

Delga

The newsletter of DELGA, Liberal Democrats for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equality

Brighton 2007



LGBT Equality: Where next?



Our Exec

The 2007 DELGA executive are:

Honorary President

Evan Harris MP

Chair

Jen Yockney

jen.yockney@delga.org.uk

Secretary

Eve Friday

eve.friday@delga.org.uk

Treasurer

Dave Page

dave.poage@delga.org.uk

General Members

Gemma Charlton

Jez Thurgood

Terry Woolley

Vice Presidents

Christina Baron

Bernard Greaves

Hannah Kaitlin-Boyer

Contact Us

Website

www.delga.org.uk

By post

DELGA

4 Cowley Street

London

SW1P 3NB

Voicemail

020 7227 1395



Chair's Column

Welcome back to Brighton! It's hard to believe it's been a year already. We had a great AGM last year, full of energy and ambition for the organisation.

DELGA has moved forward since then and in particular membership communications have improved, with newsletter mailings in October and November last year, and January, March, June this year and the AGM calling notice in August. We've also been contacting newly-selected PPCs to congratulate them, thank them for the work they will be doing and remind them DELGA is available to help with LGBT issues whether they choose to join us or not.

However with a General Election in the air we need to quicken our pace; we need a bigger team for that than that listed to the left, so here's to a productive AGM. If you have time to spare, and particularly if there is an area of work which you are skilled in and could commit to over the coming year I strongly urge you to stand either for the 2008 exec or to contact them after the AGM to offer assistance: DELGA's resources both in cash and people are limited and the load needs to be more widely spread.

As well as the AGM there will be our joint fringe with Stonewall on the way ahead for LGBT equality on Monday night. On the panel we will be welcoming Stephen Williams MP, who is spearheading the campaign to stop homophobic bullying - and Jo Swinson MP, our new Equalities spokesperson. Stonewall chief Ben Summerskill completes the lineup there.

Immediately after that, there will be the Absolutely Equal reception, again highly recommended.

And there's even a conference on sexuality in town this week lest you tire of being around other Lib Dems and want something else to do.

Finally a quick apology: on our Exec plan for the year, we were aiming to have this edition out so it would arrive in the mail ahead of conference to remind you all to come along to the DELGA related fringe events. Alas, there just weren't the hours in the week for doing that.

Catch you around conference!

Jen

Carry On Campaigning!

Bernard Greaves, Vice-President of DELGA, alerts us to how far we still have to go to achieve a just and fair society

We have equality before the criminal law, registered partnerships and soon the Single Equality Act. We even have the Commission on Equality and Human Rights to uphold our rights. Surely the need for campaigning is over. All the battles are now won.

Well no. They are not.

Out of many let me just cite two serious injustices.

Healthcare

Compared to the average clear evidence shows that gay men and women suffer from significantly worse health; those who identify as bisexual fare worst.

We drink more, use more recreational drugs and smoke more heavily. We face significantly more mental health problems with a greater risk of suicide. That all takes its toll on our health, our quality of life and our life expectancy.

Not only that, but the NHS is woefully ill-equipped to identify and meet our distinctive needs in an appropriate and effective way. As a result we have less trust in our GPs, our hospitals and the whole NHS than other people. That is unacceptable.

Care for the older people

Almost universally those providing services to elderly people simply assume we do not exist. Age Concern England, but few of its local organisations, is a praiseworthy exception. Nowhere does that cause more distress than in residential and nursing homes, and as the years pass that will become an even greater problem.

That is unacceptable too.

We may have, or nearly so, equality before the law, but we certainly don't receive services that meet our legitimately different needs as gay people in an acceptable manner.

To right that wrong needs a whole deal more campaigning.

Three random thoughts to end:

- If the Church of England continues to insist on exemption from the laws of the land on equality it should surely lose its privileged status as the Established Church.
- If the law stipulates that same sex partnerships are not the same as marriage, then surely there is no reason why one should not belong to one of each. Many people would benefit if that were so.
- We should stop describing ourselves as LGBT. That is closeted inward-looking jargon. Let us describe ourselves openly and proudly as gay people, words that everyone immediately understands.

Lessons of Bermondsey on the Conference Fringe Fringe?

It goes without saying that the DELGA AGM, joint fringe meeting with Stonewall and the Absolutely Equal reception will be top of everyone's conference agenda.

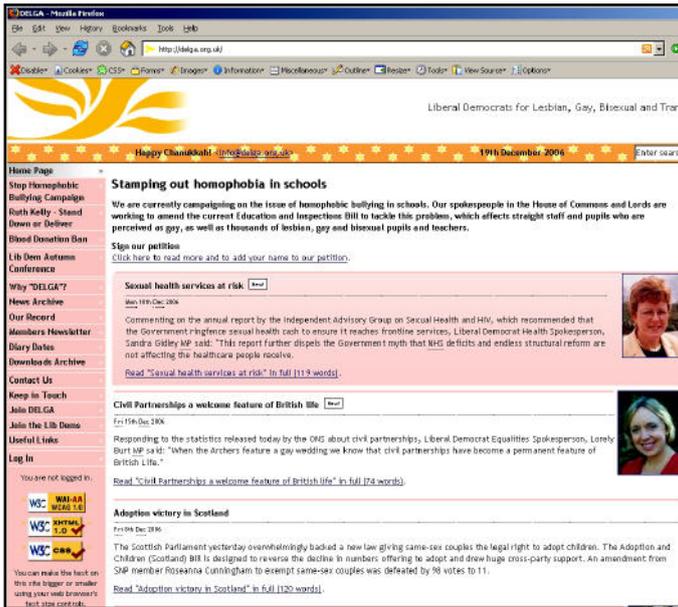
However, if you tire of the conference programme and fancy a little queer academic stimulus, we happen to be in Brighton at the same time as an intriguing looking conference on such matters.

19 September sees the Brighton and Sussex Sexualities Network inaugural conference with a packed programme of "workshops and presentations of current research and open debate" from 8.30am to 5.30pm at the Uni of Brighton, Grand Parade - then from 6.30pm to 8.30pm, a panel debate "Is Brighton Too Gay?"!

To Lib Dem listeners the most popular item will probably be a session on "learning the lessons of Bermondsey" - more than 20 years after the byelection. But there's plenty else to whet the appetite.

Registration is £5 unwaged, £20 waged. There's a sign up sheet to register your interest at the DELGA stall.

More info also from www.brighton.ac.uk/cmris/research/conferences/bssn



keep informed...
www.delga.org.uk

The best way to keep up to date all year round with what DELGA and the Party's spokespeople are up to on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues is on our website - www.delga.org.uk - take the time to register for regular email updates.

**Your chance to quiz our
would-be euro candidates
for '09 on lgbt equality**

**What should the EU be doing about
lgbt rights both in eastern european
countries and further afield?**

**How will they make the EU elections
matter to lgbt voters?**

Ask them. forum.libdems.org.uk