

ALC BULLETIN

Scottish Supplement No.4



Recent Liberal victories in by-elections to Aberdeen, NE Fife and Perth & Kinross District Councils owe much to ALC-style community campaigning. But many in Scotland have still to get the message. If the ALC is to reach these people, more members and money are needed. So please respond to the recent Appeal Letter from Tony Greaves, if you have not already done so. Remember that even if you can't send any money, you can still help by telling ALC of Councillors & activists in your area who might like to join.

Small Talk

Cllr. Olive Parker would like to talk to other small authority members. She writes:

"SKYE and LOCHALSH, large in area, is one of the smallest District Councils in population. This produces special problems -

Housing Michael Ancram says, "There are swings and roundabouts - movements in proportions of capital allocations in one direction one year are often balanced by opposite movements in the next year."

So we have to find increased loan charges of £22,000 - quite legitimately incurred - which means an extra 50p on council house rents. Already high, the average increase is £2 this year. Next year's roundabouts seem a long way off to a council tenant.

Leisure & Recreation For a 1p rate, we can do a really good job of draining one football pitch!

Rubbish We haven't enough to recycle - too expensive. We have enough to make management of the dump a constant anxiety.

Graveyards Every community wants it's graveyard to have it's grass cut and the road to it made up beautifully. We could easily spend the whole of the monies allowed to us on the honoured dead.

Democracy Who will listen to the needs of the tiny local authority? COSLA? The Scottish Office? Can Liberals help to make small viable as well as beautiful?"

Answers to Olive at 7 Buchaor Place, Portree, Isle of Skye. Tels (0478) 2530

Northern Highlights

The ALC made a big impact at the BLP Conference this year. Over 50 ALC members were amongst the delegates at Inverness, and most visited the ALC stall to speak to David Vasser and Graeme Park, and buy some ALC goodies. Several new members also signed up.

The ALC fringe meeting- "Regional Countdowns Targeting & Organising a Division" - attracted 42 delegates. The speakers at the meeting, chaired by Malcolm Bruce MP, were Ron Waddell, Cllr. Nicol Stephen and David Vasser. A question and answer session was also held. It is hoped to hold further "Regional Countdown" meetings at Dundee - if you have any suggestions for topics, please get in touch.



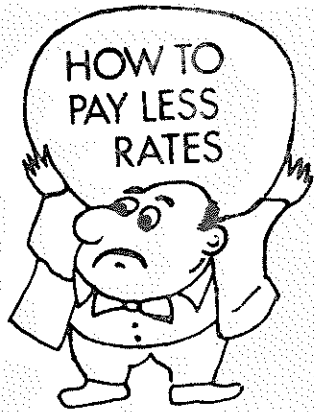
Diary Dates

Saturday 22nd June- Organisational Conference at the Royal Hotel, Bridge Of Allan from 10am. The role of the ALC is to be discussed. Graeme Park (ALC Scottish Rep) will attend in the afternoon with a stall. Full details from Anne Singh, 5 Mount Charles House, AYR (Tels 0292 42419).

Saturday 29th June- Strathclyde Activists Workshop in Strathclyde House, India St., Glasgow from 10am. ALC Treasurer, Cllr. John Pigott (Wigan) will lead the discussion on targeting, organising and campaigning for the Regional Elections in 1986. Details from Graeme Park.

July 6th & 7th- ALC Conference at HASTINGS. Full details from The Birchcliffe Centre.

With Rates being the hottest political issue in Scotland for many years, the practical guide below (produced by Graeme Park) is proving very popular in FOCUS leaflets. It is based mainly on articles from WHICH? in March 1983 and 1984. Please send Graeme copies of any local leaflets produced from this artwork. In the meantime, Graeme would like to thank those from whom he has received leaflets since the last "Scottish Supplement" - Cllr. Alex Graham (Inverness), Joe Kearns (Springburn), Cllr. Robert Aldridge (Edinburgh) and Cllr. Robert Brown (Rutherglen). Apologies to Barbara Janke (Ayr), not because she has moved to England, but because she was missed off the thank-you list the last time.



An Alliance Action Guide

Despite repeated election promises by the Tories to scrap the unfair system, Rates are still with us. And this year, Scottish householders face even larger increases, because the Government has gone ahead with Revaluation - something it would not dare try in England and Wales.

So in response to many appeals for help, the Liberal/SDP Alliance has produced this practical guide to help local residents reduce their rates bill:

1 HOUSING BENEFIT (RATE & RENT REBATE)

This is available to anyone whose rates bill is high compared to their income. In particular, large families and pensioners should apply - there's nothing to lose. Owner-occupiers should ask the Regional Council for a claim form.

Tenants should get a form which will cover benefit for both RENT and rates from their housing authority - the District Council, Scottish Special Housing Association or New Town Development Corporation.

2 RATE RELIEF FOR THE DISABLED

If anyone living in your house is disabled, you might be able to get the rates reduced if the house has any special features to help cope with the disability. Examples are:

- > space for a wheelchair or car
- > a downstairs bathroom or toilet
- > a special room to house a kidney machine
- > central heating because constant warmth is needed.

Apply to the Regional Council for more details.



3 APPEAL AGAINST REVALUATION

You can appeal because you think your house is overvalued compared to similar properties. But you stand a much better chance of success if you get together with your neighbours and appeal because of a specific problem, such as:

- > noise or nuisance from a nearby school, garage, car-park, caravan site, builder's yard, fish shop, pub.
- > disturbance from users of a footpath.
- > excessive noise from heavy traffic, railway or airport.
- > flooding or no mains drainage.
- > lack of street lights or made-up roads eg. on new housing developments.
- > disturbance from building work.
- > nearby electricity pylon, warehouse, rubbish tip or waste land.

Details of HOW to appeal are given on the back of your Revaluation Notice. Remember that you must act before the 15th September 1985.

4 For further advice or help please contact:

The Scottish Supplement to the ALC Bulletin:

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