



Liberal
Democrats
Campaigns &
Elections Team

The Liberal Democrat guide to
**Effective
Campaign
Photographs**

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The basics

There's lots of information in this guide but here are the key points:

- Make sure your candidate is the star. Make them stand out of a crowd.
- Make sure we can see the candidate's face - don't shoot from behind them or over their shoulder.
- Have your candidate speaking to and interacting with people. Not standing on their own or giving speeches.
- Get your candidate close to the camera. Don't have them standing far away next to a sign.
- Investing in a proper camera will likely result in much better quality photos.

Things to think about when taking a photo:

- Does it have a clear message?
- Is your candidate close enough? Do they stand out?
- Is there anything distracting or embarrassing in the background?
- Is there a more interesting angle you can use?
- Are people just standing in straight lines?
- Is there anything in the photo that will date it - conference badges, snow? Near Remembrance Day, you will need to get photos with and without poppies if you want to use them at other times of the year.

Things to think about when using your photos in literature:

- Does the caption tell the story?
- Can you improve it by cropping?
- Does the photo convey a message?
- Do you have permission to use the photo - from the person who took it and the people in it?

Why photos matter



Improving your local photo library will:

- build your candidate's personal brand. Our campaigns often rely on selling a person and photos are a vital way of doing that
- improve the quality of your literature and make people more likely to read it
- convey your key messages quickly and succinctly
- make your website or social media accounts more effective
- help you get better press coverage. Local papers are more likely to give prominent placement to story with a good photo.

Photos are the first thing people will look at on your leaflets or your website.

A good, prominent photo might be all people see as they glance at the leaflet on the way to the recycling bin. It is vital that your photos get your message across.

Newspapers know how important this is. Often, they'll lead with their best photo (Prince George in some knee socks) even if it's unrelated to the main story (interest rate cuts).

What did you read first?

Most people, when turning to this page, will look at the photo and then read this coloured box straight after. Yet we put more effort into getting the words inbetween right, even though fewer people read them.

Why photos matter

People will form their impression of your candidate largely from what they see in photographs. Get this wrong and it can undermine your whole campaign.

If your candidate is only ever pictured alone, it sends the message that they lack support.

And yet building up a good photo bank is something every single candidate - at any level - can do easily and cheaply.

It is the one thing that will make the biggest difference to the quality of your leaflets. And it's fun. Just look at Willie's face.

Getting better photos is easy, cheap and fun



Practical tips

There are some more advanced and specific tips later but here are some absolute basics that will help you straight away.



Make sure your candidate(s) stand out.

When taking a group shot, have them come closer to the camera.

Make sure your candidate is dressed appropriately and they have a change of clothes if you're doing multiple shots in one day.

Have a plan and an itinerary for your photo sessions. Have people in place for your candidate to be photographed with.

Be clear with people what you are looking for.



Always take lots of photos to give yourself the best chance of getting a good one.

These two were taken seconds apart and the image of the candidate goes from hectoring to friendly and engaged.



Take photos in both orientations: landscape and portrait.

Having both gives flexibility when it comes to artwork.



Practical tips



Focus on the candidate. If they're talking to someone, make sure you can see their face. That means planning ahead. If you're taking a photo in a shop, for example, you'll need to get behind the counter.

Take control

This is vital, especially when managing a big group of people. Someone has to take charge. That can mean physically moving people to get them in the right place. Be assertive.

Look at the picture you've taken. Is it interesting, does it tell a story, would you vote for the person in the picture? If the answer to any of these questions is no, work out what's wrong and put it right.

Key things to look out for:

- Get people in the right place. In groups, people need to stand uncomfortably close because gaps look bigger in photos and make for a messy shot.
- Be aware of anything distracting or embarrassing in the background. Exit signs, graffiti or dodgy shop names can scupper a good photo.
- Ask people to remove lanyards, poppies, hats, sunglasses, or distracting items of clothing.
- Ensure all the signs/diamonds/props are the right way up.
- Is anyone in your photo politically restricted?
- Have you got permission from the people you're photographing?

Take your time and get it right. Don't let people rush you to get it over with.

Common mistakes



Candidate is too far away

Standing miles away under a sign

Maybe the most common Lib Dem photo mistake. We just can't see the candidate.

The solution is to move your candidate closer to the camera with a gap back to the



Move candidates closer to the camera like this



The 'firing squad' look

For photos of people in front of signs on walls, follow the same advice as above and move them forward, with the sign in the background.

And try not to have them look so glum.



Try different angles

Don't take every photo straight on. Experiment with different angles to get a more interesting shot, like this.

Common mistakes



Photos with no people in

If the local park is under threat, don't just take a photo of the park and leave it at that.

Ideally, get a photo of your candidate talking to a local family with the park in the background. At the very least, get your candidate in the picture.



Don't shoot over your candidate's shoulder

Shot from the wrong place

You're never going to get a good canvassing photo by shooting over the candidate's shoulder. Much better to be in the house shooting from the perspective of the resident.

Also, the person speaking to your candidate needs to look engaged and happy.



This is much better

Other pitfalls to avoid

- Lots of photos of the candidate standing on their own in front of things
- People looking grumpy. When a smile isn't appropriate in a photo, candidates should use the neutral expression rather than look 'sad'
- If more than one person is taking photos, take it in turns or you'll end up with half of the people looking at one camera and half at the other
- Photos of people giving speeches. It's difficult to get one where their face doesn't look strange because they're speaking. And it's often not the right message anyway.

Seen it before...

Be careful with these photos. Avoid too many on the same piece of literature:

- Grinning with orange diamonds
- Microphone or TV camera shots
- Holding a board or paper with a message
- Pointing at things
- Standing by road signs
- Thumbs up (use sparingly and for big victories only).
- Speaking to a crowd

Additional tips

Photos have to reinforce your key messages.

They should be a large feature of any website or leaflet and so if they're not right, they're a missed opportunity at best and damaging to your campaign at worst.

Train your candidate

Talk to your candidate about what makes a good photo and what they need to do to help you. Discuss photos that you have taken and why they work or don't work. Like everything, candidates get better at this with practice and with constructive feedback.

VIPs

If a VIP is visiting, their job is to support and endorse your candidate. Your candidate should be the star of the photo, not the VIP.

Visits

If you're taking photos of your candidate visiting a business, hospital, school etc. it is vital they know what you are looking for and remain aware of the camera, while acting completely naturally. They need to make sure they're maintaining good eye contact, an engaged facial expression and good body language. You're not going to be able to tell them to cheer up while they're in the thick of it, so talk about it in advance.

Use natural light, avoid flash

Wherever possible, take photos outside and use natural light.

As a general rule, avoid using the flash unless absolutely necessary. If it's too dark, move somewhere with more light.



Crop, crop, crop

Photos almost always benefit from some cropping to focus on what's important and increase impact. Remove dead space. Make your subject fill the frame.

Which camera to use?

At the high end, phone cameras are on a par with dedicated point and shoot cameras. In fact, there's not much point buying a camera in the £100 range - a good phone will do a similar job.

Where possible, we suggest investing in a DSLR or something similar. There's a link to a good option below.

Here are some things to bear in mind when choosing or using different types of camera:

Using a phone camera

- In good light they can take decent group shots or wide shots
- That wide angle lens makes them poor for headshots though. It distorts the features
- Not great indoors unless it's well lit
- They're poor if people are moving (e.g when you're trying to capture candid shots)
- You should pretty much never use the flash
- Photo resolution is improving but is likely to be shown up on full colour leaflets
- Don't use the digital zoom on the phone. Zoom with your feet i.e. move closer
- They often do very good video, especially outdoors. It is comparable to high end cameras and it's much easier to manage and post online.

DSLR or mirrorless

These cameras are an investment but they're very often worth it.

A good option is the Canon 700D which you can buy here: amzn.to/2QGzdHC. You'll want to buy a good SD memory card (Class 10) as well for about £20 (amzn.to/2bidCBP).

Bonus fundraising tip

Why not run a fundraising drive among local members and donors to buy a really good camera for your local party?

Put together a pitch for the money (say £400) with some good examples of the difference it will make.

And if you're successful, include some 'before and after' shots in your thank you mailing.

Group photos

With group photos, you need to get people to stand closer than they feel comfortable with. People need to be touching, otherwise they look too far apart.

Check signs are the right way up and people are looking in the right direction .

Keep pestering people to look at the camera.

Take a lot of pictures. The rule of thumb is at least four photos for every person in the shot. That can be impractical if you're shooting a big group but it's something to bear in mind. Keep shooting. If people get restless, rearrange people then shoot some more.

Make sure your photos are sufficiently diverse and reflect your community. If you have multiple candidates and they all look roughly the same - three white men for example - it's even more important that you have some diversity in who they are speaking to and interacting with.

Shooting a group from above is good idea. It's a flattering angle and it's easier to get more people in.



Avoid straight lines

The key things to avoid with group photos is just a straight line of people standing miles away from the camera, like this. And try to avoid having the photographer's shadow looming over people.



Add depth

Always try and have depth in your photos, rather than a line of people parallel to the camera.

Make sure to bring your candidates forward for photos with big groups.

Group photos



Make use of diamonds, balloons, props or backdrops to add colour to your photos.

Find different angles

It would have been easiest to take this picture on top of the bridge with the river in the background.

By going down to the riverbank and getting people on different levels, it's much more interesting.

Everyone looks really happy too.



If you have multiple candidates it can be tempting to have leaflets filled with photos of the same three people stood in a row looking at the camera. It's much better if you accept that not everyone needs to be in every photo, or not all candidates need to be the focus of every photo.

You can achieve a balance across a leaflet by making each candidate the star in a different photo.

Headshots



A sense of place

A good headshot, with a backdrop that local people will immediately recognise can be a very powerful photo that you can use time and time again.

Nothing establishes the image of a local champion more quickly than a shot like this.



Whatever you do, don't photograph your candidate straight on against a wall with the camera's flash on. It will look like a criminal's mugshot. And not even a good one.

Don't have them stand square on to the camera. Get them to angle their body away slightly, with the head turned toward the camera.

Take different versions with the candidate looking both ways. It will help to have options when artworking.

Also take landscape and portrait versions. Landscape headshots with space at one side can be really useful for leaflets, especially annual reports.

Headshots



Think about message

As well as geographic place, think about what type of seat you're in. You can't credibly paint your candidate as a rural champion if every photo of them is at a desk or in a suit.

Avoid arms folded across the chest. It usually looks defensive.

This photo works though because of Alex's smile. Headshots live or die based on whether you get the face right.



Key points to remember:

You need good eye contact and a genuine smile.

Headshots in bright sunlight lead to harsh shadows. Cloudy bright is best, or find some shade.

Don't shoot from below or have your candidate with their chin down. It's unflattering

A good headshot is essential but it shouldn't be your default photo to accompany a story. Interaction photos should be used the majority of the time.

Informal can work

For softer pieces of literature like magazines, informal headshots like this can really work.

Interaction photos

Photos of your candidate interacting with other people are vital. They help to personalise the candidate and make for a much more interesting and appealing picture. Here are some good examples of candidates listening to and engaging with people.



Market stalls always make for good photos. Remember to shoot from the stallholder's side so you get the candidate's face in. And don't get people to pose. Capture a natural interaction.



Listening to the concerns of a local resident is a useful shot for all manner of stories. Holding a hot drink isn't mandatory but it gives people something to do with their hands.



Pay attention to body language. Both people have their hands up in this one (they're both a bit nervous making small talk and being photographed). It works because of the candidate's smile but keep an eye out for hand movements that look aggressive or strange faces when people are talking.

Interaction photos

The rule about not working with kids or animals doesn't apply to Lib Dem photos.

Always make sure your candidate is getting stuck in though, not standing over children like a teacher.



Get people to have a real conversation. It might feel awkward at first but it's the only way to get a natural picture.

Your best chance of getting a good shot is when your candidate is listening though, not talking.

Using props

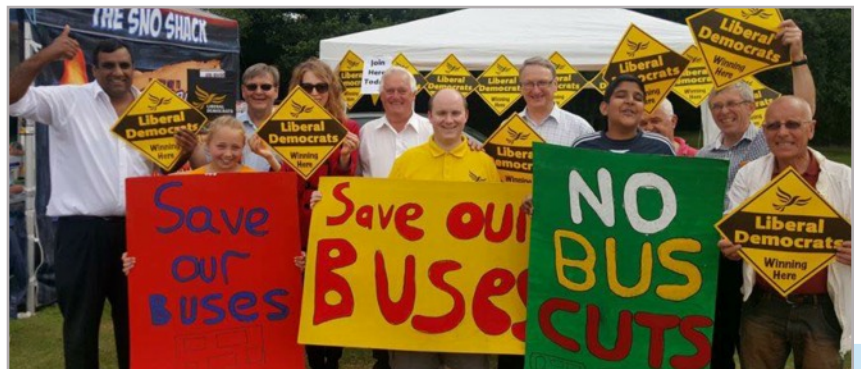
Props can help liven up photos and reinforce a message. They can also look really cheesy and amateurish. They have to tell a story and have a purpose.

If your candidate has a problem knowing what to do with their hands in photos, using props can also help.

If you're printing a banner on multiple pieces of paper, tape them together or you can end up with letters scattered too far apart to make it easily legible.



Think about how you can use your props. Here, the Lib Dems were campaigning to tear up decades of Labour neglect. The photo op is right on message.



As well as the words you use, think about what impression your signs give.

Are you trying to look fun, professional, determined? Do your signs help or hinder?

Using props



Sometimes your candidate will be given props by charities or at events outside of your control.

They just need to be a bit careful and avoid doing anything that makes them look foolish.

Try to avoid white round-neck T-shirts with a message on - especially on a larger frame.

If unavoidable, hold the T-shirt up alongside the candidate rather than wear it.

Hard hats and crash helmets may be unavoidable but ensure you can see the candidate's face.

Be co-operative with requests from charities and organisations to hold stuffed toys etc. but think about how it looks.

Make sure the message is clear at a glance, without people needing to read small text in the photo.



Issues to cover

One of the best ways to build up a robust and useful photo bank is to think about all the issues you might campaign on in the coming months and years and systematically go through and make sure you have photos for all of them.

Below is a starter list of issues for you to add to. Don't forget any local issues you're working on.

Even if you're not campaigning on these issues at the minute, it's worth getting them in the bag now rather than be in a rush later.

Over the next few pages, there are some example photos that you can use as templates for your photos.

Finally, bear in mind that you might be campaigning on something for years, so you need a variety of pictures to cover each one. And keep refreshing your photo bank.

Starter list of issues and photos for your photo bank:

- Health
- Education
- Crime
- Environment
- Families
 - Older people
 - Parents with children
 - Men and women
- Transport
- Headshots - smiling and neutral
- Local choice/local landmarks
- On the doorstep
- Record of action

Examples: Education

Photos with children in school should be fun. Avoid a lonely picture in front of a school sign.

Your candidate needs to be on the child's level and engaged. Reading a book to a group of children is a great way to get started.

Make sure to get permission from a minor's legal guardian to take and use photos of their children.

Remember older pupils and college students.



Examples: Health

The easiest way to get a good health picture is get in touch with your GP and see if you can speak to them about health issues (or get a health check up) and take some pictures. If they don't want to appear, you can shoot over their shoulder.



Example: Cost of living



Photos like this work for rising fuel bills, shopping prices, council tax rises etc.

Your candidate needs to look interested, engaged and sympathetic.

Have some bills as props but the people should be looking at each other, not the paper.

Examples: Crime

Get a picture of your candidate chatting to a police officer in the community. You can approach them and ask if you see them on patrol, or go along to a local police outreach event and ask. Again, you can take the photo from behind if they'd rather their face didn't appear. You can also capture scenes of anti-social behaviour.



Examples: Transport

Transport photos are among the easiest to get. There's always a bus or a train or a road nearby.

Just make sure there is some movement, in the vehicle or through interaction. Ideally you'd have both.



Examples: Jobs

Photos that illustrate your candidate's support for local jobs are vital. You should have a broad range, covering all the main industries in your patch.

You may be able to get photos as your candidate tours a local factory. Make sure you check with the business beforehand that it's ok for someone to come and take pictures. They might want to pose for photos with the management in the boardroom - and that's ok - but the shots you're going to use are of people interacting naturally.

If people are wearing hard hats and protective glasses, make sure you can still see their face in the photo.

You'll also want to get some shots with local shopkeepers. If you don't have an existing relationship with any, try going round with a small business survey first. It will help build relationships, and you'll quickly recognise who might be happy to be in pictures with you. Just remember to buy something!



Examples: Families

Photos with kids are always a winner. Make sure your candidate is properly engaged and looks natural.

Toys or books add interest and colour.



Examples: Record of Action

Many of our candidates campaign on a strong record of action. If that's the case, you need the photos to back it up. A leaflet full of photos of your candidate doing things will give an immediate impression that they're working hard. If there's an issue in your local area, show people your candidate is doing something about it.



Hiring a professional photographer

While the aim of this guide is to try and give you the skills and confidence to take effective campaign photographs yourself, hiring a professional to do the job for you is something to consider if you need a short term fix.

It can help kickstart your photo bank, give you something to build from and give you ideas for photos you can take yourself later.

The downside is that it can be expensive (£250 - £400 for the day is a ballpark figure) and you still need to do all the planning and management of the task on the day.

Also, while they are professional photographers, they're not political campaigners. A good photo isn't necessarily a good campaigning photo. If you're not careful you can hire a pro and end up with photos that don't do the job.

If you do decide to hire a photographer, here are some tips for a successful day:

- Have a detailed plan. Here's a rough timetable to use as a guide:

Three weeks in advance - Make a list of specific photos you need and put them in priority order. Be realistic about how many you will get done in a day. Share the list around and ask for ideas.

Two weeks in advance - get quotes from local photographers. Have a look at their portfolios to see if you like their work. Don't just go for the cheapest.

A week in advance - Line up the people you need to be in the photos with your candidate. Phone them, explain what you are doing and how long it will take.

Draw up a minute by minute itinerary. Factor in travel time, time to change clothes and time for talking to people you've lined up to be in the photos. Allow some contingency time in case something unexpected comes up.

Two days before - recce the places you're planning to shoot to ensure they're suitable. Have a think about the specific shots you're going to get.

Day before - phone everyone who you have lined up and double check they are still ok for the time and place you agreed. Make sure you have their mobile and they have yours. Let people know not only what time you are arriving but what time you have to leave, so you can stick to schedule.

- Brief the photographer. Send them this guide in advance. Show them some of your leaflets and talk about what you're looking for.

- Stay by their side through the day. It's tempting to think you can leave them to it because they're the professional, but the day will be most fruitful if you can look at what they're getting and give feedback as it's happening. You're also another pair of eyes to check there's nothing in the picture that shouldn't be.

Making the most of photos in leaflets

Even the best photo is wasted if it's not used properly in literature. Follow some simple advice to make the most effective use of the photos you take.



Go big. Go bold.

If you've got good photos, make them a big part of your literature. Our general delivery leaflets should be designed to be read by as many people as possible, just like national newspapers. Go and buy today's papers from the newsagent and look at how prominently they use photos.



Get your captions right.

People will read the captions on your photos. You need to make sure that your message is clear to the large number of people who will only look at the photo and read the caption.

Treat them like headlines. Don't just say who is in the photo or where they are. Sum up the story in one sentence.

Remember the advice on cropping. Focus the reader on what you want them to see and remove excess space, like too much sky, unless you're using it to overlay text on.

Never stretch photos vertically or horizontally. Always resize photos by dragging the corner so they remain in proportion.

Avoid flipping photos horizontally to change the direction someone is looking - people's faces aren't symmetrical and they'll look strange.

Unless you're going edge to edge with a photo, put a thin border around it using the Line option in PagePlus.

Rotate with caution. Sometimes rotating a photo as part of a design can work, but keep it to a minimum. Two degrees, like the photo above, is plenty.

Defamation

Remember photos can be defamatory – just as with words, what the ‘reasonable person’ would infer is the test.

The caption could cause a photo to be defamatory, and even the juxtaposition next to an unrelated story could get you in trouble. As ever, if in doubt check it out.

Permission

Always explain to people that you are taking photos for use in Liberal Democrat campaign material. If you visit a business and get permission from the owner, you also need to check with each individual. Don't assume employees share their bosses' attitude.

For maximum certainty, you can get people to sign a Model Release Form granting their permission. You can request model templates by email: brand@libdems.org.uk.

Parental consent must be obtained in the form of written consent to take and use images of anyone under the age of 18 prior to the taking of photographs and/or video footage. Parents/carers should be made aware of when, where and how the images may be used to give their informed consent.

Use of third party images

Hopefully you'll be able to fill your leaflets with original, local photos after reading this guide. But if you decide to use a photo from an online source you must make sure you check the license of the photo before use.

Aside from public domain imagery, there are three types of photos you will come across that can be used in campaign materials:

1. Creative Commons license. Some people make their images available for commercial use, and for adaptation under the Creative Commons licence.

When using Creative Commons imagery, you have to credit the author by putting their name, or a link if there is no name listed.

Any images licenced under CC Non-Commercial cannot be used in campaigns materials.

If you do a Google image search, make sure you click Tools and filter by those images “labelled for reuse”.

You can recognise a creative common licensed picture by this CC icon:



2. Crown Copyright and Open Government Licence:

The National Archives makes available regular government and public imagery under the Open Government Licence

You can use these subject to attributing the OGL "licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0".

3. Stock images.

You can find paid stock images at:

www.shutterstock.com
www.istockphoto.com
www.depositphotos.com
stock.adobe.com

The party has also bought some stock images that you can use. You can find them on the campaign Google Drive: <http://bit.ly/2bxQ6ko>

You can find free stock photos at:

www.freeimages.com
www.pexels.com
www.pixabay.com
www.stocksnap.io

Always make sure you check the rights granted for stock images and operate within any restrictions.

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