

FOCUS



On the Heddingham, the Maplesteads, Gestingthorpe and Wickham St Paul Spring 2011

The Coalition at Westminster—Fact and Fiction

Myth The Lib Dems let the Tories in.

Fact The electorate voted the Tories in. They could have governed with ad hoc support from minority party members, instead of entering the coalition.

Fact By entering into Coalition the Lib Dems:-

- have given the government stability that international money markets demanded;
- have already been able to make good progress on over half of our election promises;
- have prevented the Government being held to ransom by minor parties or Tory extremists.

More Fact and Fiction inside

***Labour took us to war in Iraq with support from the Conservatives.
The war cost us billions of pounds and brought chaos to Iraq.***

***The Lib Dems voted against the war, having seen through the phony
intelligence arguments & forecast the increased terrorist risk the war would generate.***

***Labour introduced university tuition fees and
the Tories increased them.***

***Lib Dems in the coalition mitigated the effect
by virtually converting the fees to a graduate tax.***



Steve discusses fees with Lord Phillips of Sudbury, Chancellor of Essex University

***Labour supported the Conservatives' transfer of
the Districts' housing to Greenfields.***

***The Lib Dems opposed the transfer; having forecast the extra expense, for
tenants and taxpayers, of having two administrations where there was one.***

***Why not let the Lib Dems inject some of their thinking into looking after the interests
of the Heddinghams and the surrounding villages, by giving them your support in the
Braintree District Council election in May? A sprinkling of Lib Dem Councillors would add to
the quality of policy discussions and would even give ruling party backbenchers more influence
over their Cabinet.***

On achieving an absolute majority on Braintree District Council, the Tories centralised the making of planning decisions. The Liberal Democrats believe in true localism. We believe planning powers should be returned to local committees, with Parish Council involvement.

The Heddinghams, the Maplesteads, Gestingthorpe and Wickham lost their Lib Dem Councillor in 2007, but the Lib Dems have still been looking after your interests.

Power Lines

Lib Dems support moves to reduce the emission of climate changing CO₂ by the use of renewable energy, including using low carbon methods of electricity generation and using extra low or no carbon electricity to replace fossil fuels.

To support this needs new Power Lines in the East of England. National Grid proposed a new 400 000 volt pylon line from near Ipswich to near Twinstead, with one option including a major transformer station somewhere in Wickham St Paul, Bulmer or Castle Heddingham.

Local Lib Dems have commented on problems with the suggested sites, and expressed support for undergrounding where the landscape is sensitive; but have also questioned whether the proposed extra line is an appropriate first step towards providing for even greater power flows that will be needed from east coast and North Sea power generators. We support undersea cables to take power to the Thames Estuary.

Village Design Statements

When attending our six Parish Councils as a District Councillor Steve Bolter encouraged villages to prepare Design Statements.

He is currently helping to produce Gestingthorpe's own Statement.

Localism in planning will mean VDS's will become more significant.

Stansted

Although the threat of a second runway in the foreseeable future has gone, the Tory supported permission to expand from the current 18 million passengers per annum to 35 million passengers per annum remains.

Currently the airport is responsible for 33 million tons of CO₂ per annum. With more flights there will be even more stacking, noise and climate-changing CO₂.

Local Lib Dems are campaigning for aircraft routing that minimises delay and disturbance and more controls on night flights.

Village Broadband

The further one is from Sible Heddingham (or Twinstead) telephone exchange, the slower the phone line Broadband becomes.

Eventually it peters out all together. One of Steve Bolter's first projects, after failing to retain his District Council seat but becoming a Parish Councillor, was to get high speed Broadband to Gestingthorpe.

Even with representations from Sir Alan Haselhurst, BT were not prepared to improve its service to the village. With the help of Braintree District Council funding the Parish had fixed wireless link broadband installed. The infrastructure we commissioned makes it easier to bring High Speed Broadband to neighbouring villages.

The Coalition at Westminster—Fact and Fiction

Fact The Tory Liberal Democrat Coalition is in Parliament only.

It does not extend to Local Government or Europe.

The Conservatives have isolated themselves from mainstream European politics, but the **Government is able to promote British interests via the Lib Dem MEPs**, who are members of the influential ALDE group.



Myth The Lib Dem did a U turn on tuition fees.

Fact The state funding of university tuition remains Lib dem policy.

In a head on clash, the Lib Dem made the Tories turn left.



The electorate did not give us enough votes to let us to put it into practice. Labour brought in tuition fees and the Conservatives, who outnumber the Lib Dems five to one, made that decision to increase them. Being in Coalition, the Lib Dems were able to negotiate to:- have a cap, link repayments to earnings and extend the loan system to part timers. Even so many Lib Dem MPs, including our local ones for Colchester, Cambridge and Norwich S, voted against.

Party	Lib Dem	Labour	Conservative
University Tuition Policy	State Pays	Students Pay Part Fees, with cap	Students Pay Full Fees, with no cap
Fraction of 2010 vote	23%	29%	36%
Seats in Parliament <i>(This row is to scale)</i>	8.5%	38.9%	46.2%

Sible Hedingham

The village has grown ever larger without leaving room for community facilities in its centre.

Young people congregate in the evenings on garage forecourts, or outside old people's housing, because there is nowhere more suitable for them to go. We believe the youth centre should be open more and that there should be places that the young can meet informally.

It is unsustainable to increase the amount of speculative housing building in Sible Hedingham without providing more jobs, improved road junctions and better transport. It would only bring more commuters and more traffic congestion on the roads to Braintree, Haverhill and Halstead.

The Lib Dems have called for former employment sites to be used to provide new job opportunities and community facilities. We suggest planning to including a lit open space, in view but away from housing, where young people can meet .

County Matters

Lib Dems are concerned that the Conservative Essex County Council is still assessed as having inadequate children's services. Problems developed while the council was focussed how to outsource, rather than on the service they were providing.

Despite trying to put it right with millions of pounds, including significant sums paid to consultants, in OFSTED's words "*The effectiveness of services in taking reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people are safe remains inadequate overall*".

The County Budget

Liberal Democrats realise the need for cost saving but are concerned about cuts in front line services including:

- Cuts in the Youth Service budget and the virtual axing of face to face career, training, advice and support service for 13-19 year olds at a time of high youth unemployment;
- Excessive spending on advertising, publicity and self-promotion [a spend of some £5 million];
- Cut-back on number of recycling centres and lack of progress on generation of green energy;
- Poor state of roads and pavements, particularly in residential areas;
- Reduction in Library hours;
- Inadequate public transport provision;
- Significant spending on setting up *Banking in Essex* which has made very few loans and is now closing.

We see a need to review:

- Numbers and pay of senior staff [The number earning over £80,000 has increased to 111];
- The number of councillors receiving Special Responsibility Allowances (should reduce the number and reduce each by 10%);

We think the Council should

- continue to support voluntary organisations.
- allow more consultation and scrutiny, early in the Budget setting process.

Support the **A**lternative **V**ote

Were AV already in place, Brooks Newmark would still have become our MP. Had it been used for County too, David Finch would still be our County Councillor.

However in seats where the division of votes between the major parties is more even and no candidate gets an overall majority, AV gives a more accurate reflection of the views of local people.

It is not full proportional representation, but it is likely to make the disparity between the fraction of the National vote and the share of seats smaller than that demonstrated on the previous page, while maintaining single local members of Parliament.

Why don't they do something?

Who are "they?" YOU are "they" (if over 18).

Politicians do not drop in from outer space. You choose them. You can put yourself forward to be one of the chosen ones, or can volunteer to help spread the message of those you support.

If you support us you could help delivering Focus, or by joining the Lib Dems you could help formulate policy and be eligible to stand for election (as well as deliver!). If you do not have the time, you could donate towards the cost of spreading our word.

Ring 01787 461 604 or e-mail hlibdem@cbb4u.co.uk to volunteer.

Find out more from www.braintreeandwithamlibdems.org.uk.