



LIB DEM CONFERENCE 2008

Your Councillors were all at what turned out to be a very upbeat Conference. Nick Clegg and Vince Cable set out the Liberal Democrat 4 point plan. Below is an extract from Nick's speech. You can see the whole thing on Utube. Or read it on <http://www.nickclegg.com/2008/09/the-only-party-for-a-fairer-britain-autumn-2008-conference-speech>

4 Point Action Plan for economic Recovery.

1. Action to stop unjust repossessions before tens of thousands of families find themselves on the streets guided by the one man who had the foresight to see these problems coming, with more wisdom and experience than Labour and Conservatives combined: **Vince Cable.**

2. The free-wheeling, bonus-driven, short termism of the City must come to an end.

We must stop the amoral culture that sees speculators betting on banks to fail, knowing the taxpayer will pay out in the end and the madness of bonuses awarded no matter what. We need a wholly new approach to regulation: limiting, not encouraging, the excesses of the market and when reckless bankers come with gold-plated begging bowls to ask for shareholders to be bailed out our answer should be a resounding 'No'.

3. We will put in place the building blocks for future economic stability. Interest rates that take house price changes into account and independent monitoring of our fiscal rules.
And finally – but most importantly:

4. Tax cuts for families who are struggling, to help them make ends meet. The money must go direct to people on low and middle incomes. The very wealthy, the super-rich – should be paying more not less.

I will never support the Tory idea that you cut taxes for millionaires and the benefits somehow trickle down, that's not what struggling families need. They need their money back.

Also at Conference Monroe chaired a very successful meeting of the Lib.Dem. Friends of Israel and Susette made a speech in the Social Mobility debate. (see over the page for more about this).

Nick Clegg and Vince Cable



Photo by Alex Folkes, fishnik.com

Barnet Tories Squander Millions says Lib Dem Group Leader Cllr Jack Cohen

Local Liberal Democrats have exposed a catalogue of extravagance, financial imprudence and sheer mismanagement by the Tory Barnet Administration. Following on the heels of at least one and a half million spent on the futile inquiry in to the sale of land at Underhill, Barnet Liberal Democrats have uncovered:

- Potential overspend of millions on the aerodrome bridge replacement
- The purchase of fourteen hundred laptops at a cost of 1.4 million, astonishingly these will not be used but put into storage at a further cost of twenty eight thousand pounds.
- Thousands splurged on plasma screen TVs at North London Business Park, including a forty six inch Screen in the Executive Suite.
- Over five thousand pounds to fly the leader of the council in business class to training sessions in America

Leader of Barnet Council Liberal Democrats, Cllr Jack Cohen slammed the Tory Administration. **"This beggars belief; this shatters the myth that the Tories can be trusted with Council Taxpayers money. This is nothing short of scandalous"**.



MORE LOCAL NEWS OVER THE PAGE COUNCIL HOUSING SCANDAL: also update on 20 MPH zones

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“Councillors’ pay has got out of hand” says Cllr Monroe Palmer



Most people would not object to some payment for the often lengthy time Councillors spend on their public duties. What I object to is how that ‘pay’ has escalated. At first each Councillor had a modest allowance with an addition for Special Responsibility.

Barnet, in the non Tory days, recognised that there had to be a cap or limit on each individual Councillor’s pay. So the Leader of the Council could have the basic plus the Leader’s pay and no more. Other councillors could get limited additional responsibility allowances. But greedy Barnet Tories changed the rules in 2007 for their own personal benefit by an oral amendment at a Council Meeting proposing “That the cap of Allowances be removed”. By these simple words passed by the built-in majority of Tories, who vote as they are whipped, the Council Leader Cllr Freer can add to his £42,750 pay by becoming Chairman of another committee. Like Gilbert & Sullivan’s Pooh Bah, he could in theory hold all the Council ‘Responsibilities’ and take all the extra allowances. Of course he doesn’t do that because he spreads the allowances amongst the faithful with some Tory Councillors getting more than a Cabinet member’s pay by means of a multiplicity of allowances. My first understanding was that the Leader was still limited in what he was paid according to the printed updated Constitution. I was told that the official printed version was wrong and Cllr Freer’s pay was declared unlimited by the orally moved amendment in 2007 because otherwise a situation could arise where other councillors by receiving numerous allowances could earn more than the Leader. Meanwhile Barnet Tory GLA Member Cllr Coleman has claimed a massive £8231 for taxis in 2007/8 including £656 for one day’s bills keeping a taxi waiting for an alleged two and a half hours.

These are the people who many voters feel can run our Borough & our country.

Is your money safe in their hands?

GRANVILLE ESTATE UPDATE.

Cllrs Monroe and Susette Palmer have been pressing Barnet Council and Barnet Homes about the ill thought out proposed development of Granville Road Estate, involving demolishing Garth House and Beech Court and selling that land and other small parcels of land to a private developer to raise funds to carry out expensive works to high-rise blocks.

Cllr Monroe Palmer said “I can report that after all this time this inefficient Tory run Barnet Council has still not had an offer for the land, which is what we said would happen. I have asked Barnet Council and Barnet Homes to reconsider if the work to reclud the High rise Blocks needs to be as expensive as suggested. I have asked that they investigate whether any central government money is available which could mean that Beech Court and Garth House NEED NOT BE DEMOLISHED, nor land sold and we could all breath easily again. I have asked that windows be renewed as soon as possible with those blocks not affected by the scheme being done first. The money for windows and interior works is already available from existing Decent Homes Funds.”

Your ward Councillors have always been against this ill thought out scheme.

Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel at Lib. Dem. Conference.

The LDFI meeting “Ongoing Steps Towards Peace” was well attended. Speakers Willie Rennie MP and Talya Lador-Fresher (Israeli Deputy Ambassador) gave interesting updates on the current situation with plenty of time for questions. The meeting was Chaired by Councillor Monroe Palmer OBE.

Cllrs Susette and Monroe Palmer also attended the Holocaust Education Trust panel discussion covering Holocaust denial, racism, contemporary genocide, the history curriculum and citizenship education. The Lib. Dem Speakers were Alistair Carmichael MP and Jeremy Browne MP both of whom had taken school children from their constituencies on trips to Auschwitz and who spoke movingly of the experience. Lord Dholakhia chaired the meeting and saw that as many people as possible were able to comment.



Cllr Susette Palmer addressed Conference on the role of

Libraries in improving Social Mobility. She drew attention to the OECD report which shows that children who read for pleasure are more likely to better themselves. Repeating her words to Barnet’s last Council Meeting Susette reiterated that the free library system was well placed to interest children in reading from the charity Baby Bookstart through baby rhyme time, “My grandwins love it”, she said, and storytime schemes to summer reading challenges and teenage reading groups in their own part of the library. In Barnet, Susette paid a special tribute to the Children’s librarian Hannah Richens, reminded members that we were one of the first Children’s libraries and congratulated library staff on their efforts. *Locally, those of you who use Childs Hill Library will, I am sure join with us in wishing Sheila every happiness on her retirement.* As we go to press Golders Green Library is benefiting from renovations including a customer toilet. “At last” say your Councillors!



DEMOCRACY, TORY STYLE

At September’s Environment Committee Cllr Monroe Palmer asked the committee to reduce and slow down traffic in Oak, Elm, Ash & Yew Groves. He proposed a 20mph speed limit as the roads fell within the national guidance which allows this and signs on Yew & Ash Groves discouraging heavy vehicles from Edgware Road. A clear majority of the committee supported Monroe’s call for a vote. However, in non Democratic Barnet, the Tory Chairman of the Committee used his powers to veto the vote by moving the item up to the all-Tory Cabinet which will no doubt again support Cllr Thomas and disallow these safety measures.

This is all of a piece with how the 20mph speed limit, without physical restrictions, on the Hocroft Estate is being dealt with. It has still not been agreed after many years of battling. Just when we feel that success has been achieved Barnet council Highways officers come up with a scheme for only Ranulf Road and Lyn-dale rather than for the whole Hocroft Estate. Watch this space as we and the Residents will not give up.

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I would like to join the Liberal Democrats.

Name.....

Phone.....email.....

Address.....

Send the form to 31 The Vale NW11 8SE or email monroepalmer@yahoo.co.uk