

Spring Conference 2nd to 4th March 2012

Eden Court, Inverness⁵

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Friday 2nd March

The afternoon session runs from 13.00 to 16.45.

13.00 Conference opens

Welcome address

Chair: Malcolm Bruce MP Aide: Craig Harrow

13:05 Speech by Danny Alexander MP, Chief Secretary to the Treasury

Chair: Craig Harrow, Aide: Helen Watt

13:20 SC1: Fuel for remote rural Scotland

Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey local party

Mover: John Thurso MP Summator: Danny Alexander MP

Conference notes:

1. The severe impact of sky high fuel prices on economic and community life in Scotland's remote places, where residents face long journeys to access basic services, fuel prices which can be over 20p per litre higher than urban areas and very few alternatives to travel by private car.
2. The failure of successive Labour and Conservative governments to take any action to address this issue over several decades.
3. The historic introduction of a 5p fuel duty discount pilot scheme for island communities on 1st March 2012 as a result of Scottish Liberal Democrat

Ministers working in government.

4. The cut to fuel duty in the 2011 Budget and the deferral of planned fuel duty increases in 2011 and 2012, providing relief from high fuel costs across Scotland as a result of Liberal Democrat Ministers working in government.
5. That many of the most remote mainland communities face fuel costs as high as the islands, while being economically fragile and vulnerable to depopulation.
6. That the Scottish Government's Rural Petrol Stations Grant Scheme was scrapped by the SNP.

Conference believes:

1. That both the price of fuel and the survival of lifeline local filling stations are essential to the sustainable future of Scotland's remote and island communities.
2. That vibrant remote and island communities have a big part to play in Scotland's economic and cultural life.
3. That Scotland's two governments should work together, both locally and in Europe, to deliver further real progress on fuel duty and the financial viability of small rural filling stations.

Conference calls for:

1. The European Commission to allow the extension of the existing derogation from the Energy Products Directive to apply to remote mainland communities.
2. The UK Government to adopt a mechanism to identify the remote mainland communities which are most vulnerable to very high fuel prices and engage with the Commission to secure its acceptance.
3. The Scottish Government to restore funding through its Enterprise Agencies to help lifeline rural filling stations modernise, survive and benefit from the fuel duty discount scheme.

Cards:

Move – Lord Thurso MP, Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross - called

Alistair Carmichael MP, O&S - called

Liam McArthur MSP, Orkney

Ian Wallace, Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross - called

Graeme Reed, Stirling - called

Sum Up – Danny Alexander MP, Inverness East, Nairn & Lochaber

Votes:

Motion: Carried

Chair: Richard Coxon, Aide: Helen Watt

13:55 SC2: Abolition of Prison Visiting Committees

Glasgow North local party

Conference notes:

- The Scottish Government's intention to replace Prison Visiting Committees with a contracted advocacy service; further reducing the role of local authorities in this important work.
- At the original consultation, no one supported this proposal and all responding Local Authorities and Criminal Justice Authorities opposed it.

Conference deplures that the Scottish Government seeks to:

- Replace a system for monitoring prisons' performance against known standards with a system for representing individual prisoners' grievances
- Replace local public service by independent citizens acting in a voluntary capacity with a nationalised contracted service which may be influenced by a wish to retain the contract.

Conference further notes that:

- The Scottish police and prison services are to be overseen by the Cabinet Secretary and the Chief Constable.
- This position is consistent with the Scottish Government's desire to centralise all control and impoverish civil society.
- There will be a further consultation on the proposals and they will then be presented to the Scottish Parliament for a formal vote.

Conference therefore calls on:

- The parliamentary party to oppose this change.

Cards:

Mover: Paul Coleshill, Glasgow North – called
Alison McInnes MSP, Aberdeenshire East - called
Jenny Dawe, South Edinburgh - called
Summator: Cllr Mary Paris, Glasgow North - called

Votes:

Motion: carried

Chair: Sheila Thomson, Aide: Ross Stalker

14:25 SC3: Youth unemployment

Policy Committee

Chair: Sheila Thomson Aide: Ross Stalker

Mover: Ruairaidh Dobson Summator: Jenny Dawe

Conference is deeply concerned at the increase in youth unemployment in recent years, under different governments; and is further concerned that many of the indicators show a worsening of the situation in Scotland compared to the rest of the UK.

Conference believes that, in order to prevent a lost generation, the UK Government, Scottish Government and local authorities should work together to tackle the problems faced by young people.

At a UK level, conference supports the Youth Contract initiative which offers more apprenticeships, more work experience places and wage subsidies to companies hiring new young workers, potentially benefiting 16,000 young people in Scotland over the next three years; and calls on the UK Government to make sure the programme is promoted effectively to Scottish employers.

At a Scottish level, conference supports continued investment in Scotland's colleges and regrets the continued threats to their budgets and viability; and calls on the Scottish Government to engage fully with the UK Government in delivering the Youth Contract.

At a local authority level, conference supports initiatives such as the City of Edinburgh Council's *Edinburgh Guarantee*, which includes commitments from the city's largest employers to provide opportunities for young people, as well as improved access to apprenticeships; and calls on all Liberal Democrat council groups to include practical steps to help local young people in their manifestos for the May council elections.

Amendment 1.

After line 7 insert points i) and ii)

- i) In entering the job market.
- ii) In setting up new enterprises.

After line 16 insert:

Conference calls on the UK and Scottish Governments to promote and encourage young people to set up new enterprises.

Cards:

Move – Ruairaidh Dobson, LYS - called

Move Amd – Nicola Prigg, LYS - called

George Boyd, Tweeddale, Lauderdale & Midlothian South - called

Cllr Carolyn Caddick, Inverness South - called

Eileen McCartin, Paisley – called

Katy Gordon, Glasgow South – called

Paul McGarry, Glasgow North

David Green, - called

Liam McArthur MSP, Orkney – called

Callum Leslie, Kirkcaldy & Cowdenbeath – not called (pressganged and last in)

Sum Up – Jenny Dawe, Edinburgh West - called

Sum Up Amd – Allan MacBain - called

Votes:

Amendment – carried

Motion as amended - carried

15.05 Speech by Nick Clegg MP, Deputy Prime Minister

Chair: Willie Rennie MSP

Chair: Richard Coxon, Aide: Paul McGarry

15.30 EM1: Protecting Scotland's Colleges

Protecting Scotland's Colleges

Conference notes:

1. That in 2011, the SNP attempted to cut college bursaries, but were forced to reverse the cut due to overwhelming pressure from students, the NUS, and the Scottish Liberal Democrats.
2. That the SNP also cut college funding by 10% at this time, which has led to increased class sizes, reductions in contact hours and over 1000 job losses.
3. That in the 2011 election campaign, all SNP MSPs signed up to NUS Scotland's 'Reclaim Your Voice' campaign.
4. That this campaign involved a commitment to protecting student places in universities and colleges, and improving student support.
5. That in late 2011 the SNP announced a further 20% cut this year to college funding, on top of the 10% cut last year, and that £11m (11.9%) would be cut from the bursaries budget.
6. That it was announced on the 23rd of January 2012 that over 50% of colleges had already overspent their bursaries budget for this year, before the £11m cut even takes effect.
7. That in a parliamentary debate on this subject on the 2nd of February 2012, Mike Russell re-affirmed his commitment to forcing through these cuts.
8. That despite this, the cuts were partially reversed in the budget bill on the 8th of February 2012, and as such the Lib Dems in Holyrood supported the budget bill.

Conference believes:

1. That colleges are a vital part of our education system.
2. That at a time when youth unemployment is rising, colleges are essential for allowing young people to re-skill or up-skill, and gain employment.
3. That many young people could not attend college without the support they receive in the form of bursaries.
4. That the potential merging of colleges will inevitably lead to less choice, and loss of local access.
5. That despite the SNP partially reversing the cuts, their willingness to cut colleges for a second year in a row shows a worrying disregard for these vital FE institutions.
6. That the SNP are still to enact their commitment to improve student support, which they signed up to when they signed the NUS Scotland Reclaim Your Voice pledge in 2011.
7. That college places have already been lost as a result of SNP cuts, and more could be lost without further investment.

Conference therefore resolves:

1. To campaign strongly against any cuts to funding and bursaries in the future.
2. To push for further investment in bursaries, to help the already overstretched bursary budgets.
3. To continue to hold the SNP to account on protecting places and investing in student support.
4. To oppose all forced college mergers.

Cards:

Move – Callum Leslie, Kirkcaldy & Cowdenbeath - called

Liam McArthur MSP, Orkney - called

Kavya Kaushik, LYS – called

Galen Milne, Stirling

Votes:

Motion - carried

Chair: Sheila Thomson, Aide: Kristian Chapmen

15.45 SC4: Control of home credit

Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey local party

Mover: Graham Marsden Summator: Stewart McFarlane

Conference is appalled by the current situation in Home Credit.

It notes a prominent doorstep lender offering a £200 loan over 33 weeks at 433.4% APR, while a well-known on-line lender is currently offering a loan of £265 with an APR of 4214%.

It also notes that, by January 2011, the home credit market had grown by 4 times in the previous 4 years, with 1.2 million people in the U.K. on temporary payday loans.

A survey, carried out in late December 2011 revealed that 3.5 million are likely to take out a high-interest payday loan over the next six months.

Meantime, the number of payday loan complaints more than doubled in 2011.

Conference also notes that Britain is virtually the only country in Europe without a legal cap, which exists in Germany, France, Italy, and Switzerland, pegged at rates between 15% and 22%, while even Ireland has a 200% ceiling on loan rates.

Conference believes that charging vulnerable groups excessive amounts of interest is highly unethical. Tragically, it is mainly those unfortunate people with a poor credit history and little money who are forced to borrow in this way, aggravating their poverty and misery. And, in the present worsening financial climate in the UK, things can only get worse.

Conference also notes that CAB Scotland dealt with 132,000 debt cases in 2010, i.e. 1/4 of all CAB's cases throughout the UK. 40% of CAB's debt clients had told staff that they had gone without food or fuel to try to pay off their debt, in many cases because they were being pressurised aggressively by creditors.

By contrast, Conference notes the much lower interest rates of Credit Unions and their increased flexibility.

Conference, however, has no wish to drive people into the arms of illegal loan sharks with their links to organised crime and severe violence.

Conference therefore calls on the UK Government to institute the following measures:-

- 1) introduce a cap on the total cost of domestic credit that can be charged;
- 2) tighten up control of all organisations offering loans via the internet;
- 3) give local authorities the power to veto licences for High Street money lenders;
- 4) introduce a levy on all money lenders to help fund the credit union network;
- 5) redouble efforts to tackle and punish illegal loan sharks.

Conference further calls for the above measures to be considered by the Scottish Liberal Democrats' Home Rule commission with a view to implementation at the most local level possible.

Amendment (Abd West)

Remove lines 36 & 37

- 4) introduce a levy on all money lenders to help fund the credit union network

Replace with

- 4) the Scottish Government to provide pump priming for the increase of the credit union network and to introduce a levy on all money lenders to pay for this.

Cards:

Move – Graham Marsden, Inverness - called

Sum Up – Trevor Escott, Inverness

David Raw, Roxburgh & Berwickshire - called

Cathy McInnes, East Dunbartonshire – called

Paul Coleshill, Glasgow South - called

Move Amd – Stella Hall, Aberdeenshire West - called
Sum Up Amd – Linda Downie, Aberdeen West

Votes:

Amendment – defeated

Motion (unamended) – carried

16.15 Speech and Q&A with Vince Cable MP, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills

Chair: Judy Hayman

Stephen McFarland, Northern Ireland – taken 2nd

Katy Gordon, Glasgow South – taken 1st

David Pollard, Argyll & Bute – taken 4th

Nigel Lindsay, West Lothian – taken 6th

Nora Radcliffe, Aberdeenshire East – taken 5th

Eileen McCartin, Paisley – taken 7th

Lin Macmillan, East Lothian – taken 3rd

Kristian Chapman, Aberdeen Central - similar to Lin Macmillan so not taken

Fred Mackintosh, Edinburgh South – taken 8th

David Raw, Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross – not taken

Christine Sullivan, Angus & Mearns – taken 9th

David Raw, Roxburgh & Berwickshire – not taken

Galen Milne, Stirling – not taken

John Barnett, NE&C Fife – not taken

16.45 Close of session

Saturday 3rd March

The morning session runs from 10.00 to 12.00.

10:00 SC5: Reducing crime through more effective rehabilitation

Policy Committee

Chair: Helen Watt Aide: Ross Stalker

Mover: Alison McInnes MSP Summator: Ewan Hoyle

Conference notes with concern:

- That 62 per cent of Scottish prisoners re-offend within two years of being released and that 13 per cent of offenders going to prison in 2009-10 had served more than ten previous prison sentences.
- That, where an ex-prisoner is reconvicted, the cost to the criminal justice system is on average £13,000.
- That the Scottish prison population has increased by over 25 per cent in the last decade leaving prisons dangerously overcrowded.

Conference further notes that more than 70 per cent of those taken into custody in Scottish prisons are drug users; and notes the recently agreed federal party policy motion setting out significant reforms to tackle drug misuse and rehabilitation more effectively.

Conference:

Believes that successful rehabilitation must be a more significant part of our criminal justice system if we are to stop the revolving doors to Scotland's prisons, make our communities safer and support ex-offenders to move on to make a positive contribution to society.

Supports the important role that Scottish Liberal Democrats played in introducing a presumption against short prison sentences of three months or less and believes that replacing short sentences with tough and effective community penalties also presents a better opportunity for more positive work with those offenders who are sent to prison.

Recognises research demonstrating that, when ex-offenders gain employment, the risk of their re-offending reduces by between a third and a half; yet many prisoners have few qualifications and low levels of literacy, and many have never held a proper job.

Believes that a new approach to prison rehabilitation, which focuses on outcomes, is needed and recognises that voluntary organisations and social enterprises have developed innovative programmes to address offending behaviour.

Conference further notes the Social Impact Bond pilot taking place in Peterborough Prison which:

- Aims to reduce re-offending amongst 3,000 male prisoners who have served a sentence of less than 12 months.
- Is jointly run by the Ministry of Justice and Social Finance, an ethical investment bank.
- Involves the money raised by Social Finance, from charitable trusts and social investment groups, being used to fund specialist charities to provide intensive support to prisoners, both inside and outside of prison.
- Rewards success: as the initiative reduces re-offending beyond a threshold investors receive from Government an increasing share of the long term savings.

Conference therefore calls on the Scottish Government to start a new approach to rehabilitation, to champion innovation, to reward success and allow the voluntary sector and social enterprises to fund offender programmes, starting inside prison and accountable after release, paying these partners by their success.

Amendment 1

Add after line 8,

4. That the average daily population of the women's prison HMP Corton Vale has increased by 65% in the last decade meaning that staff are unable to give sufficient attention to prisoners and that access for prisoners to activities such as education and vocational training is very poor. Conference is shocked by the recent HMCIP report into Corton Vale which reported a lack of progress in the provision of acceptable conditions and treatment for prisoners and warned that dignity, safety, infection control, mental health and general health issues are even more stark now than in 2009.

Add after line 41

Conference also:

Looks forward to the Commission on Women Offenders chaired by Eilish Angiolini and believes that a shift is needed in the way the justice system deals with women offenders, with a focus on dealing with the causes of offending and ensuring that women offenders receive support to turn their lives around.

Acknowledges the £20m of capital consequential that will be spent on modernisation of the prison estate for female offenders in 2014-15 as a small step in the right direction but notes that this attempts to address only one aspect of the problem.

Believes, therefore, that the Scottish Government is failing women prisoners.

Add after line 46

Conference also calls for urgent action for women prisoners to:

Increase access to learning and training opportunities;

Ensure that physical and mental health needs are met;

And ensure that women prisoners can retain family links.

Cards:

Move – Alison McInnes MSP, Aberdeen North - called

Sum Up – Ewan Hoyle, Glasgow South - called

Move Amd – Caron Lindsay, Dunfermline - called

Sum Up Amd - Katy Gordon - called

Jacquie Bell, East Lothian – called

Hugh Waterfield, Glasgow North -called

Votes:

Amendment – carried

Motion as amended - carried

10.35 Speech by Edward Davey MP, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change

Chair: Jim Hume MSP

10.55 SC6: Feed-in Tariff scheme

East Lothian local party

Chair: Judy Hayman Aide: TBC

Mover: Ettie Spencer Summator: Denis Mollison

Conference recognises that the domestic market represents significant opportunities for achieving a substantial reduction in UK carbon emissions and that

- the process of achieving this may be difficult because of the varying age and condition of the UK housing stock;
- the Feed-in Tariff scheme (FITs) available to be claimed by domestic households for the generation of clean energy has provided a valuable stimulus to the micro renewables industry by encouraging this sector to contribute substantially to the carbon reduction aims of the UK, and to create jobs within the green sector;
- the FITs scheme was proving successful in increasing the number of UK households investing in the installation of solar photovoltaic panels on their homes.

Conference notes with approval that the return on capital cost was providing the desired incentive and the industry was responding as hoped. Conference therefore deplores the recent cut in the tariff by 50%, with only 6 weeks' notice instead of the planned gradual reduction due to begin in April 2012. It notes that this cut has run into legal problems because of lack of consultation on the proposed change, and has been widely perceived as reactive and badly considered. Conference therefore expresses concern

- that one consequence of the cut was the immediate withdrawal of many households from the process of acquiring solar photovoltaics (PVs) on realization that at the new FITs rate the payback period would double to an average of twenty years, at which point the capital outlay to average households would no longer be tenable. With the consequential sudden drop in demand, many newly formed companies and numerous jobs have been lost.
- that confidence in government schemes designed to stimulate carbon-reducing household initiatives such as micro generation and low carbon heating, with the proposed Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI), has taken a severe blow as a result of this change.

Conference therefore calls on Liberal Democrat parliamentarians

- to take a much more assertive stance on the issue of domestic carbon reduction,
- to develop and campaign for a portfolio of policies that are well thought out, consistent, and effective in reducing domestic carbon consumption,
- to encourage individuals to take responsibility for domestic carbon reduction by means of incentives which are reliable and credible, and subject to change only after full and fair public consultation.

Cards:

Move – Ettie Spencer, East Lothian - called

Sum Up – Denis Mollison, East Lothian

David Pollard, Argyll & Bute - called

Cllr Paul Edie, Edinburgh West - called

Allan McBain, Ayrshire & Arran - called

Votes:

Motion - carried

11.30 In conversation with the Scottish leadership, Willie Rennie MSP and Jo Swinson MP

Cards

Nicola Prigg, Ayrshire & Arran – taken 1

Kevin Lang, Edinburgh North & Leith – taken 2

Cllr Sheena Richardson, East Lothian – taken 5

Donald Cameron, Moray

David Fleming, Angus & Mearns

Eilidh Dickson, Aberdeen Central – taken 3

Kristian Chapman, Aberdeen Central – taken 4

Caron Lindsay, Dunfermline & West Fife – taken 6

David Pollard, Argyll & Bute – taken 7

Stella Hall, Abd W – taken 8

Thomas Peag, Inverness – taken 9

Sanjay Samani, A&M

David Millar, Tweeddale, Lauderdale & South Midlothian – taken 12

David May, Angus – taken 11

David Green, LYS – taken 10

12.00-14.30 Lunch

12.10-13.10 Fringe meetings

13.30-14.30 Fringe meetings

The afternoon session runs from 14.40 to 17.10.

14.40 C7: The Coalition

East Lothian local party

Chair: Shabnum Mustapha Aide: Kristian Chapman

Mover: Nigel Lindsay Summator: Judy Hayman

Conference endorses the view that the coalition is “a business arrangement born of necessity to clear up the country’s dire financial debt and that it should never be portrayed as anything else”.

Conference

1 confirms that the Scottish Liberal Democrats will contest the next General Election independent of the coalition, with no electoral arrangements or understandings with any other party,

2 confirms that the Scottish Liberal Democrats will put before the electorate a unique programme for Scotland derived from Liberal principles, free from any elements of policy agreed in advance with any other Party,

3 calls for the establishment of a Commission composed of MPs, MSPs, and representative members of the Party, to evaluate the progress and achievements of the Coalition after its first two years in office so far as they affect Scotland.

Amendment 1

Delete paragraph (3) and substitute:

Instructs the Scottish Party Executive to establish a standing Commission (to meet at least quarterly) composed of representatives of the principle Scottish Party Committees, ASLDC, Scottish MPs, the MSP group and the MEP, to evaluate the progress and achievements of the Coalition so far as they affect Scotland, and to report to Conference annually.

Cards:

Move – Nigel Lindsay, East Lothian - called

Sum Up – Judy Hayman, East Lothian - called

Move Amd – Robert Brown, Rutherglen - called

Cllr Mike Sullivan, Angus & Mearns – not called

Alex Cole-Hamilton, Edinburgh West - called

Cllr Sheena Richardson, East Lothian - called

Caron Lindsay, Dunfermline & W Fife - called

Charles Kennedy MP, Ross, Skye & Lochaber - called

Rod Ackland, East Dunbartonshire – not called

Alistair Carmichael MP, O&S - called

Kavya Kaushik, LYS - called

Jo Swinson MP, Dumbartonshire - called

Richard Coxon, Edinburgh Central – called (Rqst Seperate vote for sects 1) and 2)

Dr Julie Williams, Edinburgh NE&L – not called

Votes:

Request for separate votes – item 1) and 2) – lines are retained

Amendment – defeated

Motion unamended – carried

15.25 EM2: Human trafficking

Chair: Sheila Thomson Aide: Mike Falchikov

Conference notes:

1. The Scottish Government debate on human trafficking dated 29th February where the Scottish Government has belatedly started looking at taking serious action on modern day slavery that is known as human trafficking.
2. That ACPOS estimated Scotland has 13.5% of the UK's trade in humans despite Scotland having less than 10% of the UK population.
3. That only one successful prosecution relating to two convictions for human trafficking has been brought in Scotland. This is in contrast to over 150 prosecutions in England and Wales.
4. The inquiry into human trafficking in Scotland by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, in particular the calls for a coherent Scottish strategy to tackle human trafficking.
5. That recent major sporting events have seen a significant increase in human trafficking around these major events.

Conference believes that the presence of human trafficking in modern society is intolerable and action must be taken to abolish it and bring those involved to justice, in particular the lack of a specific strategy to address risk of increased human trafficking instances around the Commonwealth Games.

1. Take immediate action to develop a coherent strategy that is consistent across all relevant agencies.
2. Develop a comprehensive system of end-to-end support for victims of human trafficking.
3. Send a clear message through action that Scotland provides a hostile environment to human trafficking and those involved will be prosecuted.
4. Implement a strategy to address the potential for increase in instances of human trafficking around the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

Cards:

Move – Paul McGarry, Glasgow North - called

Kavya Kaushik, LYS – card withdrawn

Jacquie Bell, East Lothian - called

Sum Up – Shabnum Mustapha, Glasgow - called

Votes:

Motion – carried [nem.con](#)

15.50 Speech by Michael Moore MP, Secretary of State for Scotland

Chair: Willie Rennie MSP

16.10 Party Business

Chair: Craig Harrow Aide: Shabnum Mustapha

AGM

Accounts – approved

Diversity Report

BM1: Strengthening the organizational structure of the party throughout the regions

Stirling local party

Mover: Galen Milne Summator: TBC

It is our belief that the present Constitution does not provide sufficient clarity regarding the formation of Regional Parties that are necessary to help ensure the ongoing development of our weaker constituencies in a more structured and proactive manner.

We believe where we have good examples of Local Party interaction via the Regional Party model, we have a more vibrant and proactive level of membership activity that helps maintain the morale as well as the participation of members from our weaker areas.

To help implement a more formal structure based upon the Regional model we wish to propose the following amendment to the Constitution –

Amend D8 b (ii) on Page 9 as follows:

Change the first paragraph from “The Local Parties may agree, in any instance, that one of them shall....are included in their affairs” to “The Local Parties will ensure, in any instance (as may be required), that one of them shall....are included in its affairs.”

Cards:

Move - Galen Milne, Stirling - called

Sheila Thomson, Aberdeen South & North Kincardine - called

Caron Lindsay, Dunfermline - called

Sum Up - Willie Wilson, Perth & Kinross - called

John Melling, Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey – called

Ross Stalker, Paisley – called

Votes:

Motion - Defeated

BM2: Amendments to conference standing orders

Conference Committee

1. Topical motions

Amendment proposal 1

In the current Standing Order [SO], 'Topical Motions' were introduced to offer members an opportunity to debate an issue that couldn't have been submitted in time for a policy motion and nor is it an emergency motion but is a current issue, therefore is topical. The intention behind this was that unlike policy motions or emergency motions, topical motions do not have to call on anyone or a body to take action; it can be used to float an issue or just to have a debate on a current issue. However, the opportunity to table such motions has rarely been used. Conference Committee believes this is because the term 'motion' suggest that these motions need to be as formal as policy or emergency motions.

Therefore, Conference Committee is proposing to amend this type of motion and change it from Topical Motion to Topical Issue. We are proposing the following amendments:

2.1.3 delete 'motions' and replace with 'issues'

2.2.3 delete 'motions' and replace with 'issues'

3.5 line one 'No Topical motion', delete 'motion' and replace with 'issue'

3.5 line four 'No Topical motion', delete 'motion' and replace with 'issue'

5.1 delete 'Topical motion' and replace with 'Topical issue'

6.1.2 line 4/5 'movers of emergency and topical motions', delete 'topical motions' and replace with 'topical issues'

6.5 line one 'On any topical motion', delete 'topical motion' and replace with 'topical issue'

Amendment proposal 2

1. Under the current SO, 2.6 states that the Conference Committee should meet as soon as possible after deadline to select a topical motion. However, in practice, we don't do this as we consider topical motions along with emergency motions which was the intention behind the original amendment to the SO that introduced topical motions. In addition, there may be an occasion where not enough policy or business motions are received, so Conference Committee would like to keep open the option of allocating dedicated slots in the agenda for topical motions separate from the slot allocated for emergency motions and this would require considering topical motions earlier [which we are proposing to re-name topical issues].

Thus, Conference Committee is proposing to amend the SO to reflect the reality:

Delete 2.6

Insert at end of 3.5, new sentence, 'Selection of topical issues for debate will be made at the same time as consideration of emergency motions for debate. However, Conference Committee reserves the right to consider topical issues earlier if required'

2. Reference back

Under the current SO, 8.2.1 simply states that a person calling for a reference back should submit a 'short statement of the reasons'. The original SO prior to recent amendments specified a word limit of 100. In order to provide clearer guidance for members wishing to submit a reference back, Conference Committee wants to re-insert the specified word limit to 100. This will also provide clarity for those submitting a reference back what a 'short statement' means.

End of last sentence in 8.2.1, after 'short statement of the reasons', insert 'of no more than 100 words'.

3. Number of members required to submit a motion or amendment

The current SO only specifies number of members required to submit an emergency motion (5) or emergency amendment (5).

E.9 of the Constitution states that not less than 25 members or a local party or an Executive Committee can submit a motion or amendment but then goes on to say 'in addition amendments to published motions may be proposed by not less than five members'. Therefore, there is confusion if five or 25 members are required to support the submission of an amendment. In practice, we have accepted five for a policy motion but 25 for amending the constitution. Conference Committee believes we should use the opportunity of the AGM to clarify the rules for members.

We propose to amend the SO to include reference to the 25 members required to submit a motion (so members are not having to look at both the SO and Constitution for guidance on this matter) and specify 5 members to submit amendments to policy motions and 25 members to submit an amendment to the constitution.

Amendment to Standing Order

Conference Committee is proposing an amendment to the SO to this effect:

Introduce a new 2.3, 'Motions for debate and amendments to the constitution relating to the business of the Party may be proposed by the Executive, the Policy Committee, the Conference Committee, any Local Party, any Associated Organisation or not less than twenty-five members. In addition amendments to published motions may be proposed by not less than five members'.

Renumber remaining paragraphs accordingly.

Amendment to Constitution

Conference Committee is proposing an amendment to the Constitution to this effect:

E.9, first line, insert 'to the constitution' after 'Motions for debate and amendments'

Cards:

Move - Sheila Thomson, Aberdeen South & North Kincardine
Sum Up – Judy Hayman, East Lothian (if required)

Votes:

Amendment 1 (issues not motions) – carried

Amendment 2 (timing) – carried

Amd 2 (Reference Back) – carried

Amd 2 (3.) – Movers request to not put forward item 3.

Sunday 4th March

The morning session runs from 10.00 to 12.30.

10.00 Speech by Malcolm Bruce MP, Party President

Chair: Craig Harrow

Chair: Judy Hayman, Aide: Jenni Lang

10.15 SC8: Scotland's housing crisis

Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey local party

Mover: Angela MacLean, Summator: Alan Nelson

Conference believes it is socially and economically untenable that, with 156,000 of Scotland's urban and rural households stuck on Local Authority waiting lists and construction industry leaders and Unions crying out for help to stop the haemorrhaging of good jobs, the Scottish Government is now committing funding for less than 4,500 new, affordable homes a year - 1,500 less than even its own stated target.

Conference notes that Scottish Government statistics show that 41,500 households were accepted by their local authority as being homeless in 2010/11 and that on 31 March 2011 there were 5,800 children living in temporary accommodation in Scotland.

Conference rejects the Scottish Government's endless lament that it is all down to Westminster spending cuts. The strategic importance that the Scottish Government chooses to give to its housing budget is its alone and, with the substantial increase in Westminster funding coming to Scotland as a direct result of both the Autumn Budget Statement and the English Council Tax Freeze 'consequential', there is no excuse for not giving the housing budget the priority and investment it clearly merits.

Conference therefore calls on the Scottish Government to reverse the 30% cut it recently made to its housing budget and to give proper priority to the construction jobs and affordable homes that are so badly needed to tackle Scotland's huge social housing and employment problems and reinvigorate our urban and rural communities.

Amendment

Instead of

“affordable homes” in final paragraph

Replace with

“social housing for rent”

Cards:

Move - Angela MacLean, Ross, Skye & Lochaber - called

Move Amd – Iris Walker, Aberdeenshire West - called

Sum Up Amd – Kristian Chapman, LYS - called

Sum Up - Kate Stephen, Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey - called

Cllr Paul Edie, Edinburgh West - called

Cllr Gurudeo Saluja, Aberdeen W

Peter Barrett, Perth & Kinross - called

Jim Hume MSP, South Scotland - called

Peter Bellarby, Angus & Mearns - called

Peter Hayman, East Lothian - called

Allan MacBain, Ayrshire & Arran

Votes:

Amendment – carried

Motion as amended - carried

10.55 Speech by Willie Rennie MSP, Leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats

Chair: Malcolm Bruce MP

~~11.30 SC9: Rationalisation of train fare pricing structure~~

~~North East & Central Fife local party~~

~~Chair: Audrey Findlay Aide: Helen Watt~~

~~Mover: TBC Summator: TBC~~

~~Conference reaffirms its support for public transport and for steps to encourage its increased use;~~

~~Conference notes the rises in train fares in Scotland;~~

~~Conference recalls the 2010 motion on "Fairer Fares" which called for a review of rail ticket pricing; better advertising, flexibility and transparency of cheap fares; and greater provision of through-ticketing;~~

~~Conference is concerned at anomalies present in the current structure of Scotrail fares whereby it is possible for two tickets to cost less than a single one along the same route, and for a shorter route avoiding the main cities to be more expensive than the longer one via the central belt.~~

~~Conference believes that these discrepancies discourage the use of the railways, therefore inconveniencing the public and forcing would-be rail passengers to revert to cars, to the detriment of the environment.~~

~~Conference calls on Scotrail and the Scottish Government to take steps to end the anomalies and introduce a more straightforward and rationalised fare structure that encourages increased use of Scotland's railways.~~

N.B.: This motion has been pulled by the conference committee – submitters found no one to move/summate. Motion to remove from agenda passed by conference.

~~11.50 11.30 EM3: Home Rule and the Independence Referendum~~

~~Chair: Sheila Thomson Aide: Shabnum Mustapha~~

~~Home Rule and the Independence Referendum~~

~~Conference notes:~~

- ~~1. The party's long-standing commitment to Home Rule and a federal UK, and that it is the only major party in Scotland with such commitments;~~
- ~~2. That Home Rule is broadly supported by a large proportion of the Scottish population;~~
- ~~3. Devolution is a process in which consideration of Home Rule should logically come before any further step such as independence;~~
- ~~4. That it is possible to have a clear and fair referendum including Home Rule as well as Independence, for example by following the precedent of the 1997 referendum and asking a first question on support for the powers required for Home Rule, followed by a second question on support for going further than Home Rule to Independence.~~
- ~~5. The party's commitment to reduce the voting age to 16.~~

~~Conference therefore supports the current Home Rule Commission, and calls on it to engage with other supporters of increased powers for the Scottish Parliament to produce a well-defined option commanding wide public support.~~

~~Conference calls on the party leadership:~~

- ~~1. To engage with the Scottish Government so as to get the option of Home Rule included in the Referendum in a fair way as outlined above;~~
- ~~2. To run a positive campaign in favour of Home Rule, in partnership with other supporters of this option among the wider population;~~
- ~~3. To support the Scottish Government in seeking a way of allowing 16 and 17 year olds to vote in the referendum, provided that this is done on the basis of extending the vote similarly for other elections in Scotland, particularly to the Scottish Parliament.~~

Cards:

Mover & Sum Up– Denis Mollison, East Lothian - called

Donald Cameron, Moray - called

Nicola Prigg, Ayrshire & Arran - called

Alex Cole-Hamilton, Edinburgh West - called

Alexandra White, Galloway - called

Jade Holden, Paisley - called

Galen Milne, Stirling - called

Ruaraidh Dobson, Inverness – request for separate vote on items 1 and 2 – called

Malcolm Bruce MP, Gordon - called

Alan Reid MP, Argyll & Bute - called

Katy Gordon, Glasgow South - called

Votes:

Sep. Vote on sects 1 and 2 – carried, lines removed

Motion as amended - defeated

12.15 Party Awards

Chair: Craig Harrow Aide: Martin Hayman

Awards:

SWLD Quaich (diversity) – Jo Swinson MP

Robin McSkimming Award (community) – Cllr Tim McKay, Edinburgh

Russell Johnston Trophy (conference speech) – Peter Hayman, East Lothian

Rae Michie Trophy (recruitment) – no award

Close of session 12.30

Scottish Liberal Democrats - Standing Orders

1. The Conference Committee

1.1. The Conference Committee shall be constituted as specified in Section E10 of the Constitution. The annual election of members by the conference shall be by Single Transferable Vote in a ballot of all members of the Party registered to attend Conference ('Conference Representatives').

1.2. The Conference Convener shall be the Chair of the Conference Committee. At its first meeting after a new election under Section E10 of the Constitution, the Conference Committee may elect one or more Vice-Conveners.

2. The Timetable and Agenda - Normal Meetings

2.1. The Agenda for each ordinary meeting of Conference shall include time for:

2.1.1. Motions;

2.1.2. Emergency motions;

2.1.3. Topical issues;

2.1.4. A business session or sessions; and

2.1.5. any other business deemed appropriate by the Conference Committee. The time to be allocated to each type of business and the order of business shall be decided by the Conference Committee.

2.2. The Conference Committee shall, before each meeting of the Conference, prepare a timetable which includes:

2.2.1. The closing date for the receipt of motions (other than Emergency or Topical motions), which shall not normally be less than eight weeks before the start of the meeting;

2.2.2. The due date for the publication of the Agenda, which shall not normally be less than six weeks before the start of the meeting;

2.2.3. The closing date for the receipt of Topical issues, which shall not normally be less than two weeks before the start of the meeting; and

2.2.4. The closing date for receipt of amendments which shall not normally be less than two working days before the start of the meeting.

2.2.5. The Conference Committee may, in special circumstances, specify dates later than the normal dates under this Standing Order. It shall report to the Conference its reasons for doing so.

2.3. Submitting organisations shall detail at the time of submission the name and contact details of a person authorised to agree any redrafting of a motion or amendment and the name of the mover and summator of the motion or amendment, should it be selected for debate at Conference.

2.4. The Conference Committee shall decide which of the motions duly submitted shall be included within the Agenda. The proposers of the motions selected for debate shall be informed of the Conference Committee's decision. The Agenda shall be circulated to Local Parties and other bodies entitled to submit motions and amendments under the provisions of Section E19 of the Constitution so that amendments can be tabled to these motions by such bodies. Copies of motions not selected for inclusion in the Agenda shall be available for inspection.

2.5. The Conference Committee shall meet the day after the deadline for submission of amendments to motions on the Agenda and shall decide which amendments should be accepted and those rejected. The proposers of the amendments selected for debate shall be informed of the Conference Committee's decision.

2.6. The Conference Committee shall also prepare an agenda for the business session of each meeting of Conference. The Committee shall circulate this, with the text of proposed amendments to the Constitution in accordance with Section L of the Constitution, amendments to Standing Orders, and other party business motions, with the Agenda as per Section 2.4

2.7. The Party's Principal Committees may submit holding motions, which shall identify the issues to be dealt with within the motion but which may be amended and expanded upon later. Standing Orders 2 and 3 shall apply to holding motions as they would apply to ordinary motions, except that:

2.7.1. the final version of the motion shall be submitted not less than two weeks before the start of the meeting of Conference;

2.7.2. The text of the final version shall be circulated to Conference Representatives, Local Parties and other bodies authorised to submit motions under the provisions of Section E19 of the Constitution, who may submit amendments no later than two working days before the start of the meeting of Conference; and

2.7.3. The Committee shall make available to Conference Representatives the text of the final version and any amendments chosen for debate, either by their publication in the Conference Daily Bulletin or by any other means the Committee considers most appropriate

2.8. The Conference Committee may, if the circumstances require, propose to Conference a variation in the order of business as set out in the Agenda. Such variation shall be put to the vote and shall take effect if approved by a majority of those voting.

3. Submission of Motions and Amendments

3.1. The Conference Committee may refuse to select a motion for the amendment of the Constitution or Standing Orders if, in the opinion of the Committee, it is similar in effect to another motion which has been selected for debate at the same meeting of Conference. All other motions in these categories shall be circulated with the Agenda.

3.2. No amendment shall be selected if, in the opinion of the Conference Committee, it is insubstantial, outside the legitimate scope of the motion or tantamount to a direct negative of the motion.

3.3. The movers of any motion or amendment that has not been selected shall be notified as soon as is practicable and may appeal to the Conference Committee in accordance with directions given by the Committee. If an appeal is allowed, the motion or amendment shall be treated as an emergency motion or amendment notwithstanding that it does not comply with Standing Order 5.

3.4. This Standing Order and Standing Order 2 do not apply to procedural motions under Standing Order 8.

3.5. No Topical issue may be selected for debate at Conference unless the Conference Committee is satisfied that the content of the motion is such that it could not have been submitted in time for the deadline as set out in Section 2.2 for ordinary motions. No Topical issue can be a holding motion from a Party Committee. Selection of topical issues for debate will be made at the same time as consideration of emergency motions for debate. However, Conference Committee reserves the right to consider topical issues earlier if required.

4. The Agenda - Special Conferences

4.1. Special Conferences shall deal only with the business stated in the notice of requisition, save that the Conference Committee may allow time for emergency motions and for business which is formal or, in the opinion of the Committee, uncontroversial.

4.2. The Conference Committee shall draw up an Agenda and circulate in line with Section 2.4. If the Committee deems it necessary the Agenda can be circulated with amendments to be submitted as Emergency Amendments.

4.3. The provisions of Standing Orders 2 and 3 shall, so far as they are not inconsistent with Standing Orders 4.1 and 4.2, apply to special meetings of the Conference.

5. Emergency Motions

5.1. An emergency motion or amendment must relate to significant developments which have occurred since the relevant closing date or so shortly before that date as to make it impracticable to submit a motion, Topical issue or amendment in due time. It must be brief and specific.

5.2. An emergency motion or amendment may be submitted by five Conference Representatives or by any persons or bodies authorised to submit motions under the provisions of Section E9 of the Constitution.

5.3. The Conference Committee may, for each day of the meeting of Conference, set aside time convenient for the debate of Emergency Motions. In such an event, proposed Emergency Motions must be submitted to the Conference Committee, duly signed, by 5pm the day before they are to be debated. Emergency Amendments to motions already on the Agenda for that meeting of Conference must be submitted by 5pm the day before the motion is to be debated.

5.4. The Conference Committee may refuse to select an emergency motion or amendment if, in the opinion of the Committee, it is similar in effect to another motion which has been selected for debate at the relevant meeting of Conference.

5.5. The Conference Committee will choose the emergency motions or amendments which, in the opinion of the Committee, are most relevant to the concerns of the Conference and can be debated within the time available. The Committee shall make available the text of all emergency motions and amendments chosen for debate either by publication in the Conference Daily Bulletin or any other means the Committee finds most appropriate.

5.6. Amendments shall not normally be taken to the text of an Emergency Motion. However Conference Committee may consider amendments duly signed by 5 Conference Representatives or by any body authorised to submit motions under the provisions of Section E9 of the Constitution. These amendments must be brief, suitable for debate and of a similar emergency nature. The deadline for submitting amendments to an Emergency Motion will be listed in the Conference Daily Bulletin alongside the text of the Emergency Motion. The movers of the Emergency Motion must be given the opportunity to agree that the text of the amendment be accepted without debate or vote, and the text must be circulated to voting representatives before the start of the debate.

6. Conduct of Debate

6.1. Length of Speeches

6.1.1. The Conference Committee shall decide the time to be allocated for each debate. The Conference Committee shall determine the times allocated to speakers in debates.

6.1.2. Movers of motions shall normally be allocated not more than 12 minutes to move and summate on a motion. Movers of amendments shall normally be allocated not more than 8 minutes to move and summate on a motion. Movers of emergency and topical motions shall normally be allocated 5 minutes to move the motion. Speakers from the floor shall normally be allocated 4 minutes but this may be varied at the discretion of the chair of the debate.

6.1.3. The allocation of the time between moving and summing shall be at the discretion of the mover subject only to notification of the Chair of the debate before the start of the debate. In the absence of such notification the Chair shall be entitled to limit speeches to three quarters of the time allocation for moving and one quarter for summation.

6.2. Order of Debate

6.2.1. The Conference Committee shall direct the order of debate. Generally, however, a motion will be moved and immediately thereafter the amendments will be moved in the order directed by the Committee. There will then be a general debate. The movers of amendments (or their nominees) shall have the right to summate in the same order, after which the mover of the motion (or their nominee) shall have the right to summate.

6.2.2. Votes will be taken on amendments in the order in which they have been moved and finally, a vote shall be taken on the substantive motion.

6.3. The Conference Committee may direct that parts of any motion or amendment or group of amendments may be the subject of a separate debate the Conference Committee may also direct that a debate may comprise of more than one substantive motion. In this case it shall be up to the discretion of the Chair as to the allotment of speakers, save that the rights of movers of motions or amendments shall not be infringed.

6.4. The Committee may authorise members of other State or Regional Parties to speak. The Committee may also, with the approval of conference, invite any person to address a Conference as a guest.

6.5. On any Topical issue, policy motion or emergency motion not moved on behalf of the Policy Committee, the Policy Committee shall have the right to nominate one of its members to report to the Conference its views on the motions and/or amendments under debate. Such persons shall be called to speak at any time up to the conclusion of the debate and before any replies and shall be entitled to speak for the same length of time as the mover of the motion. The Executive Committee shall have similar rights on business motions or motions to amend the constitution and the Conference Committee shall have similar rights in relation to motions to amend Standing Orders or motions otherwise relating to the proceedings of the Conference.

6.6. Save as provided in Standing Orders, no person may speak more than once in any debate.

6.7. All members wishing to speak in any debate, including the movers and summators of motions and amendments, must submit a speaker's card and indicate whether they wish to speak in favour or against a motion or amendment. The Chair of the session shall be responsible for providing a balanced debate between the different viewpoints in the Conference. In circumstances where there is a preponderance of members wishing to speak on the same side in any debate, the Chair may announce a departure from this rule.

7. Voting

7.1. Voting cards shall be issued to all Conference Representatives and shall be shown in respect of all votes taken. A count of voting cards will be taken when either:

7.1.1. This is felt necessary by the Chair of the session to resolve uncertainty as to the outcome, or

7.1.2. A request for a count has been made by 12 Conference Representatives standing in their places and showing their voting cards.

7.2. In the event of a count of voting cards being required, the Chair of the session shall appoint tellers for the purpose. A recount will be held only if the Chair of the session is not satisfied that the first count was accurate.

8. Points of Order and Procedural Motions

8.1. Any voting member may rise on a point of order. A point of order shall be taken immediately, except that, during a vote no point of order shall be taken that does not refer to the vote itself. The decision of the Chair of the session on all points of order shall be final.

8.2. References Back

8.2.1. A voting member may, at any time before the end of speeches in reply to the debate, submit in writing a motion to refer back the motion under debate. Such a submission shall state to whom the motion is to be referred and shall include a short statement of the reasons of no more than 100 words.

8.2.2. The Chair may decide either to take the motion to refer back immediately or defer it until the end of debate. If more than one request for a reference back is received, the Chair shall have the discretion as to which to take but shall give consideration to the appropriateness of the bodies to which the motion is being referred, the degree to which the stated reasons for reference back reflect views expressed in the debate and the order in which the requests were submitted, before exercising the rights of discretion. No more than one reference back shall be taken to any motion.

8.2.3. The Chair shall, upon taking the motion to refer back, read it and the statement of reasons and ask conference whether it wishes to debate the motion. If the conference decides not to debate the reference back, the reference back automatically falls. If the conference decides, by a majority of those voting to debate the reference back the mover of that motion may speak and the mover of the substantive motion or their nominee may reply. The Chair shall have discretion whether to allow other speakers on the motion.

8.2.4. The reference back shall require a simple majority of those voting to be passed. If the substantive motion is referred to the Executive, Policy Committee or Conference Committee that body shall report to the next meeting of conference stating the action it has taken on the reference back.

8.3. Suspension of Standing Orders

8.3.1. A voting member may, during any session of a conference, move for the suspension of Standing Orders. The mover shall submit the motion together with a written statement of its purpose, not exceeding 100 words, to the Chair who shall read them to the Conference.

8.3.2. No motion to suspend Standing Orders may suspend any requirement of the Constitution, not Standing Orders 2 and 3.

8.3.3. No motion to suspend Standing Orders to introduce a motion or amendment onto the Agenda can be taken unless the motion or amendment has been submitted to the Conference Committee in accordance with the published timetable and any right of appeal has been exercised.

8.3.4. The Chair shall read the statement of purpose and if the suspension is allowable, ask Conference whether it wishes to debate the request to suspend Standing Orders. If the Conference decides not to debate the request, it falls. If the Conference decides to hear the request the mover may speak and a

representative of the Conference may reply. The Chair has the discretion to call other speakers and all speeches will be limited to two minutes.

8.3.5. A motion to suspend Standing Orders shall only be carried if supported by at least two thirds of voting Representatives present and voting. If the procedural motion is carried all Standing Orders shall remain in force except only for the purposes set out in the motion.

8.4. Separate Votes

8.4.1. A Separate Vote shall be taken on a part of a motion or amendment.

8.4.2. At the direction of the Conference Committee; or

8.4.3. At the discretion of the Chair, when requested to do so by a voting representative. Any voting representative may submit a request for a separate vote to the Chair of a debate. Such a request must be in writing and received before the commencement of the speeches in reply to the debate.

The Chair has complete discretion in such a case on whether to take a separate vote.

8.5. These Standing Orders may be amended by a two-thirds majority of Conference Representatives present and voting on a motion duly submitted under the terms of Standing Order 3. Subject to any amendment they shall remain in force from Conference to Conference.