

Reports to Conference Autumn 2007 Brighton

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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, two reps 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 or state party reps.

Agenda

The Committee continues to develop the conference agenda to maximise its appeal for conference reps, and our message to the outside world. In addition to the debates and set-piece speeches, the agenda this year includes two presentations, from our colleagues in the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland and from Liberal Democrat-run Stockport council. We are very pleased to welcome President Barroso, of the European Commission, who will be speaking to us on the Monday of conference.

Following the success of the crime question and answer session at Harrogate, which included real-life stories from non-party participants, we are scheduling two Q&A sessions, on the subjects of climate change, and education and skills; and there is also the regular Q&A session with the party leader. Please do submit questions to these sessions, and give us a large pool of questions to choose from (see the Agenda for details). There will also be an interactive session with Steve Webb MP, manifesto coordinator, on the preparations for the election manifesto.

In addition to these, we are trying one new type of session this year: a discussion on 'citizenship and identity', with contributions from party spokespeople and outsiders. This is modelled on the sessions at the special 'Meeting the Challenge' conference in January 2006; we aim to use it to discuss this complex subject in a more in-depth way than is possible in debates. Let us know (through the feedback form at the end of conference) what you thought of this session; if it proves popular, we will organise further discussions of this type in future conferences.

The main theme of the conference is the environment in general, and climate change in particular. As well as the Q&A session, all of the set-piece speakers will be reflecting the issue in their speeches, and no less than five policy debates relate to the topic, including one on the FPC's policy paper on climate change. The other policy paper debates will centre on the FPC's proposals on poverty and inequality, taxation, local government and better governance.

Motions

The Committee remains concerned at the continuing trend downwards in the number of motions submitted – although their quality is improving; we reject fewer now because of poor drafting, so in fact we ended up with more decent motions than we could include on the agenda. Nevertheless, we are heavily dependent on parliamentary teams to submit motions, and the number debated from local parties or conference reps not associated with MPs has

fallen to a very low figure. After conference we will be reviewing the deadlines structure to see how we can make it easier for people to submit motions. Any suggestions on this issue are very welcome; either use the feedback form, or email me at duncan@dbrack.org.uk.

We continue to provide a motions drafting advisory service, and 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 deadline for anyone wanting assistance and advice with drafting their motions; draft should be sent to motionsadvice@libdems.org.uk.

Conference Rally

CentreForum won the tender process for this year's autumn Rally, and will be organising it on the theme of human rights and civil liberties. With a strong line-up of speakers, the Rally is the kick-start to conference, reminding us of many of our key principles and the reason why we are Liberal Democrats. It is being held this year in the Brighton Centre conference hall at 6.30pm on the Sunday evening of conference.

After conference, in line with the changes to autumn conferences from next year (see below), the Conference Communications Group will be reviewing the timing, format and aims of the rally. To have your say, please send your views on this key conference event to Ruth Polling, FCC Vice Chair, at r.l.polling-alumni@lse.ac.uk.

Training for first time reps

In recognition of how daunting the first visit to party conference can be, the FCC is running its normal introductory training session on how to get the most out of the week, both inside and outside the conference hall. This will be held at 1pm on Sunday 16th September, in the Regent Room in the Grand Hotel. The session will include information on all aspects of conference, and will allow plenty of time for questions; and a guide to conference for first-time reps will be provided for each new rep to take away. All first-timers are very welcome.

We will also be running a training session on speaking at conference, including tips on filling in your speaker's card, and techniques for making a speech from the podium. This will also take place on the Sunday; see the Directory for details.

Future autumn conferences

Following extensive consultation with party members, the Committee has decided to implement the proposals to change the timing of the autumn conference, starting in 2008. From next year, conference will start on the Saturday and finish on the Wednesday afternoon. By constructing a fuller conference weekend, we aim to offer more of conference to party members who cannot attend during the week. A new registration structure will be introduced to reflect this change and 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, after which we will review the experience.

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:

Spring: Liverpool, 7–9 March

Autumn: Bournemouth, 13–18 September

We are delighted to be the first political party to host a conference in Liverpool's brand-new venue, the Liverpool Arena and Convention Centre. Due to the popularity of the city for weekend visitors (not least football fans!), we have been working hard to secure an adequate allocation of accommodation for conference reps. *We very strongly advise you to book your accommodation early to avoid disappointment.* Representatives from our accommodation partners will be in the exhibition in Brighton for the first few days of conference to give information and to start taking reservations, so please make the most of this opportunity.

2009 venues will be:

Spring: Harrogate, dates to be confirmed

Autumn: Bournemouth, 20–24 September

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.

The FCC's recently launched accommodation assistance scheme for wheelchair users is supporting four members to attend conference by subsidising the cost of their wheelchair-accessible rooms. As a new scheme, there will inevitably be a learning curve during its early phase and, with feedback, we hope to improve it as we go. We are now taking applications for Spring conference 2008. An application form and 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).

Communications

Our electronic communication and registration operations are continuing to expand. Nearly half of all conference registrations are now processed online, and similar numbers have chosen 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 and would encourage everyone else to follow them!

The conference pages of the party website are frequently updated with the latest conference news and deadlines in the run-up to conference, as well as the highlights during and after 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.

We are also pleased to say that we have started the process of developing the conference database to function in sync with the membership and candidates' database. We are expecting to go live with the new system next year and are looking forward to eliminating most of the duplication and inconsistency that currently features in our mailings to you due to the current dual operation.

Stewards and security

As always, conference is only possible due to the contribution of the volunteer stewards' team. Led by the Chief Steward, Chris Jennings, and the recently appointed Deputy Chief Steward, Adrian Beavis, the stewards 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 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.

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 Ben Stoneham, HQ Director; the staff of the Conference Office – Carol Caruana, Natalie Darby, 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; to our Parliamentary colleagues who are organising Q&A and other sessions; to all my colleagues on the FCC; and, of course, to the stewards' team for their considerable contribution, led by Chris Jennings.

I look forward to seeing you in Brighton.

Duncan Brack

Chair, Federal Conference Committee

FCC regional and state reps 2006–07

Region	FCC member	Email	Phone
Devon & Cornwall	Ruth Polling	r.l.polling-alumni@lse.ac.uk	07949 651669
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 Chris Maines	garethepps@cix.co.uk cmaines@cix.co.uk	07950 035 836 ??
South East	Catherine Bearder	cbearder@cix.co.uk	07786 170 949 01865 792 960
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Western Counties	Justine McGuinness	justine.mcguinness@ googlemail.com	??
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Scotland	Debra Storr	debra@debrastorr.org.uk	01358 742 048
Wales	Ian Walton	??	??

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 Spring conference, policy working groups have produced the policy papers *Freedom from Poverty, Opportunity for All*; *Reducing the Burden*; *The Power to be Different*; *For the People, by the People*; and *Climate Change*, which are presented for debate at Brighton. Policy working groups supported by the Policy and Research Unit have also drafted consultation papers on *Further and Higher Education* and *Europe*. There will be consultation sessions to discuss these on the Sunday morning at Brighton. The working groups will then proceed to develop their final conclusions in policy papers for debate at the Spring and Autumn 2008 Party conferences respectively, 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 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 new policy papers *Freedom from Poverty, Opportunity for All*; *For the People, by the People*; and *Climate Change* all emerged from the *Trust in People* process, as did the current working groups on Health, Further and Higher Education and Europe.

The FPC has recently set up three new working groups, which will produce policy papers to be debated at the Autumn 2008 Party Conference. The Security Working Group, chaired by Dr Julie Smith, will cover not just traditional defence and foreign affairs security issues, but will also address domestic UK security measures against terrorism and the contribution made by international development to promoting security. The UK Response to Globalisation Group, chaired by Lord Teverson will consider how the UK can meet the challenges of a globalised world, including how to keep the British economy competitive, how to ensure that all regions of the UK benefit from the globalised economy, and how to manage the social and economic consequences of economic migration. The Transport Working Group, chaired by Shaun Carr, will address all aspects of UK transport policy. These groups will all be producing consultation documents available on the www.consult.libdems.org.uk website in the Autumn.

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

Conference	Consultation Papers	Policy Papers
Sept 2007	Further and Higher Education Europe	Climate Change Freedom from Poverty, Opportunity for All

		Reducing the Burden The Power to be Different For the People, by the People
March 2008	Security UK Response to Globalisation Transport	Health Further and Higher Education
Sept 2008		Europe Security UK Response to Globalisation Transport

General Election Manifesto

The Manifesto 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 Children, Schools and Families).

Steve has been leading a wide-ranging consultation among party members, through 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 Steve Webb MP, House of Commons, SW1A 0AA.

There will be a Manifesto conference fringe event at 8pm on Sunday 17th September in the Ashdown Suite at the Holiday Inn, at which party members will be able to put their ideas on key topics for the Manifesto directly to the group.

We also plan to have a one day Manifesto event in January, similar to the 2006 Meeting the Challenge conference at the LSE – more details will be announced at conference.

Improving the Way Working Groups Develop Policy

As set out in the last report to conference, the FPC been making 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 own areas of interest. We advertised for applicants in January this year, and have assembled a pool of over 300 members willing to serve in this way, and will advertise again at the end of the 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 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 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 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-Gray (Senior Policy Officer – Maternity Cover) and Ruthe Isden (Policy Officer). The Policy Projects Team has also benefited from voluntary work by Peter Cornick. Helen Banks, the Senior Policy 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 has met on 8 occasions since September 2006 (October and December 2006, January, March, May, June, July and September 2007). Now that it has been given a two-year term of office (as approved at Spring Conference 2006), the FE has concentrated on coordinating party strategy and its procedures. It began this process with an Away Day in Westminster in February and has continued the process at following meetings. At the July meeting, it implemented a new method of working, agreed a new process for regular consideration of a set of agreed performance indicators, and agreed the work programme for the rest of the year. This will include scrutiny of fundraising and longer term financial capacity, campaigns and infrastructure and the four-year HQ business plan.

The FE has maintained a watching brief on two current and ongoing political issues; political party funding (including the Hayden Phillips Review) and reform of the House of Lords.

The Executive regularly discusses current issues at its meetings. In March the Executive discussed the Hayden Phillips Review into party funding; in May it discussed the London Mayoral candidate selection and the Freedom of Information (Amendment) Bill; in July it discussed the July parliamentary by-elections and arrangements for an autumn 2007 general election, Liberal Democrat policy on Turkey and arrangements for nominations of Liberal Democrat members of the House of Lords.

The Executive has carried out regular scrutiny of its three subcommittees: the Campaigns & Communications Committee, the Federal Finance & Administration Committee and the International Relations Committee.

The Campaigns & Communications Committee presented its Snap Election Plan for the Federal Executive's approval and the FE also discussed May's elections in Scotland, Wales and England.

The FFAC reported on its work of monitoring party finances and staffing (its report follows this) and particularly on the work of recruiting to the new diversity & equality post. The FE also noted that the candidates database had been updated and combined with the membership database.

The IRC reported on the Party's involvement in European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party (ELDR), Liberal International (LI) and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy programme, and initiatives for better bilateral contacts between Liberal Democrats in the UK and other sister parties.

The Diversity and Equality Review Group has met. Its up to date report will be available to all representatives at the beginning of this Federal Conference, as a supplement to this report.

The FE-councillor working party, which has been reviewing the relationship between councillors and the Federal Party, reported to the May meeting of the Federal Executive, making specific recommendations for improvement of communication and liaison between councillors and council groups and other different parts of the party. The FE agreed to circulate the report to relevant organisations in the party for their comments before making final decisions later in the year.

Two new awards for party members have been created by the Federal Executive; a President's award open to all representatives including those appointed or elected to assembly or parliamentary office, and a Harriet Smith award for those never elected. The first awards will be made at this Conference.

The Federal Executive approved the award of Associate Organisation status to Liberal Democrat Friends of Palestine.

At the July FE meeting, the committee set its meeting dates for the rest of the year – October, November, December (subject to a general election intervening!).

Simon Hughes
Federal President
July 2005

APPENDIX: FEDERAL APPEALS PANEL REPORT

The Federal Appeals Panel is responsible for adjudicating any constitutional disagreements, not dealt with by the State Appeals Panels.

The Federal Appeals Panel has 18 voting members: nine elected by the Federal Executive (ratified by Federal Conference) and three elected by each of the State Parties. It elects its own Chair

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 Rosebery as memorably quoted to one LibDem Conference by Roy Jenkins, had the character of “flyblown phylacteries”), and dealing with a case which 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.

This rule change has been accepted by the Federal Executive and will be presented to the 2008 Spring Conference as part of their review of the Federal Election rules ahead of the 2008 Federal Elections.

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

July 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 outwith 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.

January 2007

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.

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.

The FFAC Committee, elected in January 2007 for the first time to a two year term, continues to monitor and report regularly to the Federal Executive on the Administration of the Party and its Finances (construed narrowly as the monies raised and spent by the Federal Party). The Committee is also trying to form a wider picture “in the round” of the overall income and expenditure for the past three years of the local, regional and State entities which together make up the whole Liberal Democrat Party cause.

(While these individual incomes and expenditures have always been reported to the Federal Party, they have not previously been analysed or aggregated.)

We will be reporting the preliminary results of this analysis to the Federal Executive this autumn, and would hope to bring any resulting recommendations to the 2008 Spring Conference.

Environmental Activity – Greening Cowley St

Ongoing work to ensure the Federal Party is climate neutral in all its activities has been increased. Continuing scrutiny is directed at the activities in Cowley Street where good practice is observed for purchasing, heating, recycling and water consumption and this has been independently assessed. CO2 emission offsetting arrangements are now in place for travel, office services, conferences and publications and all activity since January 2006 has been included in this offsetting.

Diversity & Equality

A staff working party set up at the end of 2006 reported to the FFAC in May to make a number of recommendations to improve diversity employment practice including new Diversity and Dignity at Work policies, improved monitoring, wider recruitment methods and encouragement for greater diversity amongst interns. In future the FFAC will be receiving half yearly reports on diversity progress.

Since May 2007 the Party has been seeking to recruit a new Diversity and Equality Officer. Unfortunately a suitable candidate did not emerge from the first advertisement and it has been re-advertised in July.

Office Modernisation

At the start of the year the Media Centre at Cowley St was reorganised and refurbished. Work is continuing during the summer to reorganise the layout of the Campaign team office.

In the first six months of this year, 57,833 calls were received in Cowley St. Over 97% of these were answered and the average answering time was 8 seconds (3-4 rings).

PPERA Compliance

The number of local parties filing accounts with the Electoral Commission as a result of their gross income or expenditure exceeding the £25,000 threshold has fallen this year from 109 to 74 sets of accounts. This consisted of 69 sets of accounts in the £25,000 to £100,000 band, 0 in the £100,000 to £250,000 band and 5 in the £250,000+ band. There were 37 sets of accounts that were over £25,000 in 2005 that fell below that threshold in 2006.

During the year new guidance was developed to comply with the loans requirements and other amendments in the Electoral Administration Act 2006.

As a result of the criticisms in the Review of the Electoral Commission by the Committee on Standards in Public Life, the Commission has decided to move to a more rigorous enforcement policy when parties and accounting units get things wrong. This has already led to the forfeiture of donations by several political parties and fines for late accounts and donation reports for some others.

The declarations of donations made, statement of accounts submitted and campaign expenditure made by the Party can be viewed on the Electoral Commission's website at <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/regulatory-issues/Regpartydonations.cfm>

Membership and Fundraising Services

The Membership Services team has maintained the improved standard of performance seen last year. Membership cards are usually being dispatched within a week of the subscription being received at headquarters. The number of members paying their subscription by direct debit continues to increase - it is now 48%. Payment by direct debit is far cheaper for the party to administer, it is faster and it reduces paper-use, as fewer paper mailings have to be sent out.

Integrating candidate data into the main database is nearly complete and the work on integrating the constituency campaign, election and biographical data used on the party website has started. This will make maintenance of all this data more accurate and efficient.

The re-structuring of fundraising staff that took place last year is bearing fruit with a more sophisticated mix of direct mail, telephone and email communication being used. All of the party's affinity fundraising schemes have been reviewed. The Liberal Democrat/Co-operative Bank Credit Card continues to be the largest contributor to affinity income. The Party's legacy material has been updated.

2006 financial results

The result for the general fund was a surplus of £80,000 plus an actuarial gain on the closed final salary pension scheme of £40,000 resulting in the accumulated deficit being reduced from £289,000 to £169,000. This deficit can be split between an underlying one and the pension scheme deficit. On this basis the underlying accumulated deficit would be just £36,000.

The election campaign fund aims to build funds towards a General Election and reduce the imbalance between the party's election spending and that of its major rivals. There were no major national elections in 2006, but funds were raised in anticipation of and to prepare for the General Election that must be held between 2007 and 2010 and for the "mid-term" 2007 elections. Funds raised in 2006 for spending in 2007 and in preparation for the next General Election produced a surplus of £1,096,000 to increase the accumulated balance to £1,684,000. This was largely due to substantial donations received in the 2nd half of 2006 (notably from The Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust Ltd) towards the next General Election and the cost of the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly and local elections in 2007.

Overall the party ended the year with net assets of £1,514,000

Income

A comparison of income to 2005 is obviously distorted by the general election held in that year, which accounts for the almost £3,000,000 (54%) reduction in donation income. As noted above this was partially offset by the receipt of some large donations towards the end of the year in anticipation of the 'mid-term' elections in 2007.

Other income increased by 4% (£135,000) largely due to an increase in conference income, the unwinding of a timing issue with grant income and an increase in the membership income nominally attributed to Scotland & Wales.

Grant income is in the form of the Policy Development Grants that work on an April to March year and do not necessarily come in equal instalments. Although the total amount available does not significantly change from year to year the rate at which the grants are claimed can cause distortions in the party's annual accounts.

Membership income includes sums nominally due from Scotland & Wales, which are reimbursed back to them to cover the additional costs of maintaining separate operations in their respective states. These reimbursements are included in expenditure under grants to party bodies. As the sum involved does not affect either the surplus or deficit for a particular year or the cash balance it had not been recalculated for some time resulting in a larger than usual adjustment in 2006.

Expenditure

Unsurprisingly direct campaign expenditure fell by over £4,000,000 by comparison to 2005 though this also explains the reduction in fund raising, premises and notional expenditure incurred for the 2005 General Election.

General fund expenditure rose partly due to the increase in the reimbursement of membership income to Scotland & Wales referred to above but also due to higher conference costs, which rose by over £110,000 (27%). There was also an increase in the amount of irrecoverable VAT shown under other expenditure.

Newspaper costs were adversely affected by the change to postal rates in August 2006.

2007 activity

Donation income and federal levy are expected to be below budget for the year. The main area of difficulty remains local party recruitment and membership renewal activity, which is adversely affecting the English Party's income and therefore the levy.

Although expenditure is expected to be broadly in line with budget for the year as a whole the net effect will be a larger than budgeted deficit for the year on the general fund. However as this includes the additional contributions to eliminate the deficit on the pension scheme it is expected that the accumulated deficit of the general fund will decrease slightly.

The campaign fund is expected to produce a substantial deficit for the year as a consequence of the funding it has provided for the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly and local elections. Obviously this deficit was expected this year as a result of these 'mid-term' elections.

Overall it is expected that there will be a large reduction in the party's reserves in 2007 and the goal now is to build funds towards a General Election that must be held between now and 2010.

Cash

At the end of 2006 the Party had net funds of £1,410,000 compared to £156,000 at the end of 2005 and did not need to utilise its overdraft facility during the year.

The overdraft facility is for £500,000 with a provision to increase it to £1,000,000 to fund cash flow for national elections. Although the facility was not required for the general election, and it is not anticipated it will be needed in the remainder of 2007, it will nevertheless be renewed in 2008.

2008 Budget

The Constitution requires the FFAC to propose an outline budget for next year for approval by Conference. This outline budget therefore has to be prepared several months before the FFAC or departmental heads have started serious work on the following year's budget, and at a stage when we have only six months of current year income and expenditure figures.

As in recent years our approach can therefore only be to identify known unavoidable changes from the current year's budget and setting a target for the surplus to reduce the accumulated deficit on the general fund.

As the 2006 accounts show, the deficit on the pension scheme fell from £269,000 to £133,000 during the year largely as a result of the additional contributions the party is making to eliminate the deficit. It also benefited from an actuarial gain of £40,000, which can not be guaranteed to recur in either 2007 or 2008. Although it is possible the deficit will be completely eliminated by the end of 2007 or 2008 the current schedule of contributions runs until early 2009 and for this reason the budget in appendix A includes the full amount of contributions to the pension scheme including the additional sums being paid to reduce the deficit on the scheme. A break even budget will therefore still result in a reduction in the overall accumulated deficit on the general fund.

The detailed work on the budget will take place in the autumn in consultation with the relevant party bodies with a view to the final budget being agreed by the Federal Executive in December and reported to next spring's conference.

The FFAC will review the existing Constitutional requirement and look at whether we can propose an alternative way of enabling Conference to have a more meaningful input to the Party's overall financial planning.

The Liberal Democrats (Trustees) Limited

The accounts of the Liberal Democrats (Trustees) Limited are included within the reports to conference and the FFAC would like to thank the Trustees, chaired by Sir Ian Wigglesworth, for their advice and assistance throughout the year.

Party Business

Conference is asked to approve the outline budget for 2008, adopt the audited accounts for 2006 and to reappoint the Party's auditors, Mazars LLP.

Duncan Greenland

Chair, Finance & Administration Committee

Registered Treasurer

July 2007

Appendix A

2008 Outline Budget

	£	£	Comments
<i>Unavoidable changes 2007 to 2008</i>			
2007 budgeted income		3,105,000	
Unavoidable income changes:			
Increase in Federal levy		22,000	Increase in Federal levy resulting from increase in subscription rate and membership numbers.
2008 budgeted income		3,127,000	
2007 budgeted expenditure		(3,126,000)	
Unavoidable expenditure changes:			
Effect of salary review	(50,000)		The budget assumes an average increase in salaries of 4%
Rates	(3,000)		Unavoidable increase
Rent	5,000		2007 budget included the assumption the rent review would increase the rent payable to £230,000, it is now expected to be £225,000.
Upgrade of Finance software	3,000		2007 budget included a non-recurring item for the upgrade of the finance ledger system
Increased contribution to Candidates Office costs	(2,000)		Federal Party's contribution to increased staffing in the Candidates Office.
Diversity & equality officer	(5,000)		Full year cost of the Diversity & Equality officer post.
Net cost of Federal Committee & Presidential election	(15,000)		The move to biennial elections meant there weren't any in 2007
		(67,000)	
2008 budgeted expenditure		(3,193,000)	
Net Budget Deficit - basic		(66,000)	
Deficit to be eliminated		66,000	Can be achieved by increase in income and/or reductions in expenditure
OUTLINE 2008 BUDGET SURPLUS		£nil	

THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS (TRUSTEES) LIMITED

Directors' Report to the Members for the year ended 31 December 2006

The Directors submit their report for the year ended 31 December 2006, and the Company's balance sheet as at that date.

By virtue of Article 8.3 of the present Constitution of the Liberal Democrats ("the Party"), the function of the Company is to acquire, hold and dispose of such assets of the Federal Party (as defined in that Constitution) as the Federal Executive (as so defined) may from time to time direct.

Where the Company enters into any transaction, it does so as trustee and/or agent for the Party. On this basis, the Company is dormant within the meaning of Section 249AA of the Companies Act 1985 and does not prepare a profit and loss account.

The Directors of the Company during the year ended 31 December 2006 were:

Lord Clement-Jones

Lord Dholakia

David Brandon Griffiths

Eric Hamilton Lowry (Irish)

Baroness Neuberger

Lord Sharman

Lord Vallance

Sir Ian William Wrigglesworth

Signed on behalf of the Board



Secretary

Dated: 19 March 2007

Registered in England

No. 2231620

Registered Office

4 Cowley Street

London SW1P 3NB

THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS (TRUSTEES) LIMITED

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2006

	£
Assets	NIL
Liabilities	NIL

Throughout the year ended 31 December 2004, the Company was dormant, and accordingly entitled under Section 249AA(1) of the Companies Act 1985 ("the Act") to exemption from audit.

Members have not required the Company to obtain an audit in accordance with Section 249B(2) of the Act.

The Directors acknowledge their responsibility for:

- (a) ensuring that the Company keeps accounting records which comply with Section 221 of the Act; and
- (b) preparing accounts which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Company as at the end of its financial year, and of its profit and loss for the financial year, in accordance with Section 226 of the Act, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Act relating to accounts so far as applicable to the Company.

Approved by the Board on 19 March 2006



IAN WRIGGLESWORTH
Director

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.

Our Leader, Menzies Campbell, gave voice to the public mood about Brown's appointment as PM by tabling a motion petitioning for a dissolution of Parliament to allow the country an opportunity to express its opinion. Whilst Brown's rejection of that motion was expected, we should all be on standby for an early General Election taking advantage of Brown's honeymoon and the ending of the Cameron honeymoon.

Leading the Opposition

There is a cosy consensus at Westminster between the Labour and Conservative front benches. On Iraq, nuclear power, Council Tax, tuition fees, Trident and many more issues Labour Ministers and their Conservative counter-parts agree. It is our job to challenge this duopoly and demonstrate the Liberal Democrat alternative.

Since I wrote my last report, we have used all three of our Opposition Days for the 2006-2007 Session to challenge the Lab/Con consensus. On the 7th February, Vince Cable tackled the Government on the issue of alleged corruption in the Al Yamamah arms deal, Nick Clegg raised the record of the Government's record on the criminal justice system, and, following very public concerns being raised, we forced a vote on Government proposals that may make Britain's waterways less safe. On the 8th May, Chris Huhne challenged the Government on climate change and Norman Lamb led on Government failure to provide adequate mental health services. Most recently, on 16th July, Vince Cable again quizzed the Government over alleged corruption in the Al Yamamah arms deal, before leading a debate on fair taxation on the super rich.

As reported previously, no Liberal Democrat was successful in the Private Member's Bill Ballot. However, a number of MPs have introduced other bills on different subjects including alcohol harm reduction, citizen's convention, cluster munitions, flexible working, freedom of information, intergovernmental contracts, light bulb regulation, protection of vulnerable adults in care, retail packaging, Scottish parliament elections and speed limits.

Norman Baker, Simon Hughes, David Howarth and David Heath led the charge against the iniquitous proposals from a former Tory Chief Whip, David Maclean, to remove the application of the Freedom of Information Act from Parliament. Whilst the Tories and the Government worked behind the scenes to secure the Bill's passage in the Commons, , steadfast Liberal Democrat opposition forced both the Government and Conservative front benches to disassociate themselves from the proposals. As I write, the bill is stuck in the House of Lords, so politically toxic has the bill become that no-one is prepared to take responsibility for steering its passage into law.

Also, in another success for long-standing Liberal Democrat values, the House of Commons voted overwhelmingly for a fully elected House of Lords. The parliamentary party decided we would apply the whip to secure a fully elected house and defeat any watering down of reform.

Finally, Tony Blair's resignation and PM and MP and the death of Piara Khabra led to two snap by-election tests for both ourselves and the Conservative Party. Recognising the significance of both contests the parliamentary party played a crucial role giving both personal and material support. I would like to thank colleagues for their efforts. Both results

saw 'Cameron's Conservatives' rejected by the voters coming a humiliating third. Whilst we must not be complacent, the results demonstrate that the Conservatives remain a very beatable political party.

Organisation of the Parliamentary Party

Gordon Brown's Premiership created an opportunity for Menzies Campbell to further strengthen his Shadow Cabinet, bringing back Norman Baker to cover cross-cutting Cabinet Office issues, and bringing in Martin Thomas as Shadow Attorney General; and promoting David Howarth as Shadow Solicitor General and Roger Williams as Shadow Secretary of State for Wales. Various other colleagues saw their responsibilities change, with David Laws shadowing Children, Schools and Families, Sarah Teather shadowing Innovations, Universities and Skills, David Heath shadowing Justice, and Danny Alexander shadowing Work and Pensions.

The reorganisation of Government Departments has also triggered a reorganisation of Select Committees. Alan Beith will chair the new Justice Select Committee, Phil Willis will be proposed as chair of the new Innovations, Universities and Skills Select Committee, whilst Malcolm Bruce will continue as Chair of the International Development Select Committee. In addition, the Government are proposing the creation of nine regional select committees and we are lobbying hard on the allocation of their chairmanships.

Along with candidates and key staff, MPs took part in an intensive training programme over a weekend in Wyboston in June. It is vital that we are as election-ready as we possibly can be and the opportunity to take advantage of the experience and advice of Hilary Stephenson, Director of Campaigns, and her team, in a networking environment, proved invaluable.

Our Media Centre and Policy and Research Unit have also been working hard with Shadow Cabinet members to develop our key messages in every key policy area. They have also been working to ensure there is a string of initiatives to keep the Liberal Democrats in the headlines over the summer months through to the conference season.

Since my last report to Conference, Phil Willis has announced his intention to step down at the next election. He has been a formidable member of the parliamentary team, first as Shadow Education Spokesperson, and then as Chair of the Science and Technology Committee in the House of Commons, and his straightforward and experienced voice will be greatly missed.

Finally, my best wishes on behalf of the whole Parliamentary Party to Paul Keetch for his speedy recovery. Paul, who had only just joined the Whip's Team, was taken ill very suddenly on a transatlantic flight and has not been able to participate in parliamentary proceedings since. His progress since then has been good and I am looking forward to his return to full health and working with him in the new session.

Parliamentary Office of the Liberal Democrats (POLD)

POLD is in the process of developing its second Business Plan for 2008, a task that will lead directly towards POLD attempting to secure Investors In People status. It is also intended as a step towards better aligning the parliamentary party's business and budgetary planning with that of the Federal Party. Once again, the process will engage staff at every level of the organisation, drawing on the wide range of talents and experience we have in post from the Press Office to the Leader's Office.

Once again, there are a number of staff changes. I would like to extend a warm welcome to Jonathan Oates, our new Director of Policy and Communications, Mark Webster, the Leader's Senior Spokesperson, and Hannah Gardiner, our new Head of Media. We now have the most professionally experienced media team we have ever had. Amongst those members of staff that have left, I would like to extend a particular thanks to Daniel Wilson and Liz Banks for their work in the Policy and Research Unit, and to Eleanor Pinfield and

Emily Ryans for their work with me in the Whip's Office.

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

With a General Election which could be just weeks away, with the Labour Party enjoying its "Brown bounce" and with the Conservatives licking their wounds from two disastrous by-election results, the Liberal Democrats must seize every opportunity to promote a vision of Britain that reflects our values: fair, free and green and contrast it with the cosy Lab/Con consensus at Westminster. The next few weeks and months will be among the most politically testing we have ever faced, but, united, disciplined and determined, the potential rewards are tremendous.

Paul Burstow MP

Chief Whip

Parliamentary Party (Lords)

The Lords Team has continued, as I reported to the Spring Conference in Harrogate, under the leadership of Tom McNally. Earlier in the summer we recruited John Lee as an additional Whip. At the time of writing discussions are taking place on reshuffling our teams to bring us into line with the changes in Government Departments in the Brown era and to be consistent with our colleagues in the House of Commons. Our work in keeping the Government to account continues in oral and written questions, general debates and European Union scrutiny. Our scrutiny of Government bills is our core work and this is set out in detail below.

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.

Consumer, Estate Agents and Redress Bill

Tim Razzall, Sue Miller, John Lee and **Celia Thomas** were 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. We strongly objected to what was effectively the abolition of Postwatch and so called a vote on our amendment that postponed its abolition until 2010, which was lost due to lack of support from the Conservatives.

Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Bill

Tim Razzall, John Lee, Navnit Dholakia Brian Cotter, Jamie Mar and Kellie and Paul Tyler participated from the Lib Dem benches on this bill. We were part of a coalition with Conservatives and Crossbench Peers that have so far defeated the Government three times on the issue of whether deaths in custody should be brought under the ambit of the offence of corporate manslaughter as created by the bill. The Government have knocked these House of Lords victories out in the House of Commons three times and replaced it with an Order that would bring deaths in custody into the bill at sometime in the future. 'Ping pong' is still in progress.

Digital Switchover (Disclosure of Information) Bill

Jane Bonham Carter and **Tim Clement-Jones** led for the Liberal Democrats on this bill, which allows social security information to be shared with the BBC in order to assist the delivery of the Digital Switchover Help Scheme. With the caveat that the details of the Help Scheme should be made available, which due to pressure from us during the course of the bill, they were, we were generally supportive.

Fraud Bill

Martin Thomas, Bob MacLennan, Alex Carlile and Celia Thomas spoke against this bill which would have allowed serious and complex fraud cases to be tried by a judge sitting without a jury. We supported a Conservative motion to reject the bill at Second Reading, which was passed by 216 votes to 143 and the bill was killed.

Freedom of Information (Amendment) Bill

In terms of the Lords, the Freedom of Information (Amendment) Bill ended up being the dog that didn't bark. Despite unexpectedly passing through the House of Commons, this bill, that removes both Houses of Parliament from the list of public bodies within the scope of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the FOI Act) and makes all communications between Members of Parliament and public bodies exempt from the FOI Act, was effectively killed when it came to the Lords as no Peer from any party was prepared to sponsor it. **Tom McNally** for the Lib Dems amassed a powerful cross-party coalition against the bill, yet in the end they were denied the opportunity to thwart it.

Gambling (Geographical Distribution of Casino Premises Licences) Order 2007

On the 28th March 2007, the Government were defeated in a debate on a Statutory Instrument in the House of Lords for only the third time ever. What is more, this defeat was on a motion from **Tim Clement-Jones** and, without the support of the Conservative frontbench, was won by just 3 votes. The statutory instrument designated the 17 locations for the new generation of casino licences under the Gambling Act 2005, including the siting of Manchester as the sole 'super' regional casino. We tabled a motion to defeat the Order due to various doubts that had been raised about the suitability of Manchester.

Greater London Authority Bill

Sally Hamwee, Graham Tope, Ros Scott, Sue Miller and Dick Newby participated in this bill that updates the 1999 Act by strengthening powers to provide more housing in London, bolster the GLA's ability to make strategic planning decisions and augment the authority's capacity to combat climate change. We were instrumental in defeating the Government on the issue of disqualifying an individual to stand for the position of Mayor or be a member of the Assembly once they have served two terms. We also defeated the Government in an amendment to allow the Assembly to block the Mayor's budget (provided they also agreed on an alternative) by a simple majority, instead of the two-thirds required at present. The bill is just completing its passage through the Lords and will then return to the Commons.

Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Bill

Trevor Smith, Angela Harris and Anthony Lester took part in this bill, which puts in place a new system for non-jury trials in Northern Ireland to replace the Diplock Courts, which have now lapsed. Now, instead of the presumption being that terrorist cases in Northern Ireland are to be tried without a jury and may only be tried by a jury if the Attorney General deschedules a case, the presumption is reversed. The bill also extends the powers of the Human Rights Commission and the remit of the Private Security Industry Act to Northern Ireland.

Legal Services Bill

Martin Thomas and Bob MacLennan led on this bill which puts in place a new regulatory regime and complaints scheme for solicitors and barristers. We supported an amendment to maintain the independence of the legal profession by ensuring that appointments made by the Lord Chancellor to the new Legal Services Board should be made with the concurrence of the Lord Chief Justice. There were further Government defeats on a number of issues, such as ensuring that the Legal Services Board acts as a light touch regulator in its dealings with the Law Society and the Bar Council.

Mental Health Bill

Liz Barker, Julia Neuberger, Alex Carlile, and John Alderdice led strong cross party opposition to this bill. They defeated the Government 6 times in the Lords which forced the

Government eventually to make some significant concessions. Although our Peers felt that the Government did not go nearly far enough and missed an historic opportunity, the changes achieved ensure that no one can be compulsorily detained unless there is a therapeutic benefit to the detention.

Offender Management Bill

Veronica Linklater, Navnit Dholakia and William Wallace are working on this bill, which will not finish in the Lords until the Autumn. There are many areas of concern which have already resulted in significant victories, but it remains to be seen how many will be reversed when the bill returns from the Commons for 'ping pong'.

Pensions Bill

Matthew Oakeshott, Celia Thomas, and Archy Kirkwood welcomed many of the proposals in this bill but raised concerns about the delay in implementing the reforms, highlighting the number of people who had yet to benefit from them.

Serious Crime Bill

Navnit Dholakia, John Burnett and Martin Thomas worked on this bill, which establishes Serious Crime Prevention Orders – so-called “super-ASBOs” – as a form of administrative punishment for those involved in serious crime. We opposed the creation of these Orders, and divided on an amendment to raise the standard of proof. We also supported a successful amendment to allow intercept evidence to be used in serious criminal trials. The Government also conceded on a number of issues in relation to data sharing.

Statistics and Registration Service Bill

Dick Newby and Matthew Oakeshott were involved in the Lib Dems response to this bill, whose aim is to reinforce the independence, integrity and quality of Government statistics by creating a new independent board with statutory responsibility for ensuring quality and comprehensiveness in official statistics. We succeeded in defeating the Government twice on the bill – one which gave final responsibility to the Cabinet Office rather than the Treasury, and the second on the role and responsibility of the new board. As a result of pressure from the Lib Dems there has also been a series of Government concessions that clarified the code of practice and retained the distinction between official and national statistics. This bill is still in play

Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Bill

Martin Thomas and Bob Maclennan led on this bill which reforms the tribunals system in the UK, and to which we gave a general welcome, although expressing concerns about the status of judicial review and the role of bailiffs.

UK Borders Bill

Eric Avebury, Navnit Dholakia and Roger Roberts are our team on this bill, which will not be completed in the Lords until the Autumn. It provides for the automatic deportation of foreign criminals at the end of their sentences and requires non-EEA nationals to register for a biometric immigration document. We will be opposing these and several other related issues as the bill makes progress.

Welfare Reform Bill

Matthew Oakeshott, Celia Thomas, Archy Kirkwood, and Dominic Addington continued the hard work of Danny Alexander in the Commons and forced the Government to concede on some of our major concerns. We seriously restricted the Government's controversial plans to sanction housing benefits for anti-social behaviour, and achieved an important victory to not allow decisions to sanction benefits to be taken by private sector companies.

Short Debates introduced by Liberal Democrats

Roger Roberts – personal interviews for passport applications

Julia Neuberger – malnutrition in hospitals

Jenny Tonge - contraception

John Burnett – inheritance tax

Richard Holme - Chinese investment in Africa

John Alderdice - regulations to practice psychology

Alex Carlile – children in custody

Tony Greaves – teaching of English to foreigners in England and the provision of coastal paths

Lindsay Northover – children with AIDs

Bill Rodgers – treatment of people with strokes

Dominic Addington – sports medicine

Jane Bonham-Carter – creative industries

Debates introduced by Liberal Democrats

Shirley Williams - Corrupt practices in relation to BAE

Joan Walmsley – monitoring of public services

Anthony Lester – human rights

Liberal Democrat Private Members Bills

Sue Miller – Public Demonstrations (Repeal)

David Chidgey – Corruption

Rupert Redesdale - Energy Efficiency

Eric Avebury and David Steel – House of Lords

Anthony Lester – Forced Marriages (subsequently taken over by the Government)

Archy Kirkwood initiated a debate to revoke two social security orders, **Tony Greaves** to annul two waste management orders and **Bill Bradshaw** to annul a community driver's regulation

Again I would wish to pay tribute to our sterling staff in Carolyn Rampton (Head of Office), Elizabeth Hanna, Tom Kiehl and Anne-Marie Christofferson-Deb. In June we said our goodbyes to Neil Balmer, who went on to the next phase of his career. We thank them all.

David Shutt July 2007

Parliamentary Party (Europe)

Andrew Duff, who leads the delegation, has been active in seeking to reinforce the relationship between the parliamentary parties at Brussels and Westminster, and in improving liaison more generally between the MEPs and the party in Britain.

His special portfolio remains the constitutional affairs of the Union, where Andrew has played a leading role in the rescue of the constitutional treaty. He has been appointed as one of three MEPs to represent the Parliament at the Intergovernmental Conference (the first ever Liberal to participate in this way). He continues to work to develop relations with national parliaments. He is rapporteur on the reform of the electoral procedure of the European Parliament.

Fiona Hall has been the lead ALDE member in discussions on the EU's Renewable Energy roadmap and has recently been appointed as the Parliament's Rapporteur on the Energy Efficiency Action Plan which proposes a 20% improvement in energy efficiency by 2020. She is a member of the newly formed temporary committee on Climate Change and had discussions in June with members of the Chinese National People's Congress. She is also working with Africa, Caribbean and Pacific members on the effects of climate change in developing countries and the particular problems in remote and arid areas. Fiona has been appointed by the Commission as head of the EU's Election Observation Mission in Togo.

Chris Davies was appointed *rapporteur* for the Environment Committee's report on a Community Strategy to reduce CO₂ emissions from cars in which, amongst other things, he proposed more ambitious environmental targets for the EU car industry to cut CO₂ emissions but granted them a larger time frame in which to achieve this. On the back of this report, in which he also recommended that no car be manufactured that exceeds the European average speed limit by 25%, Chris has co-organised a public hearing at the Parliament with Jorgo Chatzimarkakis, the *rapporteur* for Cars 21, entitled "Cars for the future". Chris has similarly organised a conference on medically assisted dying and Euthanasia with the aim of sparking public debate on this issue. In his capacity as the ALDE environment spokesman, Chris is currently in the process of drafting an opinion on behalf of the Environment Committee on fishing bycatches in which he hopes to influence maritime policy and eliminate this disgraceful practice which can lead to fisherman throwing overboard up to 90% of their catch. Chris has been working with other groups to steer amendments through the Environment Committee that reduce the use of pesticides while promoting the use of non Chemical alternatives where this is economically and technically feasible. He has been discussing with the environmentalists and the airline industry the best ways of curbing CO₂ emissions from aviation and the inclusion of aviation in Emission Trading Schemes in the most environmentally sensible way. Furthermore, Chris has participated in the debate on developing post-2012 strategies to tackle climate change through his membership of the Temporary Committee on Climate Change.

As ALDE Co-ordinator and a Vice-Chair of the Fisheries Committee, Elspeth has been closely involved with the formulation of the Parliament's response to the European Commission's Green Paper on future Maritime Policy for the EU. She was Parliament's spokesman at the Cod Recovery Symposium, which took place in Edinburgh earlier this year. Elspeth wrote the report on a new funding regime for regional advisory councils and is currently Rapporteur on the Commission's communication on Rights Based Management Tools in fisheries, initiating the discussion on possible changes to management of fisheries resources. Elspeth also drafted the Regional Development Committee's opinion on a strategic review of better regulation in the European Union.

Sajjad Karim, Liberal Democrat spokesperson on international trade, continued his work within the Doha Development Round by founding the ALDE WTO network, comprised of likeminded, liberal members of the International Parliamentary Union on the WTO.

Sajjad pursued the Liberal Democrat "green" agenda through opinions he drafted for the International Trade Committee on the EU's Roadmap for Renewable Energy and Conventional Energy Sources and Energy Technology. Sajjad is also the ALDE Shadow Rapporteur on the Trade and Climate Change report.

Sajjad was the ALDE Shadow Rapporteur on reports on Economic Partnership Agreements and the EU's Aid for Trade, with a view to linking the EU's trade and development policies towards the ACP countries.

Sajjad continued his campaign on a global moratorium on the death penalty and has successfully lobbied the EU to propose a resolution at the UN General Assembly. Sajjad has also drafted European Parliament Resolutions on Sri Lanka and Burma, both of which have prompted action at the UN.

After a parliamentary process spanning 18 months, Emma Nicholson achieved a landmark result in May with the adoption by the European Parliament of her report on 'Kashmir: present situation and future prospects', by an emphatic 522 votes to nine. It emphasises the need for Kashmiris to be able to "exercise their fundamental civil and political rights in an environment free from coercion and fear", while highlighting and deploring deficiencies in democracy and human rights. Following her fact finding trips to the Pakistani and Indian sides of the Line of Control in 2006, Emma guided her colleagues through a complex political landscape, receiving evidence on the ground and exchanging views with all sides to build broad, cross-party support for the final resolution. The report strongly supports the current peace process between India and Pakistan, while urging both governments to make great efforts 'to involve Kashmiris in the resolution of the core issues'.

Sarah Ludford's work as co-legislator with Member States in setting up the EU's Visa Information System on processing of visa applications, the world's biggest biometric database, was finalised in June when her report was adopted by a large majority. She brought many improvements to the scheme particularly in regard to data protection and the rights of individuals. Sarah is now working on a related sensitive report for the Civil Liberties Committee, on conditions for collection of the biometric identifiers from visa applicants. Sarah has also continued to work and campaign on the CIA 'extraordinary rendition'; following the publication of the European Parliament report, she briefed a Congressional Hearing in Washington and met US officials. Sarah's long campaign for a cleaner Thames including taking a petition to the European Parliament calling for Brussels' intervention, culminated in March when Thames Water finally agreed to meet EU standards to stop raw sewage discharges.

As vice-President of the European Parliament Diana Wallis is responsible for openness and transparency in the Parliament as a whole. As party Spokesperson on the Legal Affairs Committee, Diana concluded her work on Rome II, the new EU Regulation on the law applicable to non-contractual obligations, that is incidents such as road traffic accidents and faulty products. Diana led for the Parliament in the first conciliation process with the Commission and Council in this area of legislation. Diana continues her work in the field of the European Contract Law Project, which some see as the most important civil law instrument likely to come out of the EU in the next years.

Diana's work on the Petitions Committee included a high-profile report on the petition presented by survivors of the clean-up following the 1968 US nuclear B-52 bomber crash in Greenland. The Commission plans to use the report in redrafting the Euratom Treaty.

In May, Diana's report of the Parliament's Temporary Committee of Enquiry into the failure at Equitable Life was backed overwhelmingly by the Parliament and should see big future changes in the way EU law is implemented and further protection for financial service consumers across the EU.

Diana continues her interest in the North of Europe as a Vice President of the Parliament, in this respect she was instrumental in setting up a Parliamentary Forum to discuss the new Northern Dimension policy.

Sharon Bowles continues to lead on the Economic and Monetary Affairs committee. The UK is the most liberal economy in Europe and Sharon successfully pushes European financial services legislation in the liberal direction. End results sometimes fall short of the UK ideal, but are far better than would result without UK participation. Recently, Sharon has been shadow rapporteur or draftsman on several reports, including International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), company law, competition damages actions and innovation strategy as well as rapporteur on two statistical governance directives.

Current work includes Solvency II, which rewrites 14 existing directives on life, non-life insurance, winding-up and reinsurance, and will include follow up on the Equitable Life Enquiry.

Leading on Intellectual Property, Sharon spoke at the German Presidency's Conference on Patent Policy, provided opinions on legal aspects of the European Patent Litigation Agreement and is sought after for advice by the Commission and the Cabinet Office.

Continuing as a central figure campaigning against Eurostar's planned cuts to the international services from Ashford International, Sharon presented a petition to Downing Street in July. This autumn she launched a Written Declaration on child soldiers.

Bill Newton Dunn is the parliament's overall expert on the growing problem of organised international criminal gangs who feeds off rich European society almost unchecked. The core problem is that the criminal gangs operate across frontiers, but all of Europe's police forces are national or local, and not one can cross frontiers to fight crime internationally, so the criminals get away and drug, immigrant and counterfeit smuggling flourishes. It is essential that we develop a coherent EU strategy to properly deal with cross-frontier crime. As a full member of the Internal Market committee Bill has closely followed work on the full liberalisation of postal services across Europe, and other needed improvements to free trade. He also follows the Climate Change committee and has been appointed a vice chair on the budgetary control committee.

Graham Watson continues to lead the largest ever Liberal Democrat group in the European Parliament. With over 100 members, the ALDE group commands two Vice Presidencies of Parliament and three Committee chairs: Justice and Home Affairs; Transport and Tourism, and Fisheries. Graham currently serves on a working party on reform of Parliament, which he hopes will succeed in a wholesale review of Parliament's working methods, timetable and procedures. He continues to serve on the European Parliament's delegations to China and to the Korean peninsula, and has led Liberal Democrats delegations this year to Senegal and to Indonesia and Singapore.

Sharon Bowles MEP
Chief Whip (European Parliament)
July 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 16 July 07)

Approved list – 26% women (254 out of 996 approved candidates)

Selected PPCs – 36% women (42 out of 118 seats – excluding MPs)

Down slightly from last year (39%), but is still a good figure, and higher than the Tories (32%).

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

- 50 new women on approved list since 2005 General Election; 100 more needed.
- Our mentors are currently in contact with 46 women interested in approval.
- 132 women have requested a form but not returned it, we are contacting all of them to offer help; 9 women are awaiting assessment days
- 1,359 new female party members were mailed with letter, leaflet and reply slips in May/June to encourage them to think about approval – 19 responses, including 17 requests for candidate approval forms.
- 35 interested women attended “It Could Be You” event for Parliamentary, constituency, council group and Cowley Street staff on July 10th in Parliament. Speakers included Ming Campbell, Shirley Williams and Jenny Willott, and 17 other MPs attended to show their support.
- East of England regional training day planned to help develop their pool of women candidates.
- Planned mailing to all women members in held seats, excluding those already contacted as new members, encouraging them to think about approval.
- Sample approval form now available to those registered on our website, www.genderbalance.org.uk.

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

- Our mentors are currently in contact with 17 women interested in selection.
- Of the 15 women selected in winnable seats, 9 received support from us. Of the 42 who have been selected in total, 25 received support or help from us
- Of the 25 women who attended our Future MPs’ Training Weekend in Peterborough in February, 6 are now selected candidates/on the GLA list.

- Commissioned report by Dinti Batstone on issues surrounding maternity; this will be presented to the Leader and is already being circulated round the party.
- Working with Candidates' Office to foster better understanding of our activities among Returning Officers and Regional Candidates' Chairs.

Additional projects

- Full training programme at conference in support of both above objectives, including the return of the Gender Balance Auction (Monday 8:15 – 10:15, Arundel 1)
- Two well-attended training sessions and stall at ALDC Conference on June 23rd; thanks to Diane Park, PPC for Halifax, for her assistance.
- Joint "Policy Primer" day planned with WLD for September 29th, to encourage female newcomers to engage with the policy-making process, and feel more confident about this element of the approval process.

Many thanks to: Vice-Chairs Jane Bonham-Carter and Ros Harper; Candy Piercy who is Head of Training for the Campaign; and everyone who has generously responded to our fundraising drive. We are sorry to be losing our organiser Ellie Cumbo who is pursuing a career in the law, and thank her for her hard work over the last year, and the passion she has brought to the role. We hope to have her replacement in place shortly after Conference.

Jo Swinson

Chair, Campaign for Gender Balance