

Coalition Update: 29 November-5 December

The Autumn Statement and the Coalition

Lib Dems try to defuse row over £15bn spending cuts deal with Tories (*Guardian*, 30 November)

The fallout from the Autumn Statement is proving especially toxic to the Lib Dems as Danny Alexander angers his fellow Lib Dem cabinet ministers by appearing to agree that they will go into the 2015 election with identical economic policies to the Tories.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/nov/30/liberal-democrats-cuts-danny-alexander>

Clegg's backing for extra cuts provokes Lib Dem outrage (*Independent*, 1 December)

Article noting the discontent stirred among Lib Dem ranks by their leader's apparent commitment to two further years of austerity.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/cleggs-backing-for-extra-cuts-provokes-lib-dem-outrage-6270246.html>

Long live plan A as George reaches for plan B (*FT*, 29 November) **££**

Philip Stephens outlines the Coalition's political plan B, intended to distract voters from Osborne's ongoing commitment to his economic plan A and the problems presented by the fact that the coalition parties won't be able to ride a wave of growing prosperity and stability into the 2015 poll.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/304abb10-1a85-11e1-ae14-00144feabdc0.html#axzz1ffWfUhxR>

The Coalition's Political Plan B, Mrs T, and TINA: what does this spell out for the Lib Dems? (*Lib Dem Voice*, 1 December)

Blog post reflecting on the Stephens' piece in the FT and what it means for the Lib Dems, and the likelihood that if anyone benefits from this twin-pronged attack, it will be the Tories: 'Neither Labour nor the Lib Dems have yet come up with a convincing answer to how a government can achieve social justice at a time of necessary austerity.'

<http://www.libdemvoice.org/the-coalitions-political-plan-b-mrs-t-and-tina-what-does-it-all-mean-for-the-lib-dems-26058.html>

Pack & Tall debate... What's the Lib Dem economic narrative now? (*Lib Dem Voice*, 2 December)

The co-editors of Lib Dem Voice discuss how the Lib Dems can plot their way out of the political labyrinth created by the Autumn Statement.

<http://www.libdemvoice.org/mark-pack-stephen-tall-lib-dem-economic-narrative-26083.html>

Huhne opens fire on Osborne (*New Statesman blog*, 1 December)

Blog post throwing cabinet tensions into sharp relief: Huhne described the Autumn Statement as 'a Conservative Chancellor delivering his own speech' while Lord Oakeshott said 'It is very dangerous for the Liberal Democrats to go into the next election tied like a tin can to the tails of the Tories, rather than as an independent party.'

<http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/the-staggers/2011/12/huhne-election-chancellor>

Huhne gibe points to split with Chancellor (*Times*, 2 December) **££**

Article points out the inter-party tensions that have stemmed from the Autumn Statement, this time surrounding the planned 5.2% increase in welfare payments, apparently claimed by Lib Dems as a big win.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/politics/article3245500.ece>

Vow to undo benefits hike (*Times*, 4 December) **££**

Yet more strife after the Autumn Statement as Iain Duncan Smith is apparently furious with George Osborne over his decision to increase welfare payments by 5.2% while freezing tax credits.

<http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/Politics/article835892.ece>

Osborne's Autumn Statement was about creating more Tories (*Spectator*, 3 December)

The Spectator's analysis of the Autumn Statement and how it sets up 2015 as 'a traditional Tory play' which will see both Coalition parties attacking Labour and make a future Lib-Lab coalition less, not more, likely.

<http://www.spectator.co.uk/politics/all/7438738/politics-osbornes-autumn-statement-was-about-creating-more-tories.html>

The Coalition beyond 2015?

Liberal Democrats fear Conservative election grip (*FT*, 30 November) **££**

Vince Cable and Simon Hughes are mentioned as those high-profile Lib Dems most concerned by the prospect of some kind of electoral deal with the Tories, complaining that Danny Alexander's comments came as a shock.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/cdf4050c-1b6a-11e1-85f8-00144feabdc0.html#axzz1fNWduJ1C>

Europe and the Coalition

EU treaty change threatens coalition unity over Europe for David Cameron (*Guardian*, 4 December)

The EU Act seems to have entrenched the Conservatives' Europe problem rather than solved it, as disagreement reigns amongst Coalition cabinet ministers over whether proposed Eurozone treaty changes could warrant a UK referendum.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/dec/04/eu-treaty-change-coalition-split>

Special advisers

Coalition has more spin-doctors than Labour (*Independent*, 4 December)

Article picking up on the fact that the Coalition has broken its pledge to limit the number of special advisers employed by the government.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/coalition-has-more-spindoctors-than-labour-6272071.html>

Opinion Polls

What did the public make of the Autumn Statement? (*Spectator blog*, 1 December)

Blog post covering how the Coalition is performing in the polls on economic matters, and the polls' reaction to the Autumn Statement.

<http://www.spectator.co.uk/coffeehouse/7441833/what-did-the-public-make-of-the-autumn-statement.shtml>

How to read the Tory poll lead (*New Statesman blog*, 4 December)

Analysis of news that a Sunday Telegraph/ICM poll has put the Conservatives two points ahead of Labour, barely days after the controversial Autumn Statement.

<http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/the-staggers/2011/12/icm-poll-lead-labour-sunday>

Poll boost for David Cameron ahead of EU showdown (*Telegraph*, 4 December)

The offending poll itself. Plus a suggestion that the result – anomalous though it may be – might strengthen Cameron's hand even as he faces new calls for a referendum on Europe.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/8933481/Poll-boost-for-David-Cameron-ahead-of-EU-showdown.html>

A Lib Dem success story

Protecting a lifeline – Lib Dem success in battle for DLA mobility component (*Lib Dem Voice*, 1 December)

Lib Dem MP Jenny Willott claims that, amidst the wailing and gnashing of teeth over the Autumn Statement, the Lib Dems have succeeded in getting the government to drop plans to remove the mobility component of DLA for people in residential care homes.

<http://www.libdemvoice.org/jenny-willott-mp-writes-protecting-a-lifeline-lib-dem-success-in-battle-for-dla-mobility-component-26062.html>

Miscellaneous

Lib Dem donation figures in full (Q3, 2011) (*Lib Dem Voice*, 30 November)

Interesting little post on Lib Dem fundraising, suggesting that the party has now reached a stable level of donations, which might go some small way to mitigating the loss of opposition party funding since entering government.

<http://www.libdemvoice.org/lib-dem-donation-figures-in-full-q3-2011-26043.html>

David Laws interviewed by Mark Littlewood (*Lib Dem Voice*, 1 December)

Hour-long interview by the director of the Institute of Economic Affairs of the former Chief Secretary to the Treasury David Laws.

<http://www.libdemvoice.org/ldvideo-david-laws-interviewed-by-mark-littlewood-26061.html>

The powers behind the coalition throne (*Total Politics*, 1 December)

Useful little outline of the key figures involved in holding the Coalition together and making it all work at the centre.

<http://www.totalpolitics.com/blog/277977/the-powers-behind-the-coalition-throne.shtml>