

Reports to Spring Conference 2009 Harrogate

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Federal Conference Committee

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

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

Federal Conference Committee

Along with the other Federal committees, the FCC was elected anew last autumn for the following two years. At our meeting in November, the Committee elected myself as Chair, and Justine McGuinness, Geoff Payne and Andrew Wiseman as Vice Chairs.

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. 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 the state and English regional parties, and SAOs, to liaise with them during the year, provide advice and assistance on submitting motions or otherwise getting involved in conference, and appear at particular conferences to answer your questions. See the contact details at the end of this report, and don’t hesitate to get in touch with the relevant FCC member.

Agenda

The Harrogate conference agenda is rather different to that of most spring conferences: we have been fortunate in having our invitation to speak accepted from Howard Dean, one of the key Democratic leaders behind Barack Obama’s successful US Presidential campaign. Also, instead of the normal two policy papers from the FPC, we have had three submitted. There was therefore not much time left for policy motions from local parties and conference reps, and we apologise to all those who submitted good motions which we were unable to take; we hope many of them will be submitted to the autumn conference. We have, however, set aside an hour for emergency motions and topical issue discussions, and of course all the motions on the agenda are open to amendment; the deadline for all of these is 12 noon on Tuesday 3 March.

The final agenda, however, is very well suited to what could be the last conference before the general election, with a strong focus on education and early years, together with other speeches from Vince Cable, our new Welsh leader Kirsty Williams, Simon Hughes and, of course, Nick Clegg. I hope all of you will encourage colleagues in your local party to come even just for a short while as a day visitor.

Conference Rally and Welcome Drinks

The conference rally will take place on Friday 6 March, between 6.30pm and 7.30pm, in the Royal Hall, at the other end of the Harrogate Centre from the main auditorium. It is designed

to celebrate the Party's twenty-first birthday; the Liberal Democrats came into existence on 3 March 1988. Speakers will include Nick Clegg and our new President, Ros Scott.

The rally will be preceded by welcome drinks for all conference reps, kindly sponsored by the Federation of Small Businesses. Conference Committee is also organising a short briefing especially for first-timers to conference, later that evening, at 9.45pm, in the Charter Suite of the Holiday Inn. We hope this will be helpful in explaining how conference works and how to get the best out of it for those new to the experience.

Autumn Conference, Bournemouth

Looking ahead to the Bournemouth conference in September, we will be sticking with the changed timing we followed last year, essentially moving the conference forward by a day from our previous pattern. The consultative sessions will take place on Saturday morning, and the sessions in the hall will start after lunch on Saturday. The conference will finish with the leader's speech on the Wednesday afternoon. The conference feedback indicated that this was popular with most respondents, and allowed some people to come for the weekend who would not otherwise have attended.

We have also simplified the motions deadline schedule (the standing order changes were accepted at conference last year), reducing it to two deadlines, in early July (motions) and early September (amendments). We hope this will make it easier for local parties and conference reps to submit motions (particularly given the local and Euro elections in June) and also make the issues we discuss at conference more topical.

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 motions deadline for anyone wanting assistance and advice with drafting their motions; drafts should be sent to motionsadvice@libdem.org.uk.

Chairing

FCC received complaints about the chairing of two of the debates at Bournemouth last year, both relating to the selection of speaker's cards: on the *Make it Happen* debate, over the small number of women selected; and on the Transport debate, on the failure to call any wheelchair users or blind speakers. We have discussed both these debates, and the processes by which we select and train conference chairs and aides, at length in the last three FCC meetings. The analysis of each of the debates was carried out by an FCC member who was not involved in chairing or aiding it – myself for the *Make it Happen* debate, and Andrew Wiseman for the transport debate.

With regard to the *Make it Happen* debate, our conclusions were that more women could and should have been selected. However, this was an isolated example; analysis of all the debates at conference (and, indeed, at previous conferences) shows that in general conference chairs discriminate slightly in favour of women, with the aim of offsetting the fact that women conference reps submit speaker's cards less frequently than do men. Although about 40 per cent of conference participants are women, they account for only about 25 percent of the cards submitted.

On the transport debate, FCC concluded that there was a strong case for selecting at least one of the wheelchair users or the blind speaker – but this would have meant not calling another speaker with an equally strong case to be called (for example, a speaker on rural transport or on the Scottish dimension).

In each of these cases, the chair and aide team had a difficult job, with far more cards submitted than either could possibly call. In an effort to deal with this problem, we agreed to reduce the default length of speeches on long motions from five to four minutes, and also to retain flexibility to vary the timings in the agenda just before conference.

This means that for the autumn conference, the Agenda published in July will *not* have precise timings included; agenda items will be allocated to mornings or afternoons, and listed in the order in which they will be taken, and we will have some indicative timings included (e.g. 'not before 4pm'). The precise timings will only be added when we publish the *Advance Notice*, including all the amendments and emergency motions, a few days before conference. This document was formerly published on the first day of conference, but the change in deadlines I mentioned earlier, with the amendments deadline now falling ten days before conference, means that we can publish it in advance. This is an important change to our procedures, and, as usual, we look forward to your feedback on it afterwards.

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. Spring and Autumn 2010 venues will be announced in Harrogate.

Access

The Conference Access Group, convened by Robert Adamson, continues to make conference as accessible for all as possible, expanding its work to tackle obstacles facing those with a broader range of disabilities. If you are interested in the work of the Group, please feel free to contact Robert on Robert@Robertadamson.info

Stewards and Security

As always, conference can only take place due to the massive contribution and efforts of the volunteer stewards' team, who handle security, look after the exhibition, fringe, information desk, stage and auditorium, and ensure that all of us get the most out of conference. We have been pleased to appoint Adrian Beavis as our new Chief Steward, and look forward to working with him and his colleagues.

Due to the high profile of the Liberal Democrat conference, some security checks are necessary – though we aim to keep these to a minimum – and our stewards will be supported by SIA-qualified security contractors in this task. Please see the relevant section in the Agenda & Directory for the procedures.

Thanks

The vast bulk of the hard work of organising conference throughout the year falls on the professional staff in Conference Office in Cowley Street: Lucy Billingsley, Carol Caruana, Sian Jenkins, Emma Price and Katy Pritchard. Lucy, who only started her job just before Bournemouth last year, has settled in extremely well and we owe her and her colleagues sincere thanks for organising a highly professional event.

I would also like to express my warmest thanks to all the others who make conference possible: to all my colleagues on the Conference Committee; to Ben Stoneham, HQ Director in Cowley Street; the Policy Projects Team, led by Christian Moon, who process the motions and prepare much of the agenda material; the Political Information and Communications Section, led by George Crozier for producing the post-conference report, *Conference Call*, and of course to the stewards' team.

I look forward to seeing you in Harrogate.

Duncan Brack
Chair, Federal Conference Committee
January 2009

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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 the 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, three policy papers on childcare, 5-19 education and Adult Further and Higher Education have been produced and are presented for debate at Harrogate.

Policy working groups, supported by the Policy and Research Unit (PRU), have also drafted consultation papers on Youth, Women and Consumers. There will be consultation sessions to discuss these on the afternoon of Friday 6th March at Harrogate. These are also available for online comment available on the www.consult.libdems.org.uk website. These three groups will all proceed to develop their final conclusions in a policy paper for debate at the Autumn 2009 Party Conference, taking into account the outcome of the consultation sessions and other input from both within and outside the Party.

The Natural Environment and UK Response to Globalisation Working Groups will also bring policy papers to the Autumn 2009 Conference.

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

Conference	Consultation Papers	Policy Papers
March 2009	Women Youth Consumers	5-19 Education Further and Higher Education Childcare
Sept 2009		UK Response to Globalisation Natural Environment Women Youth Consumers

The FPC will be making decisions on setting up further working groups to report after Autumn 2009 and more details will be announced at Harrogate.

The General Election Manifesto

The Manifesto Group is chaired by Danny Alexander MP, and the other members are: myself as Chair of FPC, Dr Richard Grayson (Vice Chair, FPC), Jeremy Hargreaves (Vice Chair,

FPC), Steve Webb MP (Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions), Vince Cable MP (Shadow Chancellor), Edward Davey MP (Chair of Campaigns and Communications Committee) David Laws MP (Shadow Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families) and Susan Kramer MP

The first outcome of the group's work was the *Make It Happen* vision and values paper debated late autumn at Bournemouth. Subsequent work of the group has been based on the overall political narrative of *Make it Happen*. The next formal stage of the work will be a full pre-manifesto paper which will be published in the summer and be the subject of a major debate at the Autumn Conference. However, the Manifesto group has accelerated its work programme and is prepared to have a full manifesto ready in the event of an early election being called.

Members with policy ideas to contribute for the Manifesto can email them to manifesto@libdems.org.uk or write to Danny Alexander MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

European Parliamentary Election Manifesto

The European Manifesto Group is chaired by Danny Alexander MP, and the other members are: myself as Chair of FPC, Dr Richard Grayson (Vice Chair, FPC), Jeremy Hargreaves (Vice Chair, FPC), Edward Davey MP (Chair of Campaigns and Communications and Shadow Foreign Secretary), Jeremy Browne MP (Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury), Andrew Duff MEP (Leader, LDEPP), Graham Watson MEP (Leader, ALDE Group), Sarah Ludford MEP, William Wallace (Foreign Affairs Spokesperson and Deputy Leader in the Lords), Linda Jack (FPC) and Dr Julie Smith (FPC).

This group has started work, based on last autumn's policy paper *Shaping Our World through a Stronger Europe: Reforming the EU's Policies*. It has held one joint meeting with the Liberal Democrat European Parliamentary Party and will be conducting further consultation within the Party.

One Day Conference 17 January 2009

The Federal Policy Committee and the Federal Conference Committee in association with the Keynes Forum organised a one day policy conference at the London School of Economics on 17 January this year, which was attended by around 350 Party members. The theme of the conference was 'Creating a Progressive Society'. The day included a keynote speech by myself, plenary discussions on the challenges and opportunities for the Party and on the report Social Mobility Commission chaired by Martin Narey, as well as a series of breakout sessions organised by a range of Party groups.

Feedback from attendees on the day has been overwhelmingly positive. The points and issues raised in the course of the discussions have been recorded and will feed in to the FPC's work in the coming months, especially on the manifesto.

Developing the Policy Panel

Thanks to all those who responded to the invitation to put themselves forward for the panel at the beginning of the year. There are now nearly 600 people on the updated policy panel. Members can still volunteer themselves at any time via the consultation website www.consult.libdems.org.uk. To improve communication and involve panel members more in policy work, we have a regular policy newsletter, *Focus on Policy*. This newsletter keeps members of the panel informed about new publications on the consult website, new working groups and other initiatives, and includes articles from working group chairs, spokespeople, FPC members and the leadership team. It is our hope that, in future, panel members will have a much more active role in policy-making within the Party and that the policy process will benefit from their wealth of knowledge, expertise and experience.

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	tbc
East of England	Richard Grayson/Geoff Payne/Linda Jack
East Midlands	Susan Gaszczak
London	Jo Hayes/ Jeremy Hargreaves
Northern	Robert Adamson
North West	Stan Collins
South Central	Neil Fawcett/Ruth Coleman
South East	tbc
Western Counties	Theo Butt Phillip
West Midlands	Phil Bennion/Susan Juned
Yorkshire & the Humber	William Wallace/Duncan Brack

The FPC has also decided to appoint representatives to Party SAOs:

SAO	
ALDES	Julie Smith
ALDC	Susan Juned
DELGA	tbc
WLD	Ruth Coleman
Liberal Youth	Theo Butt Phillip
PCA	Susan Gaszczak
Liberal Democrat Lawyers	Jonathan Marks
EMLD	Linda Jack
ALDTU	Richard Kemp

Policy and Research Unit Staffing

The Policy and Research Unit (PRU) combining the 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), Navprit Rai (Policy Officer), Helen Banks (Policy Officer) and Debbie Enever (Policy Officer). Helen and Debbie job share two days and three days a week respectively. Emily Cornborough who served as a Policy Officer last year has recently moved on and we wish her well in the future. The Policy Projects Team has also benefited from voluntary work by Louisa Latham and William Newport.

The Adviser team consists of Chris Saunders (Economy & Treasury), James Lloyd (Environment, Energy, Food & Rural Affairs), Katie Waring (Work & Pensions), Ben Jones

(International Affairs & Defence), Steve Lotinga (Cultural Affairs), Rachel Spring (Health), Alice Douglas (Communities & Transport), Kathryn Grant (Business and Enterprise) and Sam Cannicott (Education). The Adviser team has benefited from voluntary work by: John Elliott, Leila Nathoo, Nick Branson, David Coppell, Barnaby Stannard and Ursula Lumley.

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
January 2009

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.

This report covers the Federal Executive's activity since the Autumn 2008 Federal Party conference.

On January 1st the new Federal Executive took office as Ros Scott became Party President at the same time. The Federal Executive would like to thank Simon Hughes (previously Party President) for his hard work and commitment to serving as the Party President over the past four years and wish him well in his role as Shadow Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change.

Chief Officers Group

Since September the FE has agreed recommendations from the Party Reform Commission, resulting in the establishment of the Chief Officers Group chaired by the Leader and comprises of the Leader (Chair), the Treasurer, Chair of the Federal Conference Committee, Chair of the Federal Finance & Administration Committee, Chair of the Campaigns & Communications Committee, Chief Whip, Party President, one representative from each of the State Parties & Chief Executive.

As a result of this greater coordination, significant progress has been made in bringing together the work of the Federal and Parliamentary Parties as the first joint Federal & Parliamentary Office of the Liberal Democrats (POLD) Business Plan and 2009 Budget were produced.

Scrutiny

During 2008 the Federal Executive has continued its scrutiny programme, focussing on elections ready for the 2009 round. It began by reviewing the 2008 local elections and looking forward to preparations for 2009, taking evidence from Andrew Stunell, Chair of the Local Election Campaign. The FE also scrutinised the plans for the next General Election and conducted a thorough review of parliamentary by-elections, focussing on current and future campaigning techniques.

The FE has been carrying out a review of the Party's approach to PR elections, looking at recent experiences in London, Wales, Scotland and Europe. This is due to be discussed by the FE at its March meeting.

Diversity

Work is also underway to review candidate support & gender balance throughout the UK and the FE will also be discussing this at the March meeting.

As this report is written in January and a concerted effort to encourage constituencies to select candidates is underway, the figures produced now will quickly be out of date. Consequently the diversity statistics on approved and selected candidates will be available in the Daily Bulletin at Conference and will be available on the Party website for conference delegates.

A report from the Diversity Engagement Group is included at the end of this FE report.

International Relations Committee (IRC)

The IRC has reported on its work, representing the Party at the ELDR Congress in October and helping develop the ELDR manifesto for the 2009 elections.

Campaigns & Communications Committee (CCC)

The CCC also reported to the FE, focussing on plans for the next General Election and the June 2009 local and European elections.

The Federal Executive also reviewed the Key Performance Indicators, covering membership, elected representatives, candidates, conferences, finances & staff.

Federal Finance & Administration Committee

The FE also received regular reports from the Federal Finance & Administration Committee (FFAC), whose work will be reported on later in this document.

Federal Executive January 2009

Appendix 1: Diversity Engagement Group Report

Progress to March 2009

Barriers to Benefits Report and DEG launch – Both successfully launched at Sep 2008 Federal Conference

DEG working groups – Both ‘Diversity Monitoring’ and ‘Setting Diversity Targets’ groups are meeting and successfully working towards achieving all stated objectives

North West Review - BME Involvement Review completed and accepted by NW Regional Party - Andrew Stunell MP has become the ‘Regional Diversity Champion’ - This pilot project will be rolled out to other regions on evaluation - Recommendations circulated to officers across all regions of Party.

HQ and POLD Executive Group - New internal staff group includes HQ and POLD ‘Diversity Champions’ - Group is developing HR / Equalities best practice for the workplace - Key staff undertaken Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Training

Campaigning / BME candidate support - Campaigns has supported BME candidates in potentially winnable seats - Party communicating with all BME candidates to assess development needs

Ethnic Minority Liberal Democrats / Ethnic Minority Election Task Force merger - Merger successfully announced on 2 December 2008.

Federal Policy Committee / PRU - FPC will establish Policy Equality Impact Assessment Group to audit policy proposals against equality and diversity principles

Training materials - Developed materials for local and regional party executives on diversifying membership base - Events delivered at Federal Conference Sept 2008

Community events - Leader’s Office delivered successful event within Polish Community – Wider programme of minority community events are planned for 2009

Special Approved Organisations / information exchange - Meetings are being facilitated to exchange information and support joined up working among SAOs

Plans for the future – 2009

Working with Candidates Office and other relevant groups / bodies to - develop action plan based upon the Scope gap Analysis Report – develop mentoring / support scheme for candidates from under-represented groups - deliver equality impact assessments on Parliamentary Candidates approval and selection procedures – widen participation of under-represented groups and increase applications for candidate approval - Improve diversity of candidate assessor pool by implementing recruitment campaigns - Conduct diversity review of existing training programme for selection committees - Develop diversity training for all levels of the Party to improve diversity practice and awareness - Develop Diversity Network - Develop and deliver inspiration days / events and training programmes for candidates and potential candidates from under-represented groups in the Party.

Dr Vince Cable MP
Chair, Diversity Engagement Group

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) 2008 results

1. At the start of 2008 the Federal Party had an overall accumulated deficit on its general fund of £155,000, of which £51,000 related to the deficit on the Party's final salary pension scheme (which closed in 1989) and £104,000 related to its normal operating activities.

It also had separate designated reserves for specific purposes of £25,000.

The draft figures for 2008 show a deficit on the Federal Party's general fund of £92,000 against a budgeted deficit of £42,440, though this is after transfers to the specific reserves of £25,000. This means that the accumulated deficit on its normal activities will increase from £104,000 to £196,000 and that the specific reserves will be £50,000 at the year-end.

Given the volatile economic situation it is especially difficult to predict what will happen to the pension scheme deficit. The Party continues to make additional contributions to eliminate the deficit but it is likely that factors beyond its control will make this a moving target.

2. The campaign fund is forecast to produce a deficit of approximately £700,000 reducing the accumulated surplus on the fund to around £0.5-0.6m. This needs to be seen in the context of budgets for recent general elections of £2.5m-£5m and the fact that a general election must 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 2008 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 net income was £12,000 (0.6%) above budget largely due to significantly better than expected net conference income, which offset shortfalls in direct mail, telephone appeal and Federal levy income, though there was some improvement in the final quarter in these areas.

There was also a shortfall in Policy Development Fund income, but this is a timing issue and should be recovered in the first quarter of the current year.

Overall expenditure was £62,000 (2.9%) above budget largely due to higher campaign staff expenses caused by the by-elections earlier in the year, higher than expected recruitment costs and a significant increase in the pension protection fund payment associated with the closed final salary pension scheme.

B) 2009 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 2009.

However the budgeted deficit of £54k is broadly equivalent to these additional contributions and there is therefore a break-even position if these payments could be eliminated.

The deficit also includes £12k of depreciation across several departments and £25k of transfers to the specific reserves with the result that if the budget is achieved there will be only a modest cash outflow.

Following the decision of last autumn's conference to increase the Federal levy on renewals from 42% to 44% this source of income has increased by approximately £75,000 of which £50,000 has been directed towards increasing the Party's G8 contribution from £20,000 to £70,000.

The budget is included in appendix 1 attached.

C) Grants to Party bodies

	2009 budget	2008 budget
	£	£
ALDC	107,207	112,850
LDYS	16,000	16,000
WLD	4,000	4,000
CGB	24,000	24,000
Diversity & Equality	18,500	18,500
EMLD	2,000	2,000
Total	171,707	177,350

The small reduction in the ALDC grant is part of a drive to increase ALDC income by encouraging all councillors to join the organisation through group membership. This work is being supported by the Federal Party and has been agreed with ALDC.

D) Staffing levels

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

Department	31 December 2008 FTE	31 December 2007 FTE
Campaigns	7.90	7.00
Chief Executive, office facilities & training	5.75	5.75
Compliance	1.50	1.50
Conference	4.00	4.00
Finance	3.00	3.00
International	2.00	2.35
Liberal Democrats Calling	5.25	6.35

Membership & fundraising	5.00	5.00
Newspaper	1.30	1.30
Policy*	5.00	5.00
Total	40.70	41.25

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 2007 of 258 (2006 – 226) and Labour of 193 (2006 – 240).

E) PPERA

Further changes to the legislation have been under consideration during the autumn in the Political Parties and Elections Bill. This has involved representations at Parliamentary and Civil Service level to try to ensure that the burden of the new requirements is not onerous for Local Party Treasurers.

Consolidated Local Party Accounts (including branches) for the 2008 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.

Last autumn the Electoral Commission produced Regulations to replace the current Guidance, which will affect all accounts: i.e. even those below the current threshold. These new regulations impose a standard format for the preparation of Local Party accounts and come into effect on January 1st 2010. The FFAC has agreed to require all Local Parties use the current guidance this year in order to be ready for the change that is coming next year.

Further improvements to our protocol for Federal Party donations have been implemented in consultation with the Party Trustees such that all donations over £25,000 are agreed by the Chair of the Trustees as well as the Treasurer and the Chair of the FFAC. Last autumn a Party member with experience in this field carried out an audit of our current procedures and guidance.

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

F) Membership and Fundraising Services

In October we launched the Membership Data On-line website. This website, developed together by the English and Federal parties provides Local Party officers with on-line access to their local membership data around the clock. The database is constantly updated from the HQ database, so that those dealing with membership in Local Parties can get up-to-date information whenever they need it rather than waiting for a paper report through the post.

The site also has various useful tools for communicating with local members and the Membership Services team at Cowley Street. There is also the option of signing up to email and/or text message alerts that your local Party has a new member or that an existing member has moved into the area. The site allows users to communicate information to Cowley Street by email and to make some changes directly to the data. Further features are planned for the site later in the year.

Last autumn, the Scottish Liberal Democrats transferred their remaining membership operations to the Cowley Street Membership Services Team, in order to allow them to concentrate more of their own resources on campaign activity in Scotland. The Cowley Street team are now supplying membership services to members and local parties on behalf

of the English, Scottish and Welsh Liberal Democrats. Local Parties in all three nations have access to the Membership Data On-line facilities.

We are currently re-structuring the Fundraising Team to meet the challenge of funding the next general election campaign. The emphasis of this activity is on widening the financial support for the Liberal Democrats beyond existing donors.

As recommended by the Party Reform Commission's report published last year, a new Fundraising Board has been established, chaired by the Treasurer Tim Clement-Jones to lead and support fundraising.

G) Environmental

We are currently undertaking a full review of environmental performance in HQ. Good performance has been recognised in audits we have undertaken but we want to update and determine future actions so we remain ahead in these initiatives.

H) Personnel

Following the encouraging report which was provided when we had our Investors in People standard renewed in 2008 we have been giving particular attention to actions which:

1. Continue the process of integration between the Federal Party and POLD
2. Improve communications across the Federal Party and POLD
3. Step up our plans for improved management development with the eventual aim of linking them with the work of the Capability Board
4. Make sure our in-depth management knowledge is more widely shared and safeguarded

I) Changing role of the FFAC itself within overall Party Governance

Following the recommendations of the Party Reform Commission to formalise the role of the Chief Officers Group ("COG") , the FFAC has agreed to discharge some of its responsibilities through that Group, of which the FFAC Chair is a member. The FFAC will for 2009 meet jointly with the Parliamentary Office of the Liberal Democrats Management Board to review and monitor on a quarterly basis across the whole Federal Party financial out-turns against the budget and performance outcomes against the objectives set in the business plan.

Duncan Greenland
FFAC Chair
January 2009

Appendix 1

2008 general fund budget and draft out-turn and 2009 general fund budget

	Budget 2008 £	Forecast 2008 £	Budget 2009 £
Income			
<u>Generated income</u>			
Direct mail appeals & Web	309,000	275,500	231,000
Direct mail costs	(70,000)	(69,500)	(70,000)
Standing orders	147,000	148,000	129,000
	<u>386,000</u>	<u>354,000</u>	<u>290,000</u>
<u>Services income</u>			
Federal levy	818,550	806,500	881,032
State parties cross charges	347,847	348,000	370,139
POLD service fees	176,688	176,500	234,484
Regional draws	11,000	11,000	11,000
	<u>1,354,085</u>	<u>1,342,000</u>	<u>1,496,655</u>
<u>Commercial activities (net results)</u>			
Newspaper	(332)	(7,000)	(2,676)
LDCalling	165,875	150,000	164,500
Affinity	41,500	34,000	38,500
Conference	258,687	357,500	353,565
	<u>465,730</u>	<u>534,500</u>	<u>553,889</u>
<u>Other income</u>			
International dept income	45,000	49,000	50,000
Policy Development Fund	454,000	437,500	457,000
	<u>499,000</u>	<u>486,500</u>	<u>507,000</u>
<u>Income surplus after income generation costs</u>	2,704,815	2,717,000	2,847,544

Expenditure

HQ costs

Chief Executive & HQ department	877,144	922,500	921,806
Finance	167,249	171,000	163,885
Membership	262,859	258,000	254,933
Compliance	54,837	55,500	55,323
Policy	195,863	191,000	201,108
Campaigns	315,066	334,000	340,554
International	78,839	80,000	68,221
	<u>1,951,857</u>	<u>2,012,000</u>	<u>2,005,830</u>

Other expenditure

G8	20,000	20,000	70,000
Grants to Party bodies	177,350	177,500	173,207
Refund of Federal levy to Scotland & Wales	85,696	85,500	95,000
PDF grants to Scotland & Wales	35,000	35,000	35,000
Committee expenses	18,000	19,000	12,000
Target seats, legal costs & By-elections	175,000	175,000	289,000
PPB's	40,000	40,000	40,000
ELDR/LI	18,000	17,500	18,000
Candidates support	12,300	12,500	12,600
Members Communications	39,552	40,500	41,200
Leaders/Presidents grants	5,000	5,000	5,000
Non-recoverable VAT	54,000	54,000	48,000
Net interest payable	1,500	1,500	2,500
	<u>681,398</u>	<u>683,000</u>	<u>841,507</u>

Payments to reduce pension scheme deficit	114,000	114,000	54,600
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Total expenditure	2,747,255	2,809,000	2,901,937
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Surplus/(deficit) for the year	<u>(42,440)</u>	<u>(92,000)</u>	<u>(54,393)</u>
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Parliamentary Party (Commons)

Introduction

Since we last gathered, recession has prompted a spectacular collapse in the public's confidence in Gordon Brown's premiership and has demonstrated beyond doubt how – in these extraordinary and frightening economic times – this Labour Government has wrecked trust in politicians, in politics and in parliament. Aided and abetted by a Conservative Party too complacent to respond to the concerns of hardworking British families, too arrogant to acknowledge its own policy shortcomings, and too in hoc to city interests to contemplate tough decisions on the banks, the public are receiving a brutal lesson in how broken our politics really is.

This parliamentary session is the shortest for many years and the Government have introduced just fourteen new Bills; fewer than half of the average thirty-nine over the past ten years. We have often argued for less legislation, but the absolute paucity of imagination in the bills before us shows quite how completely Labour has run out of new ideas.

Now more than ever before there is room to demonstrate the importance of a distinct and Liberal alternative to the hand-wringing duplicity of the Conservative and Labour parties.

Responding to the economic crisis

Labour's lack of initiative is matched only by its cowardice in defending the decisions that have led Britain to the brink of bankruptcy: since 2001 the Labour Party hasn't provided a single debate on the economy in government time. Extraordinarily, as I write, Labour peers – including former ministers – are being accused of lining their pockets in return for legislative favours, just as ordinary families face redundancy, bankruptcy and repossession.

By contrast, Nick Clegg, Vince Cable and the rest of the Liberal Democrat Shadow Cabinet have, in their simple and practical responses to the current hardships, demonstrated that the Liberal Democrat message is one that truly resonates with the British people. While the Government tries to stifle debate, we used part of our last opposition day to force a vote on the Government's handling of the economic crisis and to call for immediate tax cuts for lower and middle income families. At the start of this session, we used our vote on the Queen's Speech to again call for reductions to income tax, and to reaffirm our commitment to helping families and ensuring that those most vulnerable are protected against the worst effects of the recession.

In November the Government announced their Pre-Budget Report blew their one real chance to respond to the crisis by opting for a cut in VAT of 2.5%, instead of a more permanent cut in income tax that really would help those on middle and low incomes. In response, we tabled a motion opposing the change, forcing a debate and a vote on the issue, arguing instead for a real cut that would benefit those who are being hit hardest by the recession, as well as making the case for investment in more and better social housing and improving our public transport infrastructure.

Nick has also assembled an Economic Recovery Group, which brings together our best economic minds in order to ensure that responses to the crisis and new initiatives are in-touch and up-to-date. His weekly appearances in Prime Minister's Questions to press home the need for tougher regulation of the banking sector and a more humane and understanding response to the situation of those ordinary people facing the knock of the bailiffs at the door.

Finally, during the Christmas recess, Nick requested that Liberal Democrat MPs visit business in their constituency in order to better understand the effects of the recession. From breweries to bakeries, and steel works to blue chip technology firms, businesses across the UK told their concerns to Liberal Democrat MPs, each of whom reported back in the New Year, providing a unique wealth of information on the shape of the economy.

Liberal Democrats in Parliament

On international affairs, Nick has also used Prime Minister's Questions to remind the Government of the terrible responsibility they bear for the illegal war in Iraq and the need for an urgent public inquiry into the decisions that led Britain to war. Ed Davey has raised the huge potential that Israel's actions in Gaza have to impact on the processes for peace in the Middle East.

Liberal Democrat MPs fared extraordinarily well in the ballot for Private Members Bills, too, with David Heath drawing the number two slot and opting to introduce the Fuel Poverty Bill. Evan Harris drew the number five slot and opted to introduce a bill to reform royal succession, removing discrimination on the basis of sex or religion. Jeremy Browne drew the thirteenth slot and will present a bill on organ donation. Finally, Charles Kennedy drew the seventeenth slot and will introduce legislation to limit carbon emissions from electricity-generating power stations.

We are yet to receive our first Opposition Day debate of the new session, but internal discussions are already underway to ensure we get maximum impact when the Government finally schedule it.

The arrest of Damian Green led the Speaker to request the setting up of a committee of inquiry. Despite his stringent conditions, the Government motion was constructed to ensure that ministers got the result they wanted. Opposition was led by Sir Menzies Campbell and the Liberal Democrats, and the Conservatives were forced to follow suit after the Government's duplicity was exposed. Similarly, it was angry Liberal Democrat opposition to the Government's attempts to remove parliament from freedom of information provisions and conceal MPs allowances that forced the Conservatives to retreat from a deal with the Government, and back the clear position taken by Nick Clegg and David Heath. Embarrassed by their grubby horse-trading, the Government withdrew their proposals.

Finally, at the end of the last session, in the other part of our final Opposition Day, our tireless local campaigning in support of local Post Offices was vindicated when we forced a vote in the Commons calling for the Post Office Card Account to remain with the Post Office. Just days later the Government performed a U-turn, announcing that the scheme would, indeed, continue with the Post Office.

Parliamentary Party responsibilities

December saw us mark Nick Clegg's first anniversary as Leader, recognising his drive, enthusiasm and determination to make Britain a better and more Liberal place. He also announced the team that he intends to lead the Liberal Democrats into the next election, with Steve Webb being asked to take on Work and Pensions, Jenny Willott taking over the roving brief of Shadow Chancellor for the Duchy of Lancaster. Simon Hughes will be leading on energy and climate change, whilst David Heath has returned to the front bench as Shadow Leader of the House.

Lastly, Susan Kramer stepped down from the Shadow Cabinet at her own request, seeking instead to champion the battle against a third runway at Heathrow. She is already intending to use the ten minute rule bill procedure to introduce legislation to force a vote on its construction.

Organisational changes

As Chair of the Parliamentary Office of the Liberal Democrats (POLD), I would like to record particular thanks to Hannah Gardiner for her work as the Director of Media and subsequently Press Secretary to the Leader; and I am extremely pleased to welcome Lena Pietsch as her successor. I would also like to congratulate Sean Kemp on his promotion to Head of Media. I am also extremely pleased to announce that Chris Fox has joined us as the new Director of

Policy and Communications; Chris's previous worked in public relations will be an exceptional asset to the Liberal Democrats and our General Election strategy team.

Following the work of the Bones Commission, POLD has begun to work closely with the Federal Finance and Administration Committee, aligning its priorities more closely with those of the Federal Party where the rules on the use of public funds (Short Money) permits.

I would also like to welcome the appointment of John Sharkey to the General Election Team. Working closely with Chris Rennard and Chris Fox, we will have an exceptionally talented team for the General Election.

Conclusion

We are living in a time of immense uncertainty – both politically and economically. I am certain that the Liberal Democrats have never been more capable, both politically and professionally. Our success will depend on unity of purpose, clarity of message and more and harder work than ever before. These past few months have demonstrated that the contribution of the Liberal Democrats to our national life is more necessary than ever before and I am confident that we can achieve that success.

Paul Burstow MP
Chief Whip, House of Commons
January 2009

Parliamentary Party (Lords)

This report covers the spill-over session of Parliament from October until the end of November 2008 and then the new session starting from the Queens' Speech on 3rd December until the end of January 2009. In the earlier session our work on bills included:

Counter-Terrorism Bill

Sue Miller and **Martin Thomas** led on this Bill, which arrived from the Commons before the summer recess. **Kishwer Falkner, Jim Wallace, Navnit Dholakia, Willie Goodhart and Anthony Lester** also spoke during the debate. During the progress of the Bill in the Lords we managed to achieve a significant number of victories and concessions, the most momentous of these being the Government defeat on 42 days. Liberal Democrats, Conservatives, independent cross-bench peers and 24 Labour rebels joined forces to remove the provisions on detention without charge for 42 days by a majority of 191. The Government, however, did not accept this defeat gracefully and have published a draft Bill to extend pre-charge detention at some point in the future as emergency legislation, if they consider this necessary. The Government also agreed to the removal of the "secret inquest" from the bill, but will now bring these proposals forward in the forthcoming Coroners and Justice Bill. This bill is now law.

Education and Skills Bill

Joan Walmsley, Margaret Sharp and Sue Garden led on this bill that raises to eighteen the leaving age for education and training. We argued throughout that the bill risked criminalising young people instead of tackling the reasons why they leave education in the first place. We were, however, able to secure a future review of applying the criminal standard to those young people who fail to attend education or training. The Government also adopted our proposal for a 'Learning and support contract', renaming it a 'Learning and Support Agreement'.

Energy Bill

Robin Teverson, Rupert Redesdale and Jim Wallace participated in this bill, which initially only went part of the way to addressing the key issues – the cutting down of fuel bills and the reduction in carbon emissions. However, largely due to the strength of Lib Dem concerns, concessions were made by Government in a couple of key areas so the Bill that is now law is somewhat stronger than the one first introduced to Parliament.

Pensions Bill

Matthew Oakeshott, Celia Thomas, Archy Kirkwood and Lindsay Northover formed the team on this bill, which established the new Personal Accounts system, which we broadly supported.

Planning Bill

Sally Hamwee and **Tony Greaves** led on this bill with contributions from **Richard Livsey, Paul Tyler, Robin Teverson, Bill Bradshaw** and I. The bill fundamentally transforms the planning system for major projects which will now be considered by passing the decision making power to a quango called the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC). The IPC will be guided by national policy statements, something we have long called for. However, we expressed strong concerns that the IPC would ignore local demands and argued that decisions on such projects should be in the hands of democratically elected representatives. We also pushed for the environment to take a more central role in the planning process.

The Queen's speech introduced 14 bills, and so far, with the exception of the Banking Bill, we have had bills that have started their parliamentary life in the House of Lords. These have included:

Health Bill

Liz Barker, Jenny Tonge and Tim Clement-Jones will be involved in this bill that will introduce an NHS constitution for England, direct-payments for health care, further restrictions on the sale of tobacco, and provisions regarding investigations of complaints about privately arranged or funded adult social care. Our key concern is that the constitution will be nothing more than a list of platitudes. We will push for it to offer rights that have real substance.

Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill

Sally Hamwee, Tony Greaves, Graham Tope, Diana Maddock and Roger Roberts have contributed to the debates on this bill which at the time of writing is going through its committee stages. The local democracy part of the bill fails to deliver the real devolution of power to local councils that we feel is essential for local government. The bill also introduces provisions about how local councils respond to petitions, provisions that we feel are unnecessary and merely the imposition of more unwanted red-tape on local councils.

Marine and Coastal Access Bill

Tony Greaves, Paul Tyler, Sue Miller, Sally Hamwee, Jim Wallace, Richard Livsey and John Burnett have been involved in this bill, which was subject to a joint committee of both Houses in the last Parliamentary session and has been keenly awaited. We are very much in support of what the bill does, though have been critical of its timidity in certain respects. The Lib Dems have argued that conservation and sustainable development needs should have a higher priority within the Marine Management Organisation's basic objectives.

Banking Bill

Dick Newby, Matthew Oakeshott and Trevor Smith have been working on this bill for us. The Bill responds to recent crises in the Banking sector and creates a permanent statutory regime for dealing with failing banks and establishes bank insolvency and administration procedures to wind up failed banks and facilitate compensation payments to depositors. The bill will be law by the middle of February; otherwise the nationalisation of Northern Rock will expire.

Debates introduced by Liberal Democrats in these two sessions have been:

William Wallace – the use of Parliament Square

David Chidgey – the work of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Africa

Dominic Addington – the benefits of playing rugby and the future of sports funding in the UK

Emma Nicholson – the political situation in Pakistan

Hugh Dykes – Gaza and the West Bank

Bill Bradshaw – major highway projects

Lindsay Northover – the situation in Gaza

Patrick Glasgow – UK tourism industry

Liberal Democrat Private Members' Bills which are planned to be introduced are:

David Steel – House of Lords Bill

Matthew Oakeshott – House of Lords (member's taxation status) Bill

Anthony Lester – Co-habitation Bill

Rupert Redesdale – Dog Control Bill and Wildlife Welfare Bill

John Lee - Immigration (Discharged Ghurkhas) Bill

Dominic Addington – Community Amateur Sports Clubs (Support) Bill

Navnit Dholakia – Rehabilitation of Offenders Bill

Our Liberal Democrat Peers play a full part in all parliamentary activity; some are unsung heroes, like **Celia Thomas**, who used the procedures of the House to draw attention to the shortening of the backdating of social security benefits. Attracting more outside attention, was **Tom McNally's** motion to vote against the Freedom of Information Regulations which would have exempted MPs and Peers from making public their expenses, and the Government promptly withdrew the regulations!

As always, all our peers benefit from the expertise and professional help given to the group by our Whips Office staff of **Carolyn Rampton, Elizabeth Hanna, Tom Kiehl, Tim Oliver, Anne-Marie Christoffersen-Deb** and **Jake Holland**.

David Shutt
Chief Whip, House of Lords
January 2009

Parliamentary Party (Europe)

The hyperactivity of the French Presidency of the European Union, and the rush to get legislation through before the end of the European Parliament's mandate, has meant that there has been an extraordinary amount to do in recent months in a diverse range of fields, from environment to finance. All of our MEPs have been working hard to show that the Liberal Democrats are the only Party to have a consistent, and positive, policy on Europe, and that this can translate into better results for the people of Britain. In May and June we will be campaigning hard to get this message across, in conditions that will often be challenging. I know that we will be able to rely on the full support of the whole Party in doing this.

As leader of the UK delegation to the ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe) Group, **Andrew Duff** has been much engaged in preparations for the European election campaign within ALDE, the ELDR (European Liberal Democrat and Reform) Party, and the Liberal Democrat Federal Party. He has continued to work hard towards the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon and, as rapporteur, has been promoting his plans to reform the electoral procedure of the Parliament. In addition, he has led for ALDE in negotiations on European security and defence policy, and in October was elected as President of the Union of European Federalists. (www.federalists.eu) He is also writing another book.

Elsbeth Attwooll is Vice-Chair of the Fisheries Committee, and spokesperson for ALDE on fisheries issues. She is currently responsible for writing reports on 'Community action in relation to whaling' and 'Governance in the framework of the Common Fisheries Policy: the European Parliament, the Regional Advisory Council, and other actors', and is shadowing further reports on the ecosystem approach to fisheries management, applied research relating to the Common Fisheries Policy, ensuring compliance with Common Fisheries Policy rules, and conservation of fisheries resources through technical measures. As a member of the Regional Development Committee, Elspeth is the ALDE shadow for the van Nistelrooij report on 'The Green Paper on territorial cohesion and the state of the debate on the future reform of cohesion policy'.

The increasing seriousness of the financial crisis has meant that a large amount of financial regulation, on which **Sharon Bowles** focuses her attention, is passing through the Parliament. She is leading for ALDE on a number of key legislative dossiers in the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee, including those covering the protection of depositors' money when banks go bust, and banks' capital requirements. In January she was appointed by the Legal Affairs Committee to write an Opinion on credit rating agencies. Although she recognises the seriousness of the problems that must be addressed, she wants to see 'smart regulation', which does not stifle recovery of the financial markets and lengthen the recession.

Sharon has also been actively following a number of dossiers relating to the simplification of company law, the extension of copyright for sound recordings, and the use of private actions for damages as a tool of competition law enforcement. Her campaign for the equal recognition of civil partnerships across EU Member States gained widespread support.

Chris Davies believes that the most recent outstanding achievement in the environmental field has been the securing of funding to support the development of carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology, regarded by many as the primary means of reducing CO₂ emissions from fossil fuel power plants and major industrial installations. As CCS rapporteur he has fought over many months to secure support funding for a programme of large scale demonstration projects, which resulted in heads of Government eventually agreeing to his proposal for a financial mechanism worth 9 billion euros.

As a member of the Industry, Research, and Energy Committee, **Fiona Hall** was the ALDE MEP in charge of negotiating the Renewables Directive. This crucial piece of legislation will ensure that around 20% more of Europe's energy consumption comes from renewable sources by 2020, and in combination with the revision of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive will help tackle climate change, secure Europe's energy independence,

and create thousands of jobs. Fiona pressed successfully for additional emphasis on energy efficiency and for tighter sustainability criteria on biofuels.

In other areas, Fiona has been fighting for a European telecoms market which allows for cheaper cross-border calls and texts and promotes wider access to broadband internet, and has been pushing for proposals to make it harder for illegally harvested timber to enter the EU market. Finally, in September she led an election observation mission to Angola, and in October hosted a seminar on the 'Impact of the Small Arms Trade on African Development', which contributed to EU Member State governments formulating a 'common position' on arms exports.

A high-profile member of the Civil Liberties, Justice, and Home Affairs Committee, **Sarah Ludford** has successfully delivered legislation whereby biometrics can only be used in EU visas with tough data protection and data security conditions. Her hard fight to ensure that (foreign) children under 12 will not be fingerprinted has also ensured that European under-12s cannot be fingerprinted for EU biometric passports. This removes any 'Brussels' alibi for UK fingerprinting of under-12s for visa and passports.

She is working on a report on minimising the dangers of ethnic and other 'profiling' as a basis for suspicion in policing, anti-terrorism and border control. Her campaign for equal treatment of people with HIV/AIDS took another step forward with the adoption of a European Parliament call for Member States to outlaw discrimination against them, including in intra-EU free movement.

As a London MEP, Sarah has helped ensure that the breach of EU pollution standards will be a key battlement in the campaign against a third runway at Heathrow, and is keeping in close touch with the EU's Environment Commissioner.

As Employment and Social affairs spokesperson, **Liz Lynne** was dubbed the 'EU's equality rapporteur' after securing the adoption of a European Parliament report calling for an EU Directive to outlaw discrimination in access to goods and services covering all areas presently excluded, including disability, age, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The European Commission has since agreed to bring forward legislation to this end and Liz is now leading the ALDE group's response to this. Liz has also continued to lead within the wider ALDE group on the revision of the EU's Working Time Directive and has led calls for new legislation to protect healthcare workers from needle stick injuries. As spokesperson for agriculture for England and Wales, Liz has worked on many issues affecting the farming community, including sheep tagging. Liz has continued to campaign on issues such as Gaza, Kashmir, trafficking in human beings, as well as health issues including the new proposal for EU legislation on cross border healthcare, and on cancer and asthma.

Bill Newton Dunn remains concerned about the exponential growth of international cross-border crime which is affecting the UK and other countries in the EU. It is an issue which the Commission and national governments have made no serious effort to deal with, no political party dares to speak out about, and about which the statistics are kept secret. Despite this, Bill sees an opportunity for the Liberal Democrats to press hard on this issue, and proposes the creation of a new cross-border police force for the EU, hopefully led by the UK. He argues that cross-border crime destroys jobs, undermines society, and reduces legitimate tax revenue, and that it is only by raising public awareness of how severe this problem is that action will be taken to address it.

In light of the reduction of the number of East Midlands MEPs from six to five, Bill is anxious that a maximum effort is made to return a Liberal Democrat from the region to the European Parliament in June. To achieve this, he is trying to copy President Obama's use of internet campaigning to mobilise support.

Emma Nicholson continued her activities on the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Human Rights Subcommittee, recently helping to shape the Parliament's positions on the EU-India Summit in September and on the EU-India Free Trade Agreement. Her work on women's rights included orchestrating a first visit to the EU of the Iraqi Parliament's Committee on Women, Childhood and the Family, as well as work in Jordan for the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly's Committee on Women's Rights.

As the EU took over from the UN in Kosovo, Emma highlighted the situation of Kosovan Roma families suffering from lead poisoning due to contamination of UN camps. Emma pressed the French Presidency of the EU to take urgent action for resettlement of these families.

In her capacity as President of the Iraq Delegation, Emma was an organiser of the Parliament's Arab Week in November, widely reported as a success in the Parliament's efforts to promote intercultural dialogue. As Rapporteur on Kashmir, Emma held a conference in the wake of the Mumbai attacks in December, seeking peaceful means to promote the rights and cultural identity of the Kashmiri people.

As Vice-President of the European Parliament, **Diana Wallis** continues to be involved in reforming the Parliament. She led for the Liberals and Democrats group in negotiating new rules on transparency which will apply to MEPs and their assistants from 2009.

Diana remains Party Spokesperson on the Legal Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, where she continues to pursue greater access to justice for all EU citizens, most recently in December's report on e-Justice, setting out a strategy for the improved use of IT in Europe's legal systems.

She was also responsible for the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee's opinion on combating the problem of misleading directory companies. This opinion contributed to the report adopted in Strasbourg in December 2008. Diana is also responsible for the Parliament's report on a Regulation on the trade in seal products in the EU, with her report expected to be voted in Strasbourg in April.

As part of her work on Arctic governance issues she authored October's successful resolution on the Arctic. She also succeeded in her call for EU-wide commemoration of the Srebrenica genocide on July 11th.

Graham Watson has continued to execute his functions as Leader of the EU-wide ALDE Group of Liberals and Democrats. He has led delegations to the Southern Caucasus, the Far East, and Gibraltar, and has published pamphlets on migration and energy policy.

Graham has informed colleagues that after seven and a half years as Group Leader he will not seek to lead the Group in the next Parliament. However, he has responded favourably to colleagues' suggestions that he seek the Presidency of the European Parliament: hence on 5th January he launched the first ever public campaign for an office normally decided in small cabals in smoke-filled rooms.

Sharon Bowles
Liberal Democrat (European Parliament Party) Whip
January 2009

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 Rosalyn Gordon.

Current Situation (at 9th Jan 09):

Approved list – 25% women (207 women out of 839)

Selected PPCs – 25% women (67 out of 264 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. 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. The more approved candidates we have, the more who can apply to become selected as PPCs and, subsequently, increase the numbers of female MPs in future elections.

CGB has found that the best way to build up our numbers of good quality female approved candidates is by (1) inspiring women to get involved, (2) offering training events to build up skills, (3) providing a network of contacts and (4) mentoring women to get approved.

We also aim to take our campaign directly to the women we want to encourage to stand for election in as many regions as possible.

Below sets out the numerous projects we have undertaken to achieve our objectives:

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

- **New women** - 75 new women on approved list since 2005 General Election (new improved candidate approvals process should dramatically increase numbers).
- **CGB 'Inspiration and Training Days'** provide training and encouragement for those women who would like to get more involved in the Party. The Campaign ran 8 Inspiration Days in 2008, in the East of England, Western Counties, North East Scotland, Wales, and the West Midlands. These regional events have attracted 124 women members who are interested in getting more involved in the Party, and 76 (61%) of these women are interested in becoming approved candidates for the Party.
- **Mentoring scheme** continues to be popular, with 17 women interested in approval linked with CGB mentors in 2008.
- **Mailings** to 1083 new female Party members in October to encourage them to think about approval, attracting 19 requests for approval application packs.
- **Support & Encouragement**
 - We have contacted all women who have requested application forms to offer help and encouragement.

- In December, CGB followed up women who have requested application packs for approval but have not returned them, to encourage them to apply and offer help and support if needed. 168 women were contacted by phone or e-mail and this has prompted 12 requests for new application packs. Many of those contacted admitted that it was easy to put off applying for approval and were grateful for the prompt!

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

- **Winnable Seats** - Approximately 40% of our most winnable seats (according to 'swing to win' figures) have women PPCs.
- **Held Seats** – 4 out of the 6 held seats that have MPs standing down, have selected women (all of whom received support from the Campaign)
- **Selection Campaigns** - 18 approved women have been given help with selection campaigns by CGB mentors in the last six months, and 6 have gone on to be selected as PPCs.
 - One woman selected in December after receiving support from the Campaign said - *'I'm delighted and am very grateful to you and everyone involved in CGB - you gave me the boost I needed to get going with it, advice throughout, and support during my wobbly moments. My mentors were awesome!'*
- **By-Elections** - All women going for selection in by-elections have been offered full support by CGB.
- **Future Women MPs weekend** will be held on 27th – 29th March 2009 in High Wycombe. This event is aimed at women who are serious about becoming MPs, and offers expert training and skills development for both potential and current candidates.
- **Retention of PPCs** - The Campaign is currently working on a report to explore issues surrounding PPC resignations. A disproportionate number of PPCs who have stood down in the past year have been women (the report also includes men who have resigned). The report will explore possible reasons for this and suggest ways in which the Party might address these issues.
- **Support network** has been set up for current women PPCs, including a Facebook Group and mentoring scheme.
- **CGB online 'Resource Centre'** provides an additional source of advice and support, containing downloadable documents that may be useful to candidates, such as sample manifestos, hustings speeches and tips on becoming a PPC.

Additional projects/activity

- **Full training programme** at Federal Conferences in support of both above objectives.
- **CGB mailing list** currently has 501 subscribers who receive monthly updates on training, events and current PPC adverts, and this list expands weekly.
- **Fundraising** events and donations raised £13,209 for the Campaign in 2008. The CGB Auction at Autumn Conference was extremely successful and we hope to repeat this in 2009.
- **Publications** - We regularly submit articles and features to various Lib Dem publications to encourage women to attend our events and consider candidacy
- **Website** - The Campaign website (www.genderbalance.org.uk) and Facebook site are also regularly updated with relevant news and features.

Many thanks to our outgoing Chair, Jo Swinson MP, who has contributed so much time and effort to the Campaign, and we are grateful for her continuing support.

Thanks also to our Vice-Chairs, Jane Bonham-Carter and Dinti Batstone who has already proved an asset to the CGB team; Candy Piercy, who is Head of Training for the Campaign; All our mentors, trainers and volunteers who generously give their time in support of the Campaign; and to Vicky Booth, our Campaign Coordinator for her invaluable commitment and hard work.

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Rosalyn Gordon
Chair, Campaign for Gender Balance
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