

Newsletter

of the Alliance for Green Socialism – March 2013
www.greensocialist.org.uk



Eastleigh means what?

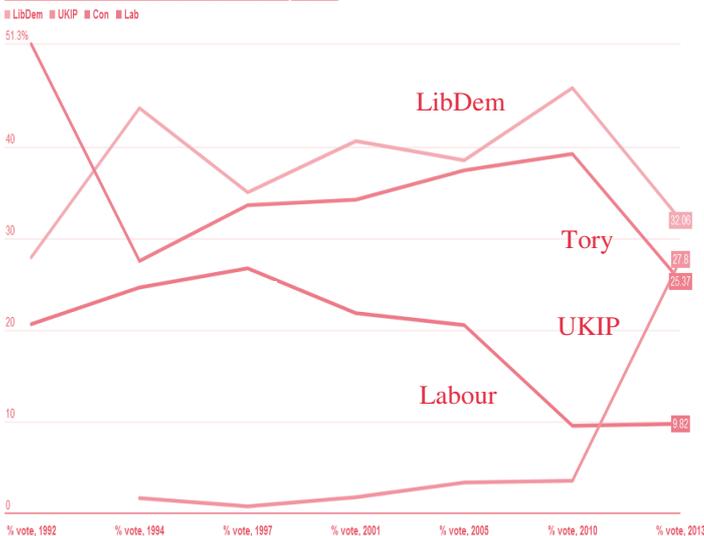
At the LibDem conference, Nick Clegg made a big deal of the LibDem holding the Eastleigh seat in the by-election. He claimed people are no longer voting LibDem because they are a protest party, but voting LibDem “because we are in government”. Brave words, little Nick.

However, Clegg is trying to explain the reason for a LibDem success that does not exist. The truth is that people did not vote for them in Eastleigh. Their share of the vote went down from 46.5% to 32.1%, a whopping fourteen point fall. The only reason they held the seat was that the right-wing vote split almost exactly down the middle between Tories and UKIP.

Eastleigh's changing vote

Guardian

This shows the share of the vote of each of the four main contestants in Eastleigh since 1992



Indeed, the reverse of Clegg's claim appears to be true. Both parties in government lost about a third of their support, while the leading protest party - UKIP - went from nowhere to a quarter of the vote.

Pity it was UKIP that benefitted: a party with no clear political direction, some extremely nasty policies, and much in common with the BNP.

Candidate	Party	Votes	% vote	change
Mike Thornton	LD	13,342	32.06	-14.48
Diane James	UKIP	11,571	27.80	24.2
Maria Hutchings	C	10,559	25.37	-13.96
John O'Farrell	Lab	4,088	9.82	0.22
Danny Stupple	Ind	768	1.85	1.56
Dr Iain MacLennan	NHA	392	0.94	
Ray Hall	Beer	235	0.56	
Kevin Milburn	Christian	163	0.39	
Howling Laud Hope	Loony	136	0.33	
Jim Duggan	Peace	128	0.31	
David Bishop	Elvis	72	0.17	
Michael Walters	Eng Dem	70	0.17	-0.3
Daz Procter	TUSC	62	0.15	
Colin Bex	Wessex Reg	30	0.07	
electorate & turnout		79,004	41,616	52.68 -16.61

The National Health Action Party stood a local doctor and got nearly 400 votes. That's hardly a threat. But for a newly formed party standing for the first time in a hotly contested election it's not bad at all. The AGS gave the NHAP some help in Eastleigh the weekend before the election, leafletting in the town centre and in shopping centres across the extensive constituency. They had a score of people out each day, some local and some from surrounding areas.

As shown above, there were a large number of other candidates. These included TUSC, who failed to see the bigger picture and give the NHAP a clear run, as we did. Fortunately TUSC had no impact at all, coming 13th out of 14.

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Meetings of the national committee are normally open to any member to observe. Meetings are on Saturdays, most often at the Calthorpe Arms on Grays Inn Road, Kings Cross, London.

18 May 2013 Calthorpe Arms, London WC1X 8JR 13:15

6 Jul 2013 venue tba

7 Sep 2013 Calthorpe Arms, London WC1X 8JR 13:15

ANNUAL CONFERENCE Sat 19 Oct 2013 Leeds

16 Nov 2013 Calthorpe Arms, London WC1X 8JR 12:00

LETTERS TO THE PRESS

Writing to the press can achieve three useful things:

- if published, it puts an AGS view before the public
- if the letter is attributed to the AGS it gives our organisation publicity
- anyway, it raises our profile within the paper itself

Of course, it is hard to get letters published. Some tips:

- It is much easier to get a letter in your local paper than in a national one
- Papers often have a standard approach to what letters they carry; for example, a paper may have one or two themes with several longer, serious letters, plus a scatter of short or more humorous letters
- The letters page often addresses a current theme, so be prompt and aware
- Papers love letters that pick up on articles they have carried (strangely, though, they don't much like articles directly attacking their own coverage)
- Letters pages are compiled by people, so pander to the kind of thing they may like (for example, a reference to the Speenhamland System was just erudite enough to appeal to the Guardian compilers - but probably not the Mail)
- Always sign yourself as Alliance for Green Socialism, provided you are reasonably confident your letter reflects AGS views. Usually the paper will drop off this attribution, but not always

Over the last year we have had at least ten letters published. These included the lead letter in the Guardian (on LIBOR and banking), complete with highlighted quote, and a couple of short ones in the Guardian, one with an attribution to the AGS.

It's hardly the revolution, but it's a start.

EAST ANGLIA LEFT-GREEN CONFERENCE

On 3rd March we convened in Chelmsford a conference of activists from the region interested in left & green issues, including the current government assault on working (and non-working) people.

Around twenty attended and there was very lively and constructive discussion.

Well done John Sillett, Pete Relph and others for organising.

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARIES

Saturday 13th July 2013

Leeds **AGS** Garden Party

Come and have fun

A STEADY STATE ECONOMY?

Check out a US-based group called the *Center for the Advancement of a Steady State Economy* (CASSE) at steadystate.org and a new book "Enough is Enough" by Rob Deitz & Dan O'Neill.

CASSE are quite clearly not socialist. However, they have picked up on one of the basic problems of capitalism, its absolute reliance on endless growth. The logic of their position ought surely to lead them to anti-capitalism and hence to socialism.

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