

## Dates for the diary

Saturday 24 October, **Quiz Evening**, Swindon Village Hall, 7.30 pm. Tickets £7.50 to include supper. Phone Heather Turner on 574227 to let us know you are coming.

Friday 13 November, **Annual Dinner**, Renaissance Restaurant, Gloucestershire College. Guest Speaker Party President Baroness Ros Scott. £20 per person. Contact Heather Turner on 574227

Wednesday 18 November 2009, **Annual General Meeting**, Municipal Offices, 7.30 pm. All members welcome. Contact Andy Williams on 224889.

Monday 23 November 2009, **Benhall & The Reddings, Hesters Way, and Up Hatherley AGM**. 6 Wards Road 7.30 pm. All branch members welcome. Contact Heather Turner on 574227.

For a full listing of events see the website at [www.cheltlibdems.org.uk](http://www.cheltlibdems.org.uk)

## Do you want to be a Borough Councillor?

We are beginning the process of selecting our candidates for next year's Borough Council elections.

Twenty seats in Cheltenham are up for grabs. We hold ten and will be working hard to make gains from both the Conservatives and the PAB group.

Please let us know as soon as possible if you are interested.

Although the job is unpaid, a "backbench" councillor receives an allowance of £4,945 a year.

If you think you may like to stand, please call the office on 224889 and we will send you a booklet explaining what the job involves and an application form.



## Cable, Clegg and Ashdown to speak at Literature Festival

Vince Cable, Nick Clegg and Paddy Ashdown are all speaking at this month's Cheltenham Literature Festival.

**Vince Cable** is speaking on Saturday 10 October at the Town Hall. about his remarkable life and career, his memoir Free Radical, and his views on the world economic crisis and how we should respond to the challenges it brings.

You can hear **Nick Clegg** on Tuesday 13 October at the Town Hall. Nick was elected as the youngest party leader in the UK in 2007. Hear him discuss his life and career, and take the opportunity to put your own questions to him.

**Paddy Ashdown**, former Lib Dem party leader, European diplomat and celebrated soldier Paddy Ashdown will be discussing his fascinating new memoir A Fortunate Life. You can hear him on Wednesday 14 October at the Everyman.

Tickets for all three events can be purchased from the box office on 0844 576 7979

## Join the Focus Club Draw

The Focus Club Draw is vital for our fund-raising in Cheltenham. Since it was launched in 1986 it has contributed many thousands of pounds to the local party. **It is also a chance to win two cash prizes every month.** We need to increase the vigour and effectiveness of our campaigning and, amongst other things, that costs money. Please consider joining by returning the form enclosed with this newsletter today. Thanks very much for your support.

## Annual General Meeting to be held on 18 November

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on **Wednesday November 18** at 7.30 pm at the Municipal Offices in the Promenade.

As well as the transaction of the usual business, there will be the chance to quiz our MP Martin Horwood and our Borough and County Councillors about their work over the last year and their plans for the future.

**There will be drinks and snacks after the meeting.**

This will be our last AGM before the General Election, so please come along and hear about our plans for the coming months and how you can help keep Martin as our excellent MP.

We hope to see you there but if you can't attend please send apologies to the office, email [cheltlibdems@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cheltlibdems@yahoo.co.uk), or phone 224889.

October 2009

The newsletter of Cheltenham Liberal Democrats

Free Speech

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**Dates for your diary** - the next quiz, annual dinner and more!

**Win, win, win!** - join the Focus Club Draw today.

## Triple by-election success in Glos...



The Liberal Democrats in Gloucestershire have triumphed in three local by-elections this summer.

First, Charlie Stewart easily held All Saints ward in Cheltenham, following the sad death of Tina Franklin. Despite the Tories making a huge effort to win the seat, Charlie scored a substantial victory by 680 votes to 395.

Next, there was a stunning result in Mitcheldean & Drybrook in the Forest, masterminded by Cheltenham's own Chris Coleman. Lib Dem Sue Henchley gained the seat with 638 votes, pushing the Tories into third place with a paltry 195 votes.

Finally, on 17 September Esmond Jenkins held the Water Park seat on Cotswold District Council with a huge 18% swing from the Tories, 894 votes to 353.

**Chairman of Cheltenham Liberal Democrats, Nigel Britter, said:**

"These results show that the Liberal Democrats can defeat the Conservatives anywhere in Gloucestershire where we work hard and campaign on the issues that really matter to local people. With the General Election just months away, we should have confidence that we can hold off the Tory challenge in Cheltenham, and make substantial progress in other parts of the County too".

## ... and progress in the polls too!

As the newsletter went to print, a number of polls showed the Liberal Democrats making substantial progress nationally following their successful conference in Bournemouth.

ICM showed us up 4 to **23%**, Com Res up 2 to **23%**, and Ipsos-Mori up 8 to **25%**, pushing Labour into third place. In the last poll, the Conservatives were down 7 to 36%.



● Local resident **Charlie Stewart** was victorious in the All Saints by-election this summer. His track record working for the local community **before** his election was reflected in his excellent result. The Tories were a very poor second despite calling the by-election, and the Greens and Labour did not even get 100 votes between them.

## Autumn dinner

Tickets are selling fast for the constituency dinner at Gloucestershire College on 13 November 2009, with guest speaker Ros Scott, President of the Liberal Democrats.

Tickets are £20 per person. Please let Heather Turner know if you are able to come on 574227.

## Lib Dem cricket marquee update

Having decided to cancel the cricket marquee because of the likely arrival of Zoë and David's baby on the 12 July, we are disappointed to announce that he arrived two weeks late on 25 July so we could have had the marquee after all!

Leo James is very sorry - here's a picture of him looking apologetic.



## It's a small world

Many of you will recall David Eggington, who was a Lib Dem member in College Ward for many years before moving up north in the 1990's.

David was very involved with the party in the years that Richard Holme was our parliamentary candidate.

At the end of September, Tony Oliver received a postcard from him from Dornie near Skye. He had been staying in a cottage there and found a College Ward Focus under the bed.

He then looked in the visitors book and found it was the same cottage Tony and Heather had stayed in and had left the Focus!

Tony says: "In case you wondered, yes I always take a College Ward Focus to bed with me on holiday as it helps me get to sleep!"

**Let us know if you would like to write an article for the newsletter**

## Martin fights in Parliament to stop the developers ruining our countryside

Cheltenham's Liberal Democrat MP Martin Horwood has put down two motions in the House of Commons opposing the Government's regional plan for the South West, which threatens countryside to the south and north-west of Cheltenham, as well as green spaces in the town itself.

It will also bring hundreds of extra cars onto already busy local roads.

The first motion is based on the manifesto of the new Save Our Green Spaces coalition which has brought together community groups fighting the plans all over the South West, including Cheltenham's Save the Countryside group. The motion calls for the regeneration of urban areas to be given priority over development of green field

sites. It also calls for a reduction in the Government's massive and unsustainable target of 500,000 new homes in the region over the next 20 years.

The second motion goes further and calls for the total abandonment of the regional plan (or 'regional spatial strategy', as it is officially known).

Martin said: 'I want to put pressure on the Government to change their plans and save our green spaces in and around Cheltenham and the other parts of South West.

"I'm very hopeful that my first motion will attract the support of the overwhelming majority of South West MPs. But the second motion goes further and represents a solid commitment from the Lib Dems to ditch the regional spatial strategy.'

## The summer BBQ at John Morris's was actually rather more fun than this picture suggests.....



# Martin wins praise for Conference green action

A national coalition of environmental and conservation organisations - including Friends of the Earth, WWF, Greenpeace and the RSPB - have praised the new Liberal Democrat policy on the natural environment, adopted at the party's recent conference in Bournemouth. And they singled out Cheltenham MP Martin Horwood, one of the co-authors of the policy, in a letter of thanks to party leader Nick Clegg.

The policy paper, Our Natural Heritage, set out the party's position on protecting wildlife and the natural environment, called for increased access to the countryside, tougher penalties for pollution and wildlife crimes, a new anti-waste strategy and an end to nationally-imposed housing targets that threaten countryside across the UK. It was overwhelmingly passed by the party's conference in Bournemouth last week.

The letter signed by the chief executives of eight leading environmental organisations described the policy as 'a coherent and credible set of policies on the natural environment; drawing together policies on the landscape,



biodiversity, environmental protection and the growing threat that we face from the depletion of natural resources.'

They went on:

'We would particularly like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to Martin Horwood and his team, who took great trouble to consult with the NGO [non-governmental organisation] community throughout the development of these policies, and were receptive to many of the issues we raised with them'.

Releasing the letter today, party leader Nick Clegg also thanked Martin: 'The Liberal Democrats have always been the leading party on the natural environment, and thanks to the tireless and dedicated efforts of Martin Horwood and his team, we have continued this tradition. The new policy paper shows that we as a party are committed to protecting the spaces we live in, and I applaud everyone involved for bringing it to fruition'

## News from around the branches

### Leoné Meyer reports from Lansdown Park and Warden Hill branch:

A branch meeting was held on August 18 to which all supporters, helpers and members were invited. At this friendly and useful get-together we decided to have bi-monthly meetings to discuss difficulties and strategies to improve the Lib Dem standing in our part of Cheltenham.

The next branch meeting will be on : Thursday, October 22, at Uplane Cottage, Parabola Close at 6 pm.

The best way of improving support in our branch is through personal contact, and if you have both time and

inclination your help with canvassing would go a long way to make the Lib Dems a stronger force for good.

On campaigning, about 500 letters went out to residents of Lansdown, where crime rates are up and 'above average', whereas crime is down in Gloucester and Stroud and some parts of Cheltenham; we have been badgering Gloucestershire Highways to sort out the numerous potholes across our area; and we have taken up the issue of commuter parking in Eldorado Road and Crescent.

At the last Branch Meeting there was a strong feeling that Lib Dem policies

should be more widely disseminated. Wendy Ritson kindly went through the Pocket Guide to Lib Dem Policies, available on the Internet, and extracted our most relevant and innovative ideas. These have been printed on our 'out slips' and are left at every house that we visit.

**Without your help, support or ideas, whichever you are able to contribute, we cannot move forward. And many thanks to those of you who are already helping! If you have a grumble or a question, give Leoné Meyer a call on 01242 579104.**