

Scottish Liberal Democrat Spring Conference

Aberdeen, March 2015

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Friday 20th March

The morning session runs from 11.00 to 13.00

11:00 Welcome address from Councillor Ian Yuill

11:10 SC1: Training and apprenticeships

Policy Committee

Mover: Charlie Scott Summator: John Watson

Conference recognises that practice in other EU member states demonstrates that – if properly valued by society and employers – apprenticeships can be more helpful and fulfilling to many individuals than continuing education. It notes also that a National Audit Office report has established that, for every £1 spent on apprenticeships, £18 is returned to the economy.

To enable all young people to realise their full potential, conference therefore calls on the Scottish Government to:

1. Ensure that every school-leaver should have the choice of moving into Further or Higher education; or Full-time employment; or An apprenticeship or equivalent formal training. This choice should also be offered to those who drop out of full time education before the age of 21 and are not in employment.
2. Reach agreement with all employers' organisations to establish Sectoral Skills Councils, [SSCs] where these or similar bodies do not already exist; and agree the number of apprentices to be employed by employers in each sector, proportionate to their total number of full-time employees. Employers would be responsible for payment of wages of all apprentices for the duration of their training.
3. Assist financially with the £6m cost of setting up SSCs but pass on the running of these bodies and the promotion of formal Training and Apprenticeship schemes to each sector's organisation. SSCs should also resource schools' careers services to present information on apprenticeships to pupils in the 13-16 age group.
4. Oversee these schemes to ensure their success, and provide necessary expenses for trainees in remote areas.
5. Transfer an appropriate element of the funding currently allocated to 18 to 25 year olds who are unemployed, and are not being given formal training, in order to fund this scheme which provides a better long term solution to the skills shortage.
6. Increase funding for local authorities to provide the opportunity to recruit experienced teachers, over a three year period, to intervene with pupils aged 5 to 15 to ensure they reach the educational standard needed for acceptance for different types of training or apprenticeships at age 16.
7. Increase the funding budget for Further Education Colleges to the level that will enable them to meet the needs of employers and facilitate the training of apprentices in different sectors.

Conference believes that adoption of these policies, together with the motion on *Respect for the Labour Force* passed at the 2014 autumn conference, forms the basis of a strong youth employment policy for the party and for Scotland.

Amendment 1

Submitted by SLDW and East Dunbartonshire local party

Mover: Katy Gordon

Summator: TBC

- 1) Delete lines 16 - 18 from 'agree the number of apprentices ...' to full time employees.' (end of sentence) and replace with: 'agree targets for the number of apprentices to be employed in each sector, with

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proportionate targets by company size (measured by employee numbers) and in relation to sectoral need. Devise a system of incentives and deterrents to achieve the targets.'

- 2) Delete lines 23 – 24 from 'resource schools' careers services...' to 'age group.' (end of sentence) and replace with 'provide materials to Skills Development Scotland on apprenticeship careers and opportunities for use in careers education and guidance work in secondary schools.'
- 3) Delete lines 31 – 33 from 'Increase funding for local authorities...' to '...pupils aged 5 - 15...' and replace with 'Introduce a Scottish Pupil Premium to provide funding for schools to introduce a range of measures for pupils aged 5 – end of compulsory school age...'
- 4) Delete line 35 'at age 16.'

Cards:

Mover: Charlie Scott, Policy Committee - called

Sum Up: John Watson, Policy Committee - called

Amd 1: Katy Gordon, East Dunbartonshire - called

Sum Up Amd: Liam McArthur MSP, Orkney - called

Votes:

Amendment - carried

Motion as amended - carried

11:40 Address by Scottish Liberal Democrat Women

11:45 Speech by Danny Alexander MP

Chief Secretary to the Treasury

12:00 EM1: Defending Human Rights and Civil Liberties

Submitted by Dumbarton Liberal Democrat Association

Mover: Finlay Craig

Summator: Andrew Nisbet

Conference is greatly concerned about the recent intrusions, restrictions and limitations of the rights, freedoms and liberties of individuals in Scotland by the Scottish Government.

Conference notes the repeated and extensive attempts to curtailment liberty:

- The centralization of authority and power to a single police force that restricts individuals', communities' and local authorities' ability to influence the style and nature of local law enforcement
- The abuse of human rights by the method, legality, scale and effectiveness of stop and search of individuals and in particular young people by Police Scotland
- The current attempt by the Scottish Government to introduce a compulsory ID card for every individual by the back door. It is envisaged that the Scottish National Entitlement Card (SNEC) which replaced the 'pensioners bus pass' could be linked to the NHS Central Register (NHSCR) resulting in a full scale population register accessible to over 120 Scottish authorities. This could give the state increased surveillance capacities and breach people's right to privacy
- The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act enacted in March 2014, in the main is welcomed, however the Act undermines the role and responsibilities of parents and imposes a state guardianship (named person) into their child's life whether needed or not (*Separate Vote*)

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Conference welcomes the outstanding efforts of Liberal Democrat MSPs to defend the privacy and liberties of the Scottish population by:

- Scottish Liberal Democrats Debate: Privacy and the State, on Wednesday 4 March 2015
- Demanding that Police Scotland be more upfront with Parliament and the SPA over the number of routine incidents attended by armed officers
- Scottish Liberal Democrat justice spokesperson Alison McInnes's call for answers over disingenuous Freedom of Information response by Police Scotland

Conference recognises that the Party exists to build and safeguard a fair, free and open society and as such has a responsibility to actively defend the liberties of the Scottish people. Conference therefore calls on the Scottish Liberal Democratic Party to:

- Ensure that liberal principles of freedom of the individual coupled with responsibility are a major component of all campaigning
- Encourage MSPs, MPs, councillors, candidates and activists to publicly and actively campaign to ensure a successful 'No to super ID cards'

Conference calls on the Scottish Government to:

1. Ensure that the Scottish Police Authority and any authority for governance and control of the police embrace a wide range of community views and is resourced to ensure effective and efficient results
2. Retain and advance parents' rights and responsibilities in relation to their children by ensuring that a 'named person' is consensual and not imposed on every child (*Separate Vote*)
3. Reconsider their present position and to ensure open, in-depth, detailed and public consultation and consideration on changes and modification to existing and intended data bases, so as to ensure no form of compulsory ID cards

Cards:

Mover: Finlay Craig, Dumbarton - called

Sum Up: Andrew Nisbet, Dumbarton - called

Evan Davidson, Aberdeen Central - called

Alex Cole-Hamilton, Edinburgh West - request for separate vote ll15-17 & 38-39) - called

Liam McArthur MSP, Orkney - called

Alison McInnes MSP, NE Scotland - called

Votes:

Separate vote on lines 15-17 (4th para in 1st set of points) - lines are deleted (43 to 28)

Separate vote on lines 38-39 - line are deleted

Motion as amended - carried

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12:25 SC2: Scottish Living Wage and Scottish Living Wage Accreditation Project

Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey local party

Mover: Cllr Kate Stephen Summator: David Green

Conference is appalled by the levels of poverty in Scotland. It notes:

- i) that the figures for 2012 to 2013 - the latest - showed that in that period in Scotland, poverty rose.
- ii) in real terms 820,000 individuals now live in poverty here, 110,000 more than in the previous year's figures with more than 30,000 families in Scotland living in poverty.

Conference further notes that Scotland has also seen a dramatic increase in “working poverty” with a quarter of a million adults living on the breadline when one member of their household has a job. In particular, it notes the following:

- a) Statistics released by the Scottish Government in 2014 showed that over half (52%) of working-age adults in poverty were in “inwork” poverty – a category which refers to individuals living in households where at least one member works either full- or parttime.
- b) The 250,000 figure for 2012-13 represents an increase of 50,000 working-age adults in “in-work” poverty compared with the previous financial year (2011-12).
- c) The number of children living in poverty who were in households in employment also rose in the latest year, with 110,000 youngsters in Scotland living in in-work poverty in 2012-13.
- d) Six in ten children in poverty in Scotland in 2012-13 were in households where at least one adult was in employment. There were 30,000 more children in in-work poverty in 2012-13 compared with the previous year.

Conference also notes:

- 1) that the current Minimum Wage is only £6.50 per hour for age 21 and over, which it believes is not enough for individuals in Scotland to access the essentials of everyday life and certainly not enough to save or plan for emergencies.
- 2) that the current Living Wage is £7.85 per hour (calculated annually at the Centre for Research and Social Policy in Loughborough University) and believes that this is one of the tools for fighting poverty in Scotland but that more than 400,000 Scots workers are still paid less than the Living Wage, while across the UK, 5.2 million people, or 22% of the workforce, were said to be paid less than the living wage - an increase of 1% over the past year.
- 3) that 64% of low paid workers in Scotland are women, and 40% are women working part time - conference, indeed, understands that poverty, and therefore low pay, is gendered with women in general having less access to income, resources and assets than their male counterparts.
- 4) that the SNP has voted against the Living Wage on a number of occasions.
- 5) about 70 to 80 companies in Scotland, have signed up to be Living Wage employers but that some firms have said they cannot afford to pay it.

Conference believes that not paying the Living Wage is unacceptable in a wealthy country where poverty and inequality are still endemic and that all workers in Scotland, full- or part-time, male or female, should be paid at least the Living Wage.

Conference therefore urgently calls on the Scottish government to work with the private sector, in particular, to establish the Living Wage in Scotland as the norm as soon as possible.

Conference also requests all employers in Scotland who do pay all their workers the Scottish Living Wage to join the new accreditation scheme, delivered by the Poverty Alliance which encourages such employers to be accredited for

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doing so and then allows them to display this on their company materials, logos etc., thus building up a momentum behind the campaign and encouraging other employers to follow their example.

Cards:

Mover: Cllr Kate Stephen, INB&E - called

Sum Up: Dave Green, Ross, Skye & Lochaber - called

Dr Trevor Escott, INB&S - called

George Grubb, Edinburgh West - called

Votes:

Motion - carried nem con

13.00-14.30 Lunch

The afternoon session runs from 14.30 to 17.15.

14:30 Energy Q&A

With Malcolm Webb, Chief Executive of Oil & Gas UK, Danny Alexander MP, Ed Davey MP & Sir Robert Smith MP

15:30 Speech by Alistair Carmichael MP

Secretary of State for Scotland

15:50 SC3: Fairer funding structure for Scottish Local Authorities and the implementation of a 'One Scotland Fund' to tackle social deprivation

Aberdeenshire West local party

Mover: Mike Rumbles Summator: Robert Smith MP

The local authority funding formula first adopted by the Scottish Executive in 1999 and then continued by the Scottish government in 2007 is seen to be overly complicated, opaque and lacking in transparency. This leads to controversy surrounding the application of the funding formula by Scottish Ministers.

Scottish Liberal Democrats have long advocated that no local authority should receive less than 90% of the average funding per head of population. The Scottish government has consistently failed to implement reform of the funding formula resulting in the relative underfunding of some local Councils, particularly Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.

The solution to the unfairness of the funding formula is to reform it entirely. The principles of openness, transparency and fairness should be at the heart of any new funding system.

Conference notes with concern:

- A. The controversy surrounding the actions of Scottish Ministers in the way they apply the current funding formula.
- B. The failure of the Scottish Government to meet its own current target of ensuring that no council receives less than 85% of the average funding per head of population.
- C. The huge number of different criteria used by Scottish Ministers to justify their funding allocations and that there is a possibility that any future Local Government Finance Commission may end up in the same situation.

Conference reaffirms the Scottish Liberal Democrat commitments to:

- i) Openness, transparency and fairness in decision making.

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ii) Our commitment to tackling social deprivation across Scotland.

Conference calls on Liberal Democrat MSPs to support:

1. A uniform funding allocation for urban councils based on population.
2. A uniform funding allocation for mainland rural councils based on population.
3. A uniform funding allocation for the three island councils based on population.
4. Urban, rural and island councils to receive between them 90% of available Scottish local government funding.
5. The setting up of a 'One Scotland Fund' to tackle social deprivation in our urban, rural and island communities as envisaged in the Campbell Commission, which should comprise the remaining 10% of available funds allocated according to need.

Cards:

Mover: 23 Mike Rumbles, Aberdeen West - called

Sum Up: 24 Sir Robert Smith MP

16 Aileen Morton, Dumbarton - called

18 Eileen McCartin, Paisley & Renfrewshire - called

22 Peter Barrett, Perth & Kinross - called

25 Ashai Ghai, East Dunbartonshire - called

31 Peter Argyle, Abd West - called

32 Phil Wheeler, Edin West - called

33 Andrew Nisbet, Dumbarton - Request for reference back

35 John Melling, INBS

-

Votes:

Reference Back to be heard

Reference Back count - For 36, Against 43 - reference back not moved

Motion - carried

16:30 SC4: Building an energy efficient Scotland

Policy Committee

Mover: Dave Gorman Summator: Charles Dundas

Conference considers:

- that climate change is the greatest threat facing humanity in the twenty-first century
- that climate change and environmental sustainability are issues of fairness between and across generations
- that those facing the worst effects of climate change did not create it and are often the world's poorest which is an unacceptable injustice
- that fully addressing climate problems is a liberal cause which brings together the power of individuals and their communities
- that climate change must be addressed within a supportive and enabling framework from government

Conference notes:

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- that greenhouse gas emissions rose in Scotland last year and that the Scottish Government has missed its emissions target for the third year in a row
- The Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (November 2014) which highlights the severity of the climate change challenge, noting specifically more extreme weather events, disturbance to existing patterns of human habitation, loss of land and soil productivity and increased crop losses
- the evidence of record temperatures being set on a continuous basis with 2014 reported as the hottest year globally since modern records began
- reports from the UK National Ecosystem Assessment (June 2011) on the many social benefits that flow from a high quality, protected environment and evidence of the importance of access to nature and high quality green space for mental health and well-being
- the report series of the Ellen MacArthur foundation published 2012-14 highlighting the economic rationale for the transition to a circular economy – an opportunity in excess of \$1 trillion for the global economy and the recent report on Scotland's circular economy with the Scottish Council for Development and Industry and the Green Alliance
- the positive impact that resource efficiency can have both socially, environmentally and economically as demonstrated by the work of Zero Waste Scotland
- the success of a pilot project in England which allowed GPs to prescribe energy efficiency and damp proofing measures to certain patients which reportedly reduced GP and outpatient visits by a third

Conference welcomes:

- the work of the Scottish Forum on Natural Capital to better quantify and prioritise the value of natural services to society and the results of the Scottish Natural Capital Survey 2014 which showed that 78% of Scottish Business leaders believe urgent action is necessary to protect and enhance Scotland's natural capital
- the success of Liberal Democrats in government to deliver a secure, sustainable, low carbon future, and its commitment to funding innovation in low carbon technologies through the Green Investment Bank
- reports from RenewableUK that in 2014 the UK wind energy industry saw a 15% increase, producing the equivalent of that needed to power over 25% of all the homes in the UK; and that in Scotland wind energy produced enough electricity to meet the demand of 98% of all Scottish households
- the increasing recognition of the opportunities for households and businesses to manage their energy demand and peak energy requirements more effectively
- the Liberal Democrat UK manifesto proposals for 5 green laws on nature, zero carbon, zero waste, green transport and a heating and energy efficiency act

Conference believes:

- that there is value in the call for a step change in Scotland's approach to and support for district heating as set out in the 2012 Expert Commission on District Heating report
- that the low carbon revolution affords opportunities to use the waste energy from Scotland's power stations and major industries
- that in spite of an abundance of energy resources the continuing poor quality of Scotland's housing stock means that many live in damp, cold conditions suffering fuel poverty
- that emissions reporting in Scotland should be required within 12 months rather than 24 months of the year end

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· that future climate change strategies for Scotland must place much greater focus on demand reduction including growing the Scottish market, energy management and energy efficiency, and an integrated approach to energy storage

Conference calls for the Scottish government:

1. to implement the recommendations of the Expert Commission on District Heating in full and without further delay
2. to introduce legislation requiring industrial and commercial developments, public sector buildings and private house-building to connect to district heating schemes where they exist and it is cost effective to do so
3. to develop a coherent and integrated approach to waste heat, and a presumption in favour of its use, to be set out in an industrial heat and power strategy
4. to raise house building standards to ensure that energy efficiency measures are in line with best practice in Nordic countries
5. to bring forward an action plan to tackle energy efficiency in existing housing stock, with a commitment to bring every house to band C by 2035 subject to a technically feasible and cost effective test
6. to support a policy of no new unabated coal or gas power stations in Scotland subject to the impacts on energy security being acceptable
7. to establish a standing Scottish Sustainable Energy Commission to provide advice and guidance to government on how to implement a sustainable, secure, fair and competitive Scottish energy system
8. to support the Cities Alliance to undertake energy plans to map the energy needs of our towns and cities with a view to the establishment of city energy companies
9. to provide greater leadership to ensure the public sector in Scotland leads on procurement of renewable energy, demand reduction, micro-renewable deployment and low carbon products
10. to come forward with proposals to pilot, with a view to rolling out, a system which allows GPs to prescribe double glazing and loft insulation for patients living in cold, damp homes

Cards:

Mover: Dave Gorman, Policy Committee

Sum Up: Charles Dundas, Policy Committee

Dave Green, Ross, Skye & Lochaber - called

30 Catherine Isherwood, Stirling & Clackmannanshire - called

36 Lin Macmillan, East Lothian - called

37 Johnathan Waddell, WAK - called

Votes:

Motion - carried

17:15 Close of session

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Saturday 21st March

The morning session runs from 10.00 to 12.00.

10:00 Address by Liberal Democrat Disability Association

10:05 SC5: Healthcare as part of the local planning process

Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey local party

Mover: Iain Nelson Summator: Christine Jardine

Conference notes:

- i) Scotland's population is growing. The estimated population of Scotland on 30 June 2013 was 5,327,700, the highest ever and an increase of 14,100 from the previous year.
- ii) This growing population is placing increasing demand on already fully-stretched GP services.
- iii) There is no statutory process for local planning agencies to consider the impact on healthcare services.
- iv) There is no mechanism to support the establishment of a new GP practice (with a small but growing patient list) as funding is largely dependent on the number of registered patients and a new practice would likely need additional funding for fixed costs in the initial stages.

Conference believes:

- A) In areas where there is a predicted or planned substantial population rise, or in areas where new major housing developments are planned, new GP practices and other health care services will need to be established to provide vital primary care services.
- B) Without investment in new GP practices, existing practices, and other health service provision, will face significant demands on already busy workloads and will be required to provide care to more patients within the same number of appointments and in premises that are too small to cope with the rise in population. This will affect patients' access to appointments and the range of services available from the practice. If patients cannot access GP appointments, they may turn to local A&E services, placing further pressure on busy hospital services.
- C) The requirement for new GP practices and other health care provision should be assessed in a consistent manner across Scotland, with the creation of a new statutory mechanism where local planners involve NHS boards in the planning and development process to ensure healthcare services are available in growing communities.

Conference also understands that:

- a) There is variable consultation and engagement between local planning departments and NHS boards, and;
- b) Even where there is engagement, access to planning gain is not guaranteed.

Conference therefore calls upon the Scottish Government to:

- 1) Create a statutory requirement for local town planning processes to consider the impact of new housing or expanding communities on local NHS services.
- 2) Make it a requirement that the availability of GP and other health care services provision should be considered from the outset where new housing developments are planned.
- 3) In consultation with relevant stakeholders, establish a process for ensuring that new GP practices and other health care services are built in areas where they are considered necessary.
- 4) Create a mechanism to provide additional financial support to new practices with small but growing patient lists.

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Cards:

Mover: Hamish Mackenzie, Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross - CALLED

Sum Up: Christine Jardine

Jacque Bell, Edinburgh NE&L - CALLED

Trevor Escott, IENBS - called

Tim Brett, NE Fife - CALLED

Galen Milne, Stirling & Clacks - CALLED

Karen Utting, Edin E - CALLED

Votes:

Motion - CARRIED

10:45 SC6: A vision for land reform in Scotland

Policy Committee

Mover: Charles Kennedy MP Summator: Cllr Kate Stephen

Conference reaffirms its belief in the need for land reform as expressed in the 'Land Reform' motion passed at autumn conference 2013.

Conference notes the report of the Land Reform Review Group published in May 2014 and the Smith Commission Agreement which will devolve powers over the Crown Estate.

Conference welcomes specific actions taken by the Scottish Government to:

- Improve the transparency of land ownership, by announcing the target to complete the Land Register covering the whole of Scotland in 10 years with all public land being registered within 5 Years
- Extend community right to buy to urban areas through the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill
- Introduce community right to buy for neglected or abandoned land within the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill
- Hold a public consultation on substantive changes to succession law before the end of the 2014/15 financial year
- Bring forward legislation to support the proposals of the Scottish Law Commission to end the distinction between immovable and moveable property in succession law.

Conference endorses the following recommendations from the Land Reform Review Group and believes that the undernoted proposals should form the basis of future land reform policy in Scotland:

- A. The Scottish Government should develop proposals to establish an upper limit on the total amount of land in Scotland that can be held by a private land owner or single beneficial interest in law.
- B. That Scottish Ministers should be given powers to direct landowners to take action to overcome barriers to sustainable development.
- C. That it should be made incompetent for any legal entity not registered in a member state of the European Union to register title to land in the Register of Scotland.
- D. That common land and commonities which come to light through the land registration process should be safeguarded.
- E. That compulsory purchase legislation should be modernised; that local authorities should have a right to exercise a Compulsory Sale Order over an area of vacant or derelict land; and that the Scottish Government and local authorities should have a right to register a statutory right of pre-emption over land where that is in the public interest.

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- F. That there should be a specific duty on charitable trustees when considering management, use or transfer of any land they must engage with the local community and consider the impact on the local community before a decision is taken.
- G. That the feasibility of introducing a majority land assembly measure should be explored.
- H. That a National Land Corporation charged with the acquisition and development of land be set up and for this body to have an extended role in small rural communities.
- I. That exemptions from sporting rates should be reviewed and a new rates system introduced.
- J. That there should be improvements in the position of tenants under the Small Landholders (Scotland) Act 1911 and that these tenants should have a statutory right to buy their holdings.
- K. That a Scottish Land and Property Commission be established with responsibility for monitoring the system of land ownership and land management and recommending changes in the public interest.

Amendment 1

Submitted by Scottish Green Liberal Democrats

Mover: Charles Dundas

Summator: TBC

Add new section "L" at line 60.

"L. That further deer management regulation measures should be introduced to be available in the event that the present arrangements are assessed as not protecting the public interest."

Cards:

Mover: Charles Kennedy MP - called

Sum Up: Cllr Kate Stephen

Amd: Charles Dundas, SGLD - called

41 Dave Gorman, Central Scotland - called

Denis Mollison, East Lothian

Jenni Lang, Edinburgh N & L - called

Sir Robert Smith MP - request for Reference back - called

Votes:

Motion is referred back to Policy Committee

11:35 Address by LGBT+ Liberal Democrats

11:40 Speech by Jo Swinson MP

Minister for Employment Relations and Consumer Affairs

12.00-14.45 Lunch

The afternoon session runs from 14.45 to 17.15.

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14:45 EM2: Protecting Asylum Seekers

Glasgow Rutherglen local party

Mover: Paul McGarry Summator: TBC

Conference notes with significant concern:

- a) Under new Home Office rules from January 25th that Asylum Seekers who have been refused leave to remain in the UK will now have to leave Scotland in order to appeal and present evidence in Liverpool.
- b) Current rules offer no limit for which a person can be held in detention whilst their case is reviewed. A FOI request by the BBC published on March 3rd revealed that of those held at Dungavel in Lanarkshire 5 had been held for over a year, of these 1 had been held for over 2 years.
- c) The UK is the only EU country not to have a cap limit on the time someone can be held at an immigration centre.
- d) The cost of detention to the UK is now £171million a year
- e) The cost of compensation paid by the Home Office to those unlawfully detained was £15million
- f) Case reviews can at present take between 6 and 12 month before a decision is reached leaving the applicant often destitute and without a certain future
- g) Data published by the All Party Parliamentary Group of Refugees and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Migration shows the UK has the highest recorded use of detention for the purpose of immigration in the world.

Conference believes:

- i. Those seeking sanctuary in the UK should be treated with compassion, dignity, respect and with justice and have a right to expect this
- ii. That detention without prospect of release is likely to have a significant long term effect on a person's mental health
- iii. The current operation of the asylum system under the Home Office has failed
- iv. Requiring those claiming asylum to travel hundreds of miles in order for their case to be heard can be traumatic and stressful for the claimant

Conference calls for the UK Government to:

- 1) Support the introduction of a 28 day limit by which a person can be detained
- 2) To ensure that women who are victims of rape and sexual violence should not be detained and that pregnant women should never be detained for immigration purposes
- 3) Introduce measures to further screen those being detained to ensure that those who have been victims of human trafficking are not detained
- 4) Where possible the hearing of cases, appeals and judicial reviews should be held on Scotland for those residing in Scotland
- 5) Review the current system for assessing asylum cases and ensure that the system of identifying genuine asylum cases treats all people with compassion, humanity and dignity

Conference further calls on Liberal Democrat MPs to support the findings and recommendations of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Migration's report of the "Inquiry into the use of Immigration Detention in the United Kingdom.

Cards:

Mover: Paul McGarry, Glasgow Rutherglen - called

Jacqui Bell Edinburgh NE&L - called

Amanda Kubie, Tweeddale, Lauderdale & Midlothian South - called

Eileen Baxendale, Rutherglen -called

Gary McLelland, Glasgow North - called

Johnathan Waddell, West Aberdeenshire - called

Votes:

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Motion - carried

15:15 Financial Appeal

15:25 Speech by Willie Rennie MSP

Leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats

15:45 Health Q&A

With Jim Hume MSP & Theresa Fyffe, Royal College of Nursing & Linda Findlay, Royal College of Psychiatrists

16:35 SC7: Compassion, dignity and choice at the end of life

Gary McLelland and 25 members

Mover: Liam McArthur MSP Summator: Jeremy Purvis

Conference notes that:

1. Assisted dying is currently an option for citizens of: the Netherlands; Belgium; Luxembourg; Switzerland; Columbia, and five US states (Washington; Oregon; New Mexico; Vermont and Montana).
2. The Federal Party passed a motion supportive of the principles contained within this motion at Federal Conference in autumn 2012 (F20: Medically Assisted Dying), spring 2004 (Assisted Dying) and autumn 1997 (Assisted Dying).
3. In 2010 the Scottish Parliament voted against (85 to 16) Margo MacDonald's End of Life Assistance Bill.

Conference expresses concern that:

1. The current law for end of life care is unclear and would benefit from a clear process being laid out by the Scottish Parliament.
2. A significant minority of people who suffer unendurably from medical conditions that offer no hope of recovery are physically unable to end their lives at a time of their own choosing without assistance.

Conference believes that:

1. As a principle of freedom of individual choice, those suffering terrible physical and mental anguish caused by a terminal medical condition should be allowed reasonable assistance to end their own lives at a time of their choosing without risking the prosecution of the individual who assists.
2. There is a need for continued investment in Scotland's excellent palliative care system to guarantee it continues to provide this vital service.
3. No one should be required to be directly involved, against their will, in the process of assisting someone to end their life.

Conference calls for:

1. The Scottish party to support the objectives of the Assisted Suicide (Scotland) Bill.
2. Adequate safeguards to be put in place to protect vulnerable groups from manipulation or coercion in this process.
3. Any such legislative proposal to be determined by way of a free vote in order to respect the freedom of conscience of Parliamentarians.

Cards:

Mover: Liam McArthur MSP, Orkney - called 1

Sum Up: Jeremy Purvis

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19 Eileen McCartin, Paisley & Renfrewshire - called 4

29 Jacqui Bell, Edin NE&L

42 Christime Jardine, Aberdeenshire East

Alex Cole-Hamilton, Edinburgh West - called 9

53 Johnathan Waddell, West Aberdeenshire - called 5

54 Ashay Ghai, E Dunbartonshire - called 3

57 Gary McLelland, Glasgow North - called 10

58 Paul McGarry, Glasgow North - called 7

59 George Grubb, Edinburgh West

60 Lin Macmillan, East Lothian - called 6

61 Elizabeth Wilson, Angus & the Mearns - called 2

65 Chris Young, Glasgow South

Notice given that only cards to speak agin the motion would be taken

67 Karen Utting, PPC Edinburgh East (for)

68 Mike Rumbles, Abd West (agin) - called 8

Votes:

Motion - carried

Close of session 17.15

Scottish Liberal Democrat Spring Conference

Aberdeen, March 2015

Sunday 22nd March

The morning session runs from 10.00 to 13.00

Party AGM & Party Business

10:00 BM1: Campaigning for a Liberal Scotland

Submitted by Glasgow Rutherglen local party

Mover: Cllr Robert Brown Summator: Nigel Lindsay

Conference recognises the importance of both the possession of liberty and the effective exercise of liberty.

Conference is appalled that

- Scotland is one of the most unequal societies in Europe, that the OECD has found that the UK economy would have been more than 20% bigger had the gap between rich and poor not widened since the 1980s and that present levels of inequality are harmful to all its inhabitants.

- although Scotland forms part of the sixth strongest economy in the world, many people are still unable to live a full and rewarding life, for want of adequate education, resources (whether of food, shelter or heating) or opportunity.

Conference believes that one of the core missions of Liberalism should be to harness the power of the State for the benefit of those most disadvantaged in society, and to ensure that each individual has an equal chance to realise his or her own potential. Conference therefore calls for Scottish Liberal Democrat candidates and activists to put the following principles at the forefront of the campaign for the 2016 Scottish Parliament elections:

1. Making social and economic justice a central plank of the Liberal Democrat campaign.
2. Challenging the unaccountable exercise of economic liberty which has led to large inequalities of wealth and influence.
3. Using post-Smith powers to their maximum extent to widen the life-chances of the poorest and most disadvantaged people in Scotland.
4. Supporting sustained investment in areas of multiple disadvantage to raise education, early years' provision and parenting skills, to levels where functional illiteracy is eliminated, social mobility increases and individuals can maximise their own potential.
5. Supporting effective policies on pay multiples and the achievement of a living wage for all.
6. Developing new means to reduce tax avoidance, and using the proceeds to fund action to combat inequality.

Conference also urges the Party to develop new campaigning methods, based on

- projecting a clear vision of what a Liberal Scotland would be;
- leading public opinion towards this vision, rather than following it;
- working towards this vision with communities and like-minded interest groups;
- recognising that inspiring and principled political leadership with a radical Liberal programme is vastly more important than seeking populist stances from the findings of private polling and focus groups.

Cards:

Mover: Cllr Robert Brown - called

Sum Up: Nigel Lindsay, East Lothian - called

Moyra Forrest, Edinburgh N&L - called

Mike Falchikov, Edinburgh South - called

Alistair Carmichael MP, Orkney - called

Dr Elizabeth Wilson, Angus & Mearns - called

Votes:

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Motion - carried

AGM

Questions:

Hugh Waterfield - answered by Sheila Thomson

Kevin Lang -

Approvals

Accounts - Formally proposed and seconded

11:15 Address by Ethnic Minority Liberal Democrats

11:20 SC8: A fair minimum wage

Liberal Youth Scotland

Mover: Jonathon Waddell Summator: Cllr Kate Stephen

Conference notes:

- The One Fair Wage campaign of the Scottish Youth Parliament as an indication of how young people feel towards the Minimum Wage
- Liberal Youth Scotland's 'Fancy a Pay Rise?' campaign for a fairer minimum wage policy
- The UK is the only country in the EU to employ a discriminatory minimum wage policy based on age
- Research from European Social Study shows 64% of people in the UK believe ageism is a serious problem compared to 44% for Europe as a whole
- An under 18 year old can earn less than 60% of what someone over 21 earns for the same job under the current minimum wage system
- The minimum wage aims to set a minimum standard of living which is the same regardless of age
- Liberal Democrat values of equality and that discrimination where possible should be prohibited
- Higher wages for employees means more disposable income which is returned to the employers and beneficial to the economy

Conferences believes that:

- Discrimination of any kind is wrong
- The current system unjustly ignores the input of hardworking young adults by putting the minimum wage on a lower level to older people doing the same job
- All people, regardless of their age, sex or ethnicity, ought to be viewed the same in relation to the minimum wage
- Age is not relevant to meeting standards of living and the minimum wage must be applicable to meeting that standard for everyone

Conference therefore resolves that:

- Age discrimination within the context of the minimum wage is to be abolished, replacing the current system with a single minimum wage, set at and maintained at the current level for 21 year olds for all those in employment, regardless of age

Cards:

Mover: Jonathon Waddell, LYS - called

Sum Up: Cllr Kate Stephen, IENBS - called

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Katy Gordon, Glasgow South - called

Trevor Escott, INBS - called

Hamish Mackenzie, CS&ER - called

Galen Milne, Stirling & Clacks - called

Votes:

Motion - carried

11:50 TI1: Making Public Transport an attractive option to the car

Dumbarton Local Party

Mover: Andrew Nisbet

Background

In the 1960's through to the early 1980's, metropolitan areas in Great Britain experienced a concerted effort to integrate public transport services so that they provided an attractive alternative to the car in congested urban areas. Significant progress was made, particularly with through ticketing.

However, in the early 1980's the Thatcher Government identified rapidly rising subsidies and fares as a major problem that needed to be addressed. Its solution was deregulation of all bus services (outside London) and rail franchising.

Since the 1986 Transport Act – integration of public ticketing and services has stagnated other than in London, where the Oyster Card provides passengers with a flexible ticket for all public transport services.

Issues

- Despite many attempts, government and local government has failed to persuade bus operators to co-operate in an Oyster Card type scheme.
- Deregulation encourages bus operators to compete against each other, rather than combining to compete against the car.
- Bus Operators in Scotland are paid almost £200 million per year by the Scottish Government for the operation of the Free Bus Pass for Elderly and Disabled persons.
- Two private Members' Bills have been raised in the Scottish Parliament. The first failed to get sufficient support, the second (promoted by Iain Gray) has obtained the right to introduce the bill.
- The report on the consultation seems to suggest that, under the bill, local transport authorities would be given a form of franchising power.
- This, together with the transfer of rail franchising powers to the Scottish Parliament could provide an opportunity to achieve much needed integration of services.

For consideration

If the current private members bill proceeds, what should the party's stance be? How will MSP's decide whether to support it or not? Or indeed seek to enhance its provisions?

Our policy in this area needs to be defined.

Cards:

Mover: Andrew Nisbett, Dumbarton - called

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Karen Utting, Edinburgh East

12:20 Speech by Malcolm Bruce MP

President of the Scottish Liberal Democrats

12:40 Party Awards

- Robin McSkimming Award (community support) – Nora Radcliffe
- Rae Michie Quaich (recruitment) – Peter Swinson, East Dunbartonshire
- SWLD Quaich (diversity) – Alison McInnes MSP
- John Morrison Award (local government) – Helen Morton
- Russell Johnstone Trophy (Conference speech) – Elisabeth Wilson
- Sheila Tennant Award (LYS Member) – Jenny Marr

Close of session 13.00