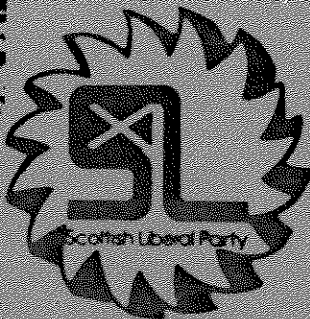


ALC BULLETIN

Scottish Supplement No.8



Graeme Park writes: This is the last Scottish Supplement that I shall edit for the foreseeable future since I do not intend to seek re-election as ALC Scottish Representative this time. I have enjoyed tremendously my time in the job, but after almost four years I feel it's about time someone else had a go. If YOU are interested, please get yourself nominated as soon as possible! Although nearly all the meetings are in England, many are in the North. Indeed, I often found I had travelled less distance to get there than the two members of Standing Committee from Kent! And in any case, you are not expected to attend all of the meetings and you do get travelling expenses. You will undoubtedly enjoy getting to know a whole new batch of talented and committed Liberals, despite the fact that they are English! Above all, you will be at the centre of things because, make no mistake, ALC is now tremendously influential in the Liberal Party, especially in England. If you would like to find out more about what is involved, please phone me on Kilbarchan 4142 or Lochwinnoch 842721.

Plus one

At the time of writing, merger looks dead and buried. But even if it rises from the grave, it's going to be very difficult time for us in Scotland at the District Elections in May. The results in Scottish local by-elections since the General Election have been very poor. In the 15 four party contests, we were in last place with an average of only 11.5%.

So now is the time to review your targeting ruthlessly. ALC strongly recommends that if you have no Liberal or SDP Councillors in your constituency now, concentrate ALL your work into ONE ward. Even paper candidates from other wards should only work in your target ward. If you feel that even this is not going to be enough to win a foothold, please go and help in another constituency - ask ALC who needs a little extra help to win.

Constituencies which already have Liberal or SDP councillors should give top priority to HOLDING these wards. ALC strongly advises that you should not target more than one ward per constituency in addition to the ones you are defending, unless power is at stake.

If people stick to these guidelines, then we could still INCREASE our number of District Councillors by half in May. If we don't, we will lose ground badly. You have been warned!

★ To find out is required to win a target ward, please read Mike Ryan's guide over.

ALC Scottish Conference

The latest ALC get-together in Scotland was held in Glasgow on October 24th/25th. If anything, it was even more successful than the one in Aberdeen last year. Over the whole weekend, about 70 delegates attended. It was very encouraging that many of these were new faces to ALC events. Archy Kirkwood MP and Malcolm Bruce MP also took part. All of us got a tremendous buzz from hearing Steve Charters describe how the Liberals in Tower Hamlets Council were putting "power to the people" into action. However, particularly in view of the grim political situation in Scotland, the clear message during the weekend was that people would have to get stuck in locally and target ruthlessly if we were to make gains in May. Thanks to all the session leaders and delegates who made the event so worthwhile.

1988 DISTRICT ELECTIONS GUIDE

CAMPAIGNING

What is it?

1. Finding out issues (large and small) which are relevant to the people who live in the wards you are contesting.
2. Taking action on these issues. Remember, the smaller the issue the easier it is to get something done. It is easier to get the Roads Dept to mend a street-light than it is to get the Government to change its housing policy.
3. Reporting back to the residents in the ward on the issues that you have found and on the action you are taking on those issues. That means putting out a regular NEWSletter. Remember that NEWS is about what is happening (preferably about what Liberals or Social Democrats are doing); it is not about party policy.

TRAINING

New candidates and agents

will need training. (Experienced candidates and agents might also need some additional training.) If you do not have any councillors or successful agents in your area to assist in training, ask ALC to provide people to help you. Remember though that training at this stage should primarily be about fighting and winning elections, not about the way the Council works.

PUBLICATIONS

The following publications (all obtainable from ALC) are essential:-

- How to Fight Local Elections and Win!
- How to Produce FOCUS and Live!
- Knocking on Doors
- Leaflet Delivery System
- Candidate Selection and Approval
- Local Election Guide (legal aspects)
- Polling Day Organisation
- Special offer to all ALC members: £2 OFF the brand new book "Winning Local Elections". Return coupon on back of last Bulletin.
- Scottish artwork sheets also available soon! For details, TEL:0422 842420.

CANDIDATES

Candidates for target seats should already have been selected. But before selecting any candidates you should set up a District-wide system of approval. Make sure that any candidates are eligible in terms of residential, or other, qualification and are old enough. Do not make the mistake of lower Hamlets Liberals of getting somebody elected and then having to fight a by-election because your winning candidate is disqualified.

FOCUS

Focus is a regular newsletter put out in a particular area (eg. a ward) to let people in the ward know what is going on. NEWS to be put in a FOCUS could include:

- What the Councillor/Focus Editor has been doing to solve local problems
- What the Councillor/Focus Editor has been campaigning about. eg. Health Service cuts, the Poll Tax
- What the local Council is planning to do in the area.
- Issues raised by local residents.
- Results of surveys carried out by local Liberals/Social Democrats.
- Useful local information

- For FOCUS to have an impact it must be readable. The content must be such that people will look forward to the next issue. It must also be regular. A recommended schedule between now and Polling day:-
- One issue in January
- Local Guide (Alex Graham producing artwork)
- One issue in February
- One issue in March
- Four issues in April (one per week)
- One issue two days before polling
- A Good Morning leaflet

For FREE local guide artwork, send A4 S.A.E. to: Alex Graham, 28 Duncraig Street, Inverness.

MANIFESTOS

A manifesto is a useful document for those who are likely to be in a position of power (either in control or in a balance of power) but for most people it will not be necessary. If you are one of the many constituencies where there are no District councillors at the moment then you are not likely to be in need of a manifesto. But if you do need a manifesto you should be drawing it up now, not in the Spring.

TARGET SEATS

If you think that you can do all these things in every seat in your district then fine - go ahead and campaign in all the seats. But realistically there are very few constituencies in Scotland where that level of organisation exists. Most constituencies in Scotland have never won even ONE seat on a District Council. (For instance, 23 out of 33 constituencies in Strathclyde have NEVER had a Liberal or Social Democrat on a District Council. In all these constituencies the 1974, 1977, 1980 and 1984 District Elections have been fought without winning a single seat. If this record is going to be changed then resources will have to be concentrated in one seat. If you already have some councillors, concentrate on holding their seats. Due to the difficult conditions at the moment, do not target more than one additional seat per constituency.

RESIDENTS' SURVEYS

A very useful way of getting on the doorstep and also of finding out what issues are of most concern to the people in your area.

DELIVERY SYSTEM

You will need a complete delivery system for all your target wards. That means that each house in the ward has a regular deliverer. Make sure that your deliverers know your plans for putting out leaflets during the election period. ASK them if they are able to cope, so that you can fill in any gaps before you put the leaflets out.