

# THE POST

Newsletter for the Angus & Mearns Liberal Democrats

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2024

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Rod Falconer

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Cllr Sarah Dickinson

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### Secretary:

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## WHEN THE POLITICAL AND PERSONAL COME TOGETHER

*Rod Falconer, Convener*



**The inevitable diary clash of personal and political diaries happened this 4th November. Instead of being at our Autumn conference in Edinburgh, I attended a family wedding in Pitlochry.**

As you would expect at any gathering there were speeches, calls for looking to the future, formal written processes to comply with rules, coalescing within our own wee cliques, emotional outpourings, discussions about getting to and from the venue... I'm talking about the wedding, of course, but as you can see, there are similarities, especially if you have ever been to a party conference.

My point is that life really is a reflection of what we do in and out of our political personas. If you are caring and considerate on a personal level then you would want your political party to try and reflect some of those attributes that are important to you. As Lib Dems we care about people and community.

Politically, as supporters of our party we are all trying to make the Scottish Liberal Democrats a manifestation of who we are as individuals. The question constantly arises, have we succeeded in achieving this? Every year at conference we try and answer this in the best way we know how. By allowing all individuals who want to be heard to come together and before witnesses speak from their hearts. This year proved to be no exception. I hope that you gain an insight as to how we, as a liberal family continue to evolve over the years and that, it is your continued support that sustain us.

[www.angusmearnslibdems.org.uk](http://www.angusmearnslibdems.org.uk)

# HOW WE CAN WIN IN WEST ABERDEENSHIRE AND KINCARDINE

by Michael Turvey, our candidate for the Westminster seat



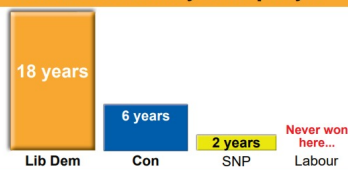
**This seat has been held by the Conservatives for 6 years. It feels like an eternity as they cram a year's worth of scandals into every month that goes by. Voters yearn for something different. Many in our area held their nose to vote Tory (or SNP) at the last election. They are desperate to get rid of the painful clothes peg they have had clipped in place ever since.**

As leaflet after leaflet from the Tories and Lib Dems has landed on the door mat, the SNP meanwhile have been conspicuously silent. Riven by infighting and underwhelmed by the weak leadership of **Humza Yousaf**, the SNP are on a downward trend. Despite holding 72% of Scottish Westminster seats they know this will not last.

In our area they are 7 months late to the campaign appointing a Councillor representing far-off Banff to stand in West Aberdeenshire. An odd choice that shows that this is not a fight they will be prioritising.

The Tories are equally heavily divided - the schisms opening up over their self destructive and pointless Rwanda scheme are profound. When a party is divided over whether it is ok to break the law, you know the end is near. Even their most die-hard supporters know that the Conservatives are doing a terrible job. Labour do not have a single councillor in the shire and do not campaign here, but they still have a core following. We need to convince them that the Liberal Democrats are worthy custodians of their vote. The Liberal Democrats present a uniquely appealing set of values.

**Liberal Democrats have won this seat more than any other party!!!**



**Our environmentalism** means we will help the oil and gas industry to decarbonise while building the renewable infrastructure of the future.

**Our internationalism** means we will work to rebuild our relationship with Europe and welcome those who choose to make our country their home.

**Our localism** means we will empower communities and local councils and work towards true home rule for Scotland.

**Our liberalism** means we will stand up for minorities and ensure people have the freedom from government interference to live their best lives in freedom and prosperity.

**Our uniquely positive vision** is another good reason we can win here and I want to share this with you and everyone who picks up a Liberal Democrat leaflet!

*The Committee is planning to organise some fundraising events in 2024 to support Michael's campaign. Do you have any ideas? We really appreciate any help in this! Please contact us as soon as possible: [info@angusmearnslibdems.org.uk](mailto:info@angusmearnslibdems.org.uk)*

## ALEX COLE-HAMILTON: “CHILDRENS’ MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES ARE A NATIONAL CRISIS”

**Parents’ worries about their child’s mental health is real and needs our attention, warned Alex Cole-Hamilton, the leader of Scottish Liberal Democrats in his speech to the Autumn Conference in Edinburgh in November.**

“As a political leader I’ve seen my fair share of its dark side, of online abuse. But for young people it can feel like there is no escape. 97% of them are now on social media, and for big chunks of the day.”

“It’s shattering their mental health. It can impact their sense of self-worth and cause them to hate their own appearance. When they are telling us it is doing them harm, we should listen”, said Alex and added that clamping down on harmful content is essential.



“We need to look deeper at the damage the social media giants have wrought, at the shattered pieces of childhood that lie in the margins of their profits. It’s time for them to pay,” said Alex. The Digital Services Tax which is paid by the media giants.

“Lib Dems would treble that tax to raise £1.5 billion next year alone. That would unlock £150 million for the Scottish budget in Barnett consequential. That could help boost mental health support in schools, get more professionals close to where you live, and guarantee that whenever a young person needs help, it will come fast,” Alex stated.

### ADJUSTING TO LIFE AFTER SIX YEARS IN AN IRANIAN JAIL

**Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and her husband Richard were the guests of honour at the Autumn conference and received a standing ovation from the audience, who listened to their story.**

Nazanin, a British citizen, was detained in Iran for six years. Her husband **Richard Ratcliffe** campaigned tirelessly for her release, even going on a hunger strike. They have a young daughter. Nazanin was finally released in March 2022. The time in jail in Iran was a very grim, bleak experience for Nazanin and she is still adjusting to life outside prison. “I had underestimated how tough freedom would be”, she admitted. “I came out, I had to rebuild my relationship with our family, and with the neighbourhood and community and society. I am a different person, Richard has changed, my daughter is nine. When I left her she wasn’t even two, so we are very different people.” Nazanin and Richard called for better consular protection for British citizens. Even though Nazanin’s was a high profile case, widely reported in the media and the charges against her baseless, they struggled to get help from the Foreign Office. During Nazanin’s time ministers were re-shuffled and relationships had to be built up again. This is a sad consequence of the turn over of ministers, just part of our dysfunctional system of government that needs root and branch reform.

## NEW BIN REGIME HELPS TO REDUCE WASTE AND INCREASE RE-CYCLING

*Stonehaven Snippets by Cllr Sarah Dickinson*



**Back in the spring of this year, Stonehaven residents received a new bin as part of the roll out of Aberdeenshire Council's three weekly waste and recycling collection strategy. Three bins instead of two has had a positive impact.**

Stonehaven residents now have three bins with one being emptied each week across a three-week cycle:

- a 240 l black lidded bin for residual waste
  - a new 180 l orange-lidded bin for tins, cans, foil, aerosols, food, and drinks cartons as well as plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays
  - a 240 l blue-lidded recycling bin for paper, card and cardboard only
- Food waste and batteries continue to be collected kerbside weekly.

This change was made for two primary reasons: to raise the rate and quality of recycling. Some 6 months on, you may also wonder how it is going.

In October, the council reported that the contamination rate for the paper, card and cardboard recycling in blue-lidded bins was vastly reduced at just 3%. An additional benefit was that this clean fibre does not have to go through expensive additional sorting processes. This helps to subsidise waste disposal costs that have been increasing steadily over recent years.

The contamination rate on the recycling contents of the orange-lid bins is sitting at 16.4% which is at the low end of the national rates which can vary between 16 and 36%.

The council has received more requests for food caddies than in previous years suggesting that food waste recycling is increasing. This is beneficial in more ways than one: food waste is recycled into high quality compost for use in local agricultural farms but there is also a very real environmental benefit as food waste typically accounts for 18% of all household waste by weight in Scotland, but 30% of all households' carbon impact from waste.

The changeover to the three-weekly system has had some hiccups along the way, as you might expect, and there will still be some households getting used to the change or finding issues with it. In the main, though, residents have adapted to the change very well.

There are benefits as we increase and improve the quality of our recycling and, with it, allow items that were never really waste at all but materials which still have a value to continue to be used delivering both economic and environmental benefit. If you have questions about the waste strategy, you will find answers and helpful information via this link - [FAQ for Waste Strategy 2019 to 2023 \(aberdeenshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/faq-for-waste-strategy-2019-to-2023)



## TRIAL COMES TO AN END AT REDCLOAK



The trial booking system that has been in place at the Redcloak Household Recycling Centre in Stonehaven over the past year is coming to an end for those accessing the site by car.

Aberdeenshire Council will allow cars to visit Redcloak and all other household recycling centres except for Inverurie and Westhill without booking from Monday 8 January 2024. This change takes account of the results of the trial and public feedback. However, a permit system for vans and trailers will be reintroduced across all household recycling centres in January to stop trade waste entering the sites.

Sarah has just been elected as the Chair of the Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee this week. More info here [https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=pfbid02jR1WrQGrw9wasc2YkWNQaWkZJfaGpvsCMYeV5yexJw7EQtrAASdWNMdBuSP2al&id=100063976986242](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid02jR1WrQGrw9wasc2YkWNQaWkZJfaGpvsCMYeV5yexJw7EQtrAASdWNMdBuSP2al&id=100063976986242)

BEST WISHES TO YOU AND YOURS AS THE HOLIDAY SEASON AND NEW YEAR APPROACHES! MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE!

