



Newsletter

of the Liberal Democrat Humanist & Secularist Group
Edited by: Roger O'Brien

September 2007

**HUMANIST & SECULAR
LIBERAL DEMOCRATS**

Brighton Conference Special

As usual the Group will be busy at the Party's Autumn Conference, with our AGM, a fringe meeting and a Stand in the Exhibition. If you are just coming to the AGM or fringe meeting, and *not* registering for Conference, you

Our Fringe:

should bring your **Party membership card**, in case of security difficulties.

Time: 8:00 pm, Monday 17th September

Place: Glyndebourne 2, in the Holiday Inn

Topic: Is Atheism the New Religion?

Speaker: Keith Porteous Wood, Executive Director of the

National Secular Society
(see page 2).

Date for Your Diary

London One Day Conference

The Group's one day conference postponed from June has been re-scheduled:

Date: Saturday, 8th December 2007

Place: Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London

(Five minutes walk from  Holborn.)

The morning will include a Guest Speaker and debate on **Dignity in Dying**. The afternoon will consist of workshop sessions on topics to be chosen by members!

Further details should be available at Brighton and will follow in the next Newsletter. However the success of this event depends on you giving early indication numbers. If you think you *might* attend please email **Vice Chair, Cllr. Vera Head**: vera.head@tiscali.co.uk or phone 01494 727254.

Our AGM at Brighton

The Group's AGM will take place at Brighton on **Sunday, 16th September** at **2:30 pm** in The Walnut Suite of the **Quality Hotel**.

N.B. This will not appear in the Conference Directory (to find out why ... come to the AGM!)

(See July Newsletter for the formal calling notice and draft Agenda.)

**Campaigning for Humanist &
Secular values within the Lib Dems**

Conference Motions submitted

The Group has organized the submission of Policy Motions to Federal Conference on Compulsory School Assemblies and on the status of Faith Schools. None of the motions have *so far* been accepted for debate. It is our intention to re-submit the motion on Faith Schools to Spring Conference. (These motions have been applicable to England only, as Education policy for Scotland and Wales can only be made by their Conferences. Colleagues in Wales have had more success – see below!)

We have been submitting the motions in the names of Voting Federal Conference Reps on our email contact list. If you are a voting Rep, and have not been contacted then please email your name, local party and membership number to the current Chair of the Group, Roger O'Brien at: hsld@obrien3.demon.co.uk

Welsh Success!

Colleagues in Wales have succeeded in getting a motion onto the agenda of their Conference in Aberystwyth this October. The motion opposes new faith school and discrimination in existing ones. For more details contact our Welsh Rep, Cllr. Ed Bridges at edbridges@hotmail.co.uk



Keith Porteous Wood

The guest speaker at our conference fringe will be Keith Porteous Wood, Executive Director of the National Secular Society.

Keith has led campaigning for the National Secular Society since 1996 after being the finance director for a number of large companies.

He is active in representing a secular and non-religious perspective in Whitehall and Parliament, mainly at Westminster but also in the European Parliament, Council of Europe, and to a limited extent in United Nations.

Keith recently worked with Dr. Evan Harris MP on the campaign for greater protection of freedom of expression in religious hatred provisions where the Government



lost by 149 votes in Lords and 1 vote in Commons.

He gave verbal evidence to Select Committees including the Lords Religious Offences Committee and the Royal "Wakeham" Commission on the Reform of the House of Lords.

He also prepared numerous submissions to Government consultations including Census 2011 and he was responsible for older pupils being able to opt themselves out of Collective Worship (Section 55 Education and Inspections Act 2006).

Can You help on the Stand?

Can you spare an hour at Conference to help staff the Group's Stand in the Exhibition?

If so then please email our Membership Secretary, Cllr. Richard Church at rchurch1@btconnect.com suggesting a time when you will be

Is Your Membership Due?



The subscription of most members is due just after Conference (except those who pay by Standing Order). If you will be at Brighton, please visit the Stand to check. Even better, to receive a Standing Order form please email our Membership Secretary, Cllr. Richard Church at rchurch1@btconnect.com

available. (The Conference Agenda and Directory are now available www.libdems.org.uk/media/conference/br07A&DAgenda.pdf).

Volunteer Webmaster

Could you set up our website?

We have had difficulty getting our website off the ground, and are looking for a volunteer webmaster to get it going. The aim is to develop something that is easy to update by officers of the Group, so it should not be a big job in the long term.

If you think you could help then please email Group Chair, Roger O'Brien at:

hsld@obrien3.demon.co.uk