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Update on government

SINCE going into the Coalition Government in May 2010 to help steer the country out of an economic crisis, Liberal Democrat ministers have achieved many benefits for the British people, which the national press often choose to ignore

The BBC estimates that we are implementing 75% of the policies in our manifesto, compared to just 60% of the Conservative Manifesto.

This supplement to your local Ad Lib newsletter explains what our party has achieved at national level.



"We all know that we did not take the easy path last [year]. But we did take the right path. Yes, being in Government with the problems we inherited is hard. Explaining why we're having to make cuts is hard. And being in Coalition with another party isn't always easy either".

- Deputy prime minister *Nick Clegg, March 2011*)

Success in Hampshire

WHILE Fareham had no council elections this May, Liberal Democrats had good results in neighbouring areas which did. We kept control of Eastleigh Borough Council and Portsmouth City Council, and remain just one seat away from control of Winchester. It was particularly pleasing to gain a seat in Whiteley and keep a strong grip on Wickham, the Winchester wards which border on Fareham.

Portsmouth Lib Dems achieved their best results ever, in contrast to some northern cities, where Labour gained seats from voters who seem to have forgotten the legacy of economic problems left by the previous government (see back page).

Greener, fairer, more liberal

From constitutional reform to the environment, Liberal Democrat policies and principles are making this country more green, more fair - and more liberal.

Among our achievements are:



Fairer taxes

- Lifting 900,000 lowest earners out of tax completely

A fair start

- The Pupil Premium:- £2.5bn extra funding for the poorest children
- Extending childcare provision to include poorest two-year-olds
- Reform of education maintenance to help the neediest students

Green economy

- The Green Deal: 100,000 jobs to insulate and upgrade homes, reducing carbon emissions and saving money
- A Green Investment Bank
- Scrapping Heathrow's third runway



Older people

- Restoring link between pensions and earnings with a triple lock to guarantee a 2.5 per cent rise
- £140 per week flat rate pension
- Increasing Winter Fuel Allowance
- £400m for carers' respite care

Banking

- Raising £2.5bn per year via a banking levy
- Reforms to get banks lending to businesses

Civil liberties

- Abolition of ID cards
- Outlawing finger-printing of children without permission
- Moving to end child detention in immigration

Regional growth

- £1.4bn Regional Growth Fund – job creation across the UK

Health

- Reforms to make the NHS more efficient while resisting privatisation.

Improving our environment



Nick

Clegg and Huhne launch dramatic action plan to beat climate change



Chris

THE cross-Government action plan on climate change sets out strict actions and deadlines for Whitehall to live up to its green ambitions, meet tough domestic carbon targets and encourage greater action internationally.

The Carbon Plan has been published in draft with the Government inviting the public and organisations to give their views on the contents. A final version will be published in the autumn and then updated annually.



The draft plan highlights three key changes that will be required across the UK economy, including the way electricity is generated, the way homes and businesses are heated and the way people travel. Internationally, the plan sets out how the UK will work within the European Union.



In May Chris Huhne and Vince Cable announced proposals for binding carbon targets in the run-up to 2050, ensuring that the UK meets our ambitions to cut carbon emissions. We are setting an

Improving education

Too many children are still leaving school without the knowledge and skills to be successful. We will aim to cut class sizes, set teachers free to spend more time in the classroom and raise standards in every school with more money for things like one to one tuition. In Government we are delivering on our commitment for a fully-funded pupil premium, through which we will spend an extra **£7 billion** on giving the poorest children a better start in life.

That is why Sarah Teather is providing free pre-school education to every two year-old from a poor background. That is why we have introduced a pupil premium putting **£2.5 billion** extra into schools that take on the children most likely to fall behind.

Liberal Democrat party policy remains to phase out higher education tuition fees, but in the circumstances of the coalition that was a policy we could not deliver. We have used our position in the Coalition to do everything



Sarah Teather MP
Minister of State
for Education

Help for the needy



Simon Hughes MP

Simon Hughes MP. Lib Dem deputy leader and the government's advocate for access to education, helped to bring in a successor to the Education Maintenance Allowance which will allow thousands of less well-off students to continue their studies.

An additional £15 million will be set aside to provide bursaries of £1,200 for the most vulnerable students, for example those in care, with severe disabilities or single parents living on their own.

Action in Europe

The South-East's two Lib Dem Euro-MPs are among the hardest working members in Brussels

Protecting the rain forests



Catherine Bearder

Catherine Bearder MEP is backing landmark new trade agreements to stop illegal logging and to protect our forests.

The EU has signed two voluntary agreements, with Cameroon and the Republic of the Congo, to tackle this problem and ensure imported timber is

legally sourced in future.



More clout than the Chancellor

Sharon Bowles MEP has been named the top Brit in the Global Finance Strategy's 50 most influential figures in global financial regulation.

This is due to her work as Chair of the European Parliament's Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee. She was assessed as having more clout than Chancellor George Osborne, former Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Bank of England Governor Mervyn King



Sharon

Making bankers pay for their mistakes

Sharon is calling for banks to make sure staff rewards match performance by paying bonuses using "contingent capital" instead of Shares.

New rules will force banks to pay between 40% - 60% of their bonuses in either contingent capital, or in shares deferred for at least three to five years.

Sharon states: "These new rules mean that if a bank suffers heavy losses, it will be the bankers responsible and their bonuses that will take the first hit, not the taxpayers."

Improving our democracy



A collection of myths and false claims helped defeat the Yes to AV campaign in the recent referendum, painting the Alternative Vote as somehow less democratic than first past the post. Yet in the same period, the Government put more

Now Nick Clegg and the Prime Minister have announced that the first elections to a reformed upper chamber will take place in 2015 - for a 300-member chamber, with each representative eligible for a single term of three parliaments.

The Coalition Agreement committed the Government to supporting a wholly or mainly elected second chamber. That is why the proposals contain two options: 100% elected, or 80% elected

Truths behind the myths

These are some of the myths that were being trotted out by the No campaign and what to say in response if you hear them.

Myth 1: AV will cost us £250 million

The truth: The only piece of equipment you need to vote with AV is a pencil.

Australia has hand counted its votes for eight decades. The £130 million of make-believe machines don't exist in Australia and won't exist in the UK.

Myth 2: AV helps the BNP

The truth: The BNP told their supporters to back a 'No' vote.

Currently, because MPs can get elected with support from less than 1 in 3 voters, there is always a risk that extremist parties can get in.

The BNP have learnt this lesson, and have used it to scrape wins in town halls across Britain. With AV, no-one can get elected unless most people back them.

Myth 3) No one uses AV

The truth: AV is a tried and tested system.

In Britain millions of people in businesses, charities, and trade unions already use it. Political parties use it to elect their leaders.

MPs themselves use it to elect their Speaker and their officials.

Liberal Democrats will continue to set out honestly the case for a more proportional and fairer voting system, so that you can truly choose the government you want.

Improving our finances



Getting your share of the banks

Earlier this year the co-chair of the Liberal Democrat parliamentary treasury committee, Stephen Williams, announced policy proposals to give shares in RBS and Lloyds to the British people.



In his pamphlet *Getting Your Share of the Banks*, Stephen Williams argues that the mass distribution of shares in the banks is the fairest way of giving taxpayers a share of the rewards while ensuring the Treasury gets a return on its investment.

Stephen Williams said: “There is a danger that when the banks return to the private sector, it is business as usual.

There is a general feeling in this country that we need to get something positive in return for the bailout.

HM Treasury needs to recover the approximately £66 billion it spent bailing out the two banks.

This pamphlet puts forward an idea for giving us all a stake in the banks, for HM Treasury to clear its debt and restore public confidence in the state-owned financial institutions.

Useful web sites:

Liberal Democrats Official web site:

www.libdems.org.uk



Fareham Liberal Democrats:

www.farehamlibdems.org.uk

The challenge - and beyond



Vince Cable

Business Secretary Vince Cable says it has been a challenge for the government to explain to the public how bad a state the economy is in.

He told the Guardian the country was poorer because of the banking collapse and recession - and from a "squeeze" from the changing world economy.

Vince Cable said the financial crisis had done 'profound damage'

"We have had a very, very profound crisis which is going to take a long time to dig out of," he warned.

Mr Cable said: "It is a challenge to us to communicate it better. I don't think it is understood that the British economy declined 6 or 7%..."

"We are actually a poorer country, mainly because of the banking crash, the recession that followed it and partly due to the squeeze we are now under from the changing balance of the world economy."

He added: "Britain is no longer one of the world's price setters. We take our prices from international commodity markets driven by China and India.

"That is something we have got to live with and adjust to. It is painful. It is a challenge to us in government to explain it. The political class as a whole is not preparing the public for how massive the problem is."

'Model that failed'

"Ultimately it comes back to this defensiveness and an unwillingness to accept that Britain was operating a model that failed... it makes it more difficult for us to get through to the public about the scale of the problem. That is to everyone's loss."

He said Britain's deficit was "only one of the symptoms" of the financial crisis.

"We had the complete collapse of a model based on consumer spending, a housing bubble, an overweight banking system - three banks, each of them with a balance sheet larger than the British economy.

"It was a disaster waiting to happen and it did happen. It has done profound damage and it is damage that is going to last a long time." (*BBC 21st May, 11*)

We've tried to set out honestly what's been done and why in the Lib Dems' first year in government. In future issues we hope to bring news of benefits that will begin to flow from these tough decisions.