

## Annual Report 2009–2010 For Annual General Meeting, 2 October 2010

### Foreword By Our Chairman.

I took over as Chairman of Freedom2Choose on 1 January 2010, not with any alacrity but more a sense of deep concern. Deep concern for what I was expected to achieve, not only by our members but also by the executive committee who had urged me to take this position.

My first thought was to maintain a steady ship, which my predecessors Colin Grainger and then Andy Davis had created. My sincerest thanks to them both for this. Sadly, I do not possess their calm, intelligent and all-considering personae, thus Chairmanship was definitely a challenge for me.

My second thought was that we, as an organisation, were going to get nowhere fast, as long as Labour were in power and therefore our best progress would be to continue accumulating knowledge with which to combat our enemies. The Freedom of Information Request (FOI) has proven to be a great asset in this work.

Having got hold of Gillian Merron's "Smokeban Review" papers from a University I was appalled to see that much of it had been written within 6–12 months of the ban's implementation! However, there was one glaring omission (admitted in the paper), that being a government-requested survey of under-25s. I decided that Freedom2Choose would carry out that survey. With the hard work of some of the Freedom2Choose executive and members the survey was completed by the end of March, with some startling results. It is now getting into the media and blogosphere. It has also been sent to pro-choice MPs including those signing Brian Binley's EDM 406 (see below). My sincerest thanks, to Karen and David, for their prodigious efforts in producing a magnificent document from the initial 'rantings' of their Chairman.

We have compiled a survey of public houses and compared the results to the Welsh Survey of 2005. Some of the results are startling and show that this ban has been the main cause of closures and unemployment within the hospitality sector. We now have the documentation to present to anyone to prove that smoke bans do industry no good at all.

We have also collated all the evidence needed to prove that Air Quality Management Systems do all that is needed to rid the air of any possible danger from SHS.

We have made great strides again this year with defeating hospital trusts in their determination to make smoking bans in hospital grounds legally enforceable. Of course we know they cannot do such but they keep trying to oppress the smokers. A large and deserved thank you to Martin and Brenda for their indefatigable work on this project, their work is now forcing hospital Trusts to backtrack and cater for smokers – Bournemouth being the latest.

A northern organisation – apintandafag – has aligned with Freedom2Choose. They have some good ideas for 'direct action', which I fully applaud, and they are still putting these plans together. When they have finalised their plans we can expect plenty of media coverage.

Of course the cementing of relationships between Freedom2Choose and Justice for Licensees (JFL) is the most important alliance of the year for Inez Ward has somehow got right to the very heart of government with her campaign on behalf of tied licensees. It is essential that we appreciate the importance of the beer tie to licensees. The smoking ban has brought the greed of the breweries and 'pubcos' to the surface.

The formation of the coalition government caused us to create the most profound piece of work yet. Simply named as "The Document" it is a multi paged A4 booklet of damage caused by the ban, the reasons behind it and the total exposure of ASH in their run up to forcing the ban through Parliament. This document has been sent to every MP signing EDM406 and I have received several very encouraging replies from grateful MPs. This document will, for the foreseeable future, play a major part in our attack strategy.

We have kept the debate alive whenever we could but suddenly a golden light has appeared in the form of Brian Binley, MP for Northampton South, who announced to the world that the smoking ban was excessively Draconian: Hallelujah for that! As is well touted we have now established a firm rapport with Brian Binley and have found the 'way in' with the CIU, initially with a recent meeting (attended by Philip Hollobone MP and Chris Heaton Harris MP) in Northampton.

The Pubs and Clubs, to be fair, have been shown to be weak and unwilling to act in this past year. Having spoken to fifty or sixty licensees/club owners I am at a loss as to explain why they just sit there as if waiting to be shot. However, this situation is changing through the prodigious efforts of JFL, whereby licensees are now realising that pubcos owe them no favours.

A couple of plaudits, richly deserved, need mention here. Firstly, as we progress through the ranks our written presentations have improved considerably and in that sphere Freedom2Choose owe Karen and David ("Aqua" and "Budgie") a serious vote of thanks for the brilliant presentation of "The Document".

Our office secretary, John (TBY) Baker has again served Freedom2Choose well but we must applaud John also for his work in blogosphere where he has maintained a serious presence throughout the year. On behalf of all Freedom2Choose members I thank you, John. I would also like to thank our treasurer for her work on our behalf, and the entire executive for their efforts.

Finally, a little mentioned, or for that matter thought of, situation. Printing for the distribution of. Our member "Cueball" has been there every time I've asked for printed needs, whether it is fliers, letter headings, or full documents. "Cueball" has been there at every call. In the process he has undoubtedly saved Freedom2Choose considerable sums of money, which has allowed funds to be used in other important areas. On behalf of the entire membership "Cueball" I sincerely thank you.

Finally, I see Freedom2Choose advancing markedly next year in political circles as well as within the media for our time is coming. ASH, CRUK et al. have shot their bolts and have now left themselves wide open to question. We must capitalise on these slips by our opponents. Members of Parliament are finally listening and accepting the inevitable truth, which is testament to the diligence of Freedom2Choose and the hard working members. 2011 must see Freedom2Choose become stronger in numbers and therefore stronger in spirit as unity is the way forward.

**Phil Johnson**  
**Chairman**

## **MEMBERSHIPS – Pete Jackson**

### **1) Membership schemes.**

The Freedom2Choose membership schemes are unchanged and are as follows;

- £10 Full membership with newsletter and voting rights + membership card.
- £5 Full discretionary hardship membership with the same advantages as above.
- £5 Junior membership with newsletter and membership card and no voting rights.
- £2 Associate membership with no rights or privileges (for Clubs only).

### **2) Membership statistics.**

The current levels of membership are laid out below.

#### 2.1) Current membership status.

Freedom2Choose has at the time of writing this report 127 members;

- 2.1.1) We currently have 96 fully paid up.
- 2.1.2) We currently have no discounted member.
- 2.1.3) We have no junior member.
- 2.1.4) We have 2 associate members.

The failure of the clubs scheme is largely responsible for the large reduction in members over the last year, the existing clubs deciding not to renew took over 20 members with them. At least 3 members were unable to renew this year due to financial considerations, leaving approximately 10 members lost for reasons unknown.

## Press Office Annual Report – Helen Daniels

### Overview of activities undertaken:

The press office has released 11 full press releases during this last year (including releases of behalf of Freedom to Choose (Scotland)), and although the amount of releases has decreased since the previous year, we are continuing to receive an ever-increasing number of telephone calls from a variety of media outlets for comments and interview.

New media contacts are continually being sought and smoker-friendly journalists identified to increase exposure in the media. Our distribution list contains approximately 900 contacts from a range of outlets including television, newspapers, radio, bloggers, magazines, other pro-choice groups, MPs and PPCs.

Although most adverts have not been placed this year, our exposure in the Yorkshire area within the trade has grown immensely due to the regular articles written by Phil Johnson and a weekly advert placed in *The Sheffield Mercury* which have lately evoked some responses.

Mainstream media exposure still remains slow, however, we are becoming more well known within the media circle, as evidenced by the increased number of enquiries to the press office.

## Accounts – Belinda Cunnison

### FREEDOM 2 CHOOSE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE PERIOD 1 JULY 2009 TO 30 JUNE 2010

	2009		2010
<b>INCOME</b>			
Donations	916	Donations	731
Standing orders	1,263	Standing orders	1,293
Membership	902	Membership	68
Renewal	499	Renewal	847
Advertising	407	Advertising	173
Shop sales	0	Shop sales	122
NET interest	1	NET interest	0
Scotland income	92	Scotland income**	241
Overlordlist income	75		
Total income	4,155		3,475
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Marketing	2,114	Marketing	2,075
Office	345	Post & phone	957
Club development expenses	278	Travel	128
*TICAP membership fee & donation	560	Miscellaneous*	77
2 donations	75	Corporation tax	62
Corporation tax	86	Website fee	60
Website fee	60	Paid to Scotland**	241
Paid to Scotland*	92		
Paid to Overlordlist**	75		
Total expenditure	3,685		3,600
<b>SURPLUS/DEFICIT OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>470</b>		<b>-125</b>

\*Donated to Freedom to Choose (Scotland) to enable attendance at Holyrood Conference, September 2009.

Membership fee in 2010 for TICAP was waived.

\*\*Income collected on behalf of and paid to Freedom to Choose (Scotland)/Overlordlist (largely through Paypal).

**FREEDOM 2 CHOOSE  
BALANCE SHEET  
AS AT 30 JUNE 2010**

	Notes	30 June 2010	
		£	£
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Bank Current Account		2,047	
Paypal Account		149	
Petty Cash	-		
Total			2,196
<b>LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Taxation			62
<b>CURRENT ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			<b>2,134</b>
<b>CAPITAL AND RESERVES</b>			
Carried forward (bank/paypal)			2,344
Corporation tax 08-09			-86
Surplus of Income over Expenditure during the period			-125
			<b>2,134</b>

**Notes:**

I have presented two years' accounts together in order to show differences.

The clearest difference is the change from a surplus in 2008/9 to a deficit in 2009/10.

On the income side, one-off donations have dropped, but income from standing orders has remained steady. Recruitment of new members is considerably down on last year, with over ten times as much coming in from renewals. Renewals are slightly up on last year.

A cutback in our advertising income has resulted in a considerable shortfall on last year's figures. Easyfundraising money, included in this section, was £86.40 (2008/9: £269.41). Shop and advertising funds/Easyfundraising together in 2009/10 amounted to less than the amount for advertising & Easyfundraising in 2008/9.

Overall expenditure has come down slightly on last year. The club expenditure section has been absorbed into 'post & phone'. It is higher than office expenditure from last year (John Baker's expenses) but office expenses have dropped considerably to around one-third of 2008/9 levels.

These accounts have not been independently verified.

## **Political Arena – Dave Atherton**

Freedom2Choose have been accepted as a mainstream pressure group and think tank in the Westminster Bubble. I have not heard one voice of dissent about an amendment to the smoking ban and many people such as Alex Deane of Big Brother Watch and Simon Richards of the Freedom Association are happy to promote our cause. They are all sympathetic and many people button hole me and say you are 'the smoking bloke'.

The Wednesday Meeting at the Taxpayer's Alliance is the cream of the UK's Centre-right think tanks and you can be aware that Freedom2Choose is on a list in the Conservative's Central Office. Government know that they have a fight on their hands and I think my efforts will go to not expecting any new restrictions.

I have also made friends with a number of MPs and senior academics, and this has furthered our cause.

I am hoping that I am now on the speaking circuit as I was at UKIP and spoke about how the smoking restrictions will find their way into drinking and eating next.

In conclusion Freedom2Choose are now a respectable and feared voice in Westminster.

## **Freedom2Choose OFFICE**

It is reasonable to expect any organisation's office to be the hub of communications and the office of Freedom2Choose is no different.

Since we first became an organisation, rather than just forum activists, many initiatives have been put into action over the past year that required the following:

- a) A secure postal address
- b) A secure email address
- c) A unique telephone/fax number
- d) A distribution point for the products needed to meet initiatives started.
- e) Membership forms and fees to be processed and stored in a secure location.
- f) Membership fees to be sent to the Treasurer on a regular basis, (weekly.)
- g) Copies of all paper records kept securely after the relevant committee member or initiative line manager has been informed of their content
- h) Passing on telephone messages received to relevant Freedom2Choose member/committee member or group member.

Your office will always be vigilant with all monies received whilst carrying out its duties on behalf of the Freedom2Choose membership, sourcing supplies and supplier's that offer the best value for your money.