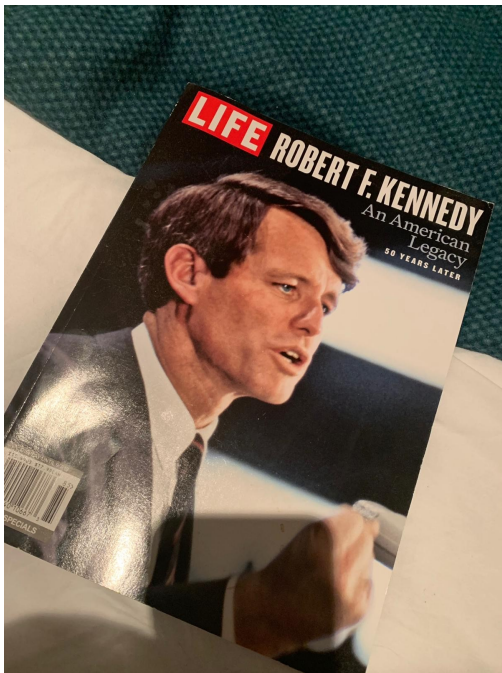


# Why I'm standing for President

There was a question at an early hustings which reminded me of exactly why I am a Liberal Democrat and why I am standing to be your Party President.

The question itself was about books and what we had been reading recently which, for me, was a special edition of Life Magazine dedicated to Robert Kennedy on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his assassination.

And as I answered I could feel all the same emotion welling up that I had felt reading it, when I saw that iconic face of the 60s looking at me from a newsstand in Chicago last summer:



Here was the lost hero of my childhood.

Here was the man who dreamed of things that never were and asked "why not?".

This was the man who was the centre of the very first political discussions I remember hearing as a child.

Most Friday nights my parents' friends and their children would all converge on our council house in Clydebanks for a communal supper and a drink.



Those were also the evening that first introduced me to politics as I huddled in the kitchen listening through the door as the grown ups discussed civil rights, Martin Luther King and the Kennedys.

They also talked about what was on the news, our politics and sport.

But somehow it was the turmoil and struggle for fairness in 1960s America which fired my imagination.

Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King epitomised for me that striving for a better world that I, in my naivety, believed we all desired.

I devoured every book, film and TV documentary about them that I could find. I still do.

At the same time I saw little to attract me to a grey, suited, polarised British system. Until, that is, I went to university.

There I came across another Kennedy.

Charles Kennedy.

This was just as the 'Gang of Four' were creating a new, exciting dynamic in British politics and change seemed just around the corner.

The red-headed, newly crowned, world debating champion that I had first encountered on the steps of Glasgow University Union seemed to me to represent that fresh opportunity for my generation.

This was when I began to realise that so many of the aims that drove those heroes of mine were just as applicable here as in the USA.

Coming from a working-class Glasgow background, I was the first in my family to go to university in the pursuit of a professional career, as the industries which had provided for previous generations disappeared.

I saw people who had been at school with me, who were just as bright, possibly more intelligent and just as keen to have a decent life, thrown on the scrap heap because they did not have the family or support network from which I got my security.

They would never have the opportunity to fulfil their potential in the way that I would.

To me it seemed clear that the constant competition between the two main parties, which always offered them so much and always failed to deliver, was a major culprit.

There was one final influence which created the changed person who graduated.

In my junior honours year my father had died suddenly of a heart attack at the age of 44.

My world, together with my mother's and my two younger sisters', was thrown into turmoil.

Again that support network had carried us through, but I had a stark reminder of how fragile economic security can be, and just how easily I, or my sisters, could have fallen through the cracks.

As a journalist I saw only too often how unfair life could be.

But I also worked closely with those working for change.

More often than not they were Liberal Democrats and I began to believe that the only way I could change things was by joining what was then Charles' party.

I have never regretted filling in that form or handing over my first direct debit in return for my bag of Focus leaflets.

This party has given me the chance to work to make the sort of change that first drew me to politics as a child.

Sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, a government that doesn't care that Brexit will damage its own communities and a climate which is teetering on the brink of catastrophe.

These are the challenges that have replaced the ones that faced those heroes of the 60s, but the effort required for change is no less.

This party, our party is taking on those challenges. We have a vision of a better way.

If we are to deliver it in a package with which we are all content, we need a voice at the top table who represents members' views.

I want to be that voice. Visit [www.cj4president.org](http://www.cj4president.org) to find out more.

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## [Another disastrous Brexit deal](#)

It seems Boris Johnson has managed to cobble together yet another disastrous Brexit deal.

It remains to be seen if he can get the deal passed by the House of Commons, but **we already know two things for certain:**

We will use every option available to give you the right to stop Brexit

1. Whatever deal Johnson proposes, it's not as good as the one we have now as a member of the EU.
2. We will not stop fighting to stop Brexit.

But as we saw three times before, agreeing a deal is only the start of the process. He still needs to get his deal through Parliament.

And Boris Johnson hasn't exactly got a great track record on that.

So far in his career as Prime Minister, he's only won one vote in the Commons and currently has a majority of -45.

**We will use every option available to give you the right to stop Brexit in its tracks.**

If any Brexit deal comes to the House of Commons, we will add an amendment for it to be put to you, in a People's Vote.

If any Brexit deal comes to the House of Commons, we will add an amendment for it to be put to you, in a People's Vote.

And then will we campaign to remain in the EU.

**This fight isn't over.** And we'll never stop fighting to stop Brexit and keep us in the EU.

That's because we know that Boris Johnson's deal is bad for our economy, bad for our environmental standards, and bad for our workers' rights.

**Whether it's this deal or the last one, there is no deal as good as the one we have, as a member of the EU.**

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## [The Candidates standing for Federal Policy Committee](#)

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## [Well, that's embarrassing for the SNP](#)



The news just broke: turns out that **the SNP spent more on the recent Shetland by-election than in the entire EU referendum campaign.**

It seems that the SNP just see Brexit as a golden opportunity to push independence at the price of our country's well-being.

Shocker

The party spent £99,000 on the Shetland by-election (of a spending limit of £100,000), compared to just over £90,000 in the 2016 referendum (13% of the limit)

This is what our chief whip, Alistair Carmichael, had to say about the news.

“The fact that the SNP spent more on the by-election in Shetland than in the entire EU referendum campaign **speaks volumes**. It is disappointing but hardly surprising, considering how much lucre they flashed around in the Northern Isles over the summer.

“Apparently one more vote for independence in Holyrood was worth more to the nationalists than their European values. It's a shame they don't put their money where their mouth is.

“It shows the cynicism of the SNP leadership's position on the EU. **They tell their supporters one story on Europe, but their actions tell another.** They back the EU with words, but the truth is that

they see Brexit as a golden opportunity to push independence at the price of our country's well-being."

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## [My response to Nicola Sturgeon's speech at the SNP Conference](#)

With her conference speech today Nicola Sturgeon has shown that she has given up on all the people across the UK trying to stop Brexit.

The momentum is with us. We can win this, if we stick together.

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