

Why Vote Liberal Democrat?

What We Believe

Our Key Values

Equality. We believe passionately that whatever a person's race, colour, religion, age, disability, sex or sexual orientation they should be treated equally. We believe that every child should have an equal chance of getting on in life whatever their circumstances - and we oppose all forms of entrenched privilege and inequality. **Galatians 3 v 28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

Freedom. Our promise is to fight for the freedom, dignity and well-being of all individuals, including respect for their right to freedom of conscience and expression. That is why we will always defend the right of a person to freely speak, write, worship and associate with whoever they want. **Galatians 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.**

Building a strong and sustainable economy. This is absolutely central to our mission. We will do this by encouraging wealth creation; using and developing the skills of everyone, particularly young people; and promoting scientific research and innovation so technological change can be used for the benefit of all.

Jeremiah 29 v7 Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.

Fairness. While we recognise that the independence of individuals can be helped by the ownership of wealth and property, we do not believe that the market, on its own, can ensure the fair distribution of prosperity in society. Liberal Democrats therefore support the widest possible distribution of wealth and believe in the entitlement of all citizens to the social provision they need. **Micah 6 v 8 He has shown you, o mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.**

Strong communities run by local people for local people. We are determined to strengthen our democratic system with decisions taken at the lowest practicable level by the people most involved. We want communities to have a greater say in the decisions that affect their lives. **Proverbs 29 v7 The righteous care about justice for the poor**

Protecting creation. Our view is that each generation has a responsibility for the fate of our planet and that we have a duty to safeguard nature and the environment, in all its diversity, for the long-term continuity of life on Earth. **Psalms 24 v 1 The earth is the Lord's and everything in it.**

Responsibility for all the world's people. Liberal Democrats do not believe that our responsibility for justice and liberty can be confined by national boundaries; we are committed to fighting poverty, oppression, hunger, ignorance, disease and aggression wherever they occur on the planet. Setting aside our national sovereignty if necessary, we will always work with other countries to achieve the equitable and peaceful international community of nations we all want. **Matthew 25 v 40 Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.**

What We Have Delivered in Coalition: A Snapshot

The Economy and Jobs

We went into Coalition with the Conservative Party because we recognised that the economy was on the verge of a precipice and that we needed a stable Government that could bring down the huge financial deficit we inherited at the time.

In Government we have helped to halve the deficit. We have:

- Helped businesses to create over 1 million new jobs.
- Created a record number of apprentices, with over 2 million young people having started an apprenticeship since 2010.
- Pushed for more investment in key sectors like manufacturing, to help build up a new, hi-tech economy.

Fairer Taxes

Delivering a fairer tax system is central to our policy on jobs and the economy. At the last election we promised to deliver tax cuts to those in low paid jobs and we have been able to deliver on this. We have:

- Given a £700 annual tax cut to 24 million people through raising the tax threshold from £6,475 to £10,000 - with a further rise in the annual tax cut to £825 in 2015.
- Clawed back £9 billion from companies and individuals evading tax.

Helping the world's poorest

The Liberal Democrats have had a long-standing commitment to ensuring that the UK spends 0.7% of its Gross National Income on international aid to help some of the poorest people in the world.

Thanks to the Liberal Democrat MP Michael Moore, who put forward a Private Members Bill, this commitment is now enshrined in law, an achievement we are particularly proud of.

The Environment

In Coalition we have made sure that protecting the environment remains at the top of the political agenda. We believe that we cannot build a stronger economy, in the long term, without creating a greener and more sustainable economy as well. That is why we have:

- Created 200,000 new green jobs by investing in renewable energy. We have already doubled the amount of electricity generated from offshore wind.
- Planted 1 million trees in England as part of the first government tree-planting programme since the 1970s.
- Introduced a 5p plastic bag charge, in an attempt to help clean up our environment and protect Britain's natural habitat.

Education

We believe that the early years of a child's life are crucial in helping them to get on later in life. Because of this we have:

- Given 15 hours of free early years education to all 3-4 year-olds, and almost half of 2 year-olds.
- Provided free school meals to 1.3 million young children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 to ensure sure that all children get, at least, one hot meal every day.
- Set up a £2.5 billion Pupil Premium fund, which puts more money into schools, targeted at those pupils who need the most help.

Back in Government we will

We are developing a full programme of policies for our 2015 Election Manifesto, Government, but these are some of our key priorities:

Improve Mental Health Services and new Rights for Carers

Liberal Democrats are committed to improving our NHS and social care services. In Government, we would:

- Increase the annual NHS budget by £8 billion by the end of the next Parliament.
- Continue to fight for better NHS services for people with mental health problems, including extra funding for children's mental health services and improved access to evidence-based psychological therapies.
- Work hard to remove the outdated stigma and prejudice associated with mental ill health.
- Reduce waiting times for mental health appointments and treatment.
- Introduce a new 'Right to Respite' package for carers, including an annual 'Carer's Bonus' of £250.

Building More Affordable Homes

We recognise the importance of good housing for people to be able to live fulfilled lives. Liberal Democrats will:

- Set the target of increasing the rate of house building to 300,000 homes a year, all built to the Zero Carbon Standard.
- Appoint a ministerial task force on housing, hosted by the Cabinet Office, to make sure this housing programme is properly implemented.
- Bring forward proposals for at least ten new 'Garden Cities' in England, in areas where there is local support, to provide thousands of high quality new homes, with gardens and shared green spaces.

Jobs, the Economy and Growth

Liberal Democrats will:

- Invest in growing sectors like manufacturing that can provide high-skilled, sustainable jobs and open up more opportunities for more small and medium sized businesses.
- Develop the skilled workforce the UK needs to support this growth through a major expansion of high-quality and advanced apprenticeships - offering vocational education on a par with academic qualifications

A Better System of Justice

The Liberal Democrats believe that the criminal justice system doesn't do enough to rehabilitate offenders. Currently far too many people are simply 'warehoused' in prison. In Government, we will:

- Broaden the use of Restorative Justice to ensure nationwide coverage, making it a choice available for victims of crime should they wish.
- Reform prisons to become places of work, rehabilitation and learning.
- Establish a Women's Justice Board to oversee key issues around prevention, custody and rehabilitation
- Commit to reducing the numbers of young people from black and minority ethnic communities in custody.
- Ensuring that custody for young people is only an option in cases where there is genuinely no alternative.

Protecting the most vulnerable

- We will continue to campaign for new laws in the EU to crack down on **human traffickers**, including greater police co-operation and tougher sentences.
- In the Coalition we ended the routine indefinite detention of children for immigration purposes. Before the Coalition, 1,119 children were locked up in immigration centres; nearly 500 were under the age of five.
- We will continue to work to end the indefinite detention of asylum seekers.
- Tackle child poverty by working towards targets in the areas of reducing relative poverty, reducing gaps in life chances, and reducing entrenched poverty

Alleviating poverty in the UK: taking even more people out of tax

We still believe there is more to do to deliver fairer taxes for all. So back in Government, we would:

- Introduce measures to tackle corporate tax evasion and abusive avoidance strategies and make those who aid tax dodgers just as culpable as the tax evaders themselves.
- For the lower paid, raise the personal tax allowance to £12,500 in the first year of the next Parliament.

Taking Further Steps to Steward Creation well

Protecting the environment will continue to be a top priority for the Liberal Democrats. If back in Government we will introduce:

- A Heating and Energy Efficiency Bill, including a national programme to raise the energy efficiency standards for all Britain's households.
- A Zero Waste Britain Bill, with binding targets and a clear action plan to reduce waste and end non-biodegradable landfill.
- A Zero Carbon Britain Bill, including a target for reducing the carbon emitted from electricity generation.
- A Green Transport Bill, with measures to establish a network of charging points for electric cars and planning laws that ensure all new developments are designed around walking, cycling and public transport

This is just part of our programme of action for Government. For more information about what the Liberal Democrats have achieved in Coalition since May 2010 and are planning for the next five years visit the Liberal Democrat website here:

<http://www.libdems.org.uk/issues>



Liberal Democrat **Christian Forum**

“He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your
God.”

Micah 6:8