



Campaign 2010

The General and City Council Elections

May 6th 2010

Report to the Portsmouth
Liberal Democrats Executive

Richard Cole

Chair, Campaigns Committee

Campaign 2010

Executive Summary

Recommendations and Proposals

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this report I outline the process by which we planned and implemented the 2010 campaign, and my views on what went right and where we got things wrong.

Building up to the campaign

Following the 2008 Council Elections the Executive agreed to revamp the structure of campaigning. The new Campaign Committee reflected the stake-holders - the Local Party, MP's Office, Council Group and Candidates.

An agreement was reached between Mike Hancock, the Group and the Local Party to fund a Constituency and Campaign Organiser. New premises in Fratton Road were found to house our campaigning office and the Printing Society.

Early recruitment of council candidates was undertaken but unfortunately there were a number of changes and some wards were not filled until near the beginning of the campaign.

The Campaign Committee adopted and reported on a comprehensive Election Plan in October 2009. The plan assumed that the mostly likely date for a General Election was May 6th 2010, held in conjunction with the local elections.

The central philosophy of the plan was to have an integrated election, with one campaign working to deliver a number of objectives. By closely relating parliamentary and council candidates in literature and campaign structure we could portray a combined team working with a common philosophy for the good of the people of Portsmouth.

The **PRIMARY TARGETS** for these elections were to retain the Parliamentary seat in Portsmouth South and to retain control of Portsmouth City Council.

In the run up to the election campaign we built up the level of activity progressively. We also fought the Southsea Town Council campaign with a resounding success for our abolition campaign.

The campaign

During the campaign the Team Leader was Will Purvis, with John Wheeler as legal agent, handling the formal paperwork and campaign bank accounts. I acted as overall co-ordinator and took on specific duties within the campaign.

Internal communication was via a Campaign Update email 2-3 times a week and a weekly candidates meeting held at the Southsea Social Club.

The literature was designed to be high impact, punchy and relevant with significant use of full colour litho printing as well as the Printing Society's equipment.

Overall the quality of our literature was very high and consistent. We achieved high rates of delivery with up to 2 deliveries a week per ward.

- The flying start leaflets were ready before the campaign, enabling us to delivery across much of the City within 72 hours.
- The free post was used to produce 2 addressed split posts in both Portsmouth North and South.
- Targeted letters were used to contact identified groups.
- Colour postcards and letters and hand addressed letters were used to target identified electoral groups.

Canvassing was conducted ward by ward and overall we collected too little data and in only one ward, Central Southsea, did we have comprehensive data.

Postal voters were targetted with mailings and blue letters in the 2-3 days before they received their vote.

We built an increasing poster presence during the campaign with rapid response to offers of poster sites, conversion of mini posters to larger posters and distribution of posters during canvassing.

We campaigned heavily amongst and with the students.

Central teams were absolutely essential to achieving the level of delivery we did.

We were privileged to be able to host a visiting team from the Molodvan Young Liberals. Over the campaign a total of 7 visited us and I believe both sides gained much from the experience.

Expenditure was monitored by the Treasurer, the Campaign Committee and at a joint meeting of the Campaign and Local Party/Group Finance Committee

Micheal Andrewes, together with John Wheeler, David Yates and Will Purvis has produced the electoral expense returns. A copy of the spreadsheet from which the returns are compiled is in the Appendices and the returns themselves are of course public documents.

The results met nearly all our targets and against the regional and national backdrop our results look even more impressive.

- **We won Portsmouth South with an increased majority**
- **We retained control with an increased majority.**
- **We maintained our vote in Portsmouth North.**
- **In the local elections we came top of the popular vote for the first time.**

RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSAL

FROM THE MAIN BODY OF THE REPORT

Recommendations

1. We overhaul candidate approval to ensure all potential candidates are approved early and are properly briefed on the role and responsibility of the candidate and what is involved in being a councillor. If necessary individual training programmes should be created.
2. Candidate selection for key seats is carried out early either in July or September. Equally selection of candidates for Parliamentary seats should be carried out as soon as possible.
3. If development seats candidates can be selected then they should be but if not proactive recruitment of potential candidates be carried out over the Summer not left to next Spring.
4. All staff recruitment is carried out to professional standards with appropriate job descriptions and letters of engagement being provided to staff recruited.
5. The Campaign Committee or its successor set clear, ranked objectives for the 2011 Campaign at its first 2011 Campaign meeting and be required to report to the Executive such objectives before August.
6. Each ward appoint one councillor to be the co-ordinator to liaise with the campaign team on local stories and photos.
7. Being able and willing to use e-mail for internal communication is an approval requirement for candidates.
8. The Executive sets up a rapid review on the management of campaigning, the campaign office, staff and financial arrangements in conjunction with Mike Hancock's Office and the Council group. Such a review should report back by the beginning of August.
9. An agreement to canvass is a requirement of approval and selection and that a failure to meet targets should be considered as a reason for de-selection.
10. Canvassing starts as soon as candidates are selected.
11. Investment in training and commercial support for enhanced websites and intranets.
12. We continue to use and develop the Portsmouth & Southsea Express and Portsmouth Talk brands.
13. Improving ward delivery networks is a priority.

14. At every election we should aim to recruit a central delivery team to fill gaps and to act as a rapid response unit.

15. A vote of thanks to the team be recorded and a letter sent to the Moldovan Liberal Party expressing recording that vote.

Proposals for discussion

A . We create a continuing programme for interns to work short periods in the campaign office.

B. This year's candidates write short pieces on their experiences to help inform future candidates.

C. The Local Party considers embracing a new approach to finding candidates by publicly inviting non-party members to an open day to discover what is involved and to see if they have the skills to put themselves forward. The party should consider pro-actively recruiting potential candidates to broaden the range of candidates we have.

D. The possibility of selling commercial adverts in the Express tabloid and Talk magazine be explored.

E. We look carefully at the balance of effort to reward before accepting further VIP visits during an election campaign.

F. We ask the Molodvan team to report back on their experience and that we look at future links with our European sister parties youth wings with the aim of inviting future teams over.

Campaign 2010

The Main Report

PREFACE

The 2010 election will always be remarkable to me because, like most observers and activists, I got up on the Morning of May 6th believing that the Liberal Democrats would make a breakthrough over the next 18 hours. My most pessimistic prediction for us was 27% of the vote nationally and I thought we would achieve better, with a significant increase in seats. While I thought winning seats from Labour would be more difficult than some did, I thought 100 MPs a real possibility.

During the day here in Portsmouth, the campaign went to plan. We had one point of concern when it looked like turn-out was low in Somerstown and Portsea. We checked direct with Polling Stations and it became clear that in fact people were queuing at polling stations across the City. The delay in figures reaching the office was the only problem. With Eastney & Craneswater clearly likely to be the closest result, we switched most resources there. By early evening the issue seemed to be finding any Lib Supporters who hadn't voted.

Our canvassing levels were lower than I would have wished and were concentrated in particular areas making it impossible to properly analyse voting patterns but nevertheless every indication was that we were doing well. I went to the count confident that Mike would win with around 50% of the three main party vote and between 45% and 48% of the overall vote. I was certain we would retain control of the council and reasonably confident we would hold every seat we defended. I expected the national result to be on a par with ours.

By the morning of the 7th we knew that we had done as expected in Portsmouth but across the country the Liberal Democrats had flat-lined in terms of votes and gone backwards in seats. The South-East was particularly bad with a 2% swing to the Conservatives and our ability to turn votes in to seats crumbling. We achieved 26.2% of the vote in the region but only won 4 out of 84 seats. Labour won 4 on 16.2%.

In this report I outline the process by which we planned and implemented the 2010 campaign, and my views on what went right and where we got things wrong.

INTRODUCTION

Following the 2008 Council Elections the Executive agreed to revamp the structure of campaigning. The results in 2008 were acceptable but below what I believed were achievable. With the support of the Executive the Campaign Committee was revamped (see appendix). Membership reflected the stake-holders - the Local Party, MP's Office, Council Group and Candidates.

An agreement was reached between Mike Hancock, the Group and the Local Party to fund a Constituency and Campaign Organiser, working part-time on Mike's Constituency Programme and part-time on local and council campaigning. After a properly organised recruitment programme, Will Purvis was appointed and took post at the end of 2008.

Councillor Stevens had also located new premises in Fratton Road to house the Campaign Office and Printing Society. These were revamped, thanks in large part to Councillor Stevens with some help by volunteers.

The next step was early recruitment of candidates. Unfortunately this proved more difficult than it should. We had changes in candidates for St Thomas, St Jude, Nelson and Hilsea, uncertainty about Copnor, and late selection of our final candidates in Hilsea, and Drayton and Farlington. Early selection helps achieve a credible campaign, even in development wards.

Approval was not achieved for the last candidates selected, however as they were selected in emergency we had no choice. More concerning was that one sitting councillor, successfully re-elected, was not approved. While there were special circumstances this was not acceptable and must be remedied as soon as possible.

Early selection enabled candidates to engage in long term campaigning, to help build support networks, to be involved in the planning process and to attend the Kick Start training weekend as in place candidates. To achieve the high level of canvassing that Councillor Lee Hunt achieved in Central Southsea requires an early start on surveying, canvassing and telephone canvassing.

I had tried to give a realistic view of life as a candidate in a newsletter article and encouraged people to come forward but some pro-active recruitment was required to recruit final candidates in March.

Following an intern programme over the Summer of 2009 we asked Nicky Metcalfe to stay on as a Campaign Assistant. She proved an important member of the team but the process of her appointment was too ad hoc leading to later confusion.

Recommendations

- 1. We overhaul candidate approval to ensure all potential candidates are approved early and are properly briefed on the role and responsibility of the candidate and what is involved in being a councillor. If necessary individual training programmes should be created.**
- 2. Candidate selection for key seats is carried out early either in July or September. Equally selection of candidates for Parliamentary seats should be carried out as soon as possible.**
- 3. If development seats candidates can be selected then they should be but if not proactive recruitment of potential candidates be carried out over the Summer not left to next Spring.**
- 4. All staff recruitment is carried out to professional standards with appropriate job descriptions and letters of engagement being provided to staff recruited.**

Proposals for discussion

- A . We create a continuing programme for interns to work short periods in the campaign office.**
- B. This year's candidates write short pieces on their experiences to help inform future candidates.**
- C. The Local Party considers embracing a new approach to finding candidates by publicly inviting non-party members to an open day to discover what is involved and to see if they have the skills to put themselves forward. The party should consider pro-actively recruiting potential candidates to broaden the range of candidates we have.**

PLANNING THE CAMPAIGN

As Chair of the Campaigns Committee I undertook the task of writing the Campaign Plan. Consultation was with Mike Hancock's Office, the Leader of the Group, the Organiser, the Chair, the Treasurer and individual members of the Council Group and party.

The Plan assumed that the mostly likely date for a General Election was May 6th 2010 in conjunction with the local elections. The contingency plans for separate campaigns in the event of an early General Election included heavily involving the local election candidates in the General Election campaign in their own wards as a build up to a later local election. In the event the contingency plan was redundant.

The central philosophy of the plan was to have an integrated election, with one campaign working to deliver a number of objectives. By closely relating parliamentary and council candidates in literature and campaign structure we could portray a combined team working with a common philosophy for the good of the people of Portsmouth. The strengths of one part of the campaign would support others and all candidates could gain from the high profile of Mike Hancock.

Our resources are always limited and election expenditure legally constrained and so a fully integrated campaign would make the best use of our resources both financial and human. At times some expressed concern that one element was being promoted above others but because the themes, styles and types of literature were common, they supported each other and each contributed to the overall whole.

The plan covered the General and Council Election timetables for May 2010, the message, management and staffing, campaign elements and the timetables for the combined campaigns in Portsmouth North and south. Appendices dealt with key jobs and personnel, the budget and preparation work. (See appendix).

The Campaign Plan was adopted by the Campaign Committee in the Autumn of 2009 and summary documents were presented first to the Executive and later to the Council Group.

The Plan was reviewed and updated over the following six months.

TARGET SETTING

The Campaign Committee set out clear, straight forward objectives for the Campaign. While everyone has a view on targets I believe it was most successful to have the Campaigns Committee set and rank its objectives in the manner they believed achievable.

The **PRIMARY TARGETS** for these elections were to:

1. Retain the Parliamentary seat in Portsmouth South
2. Retain control of Portsmouth City Council

The **SECONDARY TARGETS** were:

3. Consolidate and improve our position in Portsmouth North
4. Retain all the council seats we hold
5. To gain St. Jude and Eastney and Craneswater Wards

The targets were in the presentations given to candidates, the Executive and the Group.

Recommendation

5. The Campaign Committee or its successor set clear, ranked objectives for the 2011 Campaign at its first 2011 Campaign meeting and be required to report to the Executive such objectives before August.

THE RUN UP TO THE CAMPAIGN

In the three months running up to the election campaign we built up the level of activity progressively with the delivery of two tabloids, A3 Focuses and a Portsmouth Talk, letters pushing postal voting sign up and action weekends. The second Tabloid was funded by Mike Hancock.

The Action days proved a mixed success. At times considerable mutual support built a team effort and increased the level of canvassing achieved. However Sunday morning canvassing was not successful. The turn out for action days was always too low, sometimes far too low. With 25 councillors and many activists we could and should be able to create canvassing groups of 20+ people for these weekends.

Postal vote sign up rates were good and overwhelmed the Election Office but we should continue to push up the number of our supporters on postal votes. These voters produce a higher and more reliable turn-out.

Individual wards used street letters and mailings to bolster their campaigning. However some wards were notably slow in providing local issues and photo opportunities for the A3 Focus. This must improve.

We also fought the Southsea Town Council abolition campaign with a resounding success. This campaign involved 3 leaflets, letters and an interactive website. We combined telephone canvassing for the referendum with voter intention questions. Via the website and telephone canvassing we gained considerable data as well as helping our momentum towards the election. I am sure that the campaign contributed to our success in gaining St Jude ward.

Staff compassionate leave did cause a short term issue. I was able to give some cover in the office but we may need to develop a more robust system for coping with this sort of situation. It highlighted the need for improved procedures for backing up data and alternate storage of back ups. This has now been done.

Monthly Campaign Committee meetings, Candidate meetings and Campaign updates provided channels of communication over this period.

Recommendation

6. Each ward appoint one councillor to be the co-ordinator to liaise with the campaign team on local stories and photos.

MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING

The campaign was run from the party offices at 220 Fratton Road.

During the campaign the Team Leader was Will Purvis, with John Wheeler as legal agent, handling the formal paperwork and campaign bank accounts. Copier Express was able to fund my secondment to the campaign full time for five weeks and I acted as overall co-ordinator and took on specific duties within the campaign.

The central management roles for the campaign were each allocated to a named individual. This was generally successful although in some cases other duties conflicted with the role and in these situations I generally stepped in. (See appendix).

An informal gathering took place in the office most days at 9am and more formal campaign meetings most weeks with a weekly candidates meeting held at the Southsea Social Club.

Overall the system worked well but there were points at which conflicting demands between different candidates and uncertain lines of communication caused tension. Clear, written lines of decision making, authority and communication would have prevented this happening but were not properly in place.

A review of the way we manage staff, campaigning and the office, both inside and outside elections, would help clarify the management and reporting structure. This is particularly important for managing paid staff who are currently in danger of finding they have 3 competing bosses.

Volunteer helpers

Nicky Metcalfe held a database of local members, supporters and of distribution networks. This formed the basis of our volunteer team during the campaign and was co-ordinated by Nicky. We benefited from a number of extremely dedicated and hard working voluntary helpers who carried out a huge amount of clerical and administrative work, delivery and polling day help.

Candidate Support and Programme

Mike Andrewes and Mandy Collis gave casework, diary and communication support to Mike Hancock during the campaign. I was able to offer some support to Darren Sanders.

Communication

I produced a Campaign Update email 2-3 times a week which was sent to councillors, candidates, activists, Executive members and Campaign Team members. This was the principle route for communicating information within the campaign.

Recommendations

7. Being able and willing to use e-mail for internal communication is an approval requirement for candidates.

8. The Executive sets up a rapid review on the management of campaigning, the campaign office, staff and financial arrangements in conjunction with Mike Hancock's Office and the Council group. Such a review should report back by the beginning of August.

THE CAMPAIGN

Members Mailing

A prepared mailing to all members and other key supporters was posted first class as soon as the dissolution was announced.

The mailing included an appeal for money and help, return envelope, invitation to the adoption meeting and a poster.

Adoption Meeting

A single combined adoption meeting was held on Monday 19th April in the Guildhall and was followed by a reception. The meeting attracted over 100 people including a number of non-members and was successful as a fundraiser.

Flying Starts

The flying start leaflets were ready before the campaign, enabling us to deliver across much of the City within 72 hours. They were warded (except in the development seats where there was a combined leaflet) and established the integrated campaign from the word go. I believe they were particularly effective.

Free Post

The Free Post was used to produce 2 addressed split posts in both Portsmouth North and South. Portsmouth North was two leaflets while Portsmouth South was a leaflet followed by an enveloped letter with enclosure.

The process of litho pre-printing and mail merging the address on and folding in house was highly successful.

An issue arose with the second Free Post for Portsmouth North when Royal Mail and ourselves believed we had agreed different days for its delivery to the sorting office. In the event we were able to have 40% of the second Free Post delivered via the Post Office and some gaps were hand delivered. The whole of the Portsea Island

part of Portsmouth North received its second Free Post but the off the Island portion did not. This was a case of human error in communication under pressure. In future it is vital we ask for written confirmation from Royal Mail of deadlines to ensure we do not make a similar mistake.

Clerical work

Clerical work was organised by Nicky Metcalfe and was carried out mostly at Fratton community centre or by distribution to home workers.

Letters

In addition to members mailings and the split post, hand addressed and enveloped letters were used to contact all postal voters the day/evening before they receive their ballots.

Targeted letters were also used to contact identified groups - Bangladeshis, young people, student voters, residents of old people's blocks and sheltered housing, identified Green supporters and supporters of animal rights and environmental groups, those for whom Mike Hancock has done casework and any other relevant identified group.

Colour postcards and letters and hand addressed letters' were used to target identified electoral groups (Labour, Greens, soft Lib Dems, soft Conservatives) with squeeze and other messages. Postcard delivery was blanket in Charles Dickens.

Canvassing and Telephone Canvassing

Before and during the campaign canvassing and telephone canvassing was carried out on a ward by ward basis. Some commercial telephone canvassing was bought from the Oxford phone bank but the contact rate was low and it did not represent good value for money.

Inevitably, the amount of data obtained during the election was low compared with the months running up to the election. Overall we collected too little data and in only one ward, Central Southsea, did we have comprehensive data.

We need to increase the canvassing we do. Councillor Hunt started early and kept at it, enabling him to obtain high rates of contact in Central Southsea. Ward Councillors need to take joint responsibility with candidates to make sure satisfactory levels of canvassing are achieved.

Canvassing percentage by ward

WARD	DOORSTEP CANVASS	PHONE CANVASS	SURVEY/OTHER	TOTAL CANVASS ACHIEVED
St Thomas	21%	7%	1%	27%
St Jude	12%	19%	2%	28%
Central Southsea	78%	9%	5%	84%
Eastney & Cranes.	18%	14%	2%	32%
Milton	20%	8%	1%	26%
Fratton	1%	6%	1%	8%
Charles Dickens	4%	8%	1%	13%
Baffins	8%	9%	0.1%	17%
Nelson	7%	7%	16%	25%

Includes double canvassing.

Recommendations

9. An agreement to canvass is a requirement of approval and selection and that a failure to meet targets should be considered as a reason for de-selection.

10. Canvassing starts as soon as candidates are selected.

E-campaigning

The local websites were changed at the start of the campaign and flying start emails sent to our e-mail database. E-mail eve of polls were also used.

I monitored political chat rooms and websites for negative messages and countered them and made sure that, as far as possible, reporting on Portsmouth on line was accurate.

We need to increase our skills in e-campaigning and develop our system to make the most of opportunities on the net.

Recommendation

11. Investment in training and commercial support for enhanced websites and intranets.

Postal Votes

Postal voters were targetted with mailings and blue letters in the 2-3 days before they received their vote. Where possible they were targetted with the first Split post delivery. In some wards we were also able to do telephone or doorstep 'knocking up'.

The campaign to postal voters was hampered by the late arrival of the postal voters list from the City Council.

Posters

Mini posters were distributed across Portsmouth South, either with the Flying Start or a later delivery.

We built an increasing poster presence during the campaign with rapid response to offers of poster sites, conversion of mini posters to larger posters and distribution of posters during canvassing.

Dean Hancock lead a successful operation to get the poster boards and super signs up. We clearly won the poster war in Portsmouth South and had a strong presence in Portsmouth North.

Students

We campaigned heavily amongst and with the students including 2 targetted mailings to those registered in halls, a mailing to identified student households out of halls, significant signing up of students to postal votes and distribution of cards with polling station maps on in key polling districts.

We also held two successful 'meet and distribute literature events' in the area around the Student Union on Wednesday afternoon.

Rob Wood, in particular carefully targeted student areas in his ward and recruited student members to help.

Media Relations

Mike Hancock's high media profile inevitably meant much media attention was focused carried out by Will Purvis and myself, who acted as the lead local contacts for the media and VIP contacts and visits.

Literature - Overview

The literature was designed to be high impact, punchy and relevant with significant use of full colour litho printing as well as the Printing Society's equipment.

While the style and content varied across the literature and included geographic variation the themes remained consistent. Localised and issue based photos were

used as much as possible. We had built up a considerable library of photos before the election which proved very useful.

E-links featured prominently in the Flying Start and resulted in a high rate of hits on the website.

Literature copywriting and design was done by Will Purvis with Michael Andrewes and myself working in a supporting role.

Literature – Brands

Before and during the election we used a set of consistent 'brands' for much of our literature.

Focus is well established and remains the visible, party identified, ward newsletter with the message being highly localised.

Portsmouth Talk was developed by Will in a coffee table style light reading magazine format, used both for reporting back by Mike Hancock and for cross city campaigning. It allows a strong focus on individuals, increasing their profile and linking them with particular stories.

The tabloid Portsmouth & Southsea Express has been used for many years and allows a more combative approach and third party reportage. The price of printing the tabloid also allows two editions to be purchased cost effectively. After some discussion we used this for 'blue' and 'red' editions focusing on different stories. Overall I believe that the tabloid works best when it looks as close to a real newspaper as possible and looks as if it covers the whole city.

In the final ward A3 we again used the 'Action Map' approach for the centre pages. I believe that this remains highly effective.

Overall the quality of our literature was very high and consistent. We achieved high rates of delivery with up to 2 deliveries a week per ward.

Recommendation

12. We continue to use and develop the Portsmouth & Southsea Express and Portsmouth Talk brands.

Proposal

D. The possibility of selling commercial adverts in the Express tabloid and Talk magazine be explored.

Delivery

Delivery of leaflets was by a combination of ward networks/ward groups, paid delivery and centrally organised delivery by teams of volunteers and outside helpers. While this worked well in this election we still had too few properly developed ward networks and too much reliance was placed on paid delivery. Central teams were absolutely essential to achieving the level of delivery we did. 7-10 people proved capable of delivering a ward or more in a day.

Recommendations

13. Improving ward delivery networks is a priority.

14. At every election we should aim to recruit a central delivery team to fill gaps and to act as a rapid response unit.

EARS system

The EARS system, vital to our campaigning, was managed by Phil Smith. He was able to efficiently and effectively produce the mail merged Free post and provide all other data required. EARS is a dinosaur in terms of the evolution of computer programmes and considerable patience and dedication was required from Phil in running it for us.

However it must now be a priority for the Federal Party to produce a more modern and effective election management system.

Polling Day

We achieved an eve of poll or good morning leaflet in all or part of six wards.

The polling day operation was managed via three committee rooms each handling 3 wards and co-ordinated by the Fratton Road committee room. We had tellers in one or more polling stations in each ward, which was a dramatic improvement on previous years but we should be able to cover more polling stations in future.

The structure adopted allowed us to move resources around to meet need but we did have a shortage of people working on the day.

VISIT BY VINCE CABLE

Vince Cable visited on Tuesday 27th April and we held an event at the Ferry Port with business leaders, candidates, councillors and other guests. Although short, this visit produced some positive press coverage and a good response from our guests.

The details of the visit were, as always, arranged at the last minute. Vince's team visited us on Friday 24th leaving only the weekend and Monday to put the arrangements together. Nicky Metcalf, along with Doina and Marcella from the Moldovan team, helped a great deal in putting the visit together.

Vince Cable was on good form and was able to give the News a short interview as part of the visit.

In the long run I remain uncertain if the effort required to manage these visits is worth the result achieved.

Proposal

E. We look carefully at the balance of effort to reward before accepting further VIP visits during an election campaign.

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME

We were privileged to be able to host a visiting team from the Moldovan Young Liberals. Over the campaign a total of 7 visited us and I believe gained much from the experience.

The standard of English they had varied but as well as studying what we did, having a programme of lectures and observing us, they took a hands on approach to the campaign and joined in VIP visit administration, canvassing, letter writing, clerical work and delivery. On the latter their input cannot be underestimated.

It was interesting to see their point of view on a wide range of points. They were very positive about Portsmouth and the UK and I think the level of personal freedom as well as the standard of living made a strong impression. Equally they were able to criticise us and Dumitru, their computer experts, was horrified by how old fashioned the EARS electoral programme is and they were concerned at our lackadaisical attitude to preventing electoral fraud.

I would like to thank everyone involved in hosting, feeding or driving around the team.

Recommendation

15. A vote of thanks to the team be recorded and a letter sent to the Moldovan Liberal Party expressing recording that vote.

Proposal

F. We ask the Molodvan team to report back on their experience and that we look at future links with our European sister parties youth wings with the aim of inviting future teams over.

EXPENDITURE AND BUDGET MONITORING

The budget for a combined campaign was set out in the Campaign plan and reported to stakeholders as part of reporting the Campaign Plan. Campaigning prior to the commencement of the campaign was carried out to the budget agreed by the Executive and the Group last May.

The campaign budgets were underspent between September 2009 and March 2010 because we were unable to produce and distribute as much literature as had been originally intended. This was partly due to avoiding clashing a campaigning delivery with delivery of communications from Mike Hancock's office. It was also affected by the time taken to deliver some items, in particular the tabloid at the beginning of the year and the timing problems over the ward A3.

Expenditure was monitored by the Treasurer, the Campaign Committee and at a joint meeting of the Campaign and Local Party/Group Finance Committee on 18th December 2009. The performance against budget, forecasts of cashflow and budget updates were reported to both the Executive and the Council Group.

Expenditure for the General Election was, for the first time, limited for the period between the 1st January 2010 and the start of the campaign ("the long campaign") as well as during the General Election itself ("the short campaign").

The budget was broken down between expenditure on City Council elections and on the General Election in both parliamentary seats and shown to the parliamentary candidates and Group Leader. Mike Hancock reviewed expenditure in both his long and short campaigns and funded any extra expenditure from his Development Fund.

Micheal Andrewes, together with John Wheeler, David Yates and Will Purvis have produced the electoral expense returns. These detail the type of expenditure and allocate expenditure between general and local campaigns and between wards and constituencies. The returns are submitted to the Election Office. In the type of integrated campaign we ran, many items of expenditure, for instance the tabloid newspaper, covered both campaigns and more than one constituency and ward.

Expense return breakdowns are:

General Election:

Portsmouth South £9,884.20

Portsmouth North £4,738.21

City Council Election:

St Thomas	£
St Jude	£
Central Southsea	£
Eastney and Craneswater	£
Milton	£
Fratton	£
Charles Dickens	£
Baffins	£
Nelson	£
Copnor	£
Hilsea	£
Paulsgrove	£
Cosham	£
Drayton and Farlington	£

A copy of the spreadsheet from which the returns are compiled is in the Appendices and the returns themselves are of course public documents. Please note that the returns do not include non election items such as the International Programme, general party running expenses and cost not applicable to the campaign. It does not include expenditure prior to the election being called. The treasurer will report on expenditure on campaigning across the year.

Fundraising during the campaign was successful and meet our targets. The details of donations received was kept by Nicky and reported to the treasurer. All donations are monitored by the Treasurer and returns submitted to the Federal Party. Campaign funding came from Mike Hancock's Development funds, donations, Local Party funds, the supporters club and from a G8 grant towards the local elections.

THE RESULT

Comparing the results against the targets, we achieved targets 1 to 4 in full and partially achieved target 5.

1. Retain the Parliamentary seat in Portsmouth South

We won Portsmouth South with an increased majority and we won over 45% of the vote for the first time. The seat was one of only a few across the country that saw a fall in the Conservative percentage of the vote.

2. Retain control of Portsmouth City Council

We retained control with an increased majority.

3. Consolidate and improve our position in Portsmouth North

We maintained our vote in Portsmouth North against efforts to squeeze us and against the national trend in Conservative/Labour marginal seats. For the first time we did at least some work in every seat in the North. In every seat but Paulsgrove we achieved over 1000 votes.

4. Retain all the council seats we hold

We were defending 5 seats won as Liberal Democrats in 2006 and one seat in which the candidate had won as a Conservative and one seat in which the candidate had won as Labour. We held our 5 seats and notionally gained Central Southsea and Nelson. In 5 seats we had majorities of over one thousand.

5. To gain St. Jude and Eastney and Craneswater Wards

We gained St Jude but failed to gain Eastney and Craneswater.

The failure to gain Eastney & Craneswater was disappointing but with a well-known and hard-working Conservative councillor in place it was always a tough hurdle to jump.

In the local elections we came top of the popular vote for the first time, with over 1,000 votes more than the Conservatives.

Against the regional and national backdrop our results look even more impressive.

In the South East we saw a 2% swing from the Liberal Democrats to the Conservatives. In Portsmouth we saw the reverse. Nationally few seats saw a fall in the Conservative vote but in Portsmouth South we reduced their percentage of the vote.

In terms of swing (swing is important because it indicates the relative change in vote between winner and runner up) we out ranked most other Liberal Democrat held seats. By definition seats we gained like Eastbourne and Redcar achieved higher swings but ours was still impressive. Of held seats Eastleigh beat us by .7% but they also let the Conservative vote rise.

In both Eastleigh and Portsmouth we gained a net Conservative Council seat. In Winchester we gained the council but saw a 9.1% swing to the Conservatives in the Parliamentary seat.

It is noteworthy that the 4 seats we won in the South East all have strong council groups, professional campaign teams and a high degree of integration in campaigning.

Swing between Con and LD

Negative means a swing to the Conservatives

Positive means a swing to the Liberal Democrats

South East Region	-2%
<i>Seats won</i>	
Eastbourne	+4%
<i>Seats held</i>	
Eastleigh	+3%
Portsmouth South	+2.3 %
Lewes	-0.8 %
<i>Seats lost</i>	
Romsey & South. N'th	-4.5%
Oxford West & Abin.	-6.9%
Winchester	-9.1%
<i>Targets not gained</i>	
Oxford East	-4.1%
Guildford	-6.9%
Meon Valley	-9.4%

Outside Portsmouth, we saw the Conservative vote rise across Hampshire. Falling Labour votes allowed us to gain a number of second places but in most cases (outside Portsmouth South and Eastleigh) the Conservatives gained more and saw their parliamentary majority rise or gained the seat. The pattern was repeated across the South East and in the seats such as the Isle of Wight and New Forest West which saw a swing to us the Conservative majorities remained substantial. Canterbury was a bright spot with a huge move of Labour voters to us but the Conservatives still retained a 6,048 majority. Spelthorne saw a 6.9% swing to the Liberal Democrats but almost certainly for the very concerning reason that the Conservative candidate was black. All in all, the South East produced a disappointing result.

In local election terms the results were probably even more varied than for the General Election. Local elections were held in London boroughs and a number of English districts. The surprise is that Labour had the best night.

Party	Councils won	Change	Councillors	Change
Conservative	66	-4	3447	-119
Labour	37	+17	2945	+412
Liberal Democrat	14	-4	1714	-12

While Labour were coming back from a very poor result in 2006, the scale of their recovery, in particular in London, was impressive.

Once again Portsmouth's results look even more impressive when set against national trends.

Across Hampshire we gained 5 seats and control in Winchester, gained in Eastleigh and Portsmouth to retain control but lost 5 seats in Gosport, 3 in Southampton, 1 in Rushmoor and made no progress in Basingstoke, Havant, Hart or Fareham.

We lost control of Liverpool and Sheffield and had some bad results in London Boroughs such as Richmond and Islington.

A WORD ON COUNCILLORS FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

When I was elected in 1992 it was on the back of other councillors work and, vitally, their financial contributions. In my first year the entire expense I received from the council amounted to £640. We still gave every month. I believe that the figure was £10 per month, ie nearly 19%. The contribution of past councillors has been one of the foundation stones on which we have built our success and every councillor except Mike Hancock was first elected after having accepted the levy as part of approval and won in part thanks to the financial contribution of preceding councillors.

Personally I believe that it is an excellent Liberal system, based on mutual self-interest. It also gives the councillors considerable right to be consulted and involved. Part of this is the inclusion of council group representatives on relevant bodies. However the levy does not make the Group a Board of Directors nor does it give them a complete veto over campaigning. The party is its members and their authority is vested in the executive.

The group money is an important element of our funding and it represented about a third of the funds raised for this campaign. I believe that not only was it well spent but that by combining the funds and campaign everyone gained. Together financially we produced a stronger campaign than the same funds would have produced divided.

MY THANKS

I would like to place on record my personal thanks to Will and Nicky and to informal full times like Hywel, Phil, James and Steve. Also my thanks go to the great team of volunteers such as Maria Cole, David Burton and Teresa. I would also like to mention the team from Moldova who had considerable impact on the campaign and were great fun to be with.

John Wheeler both works tirelessly on the vital legal paperwork and issues and place a great deal of trust in the campaign team to get it right.

Our City Council candidates put their hearts and souls into the campaign and many were rewarded. Darren Sanders achieved real stature in Portsmouth North, dominating the debates and he took the requirement that he was always second fiddle to Mike with good humour and realism. Mike and Jacqui Hancock were put under unbelievable personal pressure during the campaign and their steadiness under fire deserves our admiration and loyalty. It was a privilege to work with them.

Finally I want to thank my wife Helena and brother in law David without whose support both financial and in terms of time I could not have done this job.

CONCLUSION

I believe several elements combined in the success. Careful forward planning and continual budget management by the Campaigns Committee, dedication, hard-work and some inspirational literature from our Campaign staff Will Purvis and Nicky Metcalf, months of efforts by candidates (and Councillor Lee Hunt deserves special mention in this) and a wide variety of work by a large number of volunteers (in this Phil Smith deserves particular acknowledgement) made the 2010 campaign the success it was. I am proud to have been able to lead this wide group.

We were able to use our long record of campaigning, successful running of the Council and Mike Hancock's outstanding record as a local MP to build a campaign platform, combining national policies with local stories and a record that resonated with the voters.

Planning, preparation and internal communication enabled us to establish an effective campaign team capable of delivering a successful result. Integrating the campaigns was a key difference between ourselves and the Conservatives (and Labour in the North) and I believe was a vital part of our success.

We also avoided being involved in the parts of the national campaign that did not work such as the 'tax bombshell' campaign.

For once we had the money and the people to deliver the campaign of which we were capable. The result was clear.

Richard Cole
June 2010