, Taiwan, Indonesia and Singapore in support of democratisation and Human Rights in East Asia.

Emma Nicholson continues to lead for the Liberal Democrats in the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs committee. She has been appointed to represent the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe on the forthcoming Iraq report, the Parliament's first since Emma's own report in 2002.

Visiting Baghdad in October, Emma became the first international visitor to address the Iraqi Parliament in plenary session. Together with the European Commission's Representative to Iraq she met with Prime Minister Al-Maliki to discuss the growing links between the Republic of Iraq and the European Union.

Until now the European Parliament has maintained relations with virtually all democratically elected national parliaments except Iraq's. At Emma's instigation the European Parliament decided in December to establish formal relations with Iraq's Council of Representatives.

As a member of the Parliament's delegation to Iran, Emma took part in a successful visit to Tehran at a sensitive time for EU-Iran relations. Emma met with Democrats and Republicans in Congress during an ALDE delegation to Washington D.C., as well as with State Department officials and leading organisations in the field of human rights and democracy promotion.

In her capacity as Parliament's *Rapporteur* for Kashmir, Emma has been working to promote implementation of the recommendations of the Parliament's May 2007 resolution on Kashmir.

Sarah Ludford continues to focus on how to make EU border controls and its fight against crime and terrorism effective while respectful of human rights and civil liberties. She presses the Council and Commission for EU databases not only to facilitate appropriate exchange of cross-border information but also, vitally (and aware of scandals like the UK losses of highly sensitive data) to ensure data security and protection. After securing necessary guarantees in the EU's Visa Information System for processing visa applications, she is now drafting legislation for collection of applicants' biometric identifiers and has secured the backing of the Parliament that there should be no fingerprinting of children under 12.

Sarah has also continued her work to expose and oppose torture flights and Guantanamo Bay. She is campaigning with NGOs on attempts to resettle prisoners eligible for release but unable to return to their countries of origin for fear of persecution and torture. She has secured calls for an EU lead on this in EP resolutions on terrorism and is preparing a parliamentary hearing on the topic. On January 11th, the sixth anniversary of Guantanamo, she joined former prisoners Moazzam Begg and Bisher al-Rawi in demonstrations for closure, including handing in a letter at no 10.

Continuing her campaigning against a third runway at Heathrow, in liaison with Lib Dem MPs and GLA members, Sarah was active on new EU air quality legislation to make sure there are no loopholes the UK could exploit to evade strict controls.

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 10th Jan 08):

Approved list – 26% women (212 women out of 857)

Selected PPCs – 30% women (51 out of 163 seats – *MP reselections not included*)

The Campaign closely monitors information regarding approval and selection figures, to gain an accurate picture of the gender balance within the Party. Since 2007, the numbers of approved women have risen slightly from 24% to 26% of all approved candidates. However, as predicted in the CGB report to Conference in Spring 2007, there has been a drop in the percentage of selected PPCs (from 39% in Jan 2007) due to the still relatively low numbers of female approved candidates. Increasing the number of women on the list of approved parliamentary candidates therefore continues to be a key focus for the Campaign in order to increase the number of women selected as PPCs and, subsequently, the numbers of female MPs in future elections.

The Campaign Objectives, as set by Conference in 2005, are to achieve 150 additional approved women candidates by the next General Election and 40% of our new MPs to be women after the next General Election. To continue working towards this in 2008, the Campaign aims to get 60 more women on the list of approved parliamentary candidates, increase the number of women selected as PPCs, meet a fundraising target of £25,000, and continue to raise awareness of the Campaign activities within the party.

The Campaign endeavours to achieve these aims in a number of ways:

Training

Training forms a central part of the Campaign activities. It is an excellent way both to talent-spot potential candidates and to support women through approval and selection. We conduct a variety of events throughout the year, including sessions at Federal Conferences and many regional Conferences. The Campaign will also run 10 regional 'Inspiration and Training Days' this year, which provide training and encouragement for those women who are not currently active in the Party and would like to get more involved.

Following the success of last year's event, we are holding the next Future Women MPs weekend in February for women. This is an intensive training weekend for those women who are serious about becoming MPs, whatever stage of the process they are at. Seven of last year's attendees are now selected PPCs, two in target seats, and we hope that this year's event will be just as successful.

Mentoring

We run mentoring schemes for both approval and selection, where potential candidates are linked with experienced candidates and activists for support, advice and practical one-to-one assistance with specific skills if requested. These schemes have proved highly popular, and

22 women have been assisted by the Campaign in this way since last Federal conference in September.

In addition to the personal guidance that mentors offer, we also offer additional advice and support through the CGB 'Resource Centre'. This can be accessed by registered users of the CGB website and contains downloadable documents which may be useful to candidates, such as sample manifestos, hustings speeches and tips on the application process.

Fundraising

In addition to receiving funds from the party to cover staff costs, the Campaign also strives to raise funds to cover campaigning and awareness-raising activities. Fundraising events have proved highly successful in the last year, with events such as the Gender Balance Auction at Autumn Conference 2007 raising over £3000. We also receive an annual income of £3076 from standing orders and are always looking to increase this.

The Campaign has successfully applied for a grant from the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust Ltd. for £12,900 in 2008. This grant will be used to expand our training programme, and assist with the costs of publicity for the training events.

Awareness-raising

We are constantly working to increase the profile of the Campaign within the party. The CGB mailing list currently has over 350 subscribers who receive monthly updates on training, events and current PPC adverts. We send out mailings to women members and regularly submit articles and features in various Lib Dem publications to encourage women to attend our events and consider candidacy. The Campaign website (www.genderbalance.org.uk) and Facebook site are also regularly updated with relevant news and features.

We are keen to highlight women as role models within the party wherever possible, and have organised a CGB 'Blog Awards' event at Spring Conference to highlight the increasing online activity of Lib Dem women. This event will be held at 8pm in the Canada Suite at the Crown Plaza Hotel – please join us! Other planned events include joint initiatives with relevant Party groups to encourage potential candidates from under-represented groups.

Vice-Chairs Rosalyn Harper and Baroness Jane Bonham-Carter continue to form an essential part of the Campaign team, and Vicky Booth has got off to a flying start as our Campaign Organiser having taken up the role in October 2007.

Jo Swinson

Chair, Campaign for Gender Balance, January 2008