

REPORTS TO CONFERENCE
SPRING 2015
CONTENTS

Contents

Federal Conference Committee.....4

Federal Policy Committee.....9

Federal Executive.....17

Federal Finance and Administration Committee.....25

Parliamentary Party (Commons).....29

Parliamentary Party (Lords).....35

Parliamentary Party (Europe).....41

Campaign for Gender Balance.....45

Diversity Engagement Group.....50

Federal Conference Committee

Glasgow 2015

Last autumn we went back to Glasgow for the second year running. As in 2013 we received a superb welcome from the city.

We continue to ask all attendees to complete an online feedback questionnaire. A good percentage complete this but I would urge all members to take the time to participate. It is incredibly useful to the conference office and FCC and does influence whether we visit a venue again and if we do, what changes we need to try and make.

FCC Changes

Following the committee elections at the end of last year there were a number of changes to the membership of FCC. Qassim Afzal, Louise Bloom, Sal Brinton, Prateek Buch, Veronica German, Evan Harris and David Rendel either did not restand or were not re-elected. All played a valuable role on FCC and will be missed.

We welcome Jon Ball, Zoe O'Connell and Mary Reid onto the committee as directly elected members. FPC have elected two new representatives onto FCC and we welcome back Linda Jack and Jeremy Hargreaves in these roles. Both have previously served on FCC so are familiar with the way we work. One of the FE reps is also new with Kaavya Kaushik joining James Gurling as an FE rep on FCC. Finally the Welsh rep has changed and Jo Foster has joined us.

Sal Brinton did not stand for re-election to FCC but we are delighted to welcome her back to the committee in her role as President. Sal has been a vice chair of FCC for a number of years and her experience of FCC and support will be invaluable.

I was delighted to be re-elected as chair of FCC and am grateful to the committee for their support. I will be ably supported by two vice chairs. Geoff Payne was re-elected as one of the vice chairs and Sandra Gidley was elected as the other.

Liverpool 2015

This spring, the last conference of this Parliament, we return to Liverpool which hosted the first conference of this parliamentary cycle.

This Spring, we are not designating a 'conference hotel' but all the fringe meetings and the conference bar will be in the conference centre itself. The conference centre will be open until 2.00am on both Friday and Saturday night and hot and cold bar snacks will be available during the evening.

Motions

As always, every item on the agenda is still open to amendment. The deadline for submitting amendments – and also emergency motions and questions to reports – is 13.00 on Wednesday 10th March.

We continue to provide a drafting advisory service, and I would encourage all emergency motion and amendment

submitters to make use of it – those who have used it in the past have had a much higher chance of having theirs accepted. The deadline for the advisory service for amendments and emergency motions is 13.00 on Wednesday 24th February, so please do use the service. Amendments and drafts can be submitted via the website: www.libdems.org.uk/conference_submissions

Agenda

This conference is the final conference before the general election. This means that we do not have any policy papers from FPC but conference will be used as a platform for the forthcoming election.

We have also selected a range of motions and speeches and presentations with a real relevance to the General Election so that the conference agenda, together with our programme of training and fringe, makes coming to conference the ideal preparation for May 2015.

Following the conference motion on One Member One Vote, we have facilitated an FE consultative session on Friday afternoon over how this could be implemented in 2016.

Autumn 2015

This autumn we return for the first time in a number of years to Bournemouth. The conference takes place from 19th – 23rd September.

The deadline for drafting advice is 13.00 on Wednesday 17th June and for the submission of motions it is 13.00 on Wednesday 1st July.

Stewards

As always, conference can only take place due to the massive contribution and efforts of the volunteer stewarding team, who look after the exhibition, fringe, information desk, stage and auditorium, to ensure that we all get the most out of conference.

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. You can identify us by the badges we wear, with ‘FCC’ prominently displayed; there are also pictures of us (although looking at some of the photos it may be difficult to see the true likeness!) on page 2 of the Agenda and Directory.

FCC members are assigned to state and English regional parties, and SAOs. The idea is that they provide advice and assistance on submitting motions and when requested attend 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.

Thanks

The vast bulk of the hard work of organising conference throughout the year falls on the professional staff in the Conference Office at HQ: Lucy Hope and her team Emma

Price, Siân Waddington, Joe Edwards and Aisha Zeina. I would also like to express my grateful thanks to all the others who make conference possible: to all my colleagues on the Conference Committee; to all the staff at HQ, in particular the Policy Team, led by Christian Moon, who process the motions and prepare much of the agenda material; and of course to the stewards' team.

Conference is a fantastic event to be involved in and I'm proud to chair your FCC. I look forward to seeing you in Liverpool.

Andrew Wiseman
Chair, Federal Conference Committee
January 2015

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 Malcolm Bruce MP.

New Committee

I am delighted to have been elected as the new Chair of the Committee at this important time when we are finalising the manifesto for the general election, and I am looking forward in particular to working with the three Vice Chairs Julian Huppert MP, Julie Smith and Duncan Brack. I would like to take this opportunity to express the thanks of the Committee to those former members who did not continue onto the new FPC for their past service to the party. In particular I pay tribute to the work of my predecessor in the chair, Duncan Hames MP, who chaired the FPC for the last two years. During his time at the helm the FPC has done an enormous amount of policy work,

in particular the Pre-manifesto debated at the last conference. Duncan deserves enormous credit for his contribution.

FPC Work Programme

The policy papers debated at Autumn 2014 completed the programme of policy development for this Parliament set out in the *Facing the Future* review which was adopted at the Birmingham Conference in 2011.

The FPC has agreed that a major post-election policy review similar to the *Facing the Future* review of 2010-11 should take place again immediately after the election. This will be a consultative exercise to allow party members to help determine the party's priorities for policy development.

The FPC has also decided to set up a policy working group on sex work as mandated by conference, to report to the 2016 Spring Conference.

Other decisions on policy working groups to report to Autumn 2016 should be taken after the election, and the FPC will also to conduct a review of the working group process after the election, with a view to increasing inclusiveness.

General Election Manifesto

Following the Pre-Manifesto debate and further consultation input received since, the Manifesto group and the FPC have been drawing up the General Election Manifesto for publication at the beginning of the election campaign. This work is now at an advanced stage of preparation.

The FPC has submitted a motion highlighting key policies for the manifesto for debate at Liverpool.

FPC Links

To encourage policy debate across the party we have FPC representatives taking responsibility for promoting policy debate within the regions of England and to attend regional conferences where appropriate.

Region	
Devon & Cornwall	To be announced
East of England	Geoff Payne
East Midlands	Linda Jack
London	Mark Pack, Geoff Payne
Northern	To be announced
North West	Julie Smith

South Central	Keith House
South East	Kelly-Marie Blundell
West Midlands	Phil Bennion
Western Counties	Peter Price
Yorkshire & the Humber	Duncan Brack

The FPC has also appointed representatives to Party SAOs:

SAO	
ALDES	Jenny Woods
ALDC	Mark Pack
LGBT+	Evan Harris

WLD	To be announced
Liberal Youth	Kelly-Marie Blundell, Linda Jack
PCA	Julie Smith
Liberal Democrat Lawyers	Jonathan Marks
EMLD	Linda Jack
LDDA	Kelly-Marie Blundell

In addition, there is a Liberal Youth observer on FPC (Ryan Mercer) and an EMLD observer (Tahir Maher).

The Parliamentary Party Committees have invited participation by members of the FPC. These are currently:

Committee	
Co-Chairs Liaison	Malcolm Bruce MP
DCLG	Keith House
DECC & Defra	Duncan Brack, Phil Bennion
DWP	Kelly-Marie Blundell
DCMS	Evan Harris, Jenny Woods
Education & Families	Linda Jack
Health	Jeremy Hargreaves
Home, Justice & Equalities	Linda Jack,

	Jenny Woods
International (inc Foreign, Defence, DFID)	Peter Price, Sarah Ludford
Political & Constitutional Reform (inc Scotland, Wales, NI)	Peter Price, Evan Harris
Scotland Only meetings	Jeremy Purvis
Wales Only meetings	Peter Price
Transport	Phil Bennion
Treasury & BIS	Gareth Epps

Policy Staffing and Volunteers

The Policy Unit consists of Christian Moon (Head of Policy), Steve O’Neil (Policy Development Manager), Ed Simpson (Direct Communications Manager), Kelsey Smith (Correspondence Assistant) and Rosie Gray (Correspondence Assistant). We have also benefitted from the support of secondees from PWC, Mark Vaughan and Rowena Mearley,

and secondees from KPMG, Rosalind Huish and Tom Hooper. Interns since the Autumn Conference 2014 have included Mary-Kate Browne. The FPC is grateful for the hard work of staff, and for the contribution of volunteers and interns.

Malcolm Bruce 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 (Chair), three Vice-Presidents, the Leader, two additional MPs, one peer, one MEP, two councillors, three State Party reps and fifteen members

As we enter the busiest few months of the party's history, I'm delighted to be writing my first report to you as President. Tim Farron has done an excellent job as my predecessor, and I'd like to thank him for all the dedication and commitment that he has put in, and for being such a fantastic ambassador for the Liberal Democrats.

I also want to thank my fellow Presidential candidates, Daisy Cooper and Liz Lynne, for a fascinating and hard fought campaign. We met thousands of members over the months, both in formal hustings and smaller campaign visits. On behalf of the three of us, thank you for your welcome.

The party is currently firmly focused on the General Election and May's local elections. I'd like to say thank you for all that you are doing across the country, and to pay tribute to the

hundreds of candidates who have put themselves forward to stand in May. I'm immensely grateful for all that you do, and am sure that it will be exciting, wherever you are standing. We have a big challenge, but I'm confident that with the leadership of Paddy Ashdown on the Wheelhouse, and James Gurling on the Campaigns and Communications Committee, we have the best people in place to rise to the challenge.

As well as the work that I know you are doing in your areas, I wanted to highlight four things which I know are making a difference across the country. Firstly, Team 2015 are bringing together volunteers from across the country, and providing an invaluable resource, helping our members and supporters who don't live in target seats to make phone calls that make a real difference. I have sat alongside these volunteers who are working regularly across the country and they are inspiring and committed to liberal democracy. This work has only been possible thanks to the work of our new National Volunteer Coordinator, Jonny Steen, who has done a huge amount in a short space of time.

Secondly, we've now had our sixth consecutive quarter of membership growth in a row, reversing a decline that has plagued parties across the political spectrum for over a decade. It is almost unheard of for a party in Government to increase its membership, so if you're one of the many who have gone out and recruited someone to the party, thank you.

Thirdly, we've got the best digital tools in the business. With our website, Nationbuilder and our voter database, Connect, we have resources that our opponents are envious of. With

DataPlus, we can reach the voters that matter more effectively than ever before.

Fourthly, the fundraising team at HQ have done a sterling job of raising vital cash. The legacy fund is also going from strength to strength, with more and more seats encouraging their members to leave a gift to the party in their will.

None of these will count without the most important resource there is – you. Thousands of you are putting your hearts and souls into making sure as many Liberal Democrats as possible return to Parliament and local authorities in May. You are all superstars. Thank you.

Update on the Morrissey Report

I was pleased to see that Helena Morrissey's latest report indicated that the party has made significant progress in a number of areas. That's not to say that we're resting on our laurels. One of my priorities, along with our excellent Pastoral Care Officer, Jeanne Tarrant, is to ensure that complaints are followed up on promptly and effectively, and to ensure that we're reviewing our culture on an ongoing basis. We also have to cascade the work through the staff, parliamentarians and office holders who are changing the culture throughout the party.

To that end, the FE has commissioned an investigation into whether issues regarding race and ethnicity exist in the party. Our Parliamentary party is simply not diverse enough, and I

want to take this opportunity to find out why this is the case, and most importantly, tackle the problems.

Governance Review

To many of us in the Liberal Democrats, the complex web of party committees and bodies is impenetrable. We often see the same faces on our party committees, and many others don't know what committees exist, let alone what they do!

The FE has commissioned a Governance Review aimed at untangling this web, which will also start after the General Election. The scope of the review is yet to be determined, but I'm sure that the aftermath of the General Election will provide an excellent opportunity to take stock of our party's structures. We've already spoken to Chris Bones, who looked into our party structures back in 2008, and we're grateful for his advice and guidance. The recommendations of the Bones Review and James Gurling's local elections review from last will feed into this review to ensure that recommendations from both are considered.

We'll be consulting widely with members during the course of the review. This is your party, and it's important that you have your say on how it runs in the future.

One Member One Vote

In Glasgow, conference strongly endorsed proposals to introduce One Member One Vote (OMOV) in the Liberal Democrats. We've now started work on introducing the

Constitutional and Standing Order amendments to make this happen.

FE received a good deal of criticism for the amendments submitted last autumn, and we've taken this on board. Sue Doughty and the Internal Democratic Reform Group are working on a new set of amendments, in conjunction with members of the FCC and FPC. We've been given a clear mandate by conference to bring something that makes OMOV happen; it's up to us to make sure we get it right.

In line with advice received from FCC, we've agreed to submit the amendments to Autumn Conference rather than presenting them to you in Liverpool. We don't want either FE or members to be diverted on to the fascinating issue of constitutional changes during the election campaign period!

Committee elections

Elections to our federal committees, and of course for the party presidency, took place at the end of last year. As someone who was intricately involved in the process, I want to pay tribute to the staff at LDHQ and the many volunteers who gave up their time to help with the counting and smooth running of these elections.

As standard practice HQ usually conducts a review of these elections after May. The FE will be receiving a formal report soon after the General Election, in order to not distract from the important work of campaigning.

SAO/AO/Regional Contacts

The FE has allocated members to serve as liaison points with various SAOs, AOs and party regions. The full list is provided below:

Region	
Devon & Cornwall	Neil Fawcett
East Midlands	Josh Dixon
East of England	Dan Farthing
London	Jonathan Fryer
North East	Caron Lindsay
North West	Gordon Lishman
South Central	Martin Tod
South East	Anthony Hook
West Midlands	Chris White
Western Counties	Keith House
Yorkshire & the Humber	Kath Pinnock

<u>Specified Associated Organisations</u>	<u>Preference</u>
Agents' and Organisers' Association	Chris White
	Kath Pinnock
ALDES (Association of Liberal Democrat Engineers and Scientists)	Steve Jarvis
EMLD (Ethnic Minority Liberal Democrats)	Pauline Pearce
LDLA (Liberal Democrat Lawyers' Association)	Martin Tod
LGBT+ (Previously known as DELGA)	Rodney Berman
Liberal Youth	Josh Dixon
PCA (Parliamentary Candidates Association)	Kavya Kaushik
WLD (Women Liberal Democrats)	Sue Doughty
<u>Associated Organisations</u>	
ALDTU (Association of Liberal Democrat Trade Unionists)	Josh Dixon
Chinese Liberal Democrats	Candy Piercy
Green Liberal Democrats	Neil Fawcett
Humanist and Secularist Liberal Democrats	Gordon Lishman

LDDA (Liberal Democrat Disability Association)	Dan Farthing
LDEA (Liberal Democrat Education Association)	Kavya Kaushik
LDER (Liberal Democrats for Electoral Reform)	Martin Tod
LDCF (Liberal Democrat Christian Forum)	Chris White
LDEG (Liberal Democrat European Group)	Anthony Hook
LDFAF (Liberal Democrat Friends of the Armed Forces)	Candy Piercy
Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel	<i>TBC</i>
Liberal Democrat Friends of Kashmir	<i>TBC</i>
Liberal Democrat Friends of Pakistan	<i>TBC</i>
Liberal Democrat Friends of Palestine	Jonathan Fryer
Liberal Democrats for Peace and Security	Dan Farthing
Liberal International (British Group)	Candy Piercy

Sal Brinton
Party President
Chair of the Federal Executive

Federal Finance & Administration Committee

Report

2014 results

Overall 2014 was a very successful year with membership numbers increasing and a healthy surplus. The objective, reported in previous reports, of further reducing the overdraft has been achieved. A facility has been retained as a sensible contingency.

Income was £671k above budget due to a strong performance by the fundraising team led by the Party Treasurer, Lord Wrigglesworth. Conference income was also above budget and offset the lower than expected income from Ad Lib and the Federal levy. As reported to last year's autumn conference the cost of the membership incentive scheme exceeded budget, a sign of its success.

Also as reported to last year's autumn conference, expenditure was greater than budgeted due to unavoidable non-recurring additional costs. The higher than expected fundraising income also allowed the Party to increase its campaign expenditure above the level that had originally been budgeted.

The Party received two large legacies in the second half of the year totalling £1.35m. Of these a proportion was transferred to the relevant local party and to the Party's own election

fund. Together with other smaller legacies the Legacy Fund increased by more than £1m to over £1.25m. The growing importance of legacy income has resulted in the appointment of a full time dedicated legacy officer paid for from the legacy fund itself.

The net result is that the Party is expected to have turned an accumulated deficit of £713k as at the end of 2013 into an accumulated surplus of around £750k (subject to the audit of the statutory accounts) by the end of 2014.

2015 budget

The 2015 budget has, as in 2014, been split between an Operational and an Elections/Campaigns Fund. This split is to ensure that core operations are only funded from core income and that specific identified fundraising is used to pay for Elections Fund expenditure. Consideration has been given to a range of possible scenarios that could result after the General Election, mitigating financial risk.

The 2015 budget is for a combined deficit of £50,000 largely as a result of the £45,000 included to cover the Party's share of the cost of the membership incentive scheme.

The headline budget is included in appendix 1 attached.

PPERA

There has been a successful transition by the majority of Treasurers to the new electronic reporting system on Salesforce. Charlotte Harris left the job of Compliance Officer

in the autumn to be replaced by Darren Briddock from January 2015.

Also during the summer of 2014 the Electoral Commission conducted a spot audit on the Party's donation and compliance procedures and the Party received a report successfully passing the existing procedures with some suggestions for future improvements.

Thanks to all the Local Treasurers who helped with the successful completion and submission of the European Election and Scottish Referendum national expenditure returns last summer and autumn.

This year will of course see a national expense return for the General Election and next year for the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly elections almost turning them into a regular event every year.

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 <https://pefonline.electoralcommission.org.uk/search/searchintro.aspx>

Membership and Fundraising Services

The Federal Party ended 2014 with 44,680 members, an increase of 1,229 in the year. This continues the trend of consistent membership growth (the party grew by 950 in 2013).

Underlying this trend was a significant increase in the number of people joining the party each month. Membership recruitment has increased to an average of 458 per month in 2014, up from 152 per month in 2012. This increase is driven by two factors:

- The success of the membership incentive scheme in motivating local campaigners to grow their membership
- The implementation of a new membership CRM system, which has significantly increased online recruitment whilst reducing admin overheads, and allowing more staff time to be dedicated to membership development activities.

Risk Management

The FFAC Chair regularly reviews a Register of Risk with the Chief Executive and this Register, which takes into account both the likelihood and scale of impact of risks is also reviewed by the Directors of Liberal Democrats Ltd (LDL) (formerly the Trustees) of which the FFAC Chair is a member. The FFAC received a verbal update at every meeting and LDL now reports annually to the Federal Executive in relation to its risk monitoring role.

Peter Dunphy
FFAC Chair
January 2015

Commons Parliamentary Report to Conference

This is my final report of this Parliament. We have been in Government for almost five years and achieved so much. We have played a key role in strengthening the economy while safeguarding the poorest and most vulnerable in society. But there's more to do. So as we approach the election we must remind the public that only the Liberal Democrats ensured a stronger economy and a fairer society and only the Liberal Democrats can continue on this path.

Since we met in Glasgow we have continued to ensure a liberal stamp runs through government legislation. We have brought in protections to ensure that victims are supported and traffickers brought to justice (Modern Slavery Bill); put rehabilitation at the centre of young offenders sentencing through the establishment of secure colleges (Criminal Justice and Courts Bill); and assisted families with their childcare costs up to £2,000 per child per year (Childcare Payments Bill). In the week of writing alone we have also delivered our vow to the people of Scotland and completed the Commons process for much overdue reforms for the appointment of women Bishops. Being in Government can be so much fun.

Following Autumn's conference, you will have seen that we have made some changes to our Ministerial line-up. Norman Baker left the Home Office to be replaced by Lynne Featherstone, who in turn was replaced at DfID by our

colleague in the Lords, Lindsay Northover. In the Whips team, Mark Hunter and Jenny Willott stood down with Lorely Burt and Tom Brake taking over from them as Assistant Government Whips. Both ably double hat, with Tom keeping his position as the Deputy Leader of the House and Lorely continuing to PPS for Danny in the Treasury. As Nick stated at the time, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to Norman, Jenny and Mark and would not have achieved so much in Government without their influence, skill and determination.

Our relationship with our Conservative coalition partners remains business like. However as the election approaches it is clear that they are being increasingly troubled by the UKIP threat, which is clouding their judgement on a wide range of issues. It is also true that we have been legislating on areas where there are matters on which we genuinely disagree. The public disagreements on the measures within the Counter Terrorism Bill, have keenly demonstrated the differences between the two parties – most notably seen in Nick’s insistence that the so called Snoopers Charter be excluded from the Bill. This is of course nothing new, but the angry reaction from the Conservatives, and in particular, Theresa May, is a good demonstration of the desperation and insecurity that plagues the Tories following two defections and by-election victories of Douglas Carswell and Mark Reckless.

On the other side of the chamber, the Labour Party appear keen to continue to demonstrate why they are in Opposition. Their attendance in the chamber and scrutiny of government legislation has been minimal and often tokenistic. Their opposition days are limited to attacks on cuts, which they do not oppose and refuse to reverse; and motions outlining more ways to spend the same bankers bonus tax. On Energy, the

recent fall in the wholesale energy prices have left them defending a policy that only benefits the shareholders of the big six. On Health, they seem content criticising privatisation of a hospital they privatised and weaponising patient care. Ed Ball's performance during the Autumn Statement provided us with another fine example of why they are not capable of running the country's economy alone.

Much like last year, the Conservative Party have thrown the rules out the window with regards to sitting Fridays. We had three Bills called in the top seven slots: Andrew George's Affordable Homes Bill (1); Mike Moore's International Development (Official Development Assistance) Bill (2); and Sarah Teather's Tenancy (Reform) Bill (7). The Conservatives again pushed for the EU Referendum Bill through Bob Neill (3).

I am very pleased to report that we have secured Mike's Bill – despite the efforts of Tory headbangers, Philip Davies and Paul Nuttall at report stage – which now progresses in the Lords.

Andrew's Affordable Homes Bill passed its second reading, following a huge turnout from our MPs and Labour members to defeat the Tories. However the Tories in Government have denied it the Money Resolution it needs to progress. This is almost unheard of in the Commons and despite discussions to unblock the situation we had no choice but to use the same lever to halt progress on their EU Referendum Bill. Unfortunately and despite our best efforts, Sarah's Bill was talked out at second reading by a group of Tories who seem to make it their collective mission to frustrate all Friday business.

Co-Chairs/General Election Cabinet

In January Nick announced our General Election Cabinet. This team are our spokespeople for the upcoming election and will work alongside our current Co-Chairs system to get the best from our opportunities in the Chamber and across the media.

The Cabinet is:

Leader of the Liberal Democrats	Nick Clegg
Treasury	Danny Alexander
Home Affairs	Lynne Featherstone
Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs	Tim Farron
Business, Innovation and Skills	Vince Cable
Energy and Climate Change	Ed Davey
Defence	Nick Harvey
Transport	Susan Kramer
Women, Equalities & Families	Jo Swinson
Europe	Mike Moore
Education	David Laws
Health	Norman Lamb
Work and Pensions	Steve Webb
Communities and Local Government	Stephen Williams
Older people, Ageing and Care	Paul Burstow

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	Dan Rogerson
International Development	Martin Horwood
Culture, Media and Sport	John Leech
Scotland	Alistair Carmichael
Wales	Jenny Randerson
Northern Ireland	Lorely Burt
Justice and Attorney General	Simon Hughes
Leader of the House of Commons and Minister for London	Tom Brake
Constitutional & Political Reform, Leader of the House of Lords	Jim Wallace
Chief Whip in the House of Commons	Don Foster
Chief Whip in the House of Lords	Dick Newby
Parliamentary Private Secretary to the DPM	Simon Wright
Chair of the General Election Committee (Attending)	Paddy Ashdown
Deputy Chair of the General Election Committee (Attending)	Olly Grender
Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Party	Malcolm Bruce

(Attending)	
Party President (Attending)	Sal Brinton
Chair of Diversity Engagement Group (Attending)	Navnit Dholakia

Our Co-Chairs will continue to play a huge role in how we operate in the Commons and I would like to record again my thanks to all my colleagues who ensure that we play our part in parliament and Government. Sitting on Bill committees and SI committees isn't the most glamorous of work but is essential. I am hugely grateful to colleagues such as John Hemming, Ian Swales, Mike Thornton, David Heath, Annette Brooke and Andrew Stunell who carry out significant quantities of this work.

POLD

Personnel in the Whips Office remains unchanged since my last report, with Jack Fletcher (Head) and Georgina Orso (Deputy Head) continuing to provide essential support and organisation to our parliamentary operation. My Special Advisor, Ben Williams remains a source of invaluable advice. I would like to record my thanks to two civil servant members of our team, Emma Wilde and Mike McCarthy who support our governmental functions in the office.

The Parliamentary Support Team under the leadership of Jamie Saddler (Head) and Mark MacDonald (Deputy) continue to keep subscribing colleagues well briefed on events within Parliament. They have been joined by Victor Chamberlain and Rosie Shimell, who work alongside Bradley Tully in the Officer roles.

Don Foster MP

Lords Parliamentary Report to Conference

Legislation

The final session of this Parliament has once again seen a large number of Bills considered in the Lords.

Deregulation Bill

This is a wide ranging Bill that forms a key part of the Government's 'red tape challenge' to reduce the regulatory burden on businesses and the public. Lib Dem Government Whip William Wallace is responsible for piloting the Bill through the Lords.

Ben Stoneham has led an examination of number of parts of the Bill of concern to Lib Dems, in particular provisions on the licensing of taxis.

We have also used the Bill to revive proposals made by Sarah Teather MP to outlaw retaliatory evictions. Sarah's Private Member's Bill, which would have offered protection for those who are evicted by their landlord after asking for reasonable repairs, was sadly scuppered in the Commons by right-wing Conservative MPs. Lib Dem Peers were successful in using

the Deregulation Bill to get these new protections for tenants onto the statute book.

Criminal Justice and Courts

This was a difficult Bill for many Lib Dems across both House of Parliament, in particular in relation to changes proposed in the Bill to judicial review.

Lib Dem Peers, led by Jonathan Marks, were successful in securing major changes to outlaw ‘revenge porn’, helping to complete a campaign begun by Julian Huppert and other Lib Dem MPs and activists, to create a criminal offence of sharing intimate photos of another person without their consent.

On the issue of judicial review, it was clear that many of members of the Group were concerned about the proposals. A clear message was communicated within Government of these concerns, but we were initially unable to secure the concessions necessary to satisfy the Lords. However, working closely with Ministerial colleagues, , we were able to secure a number of changes that Lib Dem Peers had proposed, which substantial increase judicial discretion within the reforms.

Initial concerns about the Bill’s proposals for girls and under 15 year old boys to be eligible for inclusion in secure colleges also resulted in guarantees that the provisions could only be implemented following further Parliamentary approval.

Counter Terrorism Bill

Lib Dem Peers, led by Sally Hamwee, have taken an active interest in scrutinising this Bill to ensure it balances the need to protect against the potential threats to our security and ensures that our civil liberties are protected.

Nick Clegg made it clear that it would be impossible for Lib Dems in the Lords to accept the Bill without ensuring there was judicial oversight of measures that enable the authorities to temporarily prevent a person returning to the UK having, for example, fought in Syria for ISIL. We were pleased that we were indeed able to ensure that amendments were brought forward to address this vital issue and to reflect the concerns of the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism.

Lib Dems also strongly opposed amendments by Lord King and others to use the Bill to revive the Draft Communications Data Bill (the so-called Snoopers Charter). We remain strongly opposed to these measures which would seriously undermine civil liberties.

International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Bill

This Bill is a major Lib Dem piece of legislation having been brought as a Private Members' Bill by Michael Moore MP. Jeremy Purvis has picked up the Bill in the Lords, where Lindsay Northover, as the Lib Dem Minister within DfID responded to the debate.

The Bill would enshrine in law our commitment to spending 0.7% of Gross National Income on overseas aid. Lib Dems

have strongly supported the Bill through the Lords, despite opposition from backbench Labour and Conservative Peers.

Wales Bill

This Bill devolves a significant package of tax and borrowing powers to Wales, giving the Welsh Government and the National Assembly for Wales more levers and incentives to boost economic growth. The Bill also enables the Welsh Government to hold a referendum on income tax powers.

The Lib Dem team on the bill was led by Martin Thomas, Mike German and Paul Tyler. Thanks to the hard work of the team, including our own Wales Minister Jenny Randerson, the Lib Dems ensured that the Bill was amended to include the provision that all 16 and 17 year olds will be able to vote in any referendum on income tax powers to Wales. This represents real progress in our party's commitment to see 16 and 17 year olds vote in all referenda and elections throughout the United Kingdom.

Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill

This Bill is another thoroughly Lib Dem piece of legislation produced by Vince Cable and Jo Swinson. Ben Stoneham is leading on the Bill in the Lords. Provisions of particular note are measures to end exclusivity on zero hour contracts and

measures to require transparency about who owns companies - a long time Lib Dem policy.

Lib Dems were also pleased that the amendments in the Commons by Greg Mulholland MP to allow pubs to opt for a 'free tie' option were not overturned in the House of Lords.

New Peers

Since our last report six new Lib Dem Peers have joined our parliamentary party in the Lords. We are very pleased to welcome Chris Fox, Dave Goddard, Barbara Janke, Kath Pinnock, Paul Scriven and Julie Smith to the group. They bring a wide range of expertise, particularly in local government and are already playing an active role both in the House and in campaigning. They are joined by Sarah Ludford, who returns to the Lords group having been unable to take up her seat during her time as an MEP.

In addition, Lib Dems also gained a new hereditary Peer in Raymond Oxford and Asquith, who brings a wealth of experience to the group, particularly on foreign affairs, Russia and Ukraine. Raymond's appointment was made following the by-election caused by the sad death of our colleague Robert Methuen.

Campaigning

Lib Dem Peers continue to take an active role in campaigning, in particular in making visits to constituencies across the Country. We are likely to meet our target of 1000 constituency visits by the end of next month and will be

looking to ensure that Peers play an active role in the General Election, particularly in held and target seats. If you would like to organise a Peers visit to your seat please contact: louise.libdems@gmail.com

Media

The Lords Group have continued to increase our media output. Around 30 of our Peers now actively engage in social media, particularly Twitter. We have also greatly increased the number of blogs and other comment pieces produced by the Lords Group. In the national media Lib Dem Peers have also had a number of significant successes, particularly surrounding the campaign to ban revenge porn, where we lent strong support to Julian Huppert's campaign to end the practice.

Staff

The Lords Group continues to be supported by a strong team in the Whips' Office. The Group's Parliamentary Assistant, Polly Martin, has been seconded to Lib Dem HQ to assist the Wheelhouse until the General Election. Louise Furness has been appointed to cover the role in Polly's absence. Humphrey Amos and Giles Derrington have now taken up their roles as Co-Heads of the Whips' Office after the departure of Laura Gilmore in autumn last year.

Lord Newby

Parliamentary Party Report (Europe)

I have been continuing to represent Liberal Democrat values and UK interests in Brussels. The Liberal ALDE Group remains the fourth-largest political group, with 68 members from 20 different countries, and continues to play a pivotal role in the European Parliament. As ALDE Coordinator on the Women's Rights committee I have had the opportunity to shape the group's priorities and policies for the next five years and have ensured that the environment and tackling climate change are placed high up on the agenda.

It has been an eventful six months, with the new European Commission under President Juncker taking office in November with an ambitious agenda for reform. I will be working closely with our five Liberal Commissioners including Sweden's Cecilia Malmstrom, who as Trade Commissioner will be negotiating the forthcoming EU-US trade deal, and Estonia's Andrus Ansip who is leading the much-needed creation of a digital single market in Europe. I will also be liaising with the UK's Commissioner Lord Hill, who will be

spearheading the creation of a capital markets union that is set to give an important boost to jobs and growth in the UK and Europe.

Environment Committee

I am ALDE's lead negotiator on the EU's new air quality law and have been working for ambitious and workable national air pollution limits. One third of the most harmful pollutants in the UK come from continental Europe and so it is vital that we put in place strict limits across the EU. The European Commission had proposed to withdraw this piece of legislation as part of its drive to cut red tape. I campaigned hard to keep the air quality law on the table and thanks to pressure from campaigners and MEPs it will now be going ahead as planned, with a committee vote scheduled for July 2015. This is with no thanks to Conservative MEPs who voted against key amendments in European Parliament resolutions calling for the air pollution law to be kept. Sadly the Commission is going ahead with its plan to withdraw the waste package, which sets out targets to improve recycling and resource-efficiency. The Commission has said it will come up with a more ambitious proposal later in 2015 and I will be keeping up the pressure to ensure it sticks to its word.

In November 2014 I launched a campaign for an EU action plan against wildlife crime with the Sunday Mirror. Wildlife crime is now the fourth largest illegal trade in the world, fuelling instability and driving many species to the brink of extinction. After having sent a letter to the European

Commission co-signed by 81 MEPs, I have now set up a cross-party steering group of MEPs to keep up the pressure on the Commission to address this pressing issue.

Women's Rights Committee

I have been working to raise awareness of the issues surrounding Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), ensuring that the EU's commitments to ending FGM are appropriately resourced and implemented. I am also the lead Liberal MEP on a report regarding equal pay between men and women, and have been pushing for an EU-wide strategy to tackle violence against women. In the second half of this year I will be drafting a report on the implementation of the anti-trafficking directive, holding the Commission and Council to account on their progress to tackle human trafficking.

Development Committee

I have raised the importance of universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene in the EU and UN's Sustainable Development Goals, engaging with the Commission to keep this high on the agenda. I have also continued my work on protecting biodiversity in the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, asking questions on the conservation of elephants and the state of play on the trade of hunting trophies.

Quaestor

I am often asked what my role as a Quaestor involves. I represent MEPs on the Bureau which is the European Parliament's governing body. This gives me privileged access to high-level meetings and influence over key decisions that affect MEPs' everyday work. I am also in charge of overseeing exhibitions and artworks in the European Parliament and am a member of the high-level working group on gender equality and diversity.

Media

I have maintained a strong presence in the national and regional media, aiming to highlight the benefits of the UK's EU membership as well as the damage done to the UK's influence by many Conservative and UKIP MEPs. I enjoy communicating my work through social media and in November took part in a question and answer session about the EU with young people on Twitter with Sky News. I also continue to dispel some of the untruths about the EU peddled by the UK media through my Euromyth Buster Facebook page which you can follow here:

<https://www.facebook.com/EuromythBuster> My monthly newsletter reports back on the work I have been doing in the European Parliament and across the South East region, you can subscribe to it here: <http://bearder.us4.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=0197b9821b1c6a6a085a7c406&id=cbbc1df445>

Campaign for Gender Balance Report

The Campaign for Gender Balance was established by the Federal Executive in response to the conference debate on gender balance in September 2001. Since the launch of Liberal Democrat Women in June 2013, CGB's aims and objectives have been incorporated into the new LDW Constitution, with Candy Piercy (Coordinator, Representation of Women Group), taking forward the CGB remit.

The Representation of Women Group, working with the Diversity and Outreach team in LDHQ, continues to form a key central initiative for attracting and supporting women candidates within the Party, and it implements a range of training, mentoring and support activities in order to increase the number of women standing for Parliament.

Current selection figures (as of 30th January 2015):

- 40% of candidates selected in strategic seats (including held seats) are women
- 26% of the currently selected candidates (excluding held seats) are women
- Out of the 11 seats where sitting MPs are standing down, 5 women have been selected and 2 are from BAME groups.

Many of these women have attended our annual Future Women MPs Weekend in the past and the others have benefited from CGB mentoring and support before and throughout their selection campaigns.

Current approval figures (as of 30th January 2015)

- 28% of approved candidates are women

One of our key aims in 2015 and in the run up to the General Election is to ensure that all potential women candidates have all the encouragement, skills and support necessary to become effective Parliamentary candidates. We continue to work closely with the Elections and Field team at HQ, and with the Candidate Leadership Programme to ensure that this happens. We continue to focus on increasing female representation in Parliament; in particular we are looking at how we can ensure that the policies and culture of the party and relevant Parliaments is conducive to electing more women Parliamentarians in addition to our on-going support for potential women candidates.

Whilst our training and mentoring programmes has ensured a high level of success for women candidates in strategic and held seat selections, more needs to be done to encourage more women to come forward for approval. We have increased the proportion of women on the approved list from 23% ten years ago to the current level of 27%. We need a significant effort post 2015 to increase this to a minimum of 40%.

Activities since last report to Conference

- **Training:** CGB ran 15 training sessions at the 2014 Autumn Conference, and will run 4 training sessions at the 2015 Spring Conference. Due to the stage of the electoral cycle, these sessions predominantly focused on key information and skills that help potential candidates to win target/winnable Parliamentary seat selections.
- **Inspiration Days** have taken place in London and Watford, which aim to encourage and support women who want to get more involved with the Party. Thirty women attended in total and the feedback was very positive.
- **Road to Westminster:** The LDW Road to Westminster Campaign aims at bringing together volunteers to help and support women standing in our most competitive seats. A successful event was held in OxwAb in October 2014 and 4 more events are planned in various seats before the General Election.

- **Training webinars:** weekly training webinars have been organised for women PPCs running until late March 2015
- **LDW Auction at Conference :** LDW successfully raised money at auction led by Don Foster MP at Autumn Conference
- **Selection mentoring:** CGB mentors advised and supported a number of women through their strategic seat selections. This mentoring is more intensive than the word normally implies. The women candidates who were mentored tell us it was a very important factor in their success.

Current and planned activities

- **Mentoring:** CGB provides ongoing mentoring to women candidates at different stages of their political careers, including a number who applied for the Leadership Programme. We view the Leadership Programme as complementary to the work of CGB. CGB focuses on encouraging women to become Westminster Parliamentary candidates, at whatever stage in their political career development they may be in.
- **Training:** A number of Inspiration Days are planned to mobilise women to consider candidacy for Westminster even at this late stage. We are also

planning workshops for groups of women PPCs in seats close to each other and in LDHQ, which focus on resilience training, leadership and on team building.

- **Newsletter:** An e-mail newsletter is sent out at least once every month to almost 1000 subscribers, including details of training events, relevant news items and seat adverts.
- **Monitoring approval and selection figures:** The Campaign continues to closely monitor information regarding approval and selection figures, to gain an accurate picture of the women's representation within the Party.
- **Liverpool Spring Conference:** A full programme of training is planned for Spring Conference
- Due to the stage of the electoral cycle, the next **Future Women MPs Weekend** will be held in November 2015/January/February 2016.

As ever thank you to all our trainers, mentors, LDW members and other supporters without whom we wouldn't be able to continue our good work.

Ros Gordon
Chair, Liberal Democrat Women

Candy Piercy
Head of LDW Representation of Women Group CGB
Project

Diversity Engagement Group

The Diversity Engagement Group (DEG) was established to oversee the achievement of the Party's equality and diversity priorities. The group brings together nominated 'Champions' from all sections of the Party in leading the strategic and accountable body responsible for delivering our diversity agenda and reporting back to every Federal Conference. DEG acts as a steering group for the Diversity and Outreach team based at Liberal Democrat HQ. and is chaired by Lord Navnit Dholakia.

The work of DEG is structured in the following ways -

I. Internal engagement:

Includes increasing representation within the party, as well as diversity awareness and unconscious bias training.

II. External engagement:

Includes campaigning in diverse communities, community outreach projects and other work that builds the influence and reputation of the Party more widely.

III. Communications:

Includes increasing the visibility of work being done within the Party and ensuring that internal and external communications reflect diversity and inclusion.

Internal Engagement:

- An **SAO training and capacity-building day** focusing on campaign skills, social media and key messages was held in January 2015. Representatives from Liberal Youth, LDW, LDDA, LGBT+ and EMLD attended, and the day received very good feedback
- **Unconscious Bias** training is delivered at every Federal Conference and for local and regional parties on request
- **Regional Diversity Champions** continue to deliver activities at a regional and local party level – examples of recent regional activities include
 - o **Two Inspiration Days**, aimed at getting more women members active within the Party, have been organised by Regional Diversity Champions in London and Watford. 30 women attended and the feedback was very positive. More Inspiration Days are being planned in the run-up to the GE.
 - o A **training day for BAME activists** is planned in Solihull in January
 - o A **training day for BAME activists** is planned in Watford in February
- **Approval and selection data** is regularly monitored and analysed in order to gain an accurate picture of candidate diversity within the Party.

- The HQ team continues to run key activities on behalf of LDW **Campaign for Gender Balance** (*see separate report*), providing support for potential women candidates going for Parliamentary approval and selection. This includes a package of **women-only training** at Conference.
- Training and mentoring support continues as part of the **Candidate Leadership Programme**
- **Twenty-five Leadership Programme candidates** have been selected as PPCs (*as of 6th January 2015*) - 15 women, 8 BAME candidates and 2 LGBT candidates.

External engagement

- **The HQ team is working with MPs and organisers in held and strategic seats with the most diverse populations** in order to identify and discuss best practice, and how further work can be done.
- **Links are being built and developed with a range of relevant external organisations** including Patchwork Foundation, 3FF, Young Black Grads, Islamic Relief, etc.
- **A training weekend** for BAME young leaders is planned in London in March 2015
- **Community briefings** have been produced and distributed to teams in held and strategic seats.
- **“Whose Vote are you missing: Campaigning in Diverse Communities”** has been updated and is being distributed to key party stakeholders.

- **Key issues briefings** for diverse communities have been discussed with the policy team, produced and will be distributed.
- **Encouraging MPs, Peers and senior LibDems to attend communities' events and providing support.**

Communications

- The HQ team presented to the House of Commons Parliamentary Party in October 2014 to increase awareness of the Diversity and Outreach team's work and encourage cooperation
- A monthly **Diversity Newsletter** highlighting key events, government announcements and SAO campaigns is being distributed to key stakeholders within the Party.
- A **Diversity and Outreach Twitter** feed was created in June 2014 – follow us @LibDemDiversity
- **Arfan Bhatti has taken on additional responsibilities in terms of specialist press**, and we have seen a significant increase in the number of press releases and articles

Lord Navnit Dholakia

Chair, Diversity Engagement Group, January 2015