

11 Lib Dem bills the Tories are killing today

Over the past year, Liberal Democrat MPs have tabled a number of Private Members' Bills that would make important changes to help **build a fairer country, tackle deep-rooted inequalities and ensure a more effective response to the Covid pandemic.**

Eleven key Liberal Democrat Bills were due to have "Second Reading" – the next stage of their progress through Parliament – over the next three months.

Some have been waiting for over nine months. But today, **Jacob Rees-Mogg** is pushing through a government motion in the House of Commons that will end any chance of them becoming law in this parliamentary session.

Here are the **eleven crucial new laws** that the Conservatives are blocking today:

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Author:

Daisy, diversity & deliveries

Last month's Federal Communications and Elections Committee (FCEC) kicked off with a productive Q&A with **deputy Leader Daisy Cooper**. Daisy's approach to collaborative working across parts of the party was warmly welcomed and FCEC expressed its support, and desire to assist, Daisy's ongoing work to support a diverse range of candidates to stand.

We were pleased to note the progress made by the State Parties on the approval process for parliamentary candidates, which has needed to adapt to the online-only world in which we are currently living. The Thornhill Review specifically pointed to the need to select strong candidates early in a Parliament, to maximise their chances to campaign, and we wish to **thank the unsung heroes doing the behind the scenes work to make it all possible.**

Looking ahead, we considered the latest analysis of our prospects in the next few General Elections. It remains vital to take a wholistic view, which means planning not just for 2024, but 2028 and beyond. This is not the space for a full explanation, but the party must remain realistic about what can be achieved in a single election and watchful of developments to the [Fixed-Term Parliaments Act](#).

Encouragingly, progress on our communications strategy continues apace. **To win elections, we need to be heard by the public, more importantly we need the public to hear how our values relate to solving the problems that matter most to them.**

We meet again on the 27th, our first meeting since the country returned to lockdown. [Ed's response](#) to the government's shocking failure to act sooner has set the groundwork for a Lib Dem vision for a fairer, safer, and economically more sensible approach to the crisis. For activists, **please read [our latest advice on campaigning](#)**; for everyone, stay safe!

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Author:

[The Government must catch up with cancer](#)

In the early months of this pandemic, the Government's messaging was clear. **'Stay at home. Protect the NHS. Save lives.'** And so it is once again. Monday's lockdown announcement, although belated, was absolutely right.

But why must we protect the NHS? So that it can continue to tackle COVID, but also, equally, so that the NHS can carry on its life-saving work in every other area.

We must protect the NHS to tackle COVID and help the NHS carry on its life-saving work in every other area

Cancer research UK report that **we will see 35,000 excess cancer deaths because of the Coronavirus pandemic**. For every 2 people who have so far lost their lives due to COVID, another will unnecessarily lose their battle with cancer.

Screenings and treatments are being cancelled, delayed and disrupted until it is too late. Usually, we see a 70:30 split between curative and palliative care. This year, it's 50:50.

The answer is not to exhort our heroic frontline staff to work harder.

It is not to carry on doing what we have always done, just doing it a little better. **This requires some new thinking.**

As Chair of the Radiotherapy APPG, I met with Matt Hancock in October and asked him to back both Catch Up with Cancer's 6-point plan to boost radiotherapy services and the APPG's submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Thousands of people could have their lives lengthened, their lives saved and their families spared of unspeakable grief if we act urgently to boost cancer services.

The Government must [#CatchUpWithCancer](#) and save lives.
pic.twitter.com/l0rhKwkJkZ

– Tim Farron (@timfarron) [December 2, 2020](#)

Radiotherapy is a clean form of cancer treatment.

It does not affect immunity or open up a patient to infection. It therefore holds **huge potential to boost cancer treatment services to 120% of pre-Covid capacity**, the levels required to clear the backlog within 2 years.

So, following the Spending Review on 25th November, there was a **collective gasp of disbelief** across the oncology and radiotherapy sector. It was baffling. There was no investment for, or no reference made to, COVID-safe radiotherapy treatment.

The Government must act urgently to catch up with cancer

Next week, I am meeting with the Under Secretary of State for Health, Jo Churchill, to remind her of the ever-increasing need for ring-fenced investment into radiotherapy services.

Thousands of people could have their lives lengthened, their lives saved, their families spared unspeakable grief, **if the Government acts urgently to catch up with cancer.**

But, most importantly, if you have even the slightest hint of a doubt that something might be wrong or unusual with any part of your body, the NHS is open to protect you.

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Author:

Democracy and freedom can never be taken for granted

Like you, I watched **domestic terrorists and insurrectionists** storm the US Capitol last night with a sense of horror and shock.

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A symbol of democracy worldwide was shown to be fragile, vulnerable.

It is a **stark reminder** that will remain etched in our memories.

Donald Trump failed to fulfil his oath to protect the US Constitution, inciting his supporters to engage in violence and attack elected officials in Congress, backed up by Congressmen, Congresswomen and Senators afraid of being deselected in primaries and willing to undermine faith in democracy to save their own skins.

There is new hope with the inauguration of Joe Biden on the 20th

An attack on democracy anywhere is an attack on democracy everywhere.

All I could think was: if this could happen there, this could also easily happen here.

We often see the US as a bastion of stability. To see how easily that was threatened and attacked should remind us that **democracy and freedom can never be taken for granted**. The Liberal Democrats can and will lead the fight to protect and defend them every single day.

That is my duty as an MP, and it is all our duties as citizens.

News that members of Trump's cabinet may be discussing invoking the 25th Amendment to the US Constitution, making Pence Acting President until 20 January, reaffirms what we already know: **Donald Trump is not and never has been fit to hold the office of President of the United States.**

Our way is plain: It is the way of democracy – of lawfulness, and of respect – respect for each other, and for our nation.

– Joe Biden (@JoeBiden) [January 6, 2021](#)

Frankly, the Tories should be ashamed of how they cosied up to Donald Trump and his administration. How they stood by as he flouted the international rules-based order. How they have mimicked his populist agenda.

While it comes too late to avoid the damage Trump has done in the US and beyond, **there is new hope in the inauguration of Joe Biden on the 20th.**

In this moment of unrest, violence and anger, we must remember the words of Dr. King, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that." Let each of us try to be a light to see our country out of this dark moment.

– Senator-Elect Reverend Raphael Warnock (@ReverendWarnock) [January 6, 2021](#)

Liberal Democrats call on the Prime Minister to **end Britain's long walk towards isolation and to seize this opportunity to re-enter the world stage** as a strong ally in the fight to promote peace and end climate change and injustice.

Democrats must stand together against those who would seek to undermine and end our way of life, whether they are members of a violent mob or politicians in positions of responsibility.

As Senator Mitt Romney said on the Senate floor when Congress reconvened late last night:

"Today was heart-breaking.

And I was shaken to the core, as I thought about the people I met in China, and Russia, and Afghanistan and Iraq and other places who yearn for freedom, and who look to this building and these shores as a place of hope.

And I saw the images being broadcast around the world, and it breaks my heart."

I couldn't have put it better myself.

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Author:

[The May elections](#)

The chaotic incompetence of a government that declares schools safe on a Sunday, sends children back for a day and then closes them is the sort of thing that should be the domain of political fiction.

Sadly and tragically, it's the government we suffer from in Westminster. It is a reminder about how important it is that we recover as a party, and a spur to our efforts to ensure we do our part in defeating the Conservatives at the ballot box.

The elections due in May across England, Scotland and Wales are an important part of that.

The May Elections

Will the elections be delayed? The simple answer is, we don't know. But we do know that we need to campaign to do well in them whenever they happen. Other parties can gamble on trying to win an election without much time to campaign beforehand. We can't.

That is why we need to continue with our preparations and build-up as if the May elections will happen, and treat any extra time as a bonus. Better that than be caught out thinking something wouldn't happen and then not having time to prepare when it does.

Of course, our work should always take into account coronavirus health risks, and always [carefully follow the party's advice](#), which is regularly reviewed and updated when necessary.

There is a wide range of free training available to help you hone your campaigning skills and learn how to campaign best in the face of coronavirus. Do take a look at the listings on [the party website](#) and on the [ALDC site](#).

Election Rumours

One other thing to bear in mind is that, as with previous questions about whether elections would be delayed or whether a government would call an election early, a lot of rumours circulate. They often appear to be based on credible insider information – e.g. 'someone who spoke to a former colleague at the Electoral Commission...' But in reality they are not nearly as credible as they may seem.

The thing to bear in mind is that the decision to delay an election can be made suddenly by the Prime Minister (in England, similar considerations for other nations). As we've seen with the fiasco of children going back to school in England for just one day before schools being closed, there's no reason to think that an election decision either way will be made carefully, in good time and with all the right preparations in place.

Or for another example, when Gordon Brown was dallying over calling a general election in 2007 the news that Labour had started printing special election leaflets sounded like it was dead-cert insider information showing the election would go ahead... and then he didn't call it. So what someone says the Electoral Commission is doing, or what Whitehall civil servants are preparing, can sound credible... but really isn't much of a clue at all to what will happen.

Rumours can be fun to talk about. But don't be misled by them into thinking someone has the inside track on what is going to happen. They don't, which is why we need to keep preparing.

Party Awards

It's award time again soon! Recognising the amazing volunteer effort across the party is something we do not do nearly enough. Which is why I've asked the Federal Conference to have time at our spring conference to add in a round of party awards. We always do some at autumn conference, but having awards in spring too will mean we can recognise more of the wonderful contributions made by so many.

The plan is to have three awards at spring: a new Leader's Award to recognise those who show leadership in whatever form in the party, the Bertha Bowness Fischer Award to recognise the contribution of a newer member and a revived Albert Ingham Award to recognise our election agents and campaign managers. More information, including how to nominate someone you know, is [on the party website](#).

Supporting Party Bodies

January sees the first meeting of a new 'party bodies forum', one of the practical steps we're taking to implement [the party bodies review](#) into how we support and work with those parts of the party which do not fit into the standard local/regional/state party structures.

Groups such as Green Liberal Democrats and Liberal Democrat Women are an important part of the Lib Dem family. The forum should help us improve the way the party and party bodies interact, something which has often been a cause of frustration in the past.

It's the first of many recommendations that we'll be implementing from the review, with the chair of the Federal People Development Committee, Bess Mayhew, taking the lead in making sure they happen.

Improving the way we fill posts in the party

I mentioned [last time](#) the progress we've already made in improving the way roles are filled in the party. We need to get better at getting high quality, diverse teams in places rather than simply people who happen to know people.

So one item from the January Steering Group is looking at the next steps we can take, both to improve what we do in the Federal Party and also how we can support other parts of the party.

I know many members have experience of how to best fill roles in volunteer organisations, so [suggestions and feedback are very welcome](#). In particular, for those of you reading who haven't put yourself forward before for a role – what would motivate you?

Parliamentary Boundary Review

The official review is underway, and expected to come into force for the next general election. However, that is no reason to hold up getting on with selections in our most winnable seats. One of the consistent lessons from previous Parliaments – and one that comes through clearly in the Thornhill Report into the 2019 election – is about the need to get prospective candidates in place early. That gives them more time to get known by voters and to help build up the sort of local party infrastructure required to run a winning campaign.

The party's response to the boundary review will be coordinated by our Director of Field Campaigns, Cllr Dave McCobb, and his team.

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