

GENERAL ELECTION 2010

The Heritage Alliance analysis of main Party manifestos

For the full texts see

- Labour Party manifesto: <http://www2.labour.org.uk/manifesto-splash?gclid=CNTnrICchqECFQ-Y2Aod7j5Bhw>
- Conservative Party manifesto: <http://www.conservatives.com/Policy/Manifesto.aspx>
- Lib Dems manifesto: http://www.libdems.org.uk/our_manifesto.aspx

Searched by Keywords

1. [Culture/heritage](#)
2. [Planning](#)
3. [Environment](#)
4. [Community](#)
5. [Voluntary sector](#)

1. KEYWORDS = CULTURE/HERITAGE

Labour Party

Primary schools: no child left behind

More children than ever leave primary school secure in the basics. Every primary school now offers whole-class teaching of English using phonics, and we are introducing specialist teachers to achieve a similar step-change in Maths. But every parent rightly wants far more, so our primary curriculum reforms will create more flexibility for teachers to offer a broad, challenging and engaging education, with opportunities to play sport, and to take part in arts, **culture** and music, including the chance to learn a musical instrument.

The challenge for Britain

To build on the renaissance that British sport, **culture** and the arts have enjoyed in the last decade in the new climate of financial restraint. The voluntary and **community** sector has a new lease of life, but needs its potential to be fully harnessed. The Tories have always neglected the arts and sport, regarding them as an easy target for cuts.

The next stage of national renewal

- A golden decade of sport with the ~ 2012 Olympics as a great national and world-wide celebration.
- ~ Registered Supporters Trusts enabled to buy stakes in their club bringing mutualism to the heart of football.
- ~ Operational independence for major museums and galleries, with more lottery funding returning to the arts, sport and **culture** after 2012.
- ~ Protection for the post offices and pubs on which **community** life depends.
- ~ The BBC's independence upheld; and Britain equipped with a world-leading digital and broadband infrastructure.

The sporting, artistic and **cultural** life of Britain is rich and diverse, internationally renowned, and as vital to our quality of life as it is to our national prosperity. Since 1997, our creative industries, arts and sport have become the envy of the world. As the 2012 Olympics draw near, we will make the most of our place in the world's spotlight to showcase Britain, getting more people playing sport and attracting more visitors to the UK.

Culture and the arts are vital to a modern economy. But they stand for more than material success, reminding us that society is not just a marketplace. Promoting well-being means sustaining the **community** institutions that we most cherish, and protecting those areas of our public life that embody the common good.

Arts, culture and museums

We have made unprecedented investment in Britain's cultural life, widening access by introducing free admission to museums and galleries. Every child and young person should be entitled to five hours of art, music and **culture** per week, through learning to play a musical instrument, visiting local museums and joining film clubs, or taking part in local theatre. Through Creative Partnerships we are ensuring that young people in the most deprived parts of the country are able to fulfil their artistic talents by working with local arts and **cultural** organisations.

We have provided the first nationwide programme of free theatre to young people; now we will build on the success of the National Theatre's £10 Season to work with theatres and sponsors to provide reduced-rate tickets for theatrical productions around Britain. Our national **cultural** life and creative industries can prosper only by developing young artistic talent. Creative Bursaries will support the most artistically gifted young people in their early professional careers.

So that our **cultural** facilities remain world-class, charities, businesses and **cultural** organisations must collaborate more closely in the future. We will review how incentives for philanthropic support can be strengthened. Our major museums and galleries should be operationally independent of government, so we will legislate to ensure their managerial and financial autonomy.

We will maintain our commitment to free admissions, encouraging people of all ages and a wide range of backgrounds to visit. Every child will have lifetime library membership from birth.

Britain is enriched by its unique historical **heritage**. We will review the structures that oversee English **Heritage**, putting mutual principles at the heart of its governance so that people can have a direct say over the protection and maintenance of Britain's built historical legacy. We will give public institutions new rights to borrow works of art from the national collection, so that more people can benefit from access to our national artistic **heritage**.

National Lottery funding is more in tune with people's priorities than ever. We will promote greater public involvement in the way that National Lottery proceeds are spent on good causes. A proportion of Lottery funding is going to the Olympics. After 2012, this proportion will return to **culture, heritage** and sport.

Britain's creative industries

In every nation and region of Britain a wealth of creative talent . in industries ranging from film to fashion, design and video games . has flourished, and creative industries now account for ten per cent of the national economy.

The strength of Britain's film industry is a source of pride. Through Labour's film tax credit we have ensured that Britain . with its unique range of skills and facilities . is the right place to invest in film production. So that films can be enjoyed more widely too, we will maintain the film tax credit and create a merged British Film Institute and UK Film Council to establish a single body to promote film production and film **heritage**.

Subject to state aid clearance, we will introduce a tax relief for the UK video games industry. We will support film festivals around the country, and establish a new biennial Festival of

Britain, beginning in 2013, showcasing our major **cultural** achievements and young British talent across all of our creative industries.

Conservative Party

Promote our enlightened national interest

A Conservative government will champion a distinctive British foreign policy. We will renew and reinforce our engagement with the rest of the world and build up British influence by deepening our alliances beyond Europe and the United States, not only diplomatically but in **culture**, education, commerce and security.

The National Lottery

We will restore the National Lottery to its original purpose and, by cutting down on administration costs, make sure more money goes to good causes. The Big Lottery Fund will focus purely on supporting social action through the voluntary and community sector, instead of Ministers' pet projects as at present. Sports, **heritage** and the arts will each see their original allocations of 20 per cent of good cause money restored.

Lib Dems

access to **culture** and sport

Liberal Democrats believe that the arts are a central part of civic and **community** life. They contribute to innovation, education, diversity, and social inclusion, and the creative industries are one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy. Britain's **culture** and **heritage** play a vital role in attracting visitors to the UK and boosting the very important **tourism** industry. We will foster an **environment** in which all forms of creativity are able to flourish. We are proud that Britain is hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012, and we support bids for other high-profile events such as the 2018 World Cup . but we believe that grassroots sport is just as important. We will give people from all backgrounds and generations the opportunity to participate in sports.

Liberal Democrats will:

- ~ Maintain free entry to national museums and galleries and open up the Government Art Collection for greater public use.
 - ~ Set up a Creative Enterprise Fund offering training, mentoring and small grants or loans to help creative businesses get off the ground.
 - ~ Cut red tape for putting on live music. We will reintroduce the rule allowing two performers of unamplified music in any licensed premises without the need for an entertainment licence, allow licensed venues for up to 200 people to host live music without the need for an entertainment licence, and remove the requirement for schools and hospitals to apply for a licence.
 - ~ Reform the National Lottery. We will change the way the National Lottery is taxed from a ticket tax to a gross profits tax, which is forecast to deliver more for good causes and the Exchequer.
 - ~ Use cash in dormant betting accounts to set up a capital fund for improving local sports facilities and supporting sports clubs.
 - ~ Close loopholes that allow playing fields to be sold or built upon without going through the normal **planning** procedures.
- A strong and diverse media, free from government interference and pressure is essential to a free and democratic society.

fair trade for British farmers

It is important to Britain's future security that the country has a sustainable farming industry. We will build on that strength and ensure that farmers get the fair deal they deserve, are able to earn a living wage and also help to protect our natural **environment** and **heritage**.

Liberal Democrats will:

“ Create a legal Supermarket Code and a powerful independent regulator of Britain’s food market. Introduce a minimum level for the Single Farm Payment and concentrate future reductions on the highest claims so that big landowners get less, and the money goes to working farmers who need it, not people who farm one field as a hobby.

“ Use the money freed by our reform to Single Farm Payments to provide extra support for hill farmers, cheap loans to help farmers invest in environmentally friendly biogas digesters and a new Farming Apprenticeship scheme.

“ Work within Europe for further reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, while continuing direct support for farmers, especially in upland and less favoured areas. We believe that a greater proportion of that support should be targeted at conservation, the environment and tackling climate change, as well as at providing food security for a rapidly growing world population. Organic and reduced-input foodstuffs should be encouraged.

“ Help consumers to choose foods with the least environmental impact, through clearer labelling, and work with the EU to make sure country-of-origin labels identify the source of the products, not where they are packaged. We will use government procurement policy to expand the market for sustainable and fair-traded products.

2. KEYWORD = PLANNING

Labour Party

21st Century infrastructure

The newly formed Infrastructure Planning Commission will . within a democratically determined framework . help streamline and speed up decision-making on major projects. We now propose to extend the public interest test so that it is applied to potential takeovers of infrastructure and utility companies.

The challenge for Britain

To be on track for the transition to a low-carbon economy in a way that is fair, secure and helps create the jobs of the future, as we protect and enhance our natural environment and quality of life. For the Tories the environment has been all about image . by failing to deliver on our renewable energy targets, reversing our planning reforms and giving up on our new industrial strategy, they would put Labour’s low-carbon revolution in jeopardy.

Clean energy

We are committed to meeting 15 per cent of our energy demand from renewables by 2020. We already have more offshore wind-power than any other country in the world, and our plans could see this increase up to 40 times, alongside other renewable technologies such as tidal and marine, solar and sustainable bio-energy. We will make a decision early in the next Parliament on the feasibility of alternative options for a tidal energy project on the Severn, taking full account of the environmental impacts. We have taken the decisions to enable a new generation of nuclear power stations, and a programme of four clean coal plants with carbon capture and storage technology with a levy to fund them. We are the only Government in the world to have banned new unabated coal-fired power stations. To secure this investment . likely to be worth around £150 billion over the next decade . we have reformed the planning system to reduce delays for major infrastructure. We will now reform the regulatory system to provide the certainty that investors need, and create a Green Investment Bank to help finance this transformation.

Thriving rural communities

Rural villages should never be left without essential services. Councils now have to ensure that the importance of local services to the community is taken into account before granting planning permission to change their use, and we will strengthen this to protect viable shops,

pubs and community facilities. We will continue to encourage and support imaginative solutions in rural communities to the provision of locally owned services.

Conservative Party

Support innovation and sustainable development

Britain's complex and unwieldy **planning** system has long been cited as a significant barrier to growth and wealth creation. We will create a presumption in favour of sustainable development in the **planning** system. We will abolish the unelected Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) and replace it with an efficient and democratically-accountable system that provides a fast-track process for major infrastructure projects. We will:

- ~ use private or hybrid Bills to promote major projects, such as our plans for a national high speed rail network;
- ~ ensure that all other major infrastructure projects are considered at **planning** inquiries which have binding timetables and which focus on **planning** issues . with final permission given by a Minister; and,
- ~ provide transitional arrangements for projects already before the IPC to ensure that these projects are not disrupted or delayed.

We will abolish the entire bureaucratic and undemocratic tier of regional **planning**, including the Regional Spatial Strategies and building targets. Developers will have to pay a tariff to the local authority to compensate the community for loss of amenity and costs of additional infrastructure. The tariff will replace the payments and levies on development that have grown up under Labour. A portion of this tariff will be kept by the neighbourhoods in which a given development takes place, providing clear incentives for communities which go for growth. Significant local projects, like new housing estates, will have to be designed through a collaborative process that has involved the neighbourhood. Immediate neighbours will have a new role . with a faster approvals process for **planning** applications where neighbours raise no objections.

At the national level, for all forms of development, we will publish and present to Parliament for debate a simple and consolidated national **planning** framework, which will set out national economic and environmental priorities. To give communities greater control over **planning**, we will:

- abolish the power of planning ~ inspectors to rewrite local plans;
- ~ amend the Use Classes Order so that people can use buildings for any purpose allowed in the local plan;
- ~ limit appeals against local **planning** decisions to cases that involve abuse of process or failure to apply the local plan;
- ~ encourage county councils and unitary authorities to compile infrastructure plans;
- ~ give local **planning** authorities and other public authorities a duty to co-operate with one another; and,
- ~ allow neighbourhoods to stop the practice of garden grabbing

Deliver more affordable homes

Communities should benefit when they choose to develop sustainably, so we will match pound-for-pound the council tax receipts that local authorities receive from new homes to encourage sensitive local development. We will create new local housing trusts to allow communities to grant **planning** permission for new housing within villages and towns so that the benefits of development remain within the local area. We will also abolish Home Information Packs, which have made a significant contribution to problems in our housing market.

Lib Dems

a fair deal for consumers

While open markets usually deliver opportunity and prosperity, sometimes markets fail and consumers are badly treated by big business. The banks have exploited their position of power to impose unfair charges. Energy bills are far too expensive for many people, and suppliers have not done enough to protect those who cannot afford to keep warm.

We will:

- Require a local competition test for all **planning** applications for new retail developments and establish a local competition office within the Office of Fair Trading to investigate anti-competitive practices at a local and regional level.

3. KEYWORDS = ENVIRONMENTAL/ENVIRONMENT

Labour Party

Rebuilding our transport infrastructure

Heathrow is Britain's international hub airport, already operating at full capacity, and supporting millions of jobs, businesses and citizens who depend upon it. We support a third runway at Heathrow, subject to strict conditions on **environmental** impact and flight numbers, but we will not allow additional runways to proceed at any other airport in the next Parliament.

The challenge for Britain

To be on track for the transition to a low-carbon economy in a way that is fair, secure and helps create the jobs of the future, as we protect and enhance our natural **environment** and quality of life. For the Tories the environment has been all about image - by failing to deliver on our renewable energy targets, reversing our **planning** reforms and giving up on our new industrial strategy, they would put Labour's low-carbon revolution in jeopardy.

The next stage of national renewal

~ Achieve around 40 per cent low-carbon electricity by 2020 and create 400,000 new green jobs by 2015.

~ Make greener living easier and fairer through pay as you save home energy insulation, energy-bill discounts for pensioners and requiring landlords to properly insulate rented homes.

~ Move towards a zero waste Britain, banning recyclable and biodegradable materials from landfill.

~ Link together new protected areas of habitat; maintain the Green Belt; increase forest and woodland areas.

~ Ensure fairness for food producers through EU reform and a Supermarkets Ombudsman; and support post offices, shops and pubs in rural **communities**.

This is a huge challenge, not just for Britain but for the world. Living within our **environmental** means will require a dramatic shift using resources more efficiently and reducing waste. We will need to find new ways of balancing the multiple uses of land: safeguarding food security at the same time as enriching our natural **environment**; protecting distinctive landscapes while enabling environmentally sensitive development.

Labour's **environmental** agenda reflects our values. Only active government can shape markets to prioritise green growth and job creation. **Environmental** sustainability cannot be left to individuals and businesses acting alone. We believe that people have the right to a healthy **environment**. That means giving everyone access to the beauty and amenity of natural places; we want to make it easier to live in a sustainable way whatever your standard of living.

We believe in local **community** action . enabling both elected councils and community and social enterprises to provide **environmental** benefits to local people. We are internationalists too: only co-operative global action . including a strong European Union . can tackle climate change and protect the world's precious **environments**.

We are committed to meeting 15 per cent of our energy demand from renewables by 2020. We already have more offshore wind-power than any other country in the world, and our plans could see this increase up to 40 times, alongside other renewable technologies such as tidal and marine, solar and sustainable bio-energy. We will make a decision early in the next Parliament on the feasibility of alternative options for a tidal energy project on the Severn, taking full account of the **environmental** impacts.

Our industrial strategy will ensure that the drive to green our economy will create jobs and businesses in Britain in the manufacture and installation of low-carbon and **environmental** technologies.

Making green living easier and fairer

Everyone can play their part in reducing carbon emissions and protecting the **environment**. Through our requirement that energy companies provide subsidies for insulation, we will ensure that all household lofts and cavity walls are insulated, where practical, by 2015. By 2020 every home will have a smart meter to help control energy use and enable cheaper tariffs; and we will enable seven million homes to have a fuller ~~eco~~-upgrade.

Encouraging greener living is about communities, not just individuals. We will devolve power to local councils to hold energy companies to account for **community** energy efficiency programmes, and give them powers to develop local energy systems such as renewables and district heating. We want local people to have a stake in local renewable energy projects such as wind farms. So we will support **community** organisations, co-ops and social enterprises to provide energy services, meaning lower prices through bulk purchasing, and the development of small-scale renewables.

Valuing nature for everyone

For millions of people the British countryside, and the parks and commons of our towns and cities, provide solace from the pressures of modern life. The riches of Britain's biodiversity . our native species, both rare and commonplace . depend on them.

We are committed not only to protecting but also to enhancing our natural **environment**, and enabling it to be enjoyed by all. The area of Green Belt has increased over the last decade . and we intend to sustain it. We will maintain the target that 60 per cent of new development should be on brownfield land. We have created two National Parks in the New Forest and South Downs, and given the public a Right to Roam our mountains, moors and heaths. We will now extend this to the whole English coastline. Competing pressures . from greater food production to housing and natural flood defences . are making the management of land resources ever more challenging. We will introduce a new framework for managing our land that can more effectively reconcile these pressures. We will put forward new areas for protected landscape and habitat status, focusing on green corridors and wildlife networks to link up existing sites. And we will commit to increasing the area covered by forest and woodland.

Our air, rivers and beaches are now the cleanest they have been since the height of the industrial revolution. We will continue to ensure progress. Having doubled spending on flood defence over the last decade we will bring forward legislation to improve floods and water management.

The challenge for Britain

To harness our strengths and values, as we develop Britain's world role in a global era, using our alliances and networks in order to promote security, economic prosperity, development and to safeguard the **environment**. The contrast with the Tory view could not be starker: they are stuck in the past, spurning alliances in Europe and helpless to defend our interests or secure the global change we need.

Conservative Party

Ensure the whole country shares in rising prosperity

Create a modern transport network

Because travel abroad is so important for our economy and for family holidays, we need to improve our airports and reduce the **environmental** impact of flying. Our goal is to make Heathrow airport better, not bigger. We will stop the third runway and instead link Heathrow directly to our high speed rail network, providing an alternative to thousands of flights. In addition, we will:

- block plans for second ~ runways at Stansted and Gatwick; and,
- ~ reform Air Passenger Duty to encourage a switch to fuller and cleaner plane

Create a low carbon future

We will increase the proportion of tax revenues accounted for by environmental taxes, ensuring that any additional revenues from new green taxes that are principally designed as an **environmental** measure to change behaviour are used to reduce the burden of taxation elsewhere.

Protect the environment

Vote blue, go green

A Conservative government will cut carbon emissions and rebuild our energy security. We will

make it easier for people to go green, with incentives for people to do the right thing. We will protect our precious habitats and natural resources, and promote a sustainable farming industry.

We will fulfil our responsibility to hand on a richer and more sustainable natural environment to future generations.

Conserve and enhance the natural environment

We will protect and improve the UK's natural **environment**, and pioneer new schemes to improve conservation. We will push for reform of the Common Agricultural and Fisheries Policies to promote sustainable farming and fishing. We will promote high animal welfare standards and ensure that government procures locally-produced food wherever possible. We will work towards a zero-waste society.

Conservatives understand the inherent value of conserving things, and we know the importance of ensuring that we provide a good quality of life for future generations. Our natural **environment** has been degraded and urgent action is needed to address the loss of vital ecosystems in the face of climate change and development. Labour have relied too much on regulation and top-down targets that have failed to halt biodiversity loss. We need to act now to enhance biodiversity, protect our countryside and marine **environment**, and secure the vital eco-systems that sustain life on land, in our rivers and in our seas. A Conservative government will take a broad approach to improving the natural environment as a whole, so that we can ensure a secure future for the natural world where vital ecological assets are protected and resources are used more responsibly.

Protect habitats

The natural world faces great pressure from development and climate change. We will produce a White Paper on protecting the natural **environment**, including a focus on restoring

habitat. We will pioneer a new system of conservation credits to protect habitats. We will maintain national Green Belt protection, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), National Parks, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other environmental designations which protect the character of our countryside landscape.

In addition, we will:

“ review the governance arrangements for National Parks and AONBs to ensure that they are more accountable to local communities; and,

“ work to reduce litter, which spoils too much of our countryside and urban environment.

Since 1997, the area of new woodland created in England each year has more than halved.

In addition to ongoing woodland creation, we will launch a national tree planting campaign, planting up to one million new trees in the next Parliament. We will tackle illegal logging by:

“ pressing for financial support from within a reformed EU budget to be given to developing countries to halt deforestation;

“ pressing for only legally-harvested timber and timber products to be made available on the market; and,

“ introducing a new criminal offence under UK law for the import and possession of illegal timber.

Promote sustainable and productive farming practices

Our farmland is a national resource for future generations and the foundation of our food security. We will prevent development on the most fertile farmland, in all but exceptional circumstances. To promote sustainable farming practices further, we will: “ support the Campaign for the Farmed Environment and seek to create a more effective system of environmental stewardship;

“ ensure that consumers have the right to choose non-GM foods through clear labelling

We will negotiate for further reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to deliver greater value for money while supporting the sustainability of British farming. The new CAP should reflect the importance we attach to the environment, to ensuring food security and to tackling global poverty. We advocate the dismantling of market-distorting subsidies at a pace that allows time for British farmers and producers in developing countries to adapt. We will minimise and reform on-farm inspections, and abolish the Agricultural Wages Board.

Lib Dems

a green and pleasant land

The beauty of Britain's natural landscape is vital to the quality of life of those who live there and to visitors. Liberal Democrats will change the way the environment is protected so everyone has fair access to clean water, clean air, and open spaces. We are the only party that takes seriously the responsibility of protecting our natural inheritance and ensuring access for all.

Liberal Democrats will:

“ Increase the general right of access to the countryside, along the lines of the model introduced by the Liberal Democrats in Scotland.

“ Abolish the Infrastructure Planning Commission and return decision making, including housing targets, to local people.

We will create

- a third-party right of appeal in cases where planning decisions go against locally agreed plans.

“ Set targets for zero waste aiming to end the use of landfill. That means less packaging, more recycling, and a huge increase in anaerobic digestion to generate energy from food and farm waste. We will also improve resource efficiency and reduce waste through requiring better design and durability product standards and reducing excess packaging.

~ Introduce a new strategy to bring the UK back on target to halt the loss of habitats and species and as far as possible restore biodiversity by 2020.

~ Protect greenfield land and our built **heritage** by reducing the cost of repairs. We will equalise on new build and repair on an overall revenue-neutral basis. This will also help to reduce the costs of repairs to historic buildings.

- Make National Parks more democratically accountable, allowing a proportion of the Park boards to be elected.

~ Create a new designation . similar to Site of Special Scientific Interest status . to protect green areas of particular importance or value to the **community**. We will aim to double the UK's woodland cover by 2050.

- We will stop garden grabbing by defining gardens as greenfield sites in **planning** law so that they cannot so easily be built over.

manage water for everyone

Britain has real problems in managing its scarce water resources. Some people face devastating floods, while others have drought conditions most summers. We will:

~ Stop major new housing developments in major flood risk areas.

~ Crack down on waste from the water companies and introduce compulsory smart meters in areas of shortage.

~ Introduce landscape-scale **planning** policies with a specific remit to restore water channels, rivers and wetlands and reduce flood risk by properly utilising the natural capacity of the landscape to retain water.

a fair deal for the countryside

Liberal Democrats are proud that we represent a large part of rural Britain. We believe a fair society is one where people can afford to work and live in the countryside with accessible public services.

Liberal Democrats will:

Give local authorities the power to set higher Council Tax rates for second homes and the option to require specific **planning** permission for new second homes, in areas where the number of such homes is threatening the viability of a **community**.

~ Through our policy on Capital Gains Tax, ensure that those who use second homes as speculative investments will pay tax on enhanced capital value at the same rate as on earned income, not at 18 per cent as at present.

~ End the post office closure programme to keep post offices open in rural areas where they are the lynchpin of **community** life, improve access to banking and help secure the future of the Post Office through a PostBank.

~ Promote schemes for affordable homes like equity mortgages and ~~Home on the Farm~~ which encourage farmers to convert existing buildings into affordable housing.

~ Refund VAT to mountain rescue services.

protecting the global **environment**

Humans are living beyond the ability of the planet to support life; more than 60 per cent of the basic ecosystems that support life on Earth are being degraded or used unsustainably. Co-ordinated international action and effective global institutions are necessary to help create a sustainable future and improve the quality of life of all the world's citizens.

Liberal Democrats will:

~ Work through the EU to make sure that the **environment** is fully integrated into the objectives of international institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation.

~ Work to increase the resourcing of the UN Environment Programme and improve the enforcement of international **environmental** treaties.

“ Protect the world’s forests, not only to reduce carbon emissions but also to preserve this crucial reservoir of biodiversity. We will argue for an international target of zero net deforestation by 2020; support a new system of payments to developing countries to enable them to reduce deforestation; and adopt at EU . or, if necessary, at UK . level a new law making it illegal to import or possess timber produced illegally in foreign countries.

“ Work with other countries to develop an international labelling system for the **environmental** impact of products, helping consumers choose those with the least impact on resource use and pollution.

putting Britain at the heart of Europe

Liberal Democrats believe that European co-operation is the best way for Britain to be strong, safe and influential in the future. We will ensure that Britain maximises its influence through a strong and positive commitment. But just because Europe is essential, that doesn’t mean the European Union is perfect. We will continue to campaign for improved accountability, efficiency and effectiveness. Working together, the member states of the EU have a better chance of managing the impacts of globalisation, such as cross-border crime and **environmental** pollution.

Liberal Democrats will:

- Work with Britain’s European neighbours to create thousands of new jobs by breaking down trade barriers and boosting support for green jobs.

“ Work through the European Union for stricter international regulation of financial services and banking.

“ Keep Britain part of international crime-fighting measures such as the European Arrest Warrant, European Police Office (Europol), Eurojust, and the European Criminal Records Information System, while ensuring high standards of justice.

“ Keep the pressure on for reform of agricultural subsidies so that farmers, consumers and taxpayers get a fair deal, and the **environment** is protected.

“ Fight to stop MEPs having to travel to the Strasbourg Parliament every month, wasting ” 200 million a year.

better and more affordable homes

In a fair society, everyone should have the right to a decent home, but this is not the reality of Britain today. There should be quality social and private rented housing available for those who need or choose it. And it should be easy to keep your home warm without harming the **environment**; British houses are frequently poorly insulated, wasting money and contributing to global warming.

a fair deal for motorists

Our planned expansion of public transport will provide much-needed alternatives to private cars, and cut carbon emissions. However, in many places there will always be a need for car travel, so we need to ensure that it is as **environmentally** friendly as possible.

We will:

“ Work through the EU for a zero emissions target for all new cars by 2040 and extend targets to other vehicles.

“ Undertake preparations for the introduction of a system of road pricing in a second parliament. Any such system would be revenue neutral for motorists, with revenue from cars used to abolish Vehicle Excise Duty and reduce fuel duty, helping those in rural areas who have no alternatives to road travel. Some of the revenue from lorries would be used to fund further extensions of high speed rail through the UK Infrastructure Bank.

“ Introduce a rural fuel discount scheme which would allow a reduced rate of fuel duty to be paid in remote rural areas, as is allowed under EU law.

4. KEY WORD = COMMUNITY

Labour Party

A good quality of life in older age

The vast majority of older people are well and active, helping to strengthen our families, communities and wider society. Many charities, voluntary organisations and schools value and rely on the contribution of older people and we support the growing number of excellent initiatives creating greater understanding across the generations. We will continue to support older people in getting involved in their community by providing matched funding for community projects.

Improving your community

The nature of the places in which we live matters enormously. We are happier, more engaged and better able to enjoy family life where there are safe and welcoming public spaces, good local amenities and buildings in which we can take pride. Britain's towns and cities have undergone a renaissance in the last decade. Our great cities have been rebuilt and revitalised and dilapidated schools and hospitals replaced with modern buildings. We will continue to promote excellence in architecture and design, helping to foster civic pride and build world-class places in which people want to live and work. We have introduced new design standards for schools, to ensure the very best architecture and building design; we will extend these to all new government funded building programmes

Protecting community life

Strong community life also depends on protecting the places in which people come together. To give families access to good recreational facilities, we are investing £235 million to create new or refurbished play spaces and adventure playgrounds. We will protect the Post Office network, so that it can fulfil its historic role as a trusted institution serving the community.

The local pub and social club are also hubs of community life. Too many pubs have closed that could have been sustained by local people. We will support pubs that have a viable future with a new fund for community ownership in 2010-11. Councils must take full account of the importance of pubs to the local community when assessing proposals that change their use, and we will make it more difficult to demolish pubs. Restrictive covenants applied by pub companies to property sales will be curbed and flexibility for pubs to provide related services promoted, making it easier to have live entertainment without a licence. A non-tie option should be available for pub tenants; we will act if the industry fails to make progress on this.

To protect the character of their areas, local authorities now have greater powers to reject applications for lapdancing clubs and we will give councils new powers to oppose gambling licences if there are too many betting shops operating in a high street.

The cleaner neighbourhoods legislation will be used to clamp down on litter, fly-tipping and vandalism. We will extend the use of participatory budgeting to give local people a stronger say. Community Land Trusts enable local people to purchase and run local amenities and assets in their area such as youth facilities, parks and open spaces. We will promote the transfer of buildings and land to the ownership or control of voluntary and community groups.

Supporting social enterprise

The Social Investment Bank will make additional capital available to social enterprises with an initial endowment of £75 million funded by dormant accounts alongside existing funding streams. We will promote the creation of more social enterprise hubs in every community, helping more to get off the ground.

The new mutualism

There is growing interest in co-operative and mutual organisations that people trust, and that have the capacity to unleash creativity and innovation, creating new jobs and services . particularly in disadvantaged neighbourhoods where traditional approaches have failed in the past. We want to see more local organisations run on cooperative principles with an expansion of **Community** Interest Companies and thirdsector mutual organisations that reinvest profits for the public good. We will promote this through the Co-operative Party, Business Link, enterprise education and the Regional Development Agencies. To give more people a stake in a highly valued national asset, British Waterways will be turned into a mutually owned co-operative. We will promote the use of **community** shares that support investment in football clubs, pubs, renewable energy and shops

Thriving rural communities

Those who live in rural areas are entitled to excellent amenities and services, as are those who live in towns and cities. Rural **communities** face unique challenges. We are committed to continued investment in frontline services in rural areas. Already £3.9 billion is being spent on support for the rural economy and we will continue to provide specific support to rural businesses. We are building 10,000 homes in rural areas up to 2011. We are protecting rural bus services and making it more difficult for rural schools to be closed. Rural businesses and **communities** must have the broadband connections they need. We are committed to universal broadband access, irrespective of location. The levy on fixed phone lines will pay for expansion of fast broadband connections to rural areas.

Rural villages should never be left without essential services. Councils now have to ensure that the importance of local services to the **community** is taken into account before granting **planning** permission to change their use, and we will strengthen this to protect viable shops, pubs and **community** facilities. We will continue to encourage and support imaginative solutions in rural **communities** to the provision of locally owned services.

Conservative Party

Neighbourhood groups

Our reform agenda is designed to empower **communities** to come together to address local issues. For example, we will enable parents to start new schools, empower communities to take over local amenities such as parks and libraries that are under threat, give neighbourhoods greater control of the **planning** system, and enable residents to hold the police to account in neighbourhood beat meetings.

These policies will give new powers and rights to neighbourhood groups: the little platoons of civil society . and the institutional building blocks of the Big Society.

Our ambition is for every adult in the country to be a member of an active neighbourhood group. We will stimulate the creation and development of neighbourhood groups, which can take action to improve their local area. We will use Cabinet Office budgets to fund the training of independent **community** organisers to help people establish and run neighbourhood groups, and provide neighbourhood grants to the UK's poorest areas to ensure they play a leading role in the rebuilding of civic society.

To stimulate social action further, we will:

- transform the civil service into a civic service by making sure that participation in social action is recognised in civil servants' appraisals;
- launch an annual Big Society Day to celebrate the work of neighbourhood groups and encourage more people to take part in social action;

“ provide funding from the Big Society Bank to intermediary bodies with a track record of supporting and growing social enterprises; and,
“ develop a measure of well-being that encapsulates the social value of state action.

Make politics more local

We will put neighbourhoods in charge of **planning** the way their **communities** develop, with incentives in favour of sustainable development. We will make it easier for everyone to get onto the housing ladder. We will give individuals and local government much more power, allow communities to take control of vital services, and give people the chance to have a powerful, elected mayor in England's largest cities.

Over the last forty years, governments of all colours have been guilty of weakening local government. But what was a gradual centralisation has accelerated dramatically under Labour. Bureaucratic control has replaced democratic accountability. The wishes of local people are second-guessed by bureaucrats; the activities of councils are micro-managed by unelected quangos. This hoarding of power by distant politicians and unaccountable officials in Whitehall has damaged society by eroding trust. We believe that the more responsibility you give people, the more responsibly they behave. That is why we are so determined to give people much more power and control over their lives. Citizens themselves should have a direct say over how they are governed . but not through bureaucratic consultations or phoney citizens juries, which never change anything. We need a totally different approach to governing, one that involves people in making the decisions that affect them. This is what we call collaborative democracy . people taking the kind of powers that until now have been exercised only by governments. So we want to pass power down to people . to individuals where we can. But it is not always possible to give power to individuals, and in those cases we need to push power down to the most appropriate local level: neighbourhood, **community** and local government.

Put **communities** in charge of **planning**

The planning system is vital for a strong economy, for an attractive and sustainable environment, and for a successful democracy. A Conservative government will introduce a new open sourced **planning** system. This will mean that people in each neighbourhood will be able to specify what kind of development they want to see in their area. These neighbourhood plans will be consolidated into a local plan.

We will abolish the entire bureaucratic and undemocratic tier of regional **planning**, including the Regional Spatial Strategies and building targets. Developers will have to pay a tariff to the local authority to compensate the **community** for loss of amenity and costs of additional infrastructure. The tariff will replace the payments and levies on development that have grown up under Labour. A portion of this tariff will be kept by the neighbourhoods in which a given development takes place, providing clear incentives for **communities** which go for growth. Significant local projects, like new housing estates, will have to be designed through a collaborative process that has involved the neighbourhood. Immediate neighbours will have a new role . with a faster approvals process for **planning** applications where neighbours raise no objections.

At the national level, for all forms of development, we will publish and present to Parliament for debate a simple and consolidated national planning framework, which will set out national economic and **environmental** priorities.

To give **communities** greater control over planning, we will:

“ abolish the power of **planning** inspectors to rewrite local plans;
“ amend the Use Classes Order so that people can use buildings for any purpose allowed in the local plan;

- “ limit appeals against local **planning** decisions to cases that involve abuse of process or failure to apply the local plan;
 - “ encourage county councils and unitary authorities to compile infrastructure plans;
 - “ give local **planning** authorities and other public authorities a duty to co-operate with one another; and,
 - “ allow neighbourhoods to stop the practice of **garden grabbing**
-

Lib Dems

your community.

Liberal Democrats believe in strong **communities**, where local people can come together to meet local needs, enjoy a pleasant local **environment**, and feel free from the threat of crime.

rebuilding security, opportunity, homes and hope

Liberal Democrats believe in strong **communities**, where local people can come together to meet local needs, enjoy a pleasant local **environment**, and feel free from the threat of crime. We want every community to be safe and fair, and offer opportunities to people of every background.

Under Labour and Conservative rule, communities have been let down. Governments have talked tough on crime but failed to take effective action. Lack of affordable housing has driven many young people out of the **communities** where they were born. Public transport is expensive when it is there at all. Key local services like the Post Office have declined dramatically. Liberal Democrats will put thousands more police on the beat and make them work more effectively to cut crime. We value Britain's open, welcoming character, and will protect it by changing the immigration system to make it firm and fair so that people can once again put their faith in it. We will invest in public transport and cut rail fares, as well as providing more affordable homes and protecting people from unfair repossessions. We will keep post offices open, and will protect and restore the natural **environment**.

5. KEY WORD = VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Labour Party

A vibrant **voluntary sector**

Britain has among the highest levels of **voluntary** membership in the world. We strongly value the independence of the **voluntary** and **community** sector, including its campaigning role, and will act to maintain it. There will be greater support for third-sector organisations in competing for public-sector contracts, ensuring there is a level playing field with the public and private sectors.

We will consult on putting the Compact Commission . which sets guidelines for effective partnership working between government and the third sector in Britain . on a statutory footing, and ensure greater support for the Compact at local level.

All young people should be active and engaged in their **communities**, so that it becomes a normal part of growing up to undertake service in the **community**. We are taking forward plans for a National Youth Community Service, with the goal that all young people contribute at least 50 hours to their **communities** by the age of 19, building on citizenship education and **community** engagement in schools.

Conservative Party

Public service reform

Our public service reform programme will enable social enterprises, charities and voluntary groups to play a leading role in delivering public services and tackling deep-rooted social problems. We will strengthen and support social enterprises to help deliver our public service reforms by creating a Big Society Bank, funded from unclaimed bank assets, to provide new finance for neighbourhood groups, charities, social enterprises and other nongovernmental bodies. This will provide social enterprises with the start-up funding and support they need to bid for government contracts or work towards delivering services under a payment by results model.

Britain has a proud and long-standing charitable tradition, and we are convinced that the **voluntary sector** should play a major part in our civic renewal. We will introduce a fair deal on grants to give voluntary sector organisations more stability and allow them to earn a competitive return for providing public services. We will work with local authorities to promote the delivery of public services by social enterprises, charities and the **voluntary sector**.

Lib Dems

supporting the **voluntary sector**

As Liberal Democrats, we are committed to handing power back to local communities. We believe that society is strengthened by communities coming together and engaging in voluntary activity, which sets people and neighbourhoods free to tackle local problems.

Liberal Democrats will support the **voluntary sector** by:

~ Introducing easy giving accounts at publicly-owned banks to allow people to operate charitable giving accounts alongside their current accounts.

~ Reforming Gift Aid to operate at a single rate of 23 per cent . giving more money to charity while closing down a loophole for higher rate tax payers.

~ Reforming the process of criminal record checking so that volunteers need only one record that is portable, rather than multiple checks for each activity.

April 2010