

## Contents

Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> February .....	2
10.00 Conference opens .....	2
SC1: A fair deal for delivery of essential services .....	2
SC2: Tackling climate change and protecting nature .....	4
Consultation session: local tax reform .....	7
SC3: To establish a Scottish Office of Budget Responsibility .....	9
12.30-14.00 Lunch .....	10
14.00 SC4: A plan for the islands .....	10
SC5: Empowering public sector workers .....	13
Speech by Willie Rennie MSP .....	15
SC6: Supporting the rights of children and young people.....	16
EM1: Emergency motion .....	19
Meet our key candidates for 2016.....	21
Saturday 27 <sup>th</sup> February.....	22
<b>09.30</b> Party AGM .....	22
BM1: Constitutional amendment – the Deputy Leader .....	22
BM2: Constitutional amendment – gender balance .....	23
BM3: Advancing diversity in the Scottish Liberal Democrats .....	25
EM2: Emergency motion or topical issue.....	30
12.00-14.40 Lunch .....	32
14.40 Q&A: Education .....	33
Speech by Tim Farron MP .....	33
SC7: Fit For The Future – the pre-manifesto of the Scottish .....	33
Party Awards .....	35
Close of session 16.45 .....	35

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February

*The morning session runs from 10.00 to 12.30.*

10.00 Conference opens

Welcome address from Cllr Paul Edie and Party President, Cllr Eileen McCartin

**SC1: A fair deal for delivery of essential services**

*Ross, Skye & Lochaber Liberal Democrats*

Mover: David Green

Summator: Cllr Angela McClean

Conference notes:

- Consumers across the north of Scotland and islands currently pay up to 2p per unit more for the delivery of electricity to their homes than those in the cheapest parts of the country, despite the north of Scotland contributing vastly to electricity generation.
- Analysis by energy regulator Ofgem suggests that this 2p surcharge equates to an annual cost of £86 for a typical 'off gas grid' consumer with all-electric heating.
- As Ofgem's analysis assumes consistent levels of energy usage across the whole country and takes no account of differences in weather or the accessibility of energy efficiency improvements for many rural homes, the true surplus cost to many fuel poor households in the north of Scotland and islands is likely to be significantly higher.
- The reason for higher distribution costs in the north of Scotland and islands is the extra cost of maintaining the extensive network that serves remote and island communities. These costs cannot be avoided without unacceptable impact on what is a lifeline universal service.
- The welcome trend towards electrification of heat and transport will reduce reliance on fossil fuels but make electricity an even more critical service and a growing proportion of total household energy bills.
- A strong coalition including the Press and Journal, the Western Isles Fuel Poverty Action Group and major energy company SSE are already campaigning for national electricity distribution charge flattening, which would lower bills in the north of Scotland while creating a fairer and more transparent market for all consumers.

Conference believes:

1. Liberal Democrats believe no one should be enslaved by poverty. Liberal Democrats should therefore seek to eradicate fuel poverty in the estimated 101,500 homes (46.7%) across the north of Scotland and islands that suffer from the highest fuel poverty. Reducing the cost of unfair electricity bills is one such way.
2. Essential universal services such as the delivery of electricity, telecommunications and post should not be subject to locational variations in charging.
3. The removal of geographic variations in delivery charges for essential services would result in simpler, fairer and more competitive markets with potential benefits to consumers all over the country.

4. Regulation of essential service provision should encourage competition that works for all consumers. Suppliers should not be able to cherry-pick cheaper-to-serve areas in a way that harms those seeking to provide an affordable service to all.
5. Universal charging for electricity distribution could be implemented with minimal disruption to existing arrangements by aggregating the existing costs incurred by electricity network operators centrally to determine a level national price. Regional variations in cost could still be published alongside other indicators of performance in an accessible form to strengthen the accountability of network operators.

Conference resolves:

- a) To work alongside campaigners in the north of Scotland and islands, other affected parts of the UK and consumer organisations in support of a flattened electricity distribution price.
- b) To call on the UK Government to maintain the Hydro Benefit Replacement Scheme and immediately bring forward the introduction of a cross-GB cost recovery mechanism for Shetland's separate distribution network.
- c) To call upon the Scottish Government and all major energy companies to state their position and work with Ofgem and the UK Government in campaigning for action.
- d) To make the case for equivalent reforms, where required, to ensure a high quality universal service can be delivered to all consumers via the UK postal and telecommunications markets, including fast broadband and the delivery of goods purchased via internet or telephone.
- e) To make the design of fair market arrangements to secure a high quality universal service in the provision of essential services a key plank of Liberal Democrat policy for the 2019 European elections and a core principle of the harmonisation of market arrangements across Europe.

*Deadline for amendments is midday 24<sup>th</sup> February. Send to: [linda.wilson@scotlibdems.org.uk](mailto:linda.wilson@scotlibdems.org.uk)*

**SC1 Cards:**

Move – David Green, Ross, Skye & Lochaber - called

Sum Up – Angela Maclean, Ross, Skye & Lochaber

Kieran Leach, Edinburgh South - called

Tom Hunter, Orkney - called

Carolyn Caddick, INBS - called

Liam McArthur, Orkney - called

Sheila Thomson, ACSNK - called

**Votes:**

Motion - carried

## **SC2: Tackling climate change and protecting nature**

*Policy committee*

Mover: Tavish Scott MSP

Summator: Charles Dundas

Conference believes:

- A. it is a core liberal value that we are trustees of the world, and must pass on a sustainable legacy;
- B. that climate change represents one of the greatest dangers facing our way of life in this country and around the world;
- C. that the Scottish Liberal Democrats should have the environment and climate change at the forefront of our agenda for the 2016-2021 Scottish Parliament;
- D. that the failure of the Scottish Government to meet its statutory Climate Change emissions reduction targets in each of the last four years, the wide belief that it will miss its target to end fuel poverty by the end of 2016, together with the devastating impact of the current Conservative UK Government's switch away from support for renewable energy and cancellation of zero-carbon housing regulations, means stronger action is needed across all sectors.

Conference notes:

- a) the increasingly evident impact of climate change at home and abroad, and the urgent need for all countries to contribute to a reduction in carbon emissions;
- b) the motion passed by conference in Spring 2015 calling for an emphasis on renewable heat and warm homes as a major additional step to meet climate change targets, together with previous motions on low-carbon transport, renewable electricity and a zero waste strategy;
- c) the policy agreed by conference in 2013 in favour of a moratorium on fracking;
- d) growing concern at the inability of the open-cast coal mining industry to afford the restoration of sites in Scotland;
- e) the large contribution of pollution from aviation to climate change, and the restrictive Chicago Convention of 1947 which prevents the levying of taxes on commercial aviation fuel.

Conference calls for the Scottish Parliament elected in May 2016 to take steps to tackle climate change by:

- 1. using its new powers, to address fuel poverty and support warmer homes, including by introducing new catch-up zones in remote areas where more flexibility is required in the delivery of effective support for hard to heat homes;
- 2. introducing new building standards for greater energy efficiency, restarting the review cancelled by the Scottish Government in September 2015, with an ongoing plan to reflect the experience in Denmark where standards were increased incrementally over decades;
- 3. maintaining a complete moratorium on planning permission and licensing for fracking and unconventional gas extraction in Scotland for the next parliamentary term to allow for a full assessment of the risks involved and long term implications;
- 4. ending all open-cast coal mining in Scotland;

5. not enacting any substantive cut in Air Passenger Duty;
6. investing in research into the optimum way of converting domestic heating systems away from dependence upon fossil fuels.

Conference further calls for action from the Scottish Government to promote the natural environment in Scotland by:

- I. learning from the first two national parks in Scotland to establish new national parks or landscape partnership areas, bringing the benefits of improved management, conservation and tourism to other parts of the country;
- II. ensuring that existing powers under the Nature Conservation Act of 2004 and Marine Act of 2010 are used by all government agencies to protect, restore and enhance biodiversity;
- III. supporting whole river catchment management systems to deliver flood attenuation, including increased levels of tree planting and enhanced wildlife habitats;
- IV. taking stronger action on wildlife crime using the recommendations on prosecution and penalties from the review group chaired by Mark Poustie, together with the proposals from Scottish Environment Link in its report *Natural Injustice* to tackle failings in reporting and investigation of wildlife crime.

#### Amendment

Ewan Hoyle & 6 others

After line 21 (Conference notes item C) insert:

"The Report of the Independent Expert Scientific Panel on Unconventional Oil and Gas published in July 2014 which states that "The Technology exists to allow the safe extraction of such reserves, subject to robust regulation being in place" and "There could be minimal impact from unconventional hydrocarbons if they are used as a petrochemical feedstock.""

Delete lines 36 to 38 (Conference calls item 3) and replace with

"Lifting the moratorium on planning and licencing for unconventional oil and gas extraction, granting the potential for Scottish-sourced unconventional gas to supply our important petrochemical industry."

#### SC2 - Cards:

Move – Tavish Scott, Shetland - called

Sum Up – Charles Dundas, Edinburgh NE&L - called

Amendment Move – Ewan Hoyle, Glasgow South - called

Martin Veart, Edinburgh NE&L - called

Charlie Scott, Edinburgh South - called

Beryl Leatherland, Dunfermline & West Fife - called

Penny Carruthers, Edinburgh South

Ross Carruthers, Perth & Kinross

Graeme Cowie, Glasgow North - called

Denis Mollison, East Lothian - called

Trevor Nicholson, Edinburgh South

Ettie Spencer, East Lothian - called

Tom Leatherland, Dunfermline

**Votes:**

Amendment - carried

Motion as amended - carried

### **Consultation session: local tax reform**

Policy Committee will lead a consultative session on local tax reform.

This follows the report from the cross-party Commission on Local Tax Reform in December 2015 which, in its words, "set out the factual position associated with different systems of local taxation".

The Commission's view is that "local taxation can be fairer, whilst delivering the scale of revenues needed to maintain the public services", its belief is that local taxation should mean voters are "able to make choices about how much tax they should pay and for what level of public service" and it expressed an expectation that "Scotland will be offered alternative systems of local taxation in the Scottish Parliamentary election in May 2016".

The long-standing policy of the Scottish Liberal Democrats has been in favour of a local income tax.

The alternatives to Council Tax, identified and researched by the cross-party Commission, mean that the Scottish Liberal Democrats will have the opportunity to consider these at the conference.

A summary guide for the discussion will be produced by the Policy Committee to help members attending conference. Members may also want to have considered the recommendations of the cross-party Commission in advance.

Policy Committee will almost certainly want to take indicative votes at the conference to guide policy for the manifesto.

The principle decision will be whether to continue to support local income tax or, in the light of the cross-party Commission, to adopt an alternative based on land or property. There are several options identified for the latter.

Speakers' cards for the consultative session will be provided in the normal way.

### **Consultative Cards:**

Move

Sum Up

Clive Sneddon, Angus & Mearns - called

Alan Reid, Argyll & Bute - called

Hew Edgar, non member from RICS - called

John Aldridge, Edinburgh West

Neil Ross, Edinburgh South

Malcolm McKitterick, ? – called

David Hannay, Galloway – called,M

Chris Young, Glasgow – called,M  
Petunia Batia, Borders – called,F  
? Anderson, Borders – called,M  
John Biggam, Stirling & Clackmannanshire – called,M  
??.Fife – called,M  
Moyra Forrest, ENL – called,F  
? Wilson, P&K – called,M  
??.Central Scotland – called,M  
??.ENL – called,M  
Joan Mitchell, Galloway,F

**Votes:**

Building/Land Based vs Income Based – Building/Land based  
Building Tax vs Land Tax – very close no obvious choice



### **SC3: To establish a Scottish Office of Budget Responsibility**

*Tweeddale, Lauderdale & Midlothian South Liberal Democrats and Ettrick and Roxburgh & Berwickshire Liberal Democrats*

Mover: John Ferry

Summator: John Ferry

Conference notes with concern that:

- 1) The Scottish Government continues to maintain a formal policy of seeking full fiscal autonomy (FFA) for Scotland, despite clear evidence (including from the Institute of Fiscal Studies and the National Institute of Economic & Social Research) that such a policy would be disastrous for Scotland's economy.
- 2) There is a lack of official public information and accountability relating to the economic impact of FFA.
- 3) The existing Scottish Fiscal Commission in its scope and remit is currently inadequate for meeting fiscal analysis and accountability requirements.
- 4) The Scottish Government's willingness to pursue constitutional change that would make Scotland's public sector impossible to finance at current levels in the absence of unheralded tax rises – which if implemented could prove recessionary via a major fall in demand in the economy – demonstrates a clear disregard for the welfare of the Scottish people.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to:

- i) A federal UK, noting that all successful federal nation-states maintain pan-national fiscal balancing. FFA would remove pan-UK fiscal transfers (and therefore an important economic stabiliser for Scotland).
- ii) A prosperous Scotland and low unemployment.
- iii) Government that is transparent and accountable.

Conference calls on the Scottish Government to:

- A) Establish a Scottish Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) that would have a similar remit to the UK Office of Budget Responsibility (ie, the production of five-year forecasts, twice per year, for the Scottish economy and Scotland's public finances; the publication of an annual fiscal sustainability report outlining Scotland's theoretical independent fiscal finance position; ongoing scrutiny of tax and welfare spending measures.)

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#### **SC3 Cards:**

Move – John Ferry, Midlothian South Tweeddale & Lauderdale - called

Sum Up – Chris Chapman, Midlothian South Tweeddale & Lauderdale - called

John Waddell, Aberdeen Central South & Kincardine North - called

#### **Votes:**

Motion - carried

12.30-14.00 Lunch  
12.45-13.45 Fringes

*The afternoon session runs from 14.00 to 16.45.*

#### **14.00 SC4: A plan for the islands**

*Orkney Liberal Democrats*

Mover: Tavish Scott MSP

Summator: Liam McArthur MSP

Conference notes:

- The strong feelings in Shetland and Orkney against the centralisation of public services, for example on policing, fire services, colleges, economic development, public sector construction and civil engineering contracts.
- Scottish Liberal Democrats support for radical action to reverse centralisation and empower communities through the Home Rule and Community Rule Commission report.
- The distinct needs of the islands on many matters, not least the seafood industries, the Scottish Government's exclusion of business from the Air Discount Scheme and the exclusion of Orkney and Shetland from any mechanism to reduce ferry fares.
- The 'Our Islands, Our Future' campaign jointly led by Orkney Islands Council, Shetland Islands Council and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar seeking additional powers to give communities greater control over island requirements.

Conference believes:

- The Scottish Government's centralised "one-size-fits-all" policies damage the interests of the islands where circumstances are very different from the Scottish mainland.
- Public bodies such as Marine Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage and Transport Scotland, for example, have a particularly big impact on island communities.
- The seabed around islands is of vital economic importance locally and nationally.
- Fuel poverty is higher in island communities than elsewhere in Scotland, due to poor housing stock, low incomes, and high fuel costs. This risks being made worse as Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rules result in new houses in island communities without access to mains gas are often built using less insulation.
- Air services are a lifeline link for businesses, patients travelling to hospital appointments and the wider public. Confidence in services has been hit following months of reduced reliability due to technical faults.
- In vital policy areas solutions in the central belt are inappropriate for the islands. Regulation of home care workers is one example. The level of accreditation required for home visits to patients on the smaller isles can appear disproportionate when visits more often deliver social interaction than healthcare provision.

- NHS Orkney and NHS Shetland have been underfunded by the Scottish Government, as assessed by the Government's own NRAC formula and confirmed by Audit Scotland. This has led to a squeeze on NHS budgets and services, already stretched by the costly nature of the provision of services in island communities.
- Good, reliable and affordable broadband is essential. For the Northern Isles, however, the current broadband roll out is only set to see 75% of premises covered by the end of 2016. This compares to a figure of 84% for the Highlands and Islands region as a whole and 95% nationally.
- Some council ward boundaries do not take account of transport or the differences between island communities, meaning that island residents can be under-represented.

Conference resolves that a future Islands (Scotland) Bill should:

- a. Subject all legislation proposed by the Scottish Government to 'Island-Proofing' to reflect the needs of island communities. 'Island-Proofing' should be extended to Scottish Government negotiations with the UK Government and with the European Union.
- b. Give Scottish Government ministers the power, only at the request of local authorities, to issue statutory guidance in relation to island communities which relevant public bodies would be required to adhere to.
- c. Ensure the ownership and management of the seabed round the islands should be devolved not just to Edinburgh, but passed to the islands.
- d. Give Highland Council and Argyll and Bute Council the powers over the waters round their islands.
- e. Reform Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rules to help in efforts to reduce bills and tackle fuel poverty.
- f. Extend the statutory protection of the Shetland and Orkney seat to Na h-Eileanan an Iar.
- g. Give island councils the power to make the case to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland for the introduction of single or two member wards where there is a strong geographical case.
- h. Introduce a working, active "Islands Plan" to provide a framework to address the interests of the islands. A new Scottish Government should be required to present a draft plan within 3 months of its appointment, then subject to consultation before a final plan is set within 6 months of the election to last the full parliamentary term.

Conference resolves that a future Islands Plan should:

1. Make provision to meet the costly provision of services faced by island communities, such as the recruitment of NHS staff and the provision of mental health services.
2. Work with relevant parties, including Loganair, to examine the longer term provision of this lifeline service.
3. Ensure significant decisions are not taken without proper consultation, such as the decisions of the SNP Government to exclude business from the Air Discount Scheme and the exclusion of Orkney and Shetland from any mechanism to reduce ferry fares.

4. Set out a framework and delivery of funding to plug the remaining gaps in broadband and mobile phone coverage.

Conference resolves that the Scottish Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Party should:

- Consult and work with Orkney Islands Council, Shetland Islands Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, the local authorities who have responsibility for island communities and relevant stakeholders, to build a consensus around future action.

Amendment 1.

Submitted by Argyll & Bute Liberal Democrats

Mover: Alan Reid

Replace lines 51-54 with the following.

- "c) Ensure that the management of, including the rights to profits from, the foreshore and seabed round the island authorities, which is currently owned by the Crown Estate, will be devolved not just to Edinburgh, but to the Island Councils.
- d) Consult with the people living on all other islands, and in local authorities with coastlines, about how best to devolve the management of, including the rights to profits from, the foreshore and seabed, which is currently owned by the Crown Estate, to local communities."

Line 59: Delete "island."

Line 60: Insert "on islands" between "wards" and "where".

Line 74: Add at the end

"and the removal of commercial vehicles from the scope of the Road Equivalent Tariff ferry fares scheme."

#### **SC4 Cards:**

Move – Tavish Scott MSP, Shetland - called

Sum Up – Liam McArthur, Orkney - CALLED

Amendment – Alan Reid, Argyll & Bute - called

Tom Hunter, Orkney - called

Moyra Forrest, Edinburgh NE&L - called

Trevor Escott, IENL - called

Andrew Nisbett, Dumbarton - called

#### **Votes:**

Amendment – carried

Motion as amended - carried

## **SC5: Empowering public sector workers**

*Policy Committee*

Mover: Katy Gordon

Summator: Elisabeth Wilson

Conference notes:

The increasing demoralisation of front line public sector workers in Scotland, as a result of the imposition of top-down targets, the centralisation of services that previously had discretion to respond to local communities, the hollowing out of administrative functions that support public service, and lack of respect by the Scottish Government of their expertise and commitment. Specific problems include:

- A. The extra bureaucratic burden on teachers from the reintroduction of national tests in schools from P1 to S3;
- B. Complaints from the Scottish Police Federation of a target culture being imposed on rank-and-file officers which they say encourages, "policing for statistics instead of policing for the public";
- C. Serious concerns about back office support functions for the police, particularly cutting the number of call centres;
- D. The crisis in the recruitment and retention of GPs and other health professionals with unprecedented joint statements from the Royal Colleges that the targets and working practices imposed on health workers are "skewing clinical priorities and wasting resources" and that this is a key area to be addressed if NHS Scotland is to remain sustainable;
- E. Serious teacher recruitment shortfall in the North and Northeast;
- F. Lack of adequate workforce planning by the Scottish Government given it takes ten years to train a GP; it takes four years to train a nurse, teacher or social worker; it takes two years to train a police officer; and fire fighter training is lengthy and ongoing.

Conference also notes:

- G. The warning from Audit Scotland of the risks of too narrow a focus on targets;
- H. Experience of public service reform from around the world where frontline professionals have been empowered to use their skills and experience;
- I. The report of the Christie Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services which noted that "international and cross-sectoral research shows that workers value respect for their knowledge and experience" and "they place a high premium on being valued for what they do, and trusted and empowered to do a good job" and its recommendation for reform "to empower front-line staff and allow them to give of their best".

Conference believes:

- a) The introduction of national tests in schools from P1 to S3 opens up the return of league tables for primary schools in Scotland, abolished by the Liberal Democrats in the Scottish Government in 2003, a move welcomed by the SNP at the time;
- b) These national tests also increase the burdens on teachers and league tables will lead to teaching to the test;

- c) The growing pressures on the health service and the challenges of integrating health and social care will need the skills and judgements of professional public sector workers to be used to the fullest extent, and this is hampered by restrictive top-down target-setting;
- d) Community safety can be promoted most effectively by decentralising control of the police and respecting the role of individual officers;
- e) That the need for professional public sector workers to have the discretion to act in the best interests of public service echoes the longstanding value of localism, held by the Scottish Liberal Democrats.

Conference calls for:

- 1) Liberal Democrats in the next Scottish Parliament to champion a liberating agenda to roll back the top-down, target-driven, one-size-fits-all culture that distorts our public services;
- 2) The cancellation of the programme to require teachers to implement and account for national tests on school children aged 5-14;
- 3) An expansion in the role of the Scottish Parliament's Public Audit Committee to allow it to consider how the pressure to achieve top-down targets may distort the service provided to the public by specific groups of public sector workers, for example police officers, social workers and health professionals;
- 4) The appointment of a Minister for Public Workforce Empowerment, working with a taskforce of frontline professionals, charged to lead a drive for the empowerment of public sector workers, changing the National Performance Framework to enshrine empowerment across government and seeking to gain service benefits from reduced form-filling by staff;
- 5) The Minister to prepare a Public Service and Leadership Bill to give power back to the public servants and local leaders;
- 6) Safeguarding of public sector workers who whistle blow on practice which may put individuals or communities at risk.

*Deadline for amendments is midday 24<sup>th</sup> February. Send to: [linda.wilson@scotlibdems.org.uk](mailto:linda.wilson@scotlibdems.org.uk)*

### **SC5 Cards:**

Move – Katy Gordon, Glasgow South - called

Sum Up - Elizabeth Wilson, East Lothian - called

Jacqui Bell, Edinburgh NE&L

Graham Cowie, Glasgow North

John Waddell, Aberdeen Central South & Kincardine North - called

George Boyd, East Lothian - called

Yvonne Finlayson, Central Scotland - called

Hannah Bettsworth, Edinburgh South - called

John Watson, Inverclyde - called

David May, Angus - called

### **Votes:**

Motion – carried

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

## **SC6: Supporting the rights of children and young people**

*Aberdeenshire East Liberal Democrats*

Mover: Alison McInnes MSP

Summator: Alex Cole-Hamilton

Conference believes that the rights of every child should be protected and promoted, in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in order that they may be free to reach their potential and get on in life.

Conference notes that the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has published its list of issues in relation to the fifth periodic report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and that this, along with the UK's responses, will be considered at its seventy-second session in June 2016.

In particular, conference further notes that the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has requested:

- Information on the number of stop and searches conducted by Police Scotland on children.
- Information on progress made in raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility, which the Committee has previously stated should be increased to 12 "as a minimum".
- Details of plans to fulfil Scotland's international obligation to provide children with equal protection from assault.
- An update on initiatives to lower the voting age to 16.
- Further information on the measures taken or planned to meet the increase in demand for mental health services for children.

Conference welcomes:

- That Scottish Liberal Democrats have secured the end of illiberal and discredited so-called consensual stop and search through successful amendments to the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill, in addition to the introduction of a code of conduct for statutory searches.
- The establishment of the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility Advisory Group by the Scottish Government, in response to efforts by Scottish Liberal Democrats to raise the age of criminal responsibility to 12 through the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill.
- The publication of the joint report, *Equally Protected: A review of the evidence on the physical punishment of children*, by Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland, Children 1<sup>st</sup>, Barnardo's and the NSPCC.
- MSPs voting unanimously to lower the voting age to 16 for all future Scottish Parliament and local government elections, but is deeply disappointed that the UK Government overturned a bid by the House of Lords to extend the franchise to 16 and 17-year-olds for the forthcoming EU referendum.
- That the Scottish Government's 2016/17 draft budget allocates an additional £50 million over five years to mental health, part of which is intended to improve child and adolescent mental health services, but considers that a further £10 million a year is nowhere near enough to provide the step change required, particularly given the share of the NHS budget spent on mental health has consistently fallen.



However, conference calls for:

- 1) The Scottish and UK Governments to incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into Scots and UK law by primary legislation in the Scottish Parliament and UK Parliament.
- 2) The Scottish Government to ensure that the stop and search code of conduct fully recognises the unique vulnerability of children and to listen to the persuasive evidence against the introduction of a potential new search power for children based on the possession of alcohol.
- 3) The Scottish Government to raise the age of criminal responsibility in Scotland to 12 by the amendment of Section 41 of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995, bringing it into line with the age of criminal prosecution.
- 4) The Scottish Government to legislate to prohibit all physical punishment of children.
- 5) The UK Government to extend the voting franchise to 16 and 17-year-olds for all future UK and European Parliament elections and referendums.
- 6) Substantially increased investment in child and adolescent mental health services to enable the step-change in prevention, early detection, treatment and recovery that is desperately needed in Scotland, ending the scandal of waits of up to a year and long journeys to access treatment.

Submitted by Ewan Hoyle and 4 others

Mover: Ewan Hoyle

After line 31 insert:

"This document called for the prohibition of the physical punishment of children; large-scale information and awareness campaigns to inform the population of the merits of positive parenting and the harm caused by physical punishment; and to support parents in using positive parenting strategies through information and parenting programmes."

Delete line 52 and replace with:

"Large-scale information and awareness campaigns to inform the population of the merits of positive parenting and the harm caused by physical punishment, and support for parents in using positive parenting strategies through information and parenting programmes."

### **SC6 Cards:**

Move: Alison McInnes, Aberdeenshire East - called

Sum Up: Alex ColeHamilton, Edinburgh West - called

Amendment: Ewan Hoyle, Glasgow South - called

Amendment Sum-Up, Chris Young, Glasgow - called

Graeme Cowie, Glasgow North

Euan Davidson, Aberdeen Central - called

John Waddell, Aberdeen Central South & North Kincardine

Sheila Thomson, Aberdeen Central, South & North Kincardine - called

Fred Mackintosh, Edinburgh South - called

Alistair Carmichael MP, Orkney & Shetland - called

Dan FarthingSykes, Edinburgh South

Christine Jardine, Aberdeenshire East

**Votes:**

Amendment – defeated

Motion - carried

## **EM1: EU Referendum**

Submitted by: North Glasgow Liberal Democrats

Mover: Elspeth Attwooll

Conference notes that David Cameron has reached a settlement with the European Council and that a referendum on UK membership of the EU will take place on June 23.

Conference expresses its concern at the implications of any possible accompanying legislation on sovereignty and human rights.

Conference recognises that

- a) The European Union has been one of the most successful international organisations of all time;
- b) By providing a basis on which the nations and states of Europe have learnt to co-operate for their mutual benefit, it has enabled the longest peace among its members since the Roman Empire;
- c) Those who are campaigning for a UK exit from the EU are doing so against the wider public interest.
- d) Many of the concerns people have result from the fact that they have been consistently misled about the EU's powers, structures, costs and activities

Conference calls on Liberal Democrat parliamentarians, councillors and members

- 1) To campaign vigorously for a vote to remain, because that is in the best interests of the people of Scotland and the rest of the UK; and
- 2) To take the opportunity to set the record straight on the myths about the EU and to emphasise the benefits the EU has brought to individuals, families and communities.

Conference reaffirms its pride in the unswerving dedication of Liberal Democrats to the idea of Europe based on co-operation rather than conflict. It contrasts this commitment with the bitter arguments about Europe that have split the Conservative Party for over thirty years and have now riven the Cabinet.

### **EM1 Cards:**

Move – Elspeth Attwooll, Glasgow North - called

Nigel Lindsay, East Lothian

Jacqui Bell, East Lothian

John Waddell, Aberdeen Central South Kincardine North - called

Hannah Bettsworth, Edinburgh South

Maureen O'Neill, Edinburgh West

Vita Zaporozcenko, Edinburgh North East & Leith, F - called

Richard Coxon, Edinburgh North East & Leith - called

Kris Chapman, Midlothian South Tweeddale & Lauderdale - called  
Nora Radcliffe, Aberdeen East - called

**Votes:**

Motion - carried

## **Meet our key candidates for 2016**

*Close of session 16.45*

17.00-18.00	Fringe meetings
19.30	Conference dinner
20.00	Liberal Youth Scotland quiz night

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> February

*The morning session runs from 09.30 to 12.00.*

**Jim Wallace Q&A**

Tim Brett, NE Fife – called

Jacqui Bell, Edinburgh North East & Leith

Moyra Forrest, ENEL

**09.30 Party AGM**

Treasurer's Report

Conference Report

Campaigns & Candidates Report

Policy Committee Report

Diversity Report

Motion to accept Reports & Accounts - carried

**BM1: Constitutional amendment – the Deputy Leader**

*Liberal Youth Scotland*

Mover: Robbie Simpson

Summator: Robbie Simpson

Delete Section F7 and replace with:

"F7. Nominations for the Leader must be proposed by at least ten percent of the Scottish Liberal Democrat Members of the Scottish Parliament. Nominations for the Deputy Leader must be proposed by at least ten percent of the Scottish Liberal Democrat members of the House of Commons representing Scottish constituencies."

**BM1 Cards:**

Move – Robbie Simpson, Glasgow North

**Votes:**

Motion - Carried

**BM2: Constitutional amendment – gender balance**  
*Willie Rennie MSP and 30 members*

Mover: Willie Rennie MSP                      Summator: Willie Rennie MSP

**Amendment 1:**

Add at the end of Clause H7 (b) (iii)

“(iv) The makeup and ordering of the list may be constrained to accommodate gender balance requirements specified by rules approved by Conference.”

**Amendment 2:**

Add at the end of Clause H10

“The composition of the shortlist may be constrained to accommodate gender balance requirements specified by rules approved by Conference.”

**Amendment to BM2: Constitutional amendment – gender balance**

Submitted by: Allan Heron and 9 others

Mover: Allan Heron

Delete “gender balance” and replace with “diversity.”

The amendment would now read:

**Amendment 1**

Add at the end of Clause H7 (b) (iii)

“(iv) The makeup and ordering of the list may be constrained to accommodate diversity requirements specified by rules approved by Conference.”

**Amendment 2**

Add at the end of Clause H10

“The composition of the shortlist may be constrained to accommodate diversity requirements specified by rules approved by Conference.”

**BM2 Cards:**

Move: Jo Swinson, East Dunbartonshire - called

Amendment: Paul McGarry, Central Scotland - called

Sum Up Willie Rennie MSP, Dunfermline - called

Hannah Bettsworth, Edinburgh South

Fiona Risk, East Dunbartonshire - called

Alison McInnes, Aberdeenshire East - called

Jenny Dawe, Edinburgh South

Fred Mackintosh, Edinburgh South - called

Kieran Leach, Edinburgh South

Charity Pierce, Edinburgh South - called

Sue Tritton, Edinburgh South

Christine Jardine, Aberdeenshire East - called  
Jenny Marr, Aberdeenshire West - withdrawn  
David Adamson, Mitlothian South Tweeddale & Lauderdale  
Mhairi Macdonal, East Dunbartonshire  
Rod Ackland, East Dunbartonshire  
Paul McGarry, Central Scotland  
Tristan Gray, Edinburgh West  
Kevin Lang, Edinburgh West - called  
Sheila Thomson, ACSNK  
Sophie Bridger, ENEL - called  
Russel McPhate, Dunfermline & West Fife  
Pramod Subbarman, Stirling & Clacks  
Galen Milne, Stirling & Clackmannanshire - called  
Chris Young, Glasgow South  
Caron Lindsay, West Lothian  
Ettie Spencer, East Lothian - called  
David May, Angus  
Rebecca Plenderleith, Dumbarton - called  
Judy Hayman, East Lothian  
Isobel Nelson, Inverness Somewhere  
Sheila Ritchie, Aberdeen Central

**Votes:**

Amendment - carried

Motion as amended – carried – 134 For, 45 Against so 75% for



**BM3: Advancing diversity in the Scottish Liberal Democrats**  
*Willie Rennie and 33 members*

Mover: Willie Rennie MSP

Summator: Jo Swinson

Conference notes:

- 1) The track record of Scottish Liberal Democrats for electing women and people from diverse backgrounds does not reflect the party's values of equality and opportunity.
- 2) There has only ever been one woman MP at any one time.
- 3) There have only ever been two women MSPs at any one time.
- 4) There has never been a parliamentarian from an ethnic minority.
- 5) In the last 20 years, of 36 new Liberal Democrat parliamentarians in Scotland only 5 have been women.
- 6) In the last 10 years, of 9 new Liberal Democrat parliamentarians in Scotland only 1 has been a woman.
- 7) Only 36% of Scottish Liberal Democrat councillors are women.
- 8) Only 30% of Scottish Liberal Democrat council group leaders are women.
- 9) Whilst 42% of members attending the Scottish Spring Conference in 2015 were women only 32% of speakers at that conference were women.
- 10) Whilst 46% of local party secretaries are women, only 21% of Conveners are women.
- 11) The party has deployed a variety of mechanisms and efforts to improve diversity including Diversity Champions, diversity training, candidate initiatives, mentoring, a Leadership Programme and engaging with underrepresented groups.

Conference believes:

- a) The party's parliamentary representatives should properly reflect the country we seek to represent, legislate for and govern.
- b) The imbalance in our representation at all levels damages our electoral prospects.
- c) We are losing out on some great talent that exists in our party and the broader liberal movement.
- d) Despite the deployment of a variety of techniques and efforts, bolder action is now required.
- e) New measures should be deployed to bring about greater diversity of elected parliamentarians and councillors and participation in the party's activities.
- f) The party should send a powerful signal to women and people from underrepresented groups that their participation is actively encouraged.
- g) The automatic assumption that a candidate must be able to commit all evenings and weekends to campaigning even if they have caring responsibilities should change.
- h) An environment and culture should be created in the party that gives women and people from diverse backgrounds opportunity to succeed in the party and to access elected office at all levels.
- i) Half of the party's parliamentary representatives should be women.

- j) Our party's parliamentary representatives should broadly reflect society in terms of ethnic background, LGBT+, disability and other characteristics.

Conference agrees:

- A. The actions set out in this Business Motion apply to the next round of elections only.
- B. The top candidate on our list in Scotland for the European Parliament Elections scheduled for June 2019 will be a woman and the second placed candidate will be a man. The remaining places on the list will be filled without reference to the gender of the candidates. When the votes of the members are counted to determine the order in which the candidates are to be placed (in the process set out in Clause H7(b)(iii) of the Constitution), EITHER the last remaining woman will be placed first on the list and her votes redistributed among the remaining men (if more than one) to determine subsequent places; OR the last remaining man will be placed second on the list and his votes redistributed among the remaining women (if more than one) to determine the first and any other subsequent places. The same arrangements will be applied to select the man for second place.
- C. Candidates for the General Election of 2020 in the five most winnable seats by percentage majority to be overcome to win the seat that do not have an incumbent Liberal Democrat MP at the time of selection should each be selected from a shortlist comprising only women members. All the remaining 53 seats not currently held will be open contests.
- D. Our candidates for the Scottish Parliament Election of 2021 for five of the ten most winnable seats (whether constituencies or top regional places) will be women. A motion will be presented to the October 2016 Conference specifying which constituencies or regional lists would be affected by this change, taking into account the results of the May 2016 election.
- E. The Scottish Party Leader will have a responsibility to oversee the drive to select and secure the election to parliament of more women and candidates from other underrepresented groups. The Leader will report twice a year to Conference on progress made.
- F. The Scottish Party Leader will appoint a group of party spokespeople from our councillors and candidates to speak for the party as well as parliamentarians. At least half of that group will be women and it will include members who are from ethnic minorities and other underrepresented backgrounds.
- G. All members of the Scottish Executive will have a responsibility to support the drive to secure the election to parliament of more women and candidates from other underrepresented groups. They will also encourage and support more women and candidates from underrepresented groups to be elected to councils and internal committees in the Party. The Executive will agree a plan to advance this objective and the effectiveness of the plan will be the subject of a debate at the Committee once a year.
- H. The job descriptions of party staff will be amended to include specific responsibilities for promoting diversity of candidate selection. This will include monitoring, communications and campaigning.
- I. In parallel with their obligation to provide an annual PPERA return to Party Headquarters, all local parties will be required to report annually on: the number of local party officeholders

who are women and from other underrepresented groups, the percentage of approved candidates locally who are women and from other underrepresented groups and the percentage of new members who attend local party meetings and join the local party committee. This information will be reported by party staff to the Executive and by the Executive to Conference on an annual basis.

- J. A new model job description and specification for candidates will be agreed by the Executive Committee based on the model in England with input from the Campaigns and Candidates Committee, Scottish Liberal Democrat Women and other interested party organisations. This will build on the Memorandum of Understanding agreed by the Scottish Executive in 2013.
- K. There will be a new Diversity Campaign Fund for use in supporting candidates in winnable seats from underrepresented groups for personal or campaign expenses. This fund will be used to reduce the practical barriers that stop people from underrepresented groups from standing for election, for example transport for people with mobility issues and BSL interpreters, as well as campaign expenditure. It will be worth at least £10,000 per year in 2016 and index linked thereafter. The Fund will be managed by the Campaigns and Candidates Committee as delegated by the Executive Committee.
- L. A team of campaign mentors will be established by the Campaigns Department and Campaigns and Candidates Committee to support candidates in winnable seats from underrepresented groups.
- M. Between autumn 2016 and late 2017 there will be a programme of information and training events to provide support and information for aspiring candidates. Local parties, parliamentarians, councillors and members of party committees will be asked to encourage those members who have not previously sought approval to attend these events. The numbers of members who attend these events and the local parties from which they arise will be reported to the Executive and annually to conference. The team and training will be managed by the Campaign and Candidates Convener with the support of party campaign staff in Scotland.
- N. Communications to members will include positive promotion to women and from other under-represented groups. The work of candidates and spokespersons who are not yet elected parliamentarians will be promoted widely to members.
- O. In interpreting this motion any approved candidate who does not identify as male or as female shall be able to access the same arrangements as are proposed for women.

#### Amendment 1

Submitted by: Allan Heron and 9 others

Mover: Allan Heron

In Paragraph B, line 40 add "As required by Article 11.1 of the Federal Constitution, the Campaign and Candidates Committee will amend the rules for the conduct of elections to reflect the changes agreed in this motion."

In Paragraph C, line 52, delete "five" and replace with "three."

In Paragraph C, line 55, delete "53" and replace with "55."

Amendment 2

Submitted by: Glasgow South Liberal Democrats

Mover: Chris Young

Call for separate votes on each of sections B (lines 41-51), C (lines 52-56) and D (lines 57-61).

**BM3 Cards:**

Move: Jo Swinson, East Dunbartonshire - called  
Amd1: Allan Heron, Paisley & Renfrewshire - called  
Amd2: Chris Young, Glasgow South - called  
Sum Up Willie Rennie MSP, Dunfermline - called  
Moyra Forrest, Edinburgh NE&L - called  
Kieran Leach, Edinburgh South - called  
James Harrison, Glasgow North – called – NOT IN HALL  
Katy Gordon, Glasgow South - called  
Hannah Bettsworth, Edinburgh South - called  
Jenny Dawe, Edinburgh South - called  
Fred Mackintosh, Edinburgh South  
Christine Jardine, Aberdeenshire East  
Jenny Marr, Aberdeenshire West  
Ross Moreland, Argyll & Bute  
Jean Davis, Caithness Sutherland & Easter Ross - called  
Sheila Thomson, Aberdeen Central South & North Kincardine - called  
Sophie Bridger, Edinburgh North East & Leith  
Galen Milne, Stirling & Clacks  
Elisabeth Wilson, East Lothian  
Baroness Sal Brinton, Federal President - called  
Jacqui Bell, Edinburgh North East & Leith  
Trevor Nicholson, Edinburgh West  
Joan Mitchell, Galloway – called – NOT IN HALL  
Angela Maclean, Ross Skye & Lochaber  
James Robb, Edinburgh North East & Leith  
David Adamson, Midlothian South Tweeddale & Lauderdale - called  
Mhairi Macdonald, East Dunbartonshire - called

**Votes:**

Amendment 1 Paragraph B – carried so lines added

Amendment 1 Paragraph C – defeated so remains at 5

Amendment 2 Section B – lines retained

Amendment 2 Section C – lines retained

Amendment 2 Section D – lines retained

Motion as amended - carried

EM2: Reinstating the post-study work visa

Submitted by Liberal Youth Scotland

Mover: Graeme Cowie

Conference reaffirms the liberal commitment to openness and internationalism and to the principles of the free movement of goods, services and persons that underpins co-operation between the UK and its neighbours.

Conference believes that immigration has enriched Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom, both economically and culturally, and should be encouraged to the fullest extent that is practical and expedient.

Conference notes in particular that sustained levels of high-skilled labour has a transformative impact on an economy that is information and research intensive, such as Scotland's.

Conference welcomes the continued success of Scottish and UK higher education institutions as world leaders in education and research, attracting over 435 000 international students to our Universities and securing more top 200 institutions in the Times University Rankings than any country other than the United States of America.

Conference notes with concern that the UK Government abolished the Tier 1 Post-Study Work Visa (PSWV) in April 2012. This scheme enabled international students, who completed a degree-level course at a UK University, to seek employment or start a business in the UK for up to two years without a work permit, and played a significant role in the retention of highly skilled migrants in the UK economy.

Conference notes that opposition to the abolition of the Post-Study Work Visa received cross-party support in Scotland, including from the Scottish Conservatives, as well as from the National Union of Students, Universities and business leaders.

Conference notes that the PSWV was itself created to replace a Scottish specific work-visa scheme, the Fresh Talent – Working in Scotland Scheme (FTWiSS) that allowed international students graduating from Scottish Universities to stay in Scotland and work for up to two years without a work permit.

Conference believes that FTWiSS sets a precedent, that Scotland-specific variations of UK immigration laws both are capable of practical implementation and can serve as an important mechanism by which unique demographic challenges facing Scotland can be overcome.

Conference notes that, with the Scottish Parliament assuming greater responsibility for its tax base, especially on income tax, the ability to attract skilled and highly educated immigrants from outside of the European Economic Area is especially important to our future prosperity.

Conference notes in particular that the Holyrood's Devolution (Further Powers) Committee in their report of 13th February 2016 was unanimous in its call to the Home Office Immigration Minister to give Scotland's need for a post-study visa programme the most urgent of attention.

In the absence of the reintroduction of a UK-wide Post-Study Work Visa, Conference therefore calls upon the UK Government either to:

1. Devolve to the Scottish Parliament limited powers in respect of immigration visas, enabling graduates from Scottish Universities to apply to be eligible to stay and work in Scotland on a similar basis to the abolished PSWV; or

2. Recreate directly the PSWV scheme on the same basis as the Fresh Talent initiative existed prior to 2008.

**EM2 Cards:**

Move: Graham Cowie, Glasgow North - called

Sum Up: Hannah Bettsworth, Edinburgh South - called

Pramod Subbaraman, Stirling & Clacks

Jamie Purcell, Glasgow North - called

Sanne Dijkstra-Downie, Edinburgh North East & Leith - called

Millicent Scott, Edinburgh West - called

Katy Gordon, Glasgow North

Euan Robson, Ettrick Roxburgh Berwickshire

Liam McArthur MSP, Orkney - called

**Votes:**

Motion - carried

12.00-14.40	Lunch
12.15-13.15	Fringe meetings
13.30-14.30	Fringe meetings

*The afternoon session runs from 14.40 to 16.45.*



#### 14.40 Q&A: Education

Kris Chapman, Midlothian South Tweeddale & Lauderdale - called

Kieran Leach, Edinburgh South - called

James Harrison, Glasgow North – called

Unknown female – called

Tim Brett, North East Fife

Speech by Tim Farron MP, Leader of the Liberal Democrats

#### SC7: Fit For The Future – the pre-manifesto of the Scottish Liberal Democrats *Policy Committee*

Mover: TBC

Summator: TBC

Conference calls for the 2016 Scottish Liberal Democrats' manifesto to be a liberal plan founded on liberal values.

Conference endorses Fit for the Future, the pre-manifesto, and agrees for it to be combined with other conference policy motions and then fully costed, using up to date information, to form the basis of that manifesto.

Conference welcomes the commitments in Fit for the Future to:

A) Help every individual to achieve their potential by:

- a) Investing a Penny for Education to transform the life chances of people in Scotland through expanded early years' education, a pupil premium, support for colleges and a reversal of council cuts to services;
- b) Supporting universities and science;
- c) Providing a diverse and well-educated and trained workforce for Scottish business.

B) Tackle social and economic injustices that limit freedom by:

- a) Transforming mental health, giving it equal status with physical health and expanding access to treatment;
- b) Investing in more GPs, working in a safe NHS;
- c) Investment in health promotion in areas of deprivation to tackle health inequalities;
- d) Increasing the amount of socially rented housing being built and reestablishing it as a valid long term option for people;
- e) Moving to reform the treatment of addiction, treating drug abuse as a health issue and adopting effective evidence-based practice from around the world;
- f) Building a consensus on the creation of a Scottish social security system that is accessible, fair, suited to the needs of Scotland and underpinned by respect for the dignity of individuals.

C) Trust communities and individuals with the power to control their own lives by:

- a) Giving power back to local authorities and communities;
- b) Bringing back democracy into Police Scotland;
- c) Stopping the Scottish Government's ID database;
- d) Supporting diversity, tackling bullying and hate crime, and addressing inequality.

D) Pass on a sustainable legacy which will benefit future generations by:

- a) Meeting climate change targets by investment, including in warm homes and renewable heat;

- b) Giving Scottish business the best skills in the world through a diverse and well-educated workforce, full super-fast broadband and mobile phone coverage across Scotland, and good transport connections;
- c) Supporting a Fair Business Pledge;
- d) Bringing government, business, colleges, universities and councils together in regional deals to develop their local economies.

Conference agrees:

- 1) To use the progressive powers over income tax to provide a Penny For Education to transform educational attainment in the next five years;
- 2) To make a priority for future income tax changes the establishment of a zero-rate band in Scotland to raise the personal tax-free allowance above that elsewhere in UK, in preference to any proposal to raise the Higher Rate threshold above inflation which would benefit only the very wealthy;
- 3) To have a competitive level of business taxation.

Conference further agrees that the challenges ahead to make Scotland fit for the future will require a full five year term of focus and therefore must not include a second referendum on independence.

*Deadline for amendments is midday 24<sup>th</sup> February. Send to: [linda.wilson@scotlibdems.org.uk](mailto:linda.wilson@scotlibdems.org.uk)*

### **SC7 Cards:**

Move – Christine Jardine – called – No Card

Sum Up – Robert Brown, Glasgow

Katy Gordon, Glasgow South - called

Jacqui Bell, Edinburgh North East & Leith - called

Andrew Nisbet, Dumbarton - called

Hannah Bettsworth, Edinburgh South - called

Trevor Escott, Inverness

Paul McGarry, Central Scotland - called

Ewan Hoyle, Glasgow South

John Waddell, Aberdeen South Central & Kincardine North - called

Austin Reid, Central Scotland - called

Cllr Eileen McCartin, Paisley & Renfrewshire - called

Tom Leatherland, Dunfermline

Beryl Leatherland, Dunfermline - called

Charlie Scott, Edinburgh South

### **Votes:**

Motion - carried

#### Party Awards

- Robin McSkimming Award (community support) – Isobel Davison
- Rae Michie Quaich (recruitment) – Hugh Waterfield
- SWLD Quaich (diversity) – Willie Rennie
- John Morrison Award (local government) – Cllr Karen Clark
- Russell Johnstone Trophy (Conference speech) – Jenny Dawe
- Sheila Tennant Award (LYS Member) – Joanne Ferguson

Close of session 16.45