

THE POST

Newsletter for the Angus & Mearns Liberal Democrats

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POLITICAL ACTIVISM STARTS WITH YOU

Rod Falconer, Convener

It's been a great summer for the Lib Dems. We now have 15 MPs, thanks to a by-election victory achieved in Somerton & Frome.

As you may also be aware, there will be another by-election in Mid Bedfordshire very soon in which we stand every chance of creating further strategic gains for the party. Much closer to home our own **Michael Turvey's** campaign for the WAK parliamentary seat continues apace. For those of you familiar with the area it requires a lot of travelling to reach smaller pockets of voters. If you live within the constituency any wee help that you can offer towards Michael's campaign really will make a huge difference.

Scottish Liberal Democrats have a plan called 150 Rising. We aim to increase the number of LD councillors from the current 86 to a target of 150. We at Angus & Mearns are intending to do our bit to help achieve this and are working on a strategy to help meet this target over the next 4 years.

The Autumn Conference is also coming soon. What gets discussed, debated and passed at conference may very well start from a simple dialogue between a member like yourself and members of the local party executive. If there is anything that you think that we as a local party should be discussing, get in touch and we will try and accommodate it within our busy agenda. Better still, why not get a little pro active and come and join us on the committee. Turning any idea into a positive argument, making a plan then implementing it into coherent policy. That's how political activism works. Our conference will be in Edinburgh on the 4th November and I look forward to reporting back to you in our next edition the outcomes from conference.

COME AND CELEBRATE THE OPENING OF THE WHITE BRIDGE!

The Stonehaven Flood Protection Scheme work began in the spring of 2019 and after four years Aberdeenshire Council has now declared the work finished.

Thank you to the community for the patience shown over these years but especially a huge thank you to those residents who live alongside the scheme and have been most immediately affected by these works on a day-to-day basis.

To mark the completion of the scheme the local community is invited to the opening of the White Bridge on Saturday, September 9th from 11am.

The Provost of Aberdeenshire Cllr **Judy Whyte** will be unveiling a commemorative plaque following which there will be a brief guided tour of the works themselves and a duck race organised by Stonehaven Sea Cadets.



SINGLE USE DISPOSABLE VAPES SHOULD BE BANNED

Stonehaven Snippets by Cllr Sarah Dickinson



I am passionate about trying to reduce litter whether that be through having bins in the right place serviced at the right frequency, picking up litter daily as I walk my dog, actively working to reduce single use plastic in our community, or promoting more responsible behaviour when it comes to litter.

In June, I asked Aberdeenshire Council to support writing to the Scottish Government expressing our support for consideration to be given to banning single use vapes. Vaping can play a part in helping people to successfully come off cigarettes and, therefore, it is important to underline that the focus of the motion was specifically single use disposable vapes.

Why bring such a motion? Single use vapes last for about 600 puffs and contain plastic, copper, rubber, and a lithium battery; all precious resources which should not be being used for a single use product when reusable options are available. The lithium battery in each one means they must be disposed of as small electrical items through our household recycling centres. All too often, though, they are not disposed of correctly and end up in general waste or are simply discarded as litter. As general waste, recyclable elements are not collected and given the corrosive and flammable chemicals in them, they present a serious fire risk at waste facilities. As litter they present an environmental risk increasing plastic pollution and the risk of toxic chemical leakage into the land and marine environment.

Just as concerning, though, is that given their relatively cheap price point and range of flavours, there has been a worrying increase in the number of young people vaping.

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) has now called for a ban on disposable vapes. Their officer for Scotland Dr **Mairi Stark** is reported as saying vapes "categorically should not be used by children" and that "At best they are a smoking cessation tool, at worst a harmful pathway to nicotine addiction, with research from the World Health Organisation showing that young people who vape are up to three times as likely to start smoking."

I am delighted to say that the motion was unanimously supported by councillors.

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ON MICHAEL TURVEY'S CAMPAIGN TRAIL



This summer has been busy for Michael Turvey, the Lib Dem candidate for the Westminster seat of West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine. Meeting people from all walks of life, community events and campaigning took him to all corners of the constituency.

“There was a great atmosphere in Stonehaven Harbour Festival. Lots of people were engaging with us. Very quiet around the Tory stand,” says Michael. He also attended the Braemar gathering and was impressed by the reopened Braemar Castle. Campaigning in the Mid Bedfordshire by-election took Michael to the village of Turvey - quite a nice surprise! During the summer Michael talked to many farmers, who increasingly seem to be looking for alternative representation having been deeply disappointed with the Conservatives in recent years. There has also been challenging conversations with SSEN about the plans for pylons and substations in the Mearn, Durris, Drumoak and Loch of Skene. “The key points about the appropriateness of the current scheme and my positive alternative proposals seem to have landed well,” Michael concludes.



Rosemary and Malcolm came out with the team in Kennay



With Yi-Pei and Sarah at the Stonehaven Harbour Festival

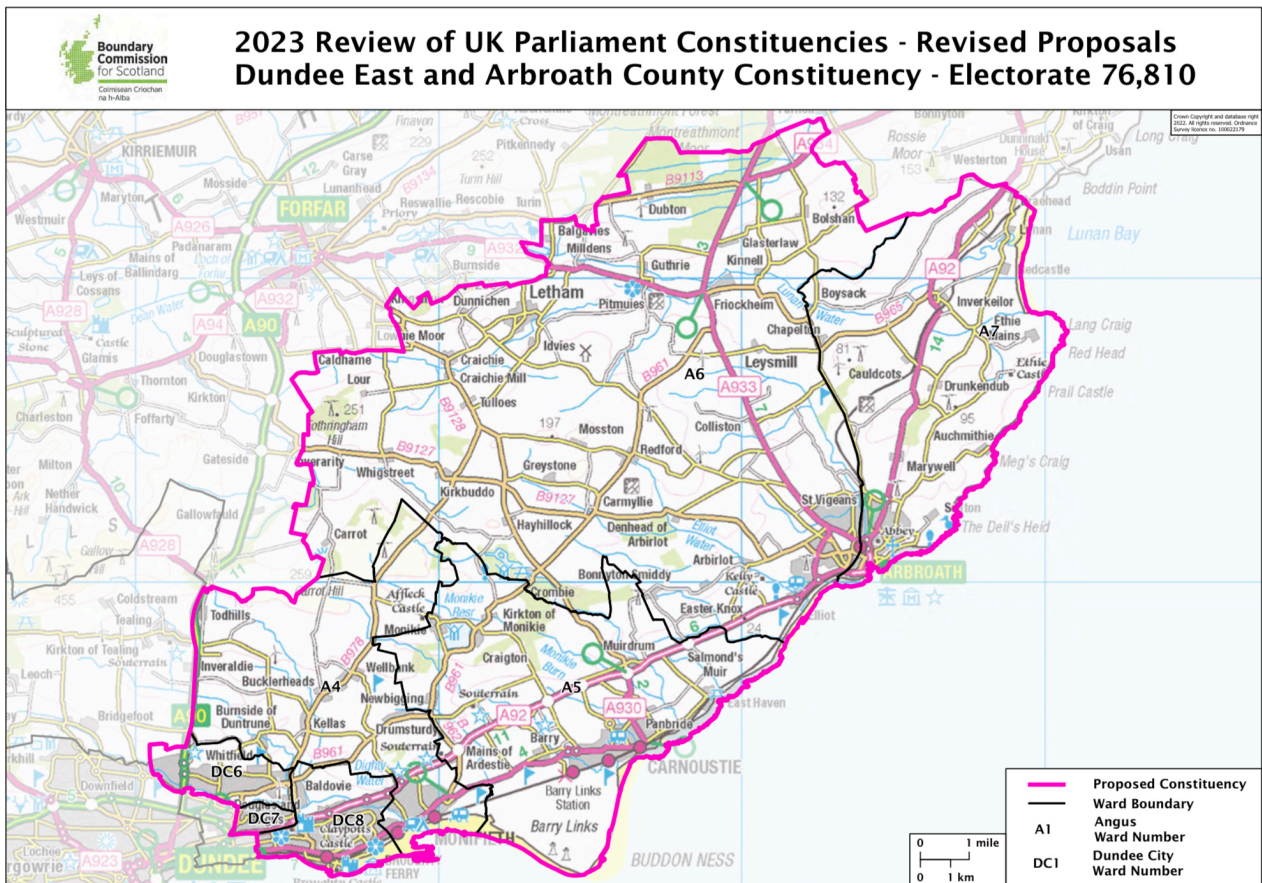
NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT AND GET READY FOR THE NEXT ELECTION CYCLE

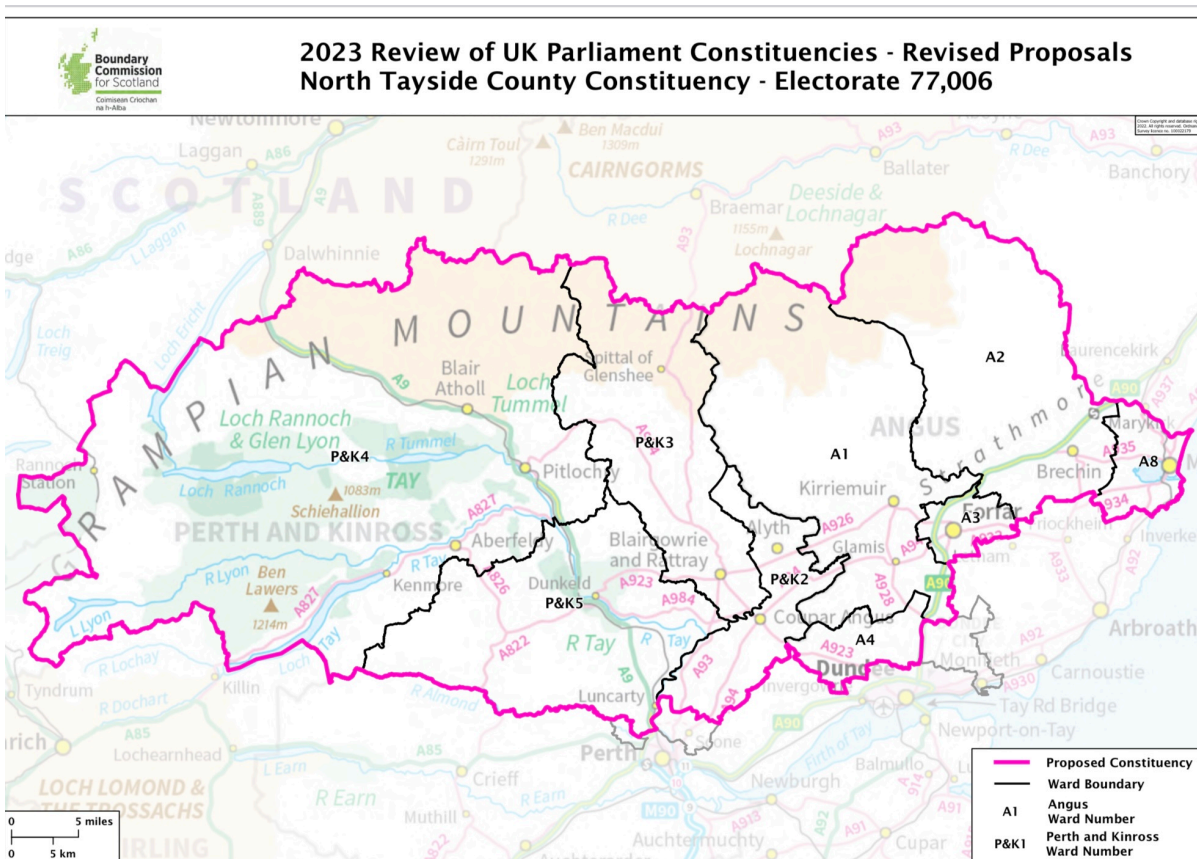
by Rod Falconer

As the political wheel continues to turn from one election cycle to another, here at Angus & Mearns we are setting in motion the beginnings of future campaigns that will happen over the forthcoming election cycles. If you want to change the political landscape, this is your chance.

Firstly, there is going to be a General Election within the next year or so with the First Past the Post (FPPT) system. With its simple majority mandate, this means the winner takes all and the wishes of all other voters can then be disregarded. That is why we as Liberal Democrats believe that Proportional Representation (PR) would more accurately be reflective of every vote in the country and where every individual vote would actually matter. The safe seat mentality would then be consigned to history and power would return to the electorate.

We also have to remember that the current government abolished the fixed term parliament act (a Lib Dem initiative while in coalition) so as to try and control as much of the agenda as possible (obviously, in their favour). When you look at the cost of energy, mortgage rates, inflation and not forgetting the “Stop the Boats”- mantra, I think it’s safe to say that it’s not going at all well for them. As a reminder, the new boundary changes will be in effect for the election and as you can see from the maps below, the inclusion of Broughty Ferry along with part of North Perthshire will be interesting for everybody within these two new constituencies.





Then we will have local council elections in 4 years time. The time frame may seem a long way away but in reality a lot of preparation as well as back office tasks are already whirring away in the background.

Both these elections will require time and effort. This is why I am asking for your direct support towards any help that you may be able offer us here within the local party or by signposting others within your circle towards us, for an opportunity to explore some of the many facets that you may not realise that happen here within Angus & Mearns. Everything from political activism, canvassing, campaigning, training for future leaders with the ultimate possibility of representing your community on the political stage. Anyone can do it with the right support, advice and training. Support from existing experienced party members will never be far away to help enhance ongoing personal development which can be very enriching as well as rewarding for everyone.

Help can come in many forms. When it comes to putting leaflets through a letterbox it's always better if we had 10 people, each putting 10 leaflets through 10 letterboxes rather than 1 person having to do 100 on their own. Sharing the load always makes everything much more enjoyable. These types of tasks don't need to be done by dyed in the wool political activists. Perhaps you and a few pals could spend the occasional half hour doing a few streets for us. These simple tasks can and do change the political landscape. For those of you who maybe would like to get into politics at a slightly deeper level, it doesn't matter where you are in life, whether you're between jobs, looking for new directions or simply wanting to enhance your activism skills - we are always keen to hear from you. You can give as much or as little of energies as you see fit. This is a call to all campaigners, activists or anyone who sees injustice and wishes to change the world; we are ready to bring forward the next cohort of potential councillors. If you or someone you know are looking for a political avenue in which to advocate for their community then please feel free to get in touch with me on X (Twitter) or via our web site <https://www.angusmearnslibdems.org.uk/>

DESPERATE DAN

by Stewart Owers

It's beginning to be nigh impossible to find a public toilet these days. The sad decline of a commercial commodity, which in the 1800's was collected in booths 'within half a mile of pubs', has reached its nadir, with the demise of these necessary establishments all around Scotland.

From the earliest days of the Grecian empire urine had value in its use as a chemical bonding agent for colour dyes. In 19th century Yorkshire, with the discovery of deposits of alum south of Whitby, urine was taken in barrels from Hull, London and other industrial cities, to separate the alum salt from the host rock. However, by 1850, alum replaced urea as the preferred colour fixing agent, but by then the Victorians has created their 'crystal palaces', with sewer drainage, so collection in pots outside pubs was no longer commercially viable.

Only three of these Victorian ceramic conveniences remain as listed buildings in Scotland, as unlike Kirks, they were not automatically listed, although they have the same devoted followers.

Covid restrictions allowed local authorities to mothball public conveniences under their control, and many will never reopen. They rank low in the spending priorities. Shopping centres, cafes, pubs and public libraries are being touted as a solution by the SNP. In Dundee they have already managed to close two public toilets and more is likely to follow.

There is no specific supervisory body to fix this situation, so here are some suggestions.

Firstly, toilets should be mandatory when public facilities are planned.

Secondly, all the existing public

conveniences and future ones should be transferred to Scottish Water. This way these facilities are moved from the political local authority budget, and the costs could be charged via the water rates.

As most villages in Scotland have their own individual sewage works, water and power are on hand to facilitate new toilet blocks with limited planning objections. The minimal facility would include universal closets, common baby changing and hand cleansing, with additional urinals, if greater capacity is required. A common design and modular construction would greatly reduce costs for new units. This would allow existing sites to be reused with a standard serviced concrete base.

Only city sites would require supervision by attendants, the rest would have debit card or mobile app access. This gives specific names and times to the users which would reduce the prospect of unsavoury behaviour. A sign 'Hello Stewart' on entry would certainly stop me from being a graphic artist. For security, motion and noise activated CCTV would cover the common area.

Companies offering the required national hygiene services, and the use of industrial scale wet-wipes replacing hot water washbasins and hand dryers would reduce running costs. This does not preclude placement at sports clubs, village halls or other local social assets, which Scottish Water could organise at the behest of local communities.

Adoption of this strategy by the LibDems would clearly bring relief to the elderly and travellers, as well as extending the range of the hard pressed leafleteer.