



Vote for the North East
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Referendum Special

Hexham Constituency Liberal Democrats

FOCUS

www.libdems.org.uk

Vote YES

before

4TH

November

THE GREAT NORTH VOTE

On November 4th 2004 we will have the chance to vote for a regional assembly. It will take power from government in London and hand it to the people of the North East.

That power will allow us to:

- Support jobs in our home grown industries
- Provide affordable homes for first time buyers
- Create better public transport

And much, much more...



Kennedy backs YES vote



LIBERAL Democrats in the North East have won the backing of leader Charles Kennedy in their campaign to win a "Yes" vote for a North East Assembly.

Residents of the North East have the opportunity to vote on plans to hand out power from Whitehall to the region. Voting is by postal vote and people must send their ballot papers back by Thursday 4th November.

Liberal Democrats have backed the "Yes" campaign which is being led by North East athlete Brendan Foster and creator of the Tyneside Metrocentre, Sir John Hall.

The key points about a regional assembly are:

It will take powers away from London and allow the North East a much bigger say over what happens here.

It will lead to up to 500 fewer politicians as there will be fewer councillors and tiers of local government – not more as opponents claim.

It will lead to more sensible, joined up and efficient decision-making in the North East.

It will give the North East a much stronger voice to fight our corner (Scotland, Wales and London have their own assemblies and get a better deal from the government).

An assembly will have about 25 members, all elected by the people on a fair votes system – so it won't be dominated by Labour.

It will replace an unelected assembly that is currently made up of about 70 members who are appointed by councils, business, trade unions and other bodies.

4 reasons 4 Yes

1. More decisions about the North East made in the North East

Key decisions about our future would be taken by an elected assembly here in the region - rather than by Ministers and civil servants in London. The people of the North East are best placed to understand our needs and make the right decisions to take us forward. London is too remote and Whitehall doesn't always know best to take decisions on our behalf. The current system is failing us badly. We must say no to the status quo and change to a modern, flexible system which responds to the needs of the region.

2. Focus on full employment for all in the North East

There is no reason why we shouldn't set our sights on full employment in the North East. The South East has it, why shouldn't we. Our region has different economic problems and potential to other parts of the UK. Whitehall has failed to help us realise our potential for generations. Our poll shows that the lack of jobs and the poor quality of jobs in the region is the primary concern of voters: we must let people know that a regional assembly could respond to this with greater focus than the national government ever could.

An elected Assembly will be able to focus on nurturing our own home-grown businesses, as well as continuing to attract inward investors - but the right kind that bring good-quality jobs and the latest technology and embed themselves into the economy of the region.

3. A stronger voice

Representatives with the backing of their people have a louder and stronger voice than faceless, unelected bureaucrats. They can speak up for the region with authority. In an increasingly competitive world we need strong voices and strong leadership to make sure we succeed in growing our economy.

Scotland and Wales have such a voice. The Mayor of London is a powerful advocate for the City and makes sure it gets its share of public funds. The North East needs a voice of equal weight. Regional government would be a force to be reckoned with.

4. North East England is our community and place to be proud of.

The people of the North East have a shared culture which comes from their history. They have a strong sense of community, born out of the industries of the past. These industries made sure people had to work hard, together, to succeed. People are proud to be from this region and many ex-patriots want to return.

Of all the English regions, the North East has the strongest sense of identity. We share a proud history and great potential for the future. These are the basis of our region being the only part of the country to be given this opportunity. This is a once in a generation chance to take control of our region's destiny for our sake and those of future generations.

1 Referendum 2 Questions

WHAT WILL BE ON THE BALLOT PAPER

There will be two parts: the first on the referendum for a regional assembly. The question will ask you:-

Should there be an elected assembly for the North East region?

The second question will ask you which unitary authority option you want. The option will be as follows

Option A:

This option proposes the creation of one single tier local authority – Northumberland; covering the whole of the existing county council area.

Option B:

This option proposes the creation of two single tier local authorities.

1. Rural Northumberland:

This authority would cover the former districts of **Alnwick, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Castle Morpeth and Tynedale.**

2. South East Northumberland: This authority would cover the former districts of Blyth Valley and Wansbeck.

This time it is simpler than the European postal ballot.

All you have to do is vote and return the ballot paper in the envelope provided. If you aren't sure what to do contact your local council and they will help you.



Say YES to the North East



Who backs a YES vote?

Sir John Hall - creator of the Metrocentre

Denise Welsh - actress and former star of *Coronation Street*

Brendan Foster - Gateshead athlete and Olympic medallist

Bishop Michael Turnbull - until recently the Bishop of Durham

Ray Mallon - dubbed Robocop, invented 'zero tolerance policing', now Independent Mayor of Middlesbrough

Suzannah Clarke - internationally renowned opera star.

Melanie Hill - star of *Playing the Field*

Denise Robertson - author and TV 'agony aunt'



Andrew Duffield

Andrew Duffield

is a Northumberland County Councillor and has been selected by Hexham Constituency Liberal Democrats to stand for them at the next general election.

Lib Dems have long supported decentralising decision-making to the lowest effective level, believing that all tiers of government should be elected and accountable. A Regional Assembly conforms very much to this principle, and would mean many more key decisions being taken here rather than at Westminster. It would be an authoritative and credible voice for the North East, enhancing pride in the region, driving economic advancement and reducing regional disparities. Quite simply, if it's good enough for Scotland, Wales, London and Northern Ireland then it's good enough for the North East too!

LIB DEMS SUPPORT PARENTAL CHOICE ON SCHOOLS

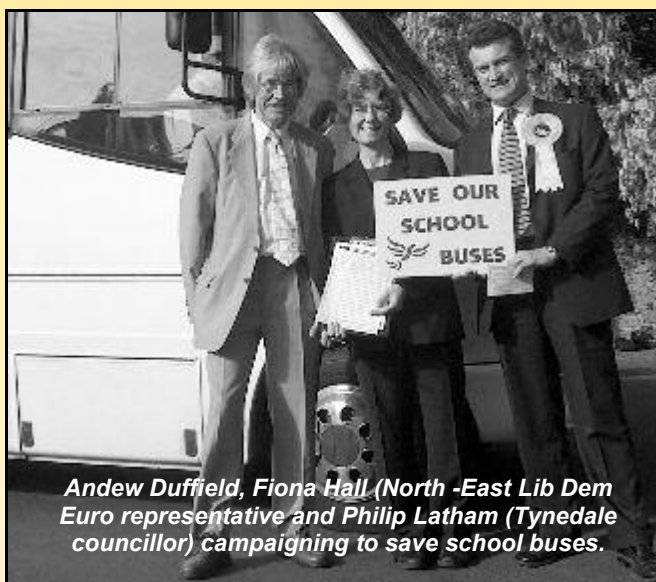


Corbridge Middle School - one of 45 Northumberland Schools threatened with closure!

At the July meeting of Tynedale Council a Liberal Democrat motion supporting the principle of parental choice was supported by the council. Lib Dems believe that there must be genuine consultation on the County Council's proposals for reorganisation. If a majority of parents want to retain the three tier system with middle schools, then the County should modify their plans.

However with the regional referendum vote on November 4th, parents in Tynedale will have a second vote. This will be to decide the type of unitary authority they want. One of the options is two unitaries 1) a rural authority 2) an urban authority based on the South East of the county. **The 37,000 parents who signed the petition to retain middle schools may decide voting for an elected regional assembly and 2 unitary authorities will be their best chance to retain middle schools.**

DOUBLE WHAMMY FOR TYNEDALE PARENTS



Andrew Duffield, Fiona Hall (North -East Lib Dem Euro representative and Philip Latham (Tynedale councillor) campaigning to save school buses.

Parents in Tynedale are facing a double whammy in the coming months. Firstly with disruption to education caused by proposed Labour Party scrapping of the 3 tier system; then government scrapping of free bus travel to those who live a long way from school. If the limit goes up to 5 miles, then there could be many more parents forced to pay for their children's travel to and from school.

Liberal Democrats are leading the campaign against Labour's plans for scrapping free bus travel. And if there is a move to bigger secondary schools coupled with the closure of rural first schools then more children could be forced to travel longer.

No wonder that parents in Tynedale are wondering how best to send a clear message to Labour controlled Northumberland in the referendum on November 4th.

Lib Dems call for investment in Prudhoe

Lib Democrats in Prudhoe are demanding that large scale projects in the pipeline for Prudhoe get major injections of cash from the region to ensure they are successful.

Councillor Neil Bradbury said, 'At the moment the regional agency, One North East, is not accountable to anyone for the way in which it spends its budget of hundreds of millions of pounds a year. With an elected regional assembly, local people will be able to hold quangos to account. Prudhoe will have a greater opportunity to have its voice heard.'

Fight continues for phone boxes



Lib Dem MP for Berwick - Alan Beith - campaigning to save telephone boxes

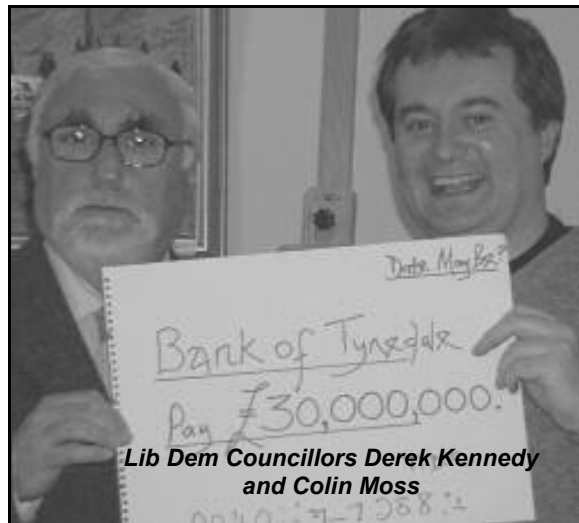
Alan Beith has called on BT officials to explain the proposed phone box cuts in a face-to-face meeting.

In a strongly-worded letter to BT's Chief Executive, Mr Beith has outlined arguments against the closure of up to 72 phone boxes in the Berwick-upon-Tweed constituency. Some boxes are located in the most socially deprived areas or in small communities which already have only one payphone. Others are in areas with little or no mobile phone coverage, including popular walking sections of the Northumberland National Park.

"Continued provision of payphones is essential to communities and I have called for a moratorium on closures until each case can be individually examined. I hope BT executives will meet me to discuss their plans.

"I am concerned that BT have not taken social and geographical factors fully into account in drawing up their list of proposed closures and I am making sure they are fully aware of the impact such closures could have. I am still receiving information from constituents about the phone kiosks and am pressing BT to take all this into account before closing any boxes," explained Mr Beith.

£30 million – The money that Tynedale Council won't spend!



Lib Dem Councillors Derek Kennedy and Colin Moss

Lib Dem pressure begins to work

Despite recent opposition by Tynedale Tories it, looks like some of the £30 million belonging to Tynedale residents will be spent in Tynedale. Tynedale Council has had this money since 2000 when the housing stock was sold. Only now does it appear some of this money will be spent.

The recent public consultation exercise on a possible **new swimming pool at Wentworth could result in several millions being spent on a new pool.** Lib Dems welcome this approach.

Lib Dems will be keeping up the pressure in the council to ensure that the rest of the £30 million is spent where it belongs; in Tynedale.

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS CAMPAIGN FOR NEW BUS ROUTE

Liberal Democrat Councillor Peter Charleton is campaigning for a regular bus service linking Ponteland and Morpeth. This service will go via Thornhill Road Estate, Newcastle Airport and Newcastle. The campaign has received support from Ponteland Parish Council and Peter hopes it will also get support from Morpeth Parish Council.

Help the Liberal Democrats



- I can help deliver leaflets
- I enclose a donation of
- I want to join

I enclose a cheque (payable to "Liberal Democrats" for £

A donation of £5 or more entitles you to membership of the Liberal Democrats. Tick above if you would like to become a member.

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