

Our public sector workers deserve better than a pay freeze

With the economic uncertainty caused by the pandemic, the Chancellor needed to ensure today that no one is left behind. **That was the litmus test, and he has failed**

In a year when our NHS and care staff, teachers, police officers and many others have gone beyond the call of duty, a pay freeze reveals just how callous the Chancellor truly is.

Many public sector staff have worked on the front-line throughout the pandemic, putting their lives on the line, and a pay-freeze is not how they should be rewarded.

The Conservatives have **consistently underfunded the public sector**, and now the Chancellor is allowing those who have worked so hard to slow the spread of this virus and keep the country going to be the first in line to foot the bill.

The Chancellor has delivered a real terms pay cut for teachers, carers, police officers and so many other public-sector workers today.

They have been on the front-line throughout this pandemic, and so to treat them in this way is outrageously rude, ungrateful and unacceptable.

– Tim Farron (@timfarron) [November 25, 2020](#)

Freezing public sector pay will have a negligible effect on the national debt. We need to balance the books by **growing our economy** through investment in green technologies.

They deserve better than this.

Public sector workers deserve a Government that recognises and rewards their sacrifices and service during this terribly difficult time.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

George Floyd: 6 Months On

Roderick Lynch – Chair of Lib Dem Campaign for Race Equality



The death of George Floyd has put race and racism firmly on the political agenda. Black Lives really do matter, or do they?

Whilst people are grieving on the streets, the authorities were working behind the scenes to use legislation to curtail their protesting. Corporate companies and local governments have jumped on board the Black Lives Bandwagon with slogans and statements, however, **we need to see deeds not words.**

As a political party we stood up and with the slogan Black Lives Matter. But that's just it. We have open arms but closed minds. There is a lot still to do from the top of the Party and from the grassroots up.

Fellow Lib Dems, if anything, **the death of George Floyd is a wake up call** to the Lib Dems' in it's failing to deal with and engage with the Black Community. Failure to engage is going to cost us dear at the ballot box.

A magnifying glass has been focused on inequality in:

- The Justice System
- The Health Service
- The Banking system
- The Education Service
- The Political Estate
- The Police Service

People are now understanding the links between the way we live our lives today and slavery.

The toppling of statues has made me look at all statues I pass and research who they are and how they have received notoriety (greatness). Seeing street names changed and programmes and films pulled from being shown is a wake up call.

On George Floyd's 47th Birthday I visited the vigil held in Windrush Square with Leroy Logan MBE & Lambeth & Southwark GLA member Florence Mele.

Glacially slow but baby steps have been made.

Rebecca Bell – Scottish Lib Dem Environment spokesperson



Sometimes I despair that racial murders and injustices have been shocking for decades but only now in 2020 I'm feeling the first spark of hope for change.

Whilst my optimism is cautious as I've been let down before, **I'm heartened that so many friends have taken the time to recognise their white privilege and educate themselves.** Instagram has been a positive platform for this, sharing videos and articles to amplify black voices about BLM.

Being mixed race, I bridge the divide and often feel I belong in neither group, I struggle in ticking the ethnic origin boxes.

I hope my daughter's generation has a different experience. I want to see more museums in Britain about our slave trade history and colonisation, knowing where we came from is key in humility going forward. Keep the statues but add plaques to educate and let's build new ones for VME British heroes.

Mark Pack – President



George Floyd's death starkly brought to wider attention the amount that still needs to be done to secure racial equality **not only in the US but also in the UK.** Especially to those of us who are not directly on the receiving end of discrimination, and so can too easily let helping to fight it slip down our lists of priorities.

The speed and extent with which public opinion has started to shift in response to his death, the Black Lives Matters protests and incidents such as the removal of the Edward Colston statue, should give us hope.

Campaigning can work. Public opinion can shift. **Injustices can be tackled –**

and they need to be.

Cllr Tumi Hawkins- District Councillor for Caldecote Ward, South Cambridgeshire



2020 has been explosive and defining.

The structural racism and inequalities in British society were starkly exposed by Covid19 pandemic and Black Lives Matter protests that followed the killing by Police of George Floyd in the USA.

Racial justice was pushed to the forefront of national consciousness and debate in a new way, driven by young people and we must ensure it stays there.

Many white friends now understand the struggles Black people face daily, are learning that Black history is British history and becoming allies.

It was great to see many organisations celebrating black history month for the first time, and I see more people of colour in television adverts and media.

But we must press the advantage even further through lobbying the government to implement recommendations from previous race enquiry reports. The party must now step up, listen to BLAC LibDems and act decisively to broaden its appeal.

Isabelle Parasram – Vice President



This year, I chaired an event called “What Does it Mean to be Black in Britain in 2020?” with Professor Christopher Jackson -the first Black scientist to give the Royal Institution Christmas Lectures and Paul Anderson-Walsh- former CEO of The Stephen Lawrence Trust.

In my work as Vice President, **I am trying to focus on outreach**. The tumultuous events of 2020 have made the path towards building connections with non-Party members of the public, organisations and thought leaders so much smoother.

Where there was suspicion of my work and my motives in the past, there now seems to be a positive welcome. And this is because people who could see and hear the issues we face as a society could suddenly feel them.

Out of the tragedies of 2020 has come a universal passion – a passion to fight for race equality in a way I've never seen before. I sincerely hope it lasts.

Joyce Onstad – 2021 GLA List candidate & Federal Board Member



George Floyd's death marked a very important moment in our history.

It brought racial injustice into the open and forced us to confront the reality which is normally hidden in our subconscious because it's either too painful or too shameful to confront. **The positive thing is that it energised us and justice movements like Black Lives Matter to demand change.**

We were forced to confront the ugliness and brutality of the past in the form of slavery and colonialism, which ultimately gave birth to today's injustices.

Most of all, George Floyd's death has made the quest for racial justice urgent and universal, engaging people in all sectors and institutions.

We must not allow this to be 'A Moment' but must say 'Never Again' and keep the momentum going by holding our governments and institutions to account, teaching history truthfully, and remembering and honouring those whose sacrifices and labour lay the foundations for the wealth that we now enjoy.

Mike Dixon – Chief Exec



This has been an intense year.

Like lots of people, I've spent more time at home than I expected, seen less of my friends and family, and found myself asking more questions about what's important to me. My world has shrunk in many ways.

In the middle of that, George Floyd's death, and the movement that followed, shaped many of my questions. As a White English man in a position of influence, **how should I best use the tools I have to make the country a better place?** Am I doing enough? Should I speak up more, or step aside more? What language should I use? What should I read and listen to? How should I talk to my young children about what was happening?

I found a lot of answers in some simple videos, podcasts, books and conversations. That it's ok to feel unsure about language, that consensus shifts, and that everyone makes mistakes. That what matters is listening, educating yourself and changing. That this is going to take time.

George Floyd's death also changed what we're doing as an organisation. We've got a grip on our numbers, and for the first time we've pulled together all our data in one place so we can track what's happening. Right now we're not reaching or representing Britain well enough. Though as we look ahead – especially in target seats – are less likely to be White people and our local party officers are less likely too.

We've built a more diverse senior team. We've focused and won campaigns on issues that matter. We'll only be relevant to people when they can see we fight for them, understand their lives, and care about making them better. And we've given guidance and training to hundreds of activists and leaders across the party on how to listen to and act for people they're not currently reaching.

These are all good things. They're not enough, but we're headed in the right direction.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

The Government must commit real funding to resettle vulnerable refugees

We must do all we can to protect people forced to flee their homes to escape war and persecution.

That's why, back in September, all **Liberal Democrat MPs wrote to the Chancellor and Home Secretary calling for a new long-term commitment to resettle vulnerable refugees in the UK.**

The UK has a proud history of providing sanctuary to those in need.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

Policy planning 2021

This week FPC met with an unusually light-looking agenda but we still managed to talk for two and half hours! We received an excellent presentation from Mimi Turner, Director of Strategy, Messaging and Research. Mimi talked us through the scale of the task ahead of us in terms of understanding how the Party fares when voters are asked whether we share their values; whether we'll do what we say; whether we're perceived as wanting to help ordinary people get on in life; and whether they see us as competent and capable.

Mimi explained that by segmenting voters and targeting certain groups, we are missing the opportunity to speak to millions of voters. From a policy perspective, our role is to develop distinctive policies on the issues that matter most in terms of improving people's lives and that resonate in our target seats. Easy, right?! Well I don't think any of us underestimates the scale of the task ahead but we're certainly up for it.

FPC work programme

FPC members found the presentation very useful as we went on to discuss our current and future work programme in the context of Mimi's analysis and thoughts on future strategy. We have a number of pieces of work underway at

the moment – a mixture of pieces looking at the bigger picture, some high profile issues that we've been tasked with looking at, and some specifics where we hope to bring forward some appealing policy proposals:

Nature of Public Debate – planned for Spring 2021

Making Utilities Work Better for the Public – planned for Spring 2021

Federal England – aiming for Spring 2021, with the group working fast since autumn conference

Natural Resources and the Natural Environment – planned for Autumn 2021

Liberal Democrat Principles and Values – planned for Autumn 2021

Universal Basic Income – planned for Autumn 2021

Carbon Pricing – (a sub-group of the former climate change working group) – planned for Autumn 2021

Themes Paper – (building on the World After Coronavirus consultation) – planned for Autumn 2021

The themes paper will act as a pre-manifesto and messaging document but also help us to set out where we need to do further policy development work between 2022 and the next General Election. We agreed that we need to make sure we are planning future pieces of work in good time. One piece of work we have already agreed to undertake is a focus on carers.

In discussion we agreed that the Principles and Values and themes paper exercises were excellent opportunities for wide engagement with members, including through SA0s/A0s and regional parties. We discussed the need to integrate and intersectional approach to all of our policy work and there is an opportunity to work with other party bodies to achieve this.

Brexit

We were joined by Christine Jardine who outlined the current parliamentary work around Brexit. CJ explained that the situation is changing on a daily basis, and although the UK may secure a last minute trade deal with the EU it's likely to be a very "skinny" deal. The current focus is on protecting Britain's interests and holding the government to account. This includes identifying areas where people will be most impacted, including passport queues, supply of medicines, and pet travel. We also discussed how EU Exit may impact the upcoming elections in May, particularly in Scotland where the Conservatives and SNP each argue for being inside one union and out of another.

Member engagement

Over the last fortnight FPC members have been attending regional party conferences to run sessions on policy development and the work of the Committee. Feedback from these sessions has been very positive and a number of common questions have come up including how to access the most up to date policy information easily and how to improve communication and coordination between the regions and FPC (and between S/AOs and FPC).

On the wider issue of member engagement I will be resurrecting our member engagement sub-group, and I reported back on a very positive meeting Jeremy and I had with Bess Mayhew, the new chair of the Federal People Development Committee, to join up our efforts to support members who want to get more involved with policy work.

We're also looking forward to seeing the results of the current membership survey (which you should have received from Greg Foster). If you've not already responded, please make sure you do – every response will help inform what we do.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

Determined Davey and Moving Forwards to 2021 Elections

November's meeting opened with a discussion with Ed Davey in which he outlined his plans for the Parliamentary Party going forwards. Collectively we deliberated on how to make sure all parts of the party are collaborating effectively and making best use of Ed's overarching strategy.

The Moving Forward Programme

The move to joint-fund staff between Federal, State and Regional parties is paying off and we **now have full time Campaign Managers/Regional Development Officers working in every Region**, working in cooperation with ALDC and a substantial staff team. Our field capacity is as large as it perhaps has ever been at this stage in a Parliament supporting our campaigns teams on the ground.

In quarter 3 of 2020 we focussed a lot of our work on mapping seats to the Tiering Strategy to ensure we have a shared understanding across the party of where each of our Local Parties sits. This will help us **better target the different kinds of resources we have to get the maximum number of Lib Dems elected in forthcoming elections**.

This isn't the place for a full run-down, but the Tiers are roughly:

Tier 1 = Advanced – local parties that have won their Westminster / devolved government constituency seat or are genuinely challenging to win it in the current cycle.

Tier 2 = Moving forward – developed local organisations landing second in Westminster / devolved government level OR are challenging for/have control of their local authority looking to entrench and break into being 'advanced'

Tier 3 = Developing – local parties with their first bridgehead gains at local authority level and working to expand.

Tier 4 = Start-up – local parties working to get themselves functioning smoothly and growing.

The next stage of the work will be helping local parties to draw up their local development plans so that they can progress up the tiers. Each and every seat is an opportunity.

Pacts with opposition parties

We discussed the use of pacts and agreed that, in our view, the **expected starting point is to always field a full slate of candidates and to not make pacts with opposition parties.**

Naturally, though, where there are exceptional circumstances and strong arguments, pacts can be the right thing. This is especially at local level, where of course FCEC's remit does not extend!

As a committee of experienced campaigners, we would encourage local parties considering such pacts to work closely with their regions, who do have a remit over agreeing such pacts, and make the most of the support and expertise available to them from the party. We are all pulling in one direction – painting the map gold.

[Go to Source](#)

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