

WHAT THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS BELIEVE

PARTY'S PHILOSOPHY IN A SENTENCE

FROM THE PREAMBLE TO THE PARTY'S CONSTITUTION

"NO ONE SHALL BE ENSLAVED BY POVERTY, IGNORANCE OR CONFORMITY"

DEMAND BETTER: LIBERAL DEMOCRAT PRIORITIES FOR A BETTER BRITAIN



DEMAND A FAIR SOCIETY

An end to austerity, a fair distribution of wealth, more and better homes, protect our civil liberties, political reform to give power to the people, and everyone given an opportunity to succeed.



DEMAND HIGH-QUALITY HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Proper funding of the NHS, giving mental health issues the same importance as physical health, and a sensible approach to drugs, including a regulated legal market for cannabis.



DEMAND LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Support education at all levels from pre-school to post-university, including extra support for life-long learning for adults, and reducing testing and league tables for schools.



DEMAND A GREEN ECONOMY AND SOCIETY

Ambitious action to tackle climate change and pollution, boosting green jobs and industries, with clean energy and transport reducing energy bills and cutting deaths from air pollution.



DEMAND A STRONGER ECONOMY

A major programme of investment in infrastructure, doubling research spending, rolling out hyperfast broadband and strengthening employee participation in the workplace.



DEMAND A BRITAIN OPEN TO THE WORLD

Opposing Brexit, supporting sustainable development around the world and welcoming the benefits of immigration, ensuring those benefits are shared across the country.

A PRO-EUROPEAN PARTY



The party combines a desire to **devolve power to the lowest level possible** with a push for **international cooperation on issues that cross national boundaries**.

Spearheaded by Jo Grimond, the Liberal Party was **one of the first voices calling for Britain to join the Common Market** (the forerunner of the European Union) in the 1950s. Then in the European Referendum of 1975, many pro-European Labour figures cooperated with the Liberals, paving the way for the formation of the SDP and later merger to form the Liberal Democrats.

The party has continued to argue the pro-European case since, including opposing Britain's departure from the European Union.

PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

As far back as the "Yellow Book" in 1928, protecting the environment has been at the heart of the party's policies. The concern for future generations is enshrined in the party's constitution:

"We believe that each generation is responsible for the fate of our planet and, by safeguarding the balance of nature and the environment, for the long term continuity of life in all its forms."



SOCIAL & ECONOMIC LIBERALS

Balancing **social liberalism** and **economic liberalism** is at the heart of the party's approach.



SOCIAL LIBERALS

Tend to be most concerned about **inequality** and **promote democracy** to give people more power.

INEQUALITY



ECONOMIC LIBERALS

Tend to be most concerned about an **overbearing state** and **promote free markets** to give people more power.

OVERBEARING STATE

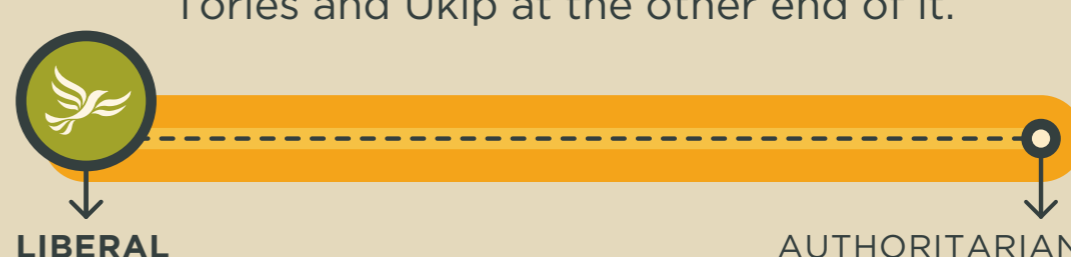
Economic and social liberals put different emphasis on the best defences and the biggest bullies. Social liberals tend to favour a greater degree of government intervention to achieve policy aims, whereas economic liberals tend to favour smaller-state solutions.

CENTRE PARTY OR NOT?

Some see the party as being in the **centre on a left/right spectrum**, with Labour, Tories and Ukip at the ends of it.



Others reject this spectrum, and instead see the party at the **liberal end of a liberal/authoritarian spectrum**, with Labour, Tories and Ukip at the other end of it.



THE ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

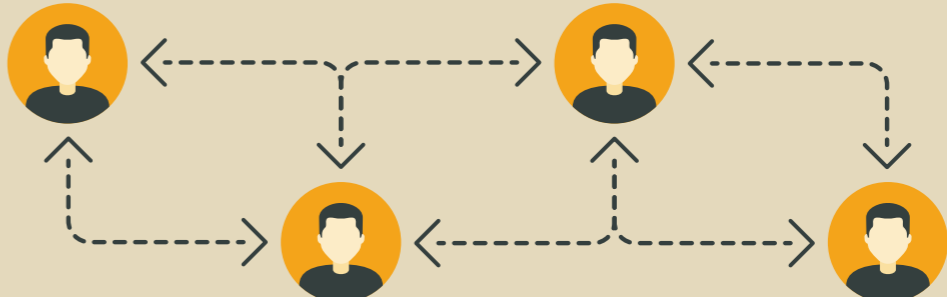
BOSSES VERSUS WORKERS

This viewpoint gives Labour and Tories a **central organising economic idea**.



MUTUALS AND COOPERATIVES

Lib Dems reject this way of looking at the world, looking to **mutuals and cooperatives** to break that struggle.



PUTTING NEW IDEAS ON THE AGENDA

"I AM A LIBERAL AND I AM AGAINST THIS SORT OF THING"

HARRY WILLCOCK

Over the years the party has been central to popularising some previously fringe beliefs which then became mainstream - especially **civil liberties, pro-Europeanism, environmentalism and constitutional reform**.

Most famously, Harry Willcock triggered the abolition of ID cards with an act of civil disobedience in 1950.

WANT TO FIND OUT HOW TO TURN BELIEFS INTO POLITICAL POWER?

GET THE BOOK!
101 WAYS TO WIN AN ELECTION

by Ed Maxfield and Mark Pack
Biteback, 2nd edition 2016



HISTORY

ONE REVOLUTION AND TWO MERGERS

1688

GLORIOUS REVOLUTION



The Whigs saw this as ousting a despotic King to ensure parliament was supreme. It embodied their political tradition of opposing absolute power and supporting religious toleration.

From this later came support for the **rule of law and equality before the law**.

1859

WILLIS ROOMS MEETING



Whigs, Radicals and Peelites (*followers of the former Conservative PM*) met in London and **combined to form the Liberal Party**.

1988

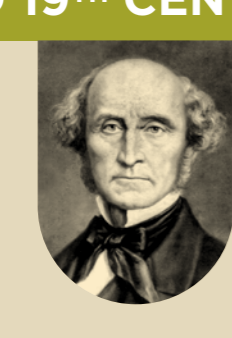
THE MERGER



SDP (formed mainly by ex-Labour figures) and **Liberal Party** merged to form the Liberal Democrats.

PRIORITIES THROUGH THE AGES

MID 19TH CENTURY

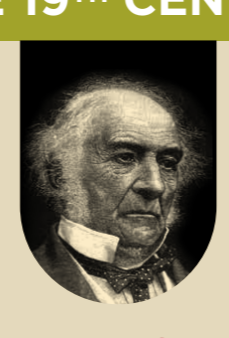


THE HARM PRINCIPLE

"The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to **prevent harm to others**"

John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor in *On Liberty*

LATE 19TH CENTURY



"PEACE, RETRENCHMENT AND REFORM"

William Gladstone's popular trio meant **peace overseas, economy in public spending and political reform**.

EARLY 20TH CENTURY



"WE CAN CONQUER UNEMPLOYMENT"

David Lloyd George's famous slogan was part of a Liberal shift to **supporting greater public spending to help the economy and fund a welfare state**.

MID 20TH CENTURY



COMMUNITY POLITICS DEVELOPED

A growing emphasis on **winning local elections and pavement politics** led to a new political theory about **helping people secure power over their own lives**.