

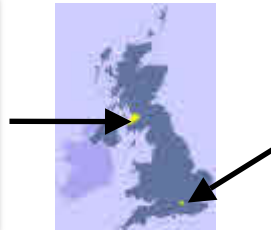
Equal Parenting Alliance News Election Special

May 2007

Equal Parenting Alliance Stands Two Candidates in Elections

Our first candidate was **Ray Barry** standing as a Scottish Parliamentary candidate for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley near Glasgow.

Ray gained 124 votes.



Our second candidate was **Keith Collett**, standing in the English local government elections in Runnymede, Surrey.

Keith gained 17 votes.

Congratulations to both Ray and Keith!

We are very satisfied with both these results.

Although 124 and 17 votes (out of 33,800 and 1,200 votes cast respectively) may not seem like much, we have to remember we were initially almost entirely unknown and our resources available for campaigning were very limited.

Of course, we would have *liked* more votes, but in the end we are not doing this to get elected but to gain publicity for the cause of equal parenting.

These are the first elections we have ever fought, tackling an established party machine.

At the very least we have given notice that the Equal Parenting Alliance has arrived – and we are here to stay!



Ray delivering his speech at the results ceremony in Ayr. The results were not announced until about six in the morning – courtesy of the new computerised counting system.

It was never about winning a seat

"Our campaign was never about winning a seat" said Ray Barry.

"We are using the election process to try to bring about change in Family Law. Did we begin to do that in this, in the first seat our party has contested? To answer that, I think you need to look at the wider picture of what happened across Scotland last Thursday.

"Nationally 2.6% of voters defected from Labour, and in seats where the sitting tenant was Labour, those votes moved, in general, to whichever other candidate had best chance of unseating them. I find it significant that, in the seat which I contested, that rate of defection doubled to 5.3%. Our campaign targeted Labour's failings, and if that influenced some voters to cast their vote tactically for the SNP candidate, rather than for me, then I am more than happy.

"We accused Labour of conducting a huge social experiment to test their pet theory that fathers are unnecessary. We argued that this experiment has resulted in a quarter of Scottish children having no contact with their father or paternal grandparents.

"We showed evidence to voters that the rise in youth crime and anti-social behaviour is caused by this isolation of youngsters from their wider families.

"In short, we focused exclusively on Labour letting down our families and children. This may help to explain why voters in this constituency chose to abandon Labour at double the national rate.

"If that was the case, then our campaign has been a great success and we intend to build on it by standing more and more candidates in future elections."

CAMPAIGN NEWS

Web-Site Visitors Sky-Rocketing!

Our web-site visitor count shows a dramatic increase for the last few months. After hovering around 450 visitors per month throughout 2006, this has steadily increased in the few months before the election, reaching over 1500 in April.

So far in May, we've already had over 700 visitors (as I write this on the 9th of May), so we look to continue this trend, even if the local effect of the elections diminishes.

Of course, this is important to us because it shows that we are being noticed. It doesn't even matter whether the people looking at the site are our 'enemies', as this still shows we are making an impact.

Election Fund-Raising

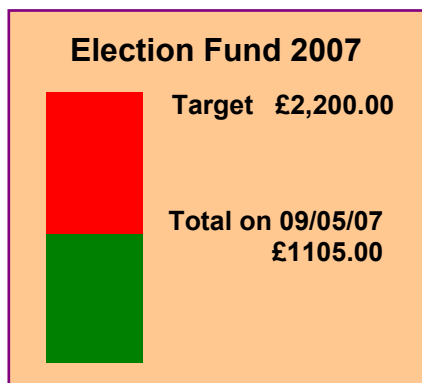
Thanks to everyone who made a donation towards our election fund. We aimed for £2,200 which would cover the basic cost (deposit and leaflets) of fighting two seats in the Scottish elections.

As it was, the amount we received covered most of the costs of fighting just the one seat in Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley near Glasgow.

But we now have to get even more serious into raising funds to fight more campaigns in future local and By-Elections, not to mention the general election in [probably] two years time.

So as well as keeping the fund open, we'll be chasing any other potential large-scale donors who may be interested in helping us achieve our aims in the medium term.

So if you should happen to know anyone with spare wads of cash hanging around, please let us know.



Our Election Fund-ometer



The number of people who have looked at the Equal Parenting Alliance web-site per month. Visitors are only counted once, so if someone visits the site ten times in a month, they still only count as one visitor in the above graph.

(Note this measure is not the same as the often quoted 'hit count' which is an utterly useless figure. For example our hit count for April was around 40,000. The hit count is deliberately used simply because it is large and impressive, always misleadingly so).

Worth Bothering for 17 Votes?

Although 17 votes in Runnymede (out of approximately 1200 votes cast) may not seem like much, Keith's result was achieved entirely on his own without any campaigning or even a leaflet drop.

In fact, considering the first time most voters in Runnymede had even heard of the Equal Parenting Alliance was when they were in the ballot box, in some ways it's remarkable that anyone voted for us at all!

Unfortunately, we weren't able to stretch our resources to give Keith any more than simple moral support in this election. (Keith understood this as the decision to stand was last minute).

Of course, we would have liked more votes, but in the end we are not doing this to get elected.

We are doing this to raise the political profile of equal parenting and the problems caused by society's poor response to family breakdown.

Naturally, we hope to do better next time in both national and local elections.

DEBATE

Join EPA or join another party?

I've been constantly surprised by the number of people who have said what we are trying to do is a *waste of time*. Usually the reason given for this is the fact that we will not get elected.

Of course, at this stage, it's extremely unlikely that we *will* get elected, but that is not why we are standing, as we have already said.

A similar debate continues about whether it makes more sense to join/form a single issue party like the Equal Parenting Alliance, or to join one of the other major political parties and try and influence them from within.

I don't see this as an issue. Both approaches are perfectly valid and I see nothing wrong in people doing either (or both).

We would fully support someone joining another party and trying to get change within it and if we could help them in any way, then we would.

We have always believed that a complementary approach is necessary to achieve our goals, if only because the problems we face are so immense.

We are not competing with anyone whose basic goals are compatible with ours – even if we don't agree with every subtle point difference between our policies. Why do these other groups have to see everything as a competition between groups?

However, after saying this, below are some of the reasons we believe our party approach is the right choice for us.

Why the EPA approach is just better!

Clarity of Purpose – By running as a separate party we keep our cause and issues clear and in the foreground. Our message is in no danger of being diluted.

We keep Control – In our Scottish election campaign our leaflet projected exactly the message we wanted to convey. It's very unlikely that another party would give so much space to issues of family law.

Guarantee of Exposure – Even if another party can be persuaded to adopt good policies, there's no guarantee that they will actively promote or pursue them.

For example, at the last general election the Conservative party *had* a good set of family law policies, including a presumption of contact and abolition of CAF/CASS. (These were chiefly due to the influence of Theresa May, who has a good measure of the issues).

However, during the election campaign, the Tories *did not mention these policies once* to

our knowledge. It seems they saw them as an electoral liability and believed they might risk losing the women's vote.

We, of course, can afford to be bold, in fact there's no point in having these policies if we're afraid to promote them!

Continuity – We believe the movement for better parenting for children after parental separation deserves to continue and be seen to progress. Hiding away inside another party creates the impression the problems have gone away.

Personal Commitment – I can't imagine working within another party where most of the issues would be a diversion from the issues I think really need addressing.

Plus – Maybe one day our kids will thank us for this too "I joined the EPA ten years ago to fight for you, and I'm still here fighting for those other children now".

United Equal Parenting Conference June 16 & 17 – Advance Notice

A conference to discuss the best interests of the child, children's rights and equal parenting including mutual support, media campaigning, political lobbying, campaigning and discussion of best practice

Campaigners, authors, well-known figures, charities and organisations have been invited to speak. All views are welcome on how to progress equal parenting. The conference is to encourage the exchange of ideas and contacts and will end with an open discussion of strategy and plans.

Saturday, 16th June and Sunday, 17th June 2007 Reading, Berkshire

See <http://www.unitedconference.com/>

Not an EPA Event - but recommended

THE LIGHTER SIDE

Making [Non] Sense of Family Law

It's easy to simply condemn the professionals operating within the family law system as lazy people, cynically profiting from the pain and damage inflicted on children by selfish parents.

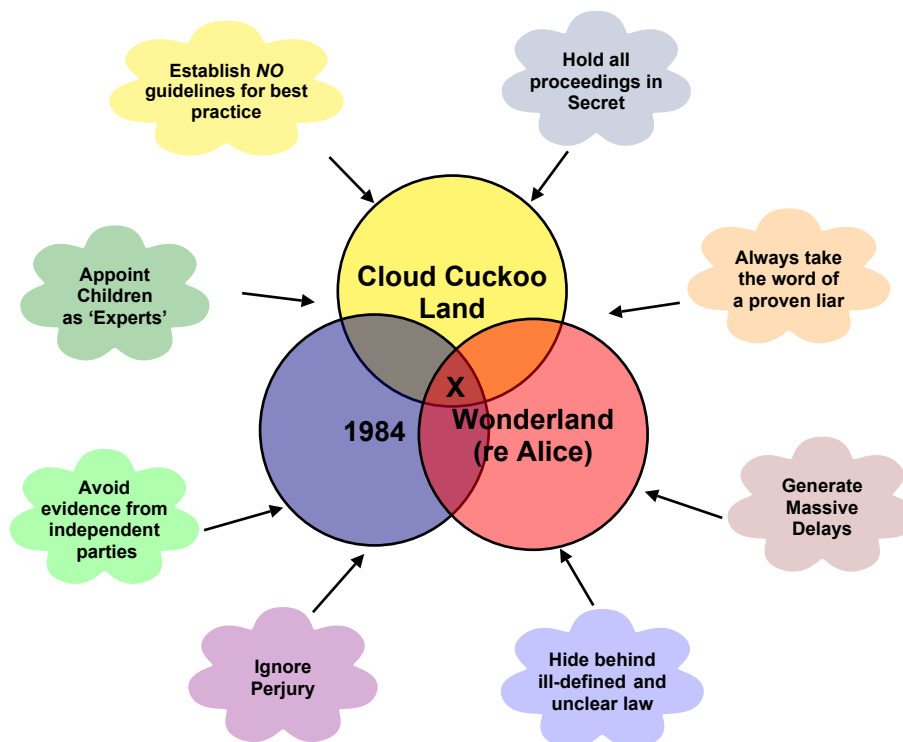
But is there more to it than this?

Our boffins have been beavering away in the background to try and explain how family law works. We're very pleased to report that we have come up with 'the answer' to family law, or at the very least we have explained the methodology to an unprecedented degree of accuracy.

In the diagram below, the circles are the 'domains' representing the range of thought processes or 'mind-set' required to think like a family court

Once the domains have been set-up, we then need to apply certain 'rules' which govern how the courts operate. These are shown as 'cloud' inputs to the domains.

A little maths (which we won't bore you with) then allows us to quickly establish the relationship between the domains and rules and calculate the true reason why family law is so dumb.



Family Law Circle of Dysfunction

Using our formula, we have calculated the 'answer' or the true meaning of family law (the "X" in the centre of the diagram above) as follows: **True meaning of family law = 0.0238**

This may at first seem to be a random result, but any Stephen Hawking's among us will realise it is the inverse (or opposite) of 42. Of course, forty-two itself is well documented as the meaning of life, the universe and everything, so we therefore conclude that family law is *equal to the complete opposite of all meaning and purpose in the universe*. Though this may not be surprising to many, this discovery must still rank alongside the famous (but over-rated in our view) $E = mc^2$.

We suppose Einstein had to leave *something* for others to find in the future!

*Although, this article is just for fun, the reality of family law implementation is – incredibly – not that different from our model! Everything in the above diagram we consider to be perfectly valid; it's just the pseudo-science that is totally bogus. For how this model **does** apply in real-life, please visit www.EqualParentingAlliance.org/model.html which will shortly be updated.*