



Scottish
Liberal Democrats
for Scotland's future.

Spring Conference

Edinburgh

26th & 27th February 2016

Scotlibdems.org.uk

Friday 26th February

Morning session 10.00-12.30

- Welcome address
- SC1: A fair deal for delivery of essential services
- SC2: Tackling climate change and protecting nature
- Consultation session: local tax reform
- SC3: To establish a Scottish Office of Budget Responsibility

Afternoon session 14.00-16.45

- SC4: A plan for the islands
 - SC5: Empowering public sector workers
 - **Speech by Willie Rennie MSP, Leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats**
 - SC6: Supporting the rights of children and young people
 - EM1: Emergency motion
 - Meet our candidates for the Scottish Parliament
-

Saturday 27th February

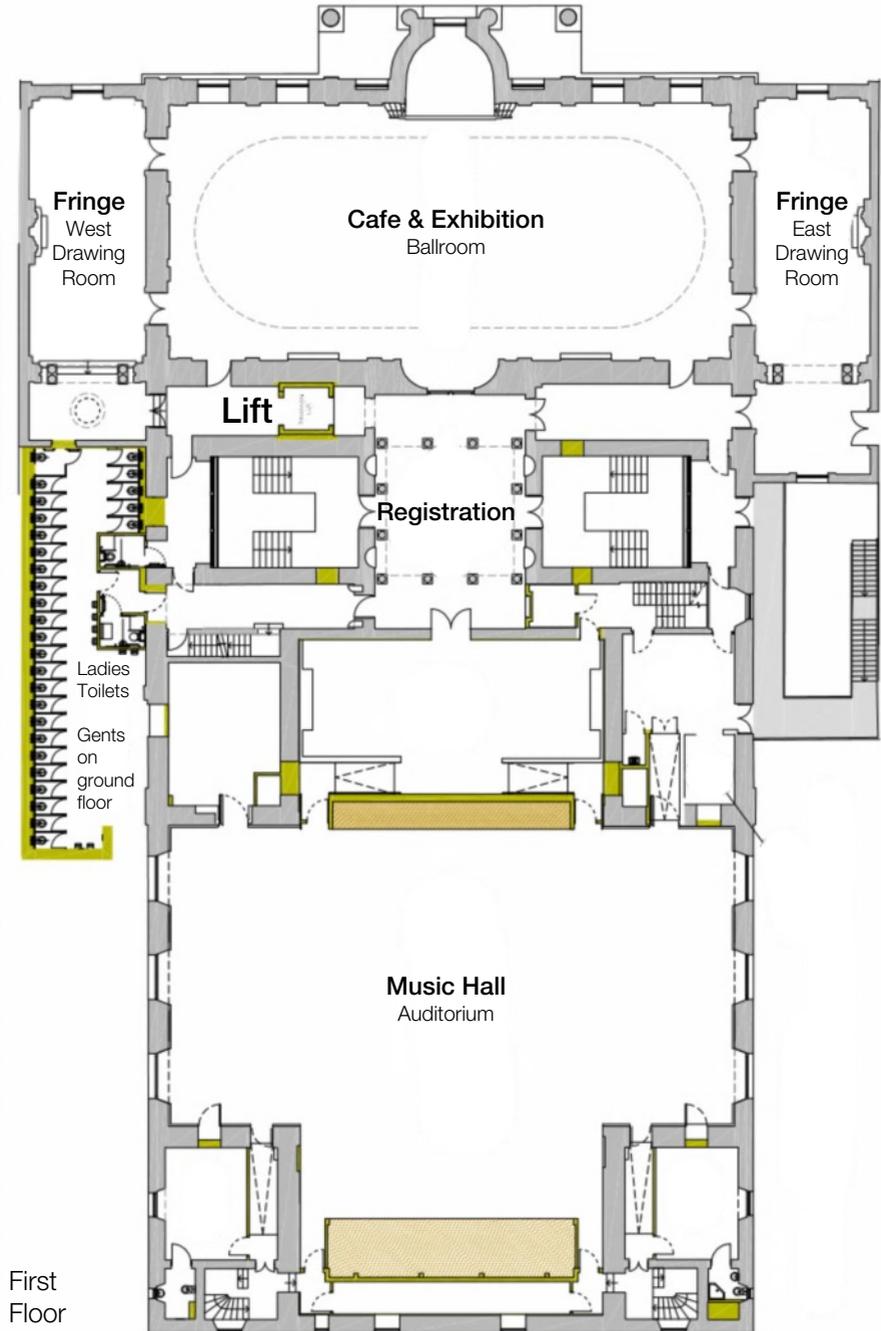
Morning session 09.30-12.00

- Party AGM
- EM2: Emergency motion or topical issue

Afternoon session 14.40-16.45

- Q&A: Education
- **Speech by Tim Farron MP, Leader of the Liberal Democrats**
- SC7: Scottish Parliament Pre-manifesto
- Party awards

Map of the Venue



Welcome to Edinburgh - Willie Rennie MSP

I am delighted to welcome you to Edinburgh for our first party conference in the capital since 1993.

A lot has changed since then, with the creation of the Scottish Parliament and the opening of the new Parliament building at Holyrood marking a fundamental change in the way that Scotland is governed.

Liberal Democrats have always fought hard to deliver more powers for Scotland and to ensure that local communities are able to take the choices which work best for them. In Edinburgh, this work has been supported by local Lib Dem champions like Donald Gorrie, Margaret Smith, Mike Pringle, John Barrett and Mike Crockart. We are also fortunate to have energetic candidates like Alex Cole-Hamilton leading the Lib Dem fightback in the city.



At the Scottish Parliament we are the sole opposition to an SNP government determined to force a return to national testing in schools despite the risk of league tables. We have led work to hold the SNP to account for their failure to meet promises on early years childcare, so important to ensuring that children get the best start in life. And we have been credited for our work holding the Government to account on Police Scotland.

The truth is that after five years of talking about independence at Holyrood, it is time that we had five years for our public services. For our police, for our schools, for our NHS. The public sector has been put under huge pressure by an SNP government that is more interested in picking fights with Westminster than getting on with the day job.

We approach this election with a bright, green and liberal plan to reverse the decline in our NHS and cuts to our schools, protect the environment and our civil liberties and put the divisions of the referendum behind us. The motions we will debate at conference will set the tone for an upbeat, positive campaign to put our public services first.

I look forward to catching up with many of you over the weekend.

Enjoy conference.

Willie Rennie MSP, Leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats

Welcome to Edinburgh - Cllr Paul Edie

As Leader of Edinburgh's Liberal Democrat councillors I am delighted to welcome the Scottish Liberal Democrat Conference to our capital city and, particularly, to the magnificent, and newly refurbished, Assembly Rooms.

Edinburgh has a long and proud Liberal tradition built up through a very strong local government base, which in recent years saw the Liberal Democrat Group leading the council administration.

The city still feels the benefits of many of the radical policies we introduced in that time; policies such as the Edinburgh Guarantee which has ensured a better future for our school leavers, re-ablement which helped to improve the lives of many older people and radical homelessness prevention policies which were successful in helping people maintain tenancies where in the past they would have found themselves destitute.

We have also had a strong tradition of electing parliamentarians with Donald Gorrie, Sir David Steel, and Margaret Smith among those who have represented parts of this city in Westminster and Holyrood.

These solid foundations make Edinburgh perhaps the best place for our Party to continue our fight back and to rebuild for the future.

I would like to wish you all an enjoyable conference.

Paul Edie

Cllr Paul Edie, Leader, Edinburgh Liberal Democrat Group



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Venue

The Assembly Rooms
54 George Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2LR
0131 220 4348

All bags will be subject to search.

Parking

There is on-street parking along George Street outside the Assembly Rooms and in the surrounding streets, all of which is controlled by parking meters during the day. RingGo, a cashless payment system, can be used via telephone or online app to pay for parking. See www.myringgo.co.uk Alternatively coins can be used to buy a ticket. The nearest car park is at the St James Shopping Centre - for further information go to www.ncp.co.uk Bike racks are available in the central reservation outside the venue.

Disabled parking is available close to the front of the building and in surrounding streets. To see a map showing the location of disabled parking close to the venue, please go to www.edinburgh.gov.uk and search for 'disabled parking bays'.

Conference passes

Please remember to bring your pass with you as a replacement pass will be charged at a cost of £5. The registration desk will be situated on the first floor of the Assembly Rooms. Passes must be worn visibly.

Taxis

- City Cabs Ltd 0131 228 1211
- ComCab 0131 272 8000
- Central Taxis 0131 229 2468

Public transport

The Assembly Rooms is only a 5 minute walk from Edinburgh Waverley train station and a 10 minute bus or taxi journey from Edinburgh Haymarket. For information on bus routes and fares in Edinburgh see lothianbuses.com

Wifi

There is free wifi throughout the building.

Accessibility

The Assembly Rooms is fully wheelchair accessible. There is a lift to the first floor where conference is taking place. Wheelchair accessible and disabled toilets are located throughout the venue. There is an induction loop in the Music Hall and there will be induction loops in the East and West Drawing Rooms. Please note that there will be flash photography in the Music Hall.

Refreshments

A café in the Ballroom will serve refreshments throughout conference. If you have any dietary requirements please inform the catering staff who will do their best to accommodate you. Lunchtime and evening fringes may provide complimentary refreshments.

Deadlines

All motions and constitutional amendments are open to amendment by members. Amendments must be submitted by midday on 24th February by emailing linda.wilson@scotlibdems.org.uk Amendments must be supported by at least five members.

Speaking in debates

All movers and summators of motions must submit a speaker's card. Speakers from the floor shall normally be allocated 3 minutes but this may be varied at the discretion of the chair of the debate

Conference committee standing orders

Copies of standing orders will be available at conference or please call 0131 337 2314 to request a copy.

Further information

If you have any questions about conference, please contact Colum Bannatyne on 0131 337 2314 or hq@scotlibdems.org.uk

Conference Committee

Jenni Lang (Convener)
Graeme Cowie
Sandy Leslie
Callum Leslie
David Green
Paul McGarry
Ross Stalker
Willie Rennie (MSP)
Sheila Thomson (Scottish Convener)
Emma Farthing-Sykes (Executive)
Willie Wilson (ASLDC)
Jacquie Bell (SLDW)
Michael Wilson (LYS)

Party Office Bearers

Leader:
Willie Rennie MSP
President:
Eileen McCartin
Deputy Leader:
Alistair Carmichael MP
Convener:
Sheila Thomson
Treasurer:
Caron Lindsay
Policy Convener:
Isobel Davidson
Conference Convener:
Jenni Lang

Campaigns & Candidates Convener:
Dan Farthing-Sykes

Scottish HQ Staff

Party Manager
Linda Wilson

Administrative Assistant
Colum Bannatyne

Campaigns Director
Adam Stachura

Campaigns Officers
Paul Moat
Greg Foster

Communications Director
Adam Clarke

Thanks

Many thanks are extended to all the staff at the Assembly Rooms and Appetite Direct.

Also thanks to Party staff for all their support and to Metro who have yet again provided the stage set and AV services.

Thank you to MBM for their kind sponsorship of the agenda and to Kirsty Smith, once again, for her sterling work behind the speaker's desk.

“Syria, Middle East...and Britain”

Tom Brake MP, Lib Dem spokesperson on Foreign Affairs and Defence

East Drawing Room, 12.45 - 13.45



The dilemmas facing Western countries... and the Lib Dems

This is a joint meeting of Liberal International in Scotland and the Scottish Liberal Club

Policy Pitch

West Drawing Room & Music Hall, 12.45 - 13.45



Charities and organisations attending conference will have 2 minutes to pitch the one idea they want the Scottish Liberal Democrats to take forward. Come along and hear what matters most to them.

Stand up for Scottish Education

East Drawing Room, 17.00 - 18.00

With the forthcoming Scottish elections in view what are the issues which will dominate Scottish Education in the months to come?

Speakers from the EIS and the Scottish Liberal Democrats will provide their perspectives.

Refreshments provided.



Royal College of Psychiatrists

Chair: Jim Hume MSP

Speakers: Dr Roch Cantwell, Ms Elaine Clarke, Dr Anne McFadyen

East Drawing Room, 12.15 - 13.15



Come and join us and hear about our Healthy Start, Healthy Scotland campaign. Launched in the Parliament in September 2015, the campaign will focus on how to get the best mental health for both parents and infants and will look at processes for engaging with families to allow types of support that demonstrate the effect of early years' interventions on a child growing up. *Buffet lunch provided.*

A better vision for Scotland

Chair: Cllr Robert Brown.

Speakers: Caron Lindsay, Sandra Wilson, James Adams

West Drawing Room, 12.15 - 13.15



Support for those newly diagnosed with sight loss, disability benefits that recognise the extra costs involved in being blind, accessible public transport, and less cluttered streets. RNIB Scotland's manifesto for the May election is urging steps that could make Scotland a kinder, safer, more inclusive place for those with sight loss. The costs are relatively modest, but the gains for some of the most vulnerable in our society would be far-reaching and profound. *Buffet provided.*

Law Society Scotland

West Drawing Room, 13.30 - 14.30



The next Scottish Parliament will have more revenue-raising powers than ever before, leading many to describe May's election as the most important since devolution. Law Society President Christine McLintock will chair a panel discussion on what Liberal Democrat proposals would mean in practice for businesses, tax payers and public services. *Refreshments provided.*

Inclusion Scotland

East Drawing Room, Saturday, 13.30 - 14.30

Find out about our new advice and support service for disabled people seeking political involvement and elected office. We'll be discussing ways local parties and groups can be more inclusive for disabled people and welcome hearing about your own experiences.



Our voices ■ Our choices



Countryside Alliance

Music Hall, Saturday, 13.30 - 14.30

The Scottish countryside is famous throughout the world. It is because of the knowledge, passion and work of those who shoot, hunt, fish and farm that our countryside looks the way it does. This event will be an opportunity to discuss the true meaning of conservation and best practice in wildlife management.

Chaired by the Scottish Countryside Alliance this event will consist of a panel of four speakers. Each speaker will have the chance to make a five minute opening statement before the Chair opens the discussion with questions from the audience.



The voice of the countryside

Annual General Meeting

East Drawing Room, 16.50 - 17.50



Association of Scottish Liberal Democrat Councillors and Campaigners, with Guest Speaker Councillor Peter Barrett, ASLDC Scottish Development Officer.

Heart disease is Scotland's single biggest killer. 1,250 families are devastated every month when they lose a loved one to cardiovascular disease. **BHF Scotland** is calling on everyone in Scotland to #BacktheBeat and help in the fight for every heartbeat.

Visit www.bhf.org./backthebeat



The **Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)** is Scotland's largest teaching trade union with around 55,000 members employed in nursery, primary, special, secondary, further and higher education. The EIS represents over 80% of all teachers and lecturers in Scotland and campaigns to protect and improve their pay and conditions of service as well as seeking to promote "sound learning" across all sectors.



The **Equality Network** is Scotland's national lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) equality and human rights charity. Within the Equality Network, the **Scottish Transgender Alliance** is Scotland's national project working to improve gender identity and gender reassignment equality and human rights.

Inclusion Scotland works for the removal of barriers that affect the everyday lives of disabled

people. We will be promoting our **Access to Politics** project, which is seeking to make politics and elected office more inclusive of disabled people by providing advice on reasonable adjustments and solutions for disabled activists.



Our voices ■ Our choices



MBM is a printing business with specialist expertise in the effective delivery of election

communications to the public. We are a single source and expert partner in the production and distribution of all printed materials supporting an effective campaign (including the 2015 General Election).

Contact: Stephen Black
Email: Stephen.Black@mbmprint.co.uk



NUS Scotland represents around 500,000 students in Scotland through our

member college and university students' associations. We promote, defend and extend the rights of students. Scotland's young people are more politically engaged now than they have ever been before. NUS Scotland is helping our members across the country harness that sense of engagement and turn it into action that achieves results. Students are our future – let's give them the support they deserve.



The Royal National
Institute of Blind



People Scotland helps blind and partially sighted people of all ages live as fully and independently as possible. It provides advice, support, training, equipment and transcribes books and other materials. It also campaigns to improve sight loss prevention.

Contact: Ian Brown, Senior Communications Officer, RNIB Scotland, tel 0131 652 3140
Email ian.brown@rnib.org.uk

RSPB Scotland is the charity that promotes the conservation of birds and other wildlife. We



carry out scientific research, education, land management and policy advocacy in areas such as agriculture, marine, flooding, planning, energy, forestry, species and habitats and sustainability.

Come and say hello!

Contact details: Rea Cris, Parliamentary Officer.
Tel: 0131-317-4100 Email: rea.cris@rspb.org.uk
www.rspb.org.uk/scotland

SAMH is Scotland's largest mental health charity, campaigning and providing services to over 2000 people



every week. Our manifesto for the Scottish Parliamentary election, Ask Once, Get Help Fast, sets out our key recommendations to transform Scotland's mental health by promoting early intervention, choice and prevention.



Save the Children

Reading is vital to give children a fair start and bright future. We want to see every child reading well by the time they leave primary school. But we can't do this without you. Visit Save the Children to find out how you can support Read On. Get On.



Scotland in Union, campaigning to keep Scotland in the UK.

We are a non-party movement and we wish for a confident, stable and prosperous Scotland within the UK.



We're here to let all lesbian, gay, bi and trans people know they're not alone, campaigning for acceptance without exception. Come talk to us about the key LGBT issues for this election and sign up to our manifesto!

Citizens Advice Scotland

(CAS), our 61 member Citizen Advice Bureaux (CAB), the Citizen Advice consumer helpline, and the Extra Help Unit, form Scotland's largest independent advice network. Advice provided by our service is free, independent, confidential, impartial and available to everyone. Our self-help website provides information on rights and helps people solve their problems.



Learn more about Land Value Taxation and its benefits to wealth distribution, public investment, housing, the environment, economic recovery and sustainable growth. LVT is Federal Party Policy 'for the long term' – but Scotland can adopt it now.

Contact: scotland@libdemsalter.org.uk or see libdemsalter.org.uk and follow on Twitter @libdemsalter



Association of Liberal Democrat Councillors

Association of Scottish Liberal Democrat Councillors represents councillors and provides advice, information and resources for all activists, candidates and councillors. Visit our stand to join ASLDC and get access to our templates, ideas, advice and our member products like free campaigning websites and Connect Casework.



Liberal Youth Scotland

is the Youth Wing of the Scottish Liberal Democrats. As an associated organisation we build campaigns around the issues our members care about. We also have representatives at all levels of the party and contribute to campaigns and recruiting members. Come and see what we do!



Come and find out what Scottish Liberal Democrat Women (SLDW) are doing to help get more women elected, increase female influence on policy and make the party a more equal place. Do you want to be an MP, lead a committee or change party policy? We can show you how!

Friday 26th February

Simple campaign activity you can do now for 2016 and beyond

East Drawing Room, 10.15-11.00

Attracting more diverse candidates

West Drawing Room, 11.00-12.00

How to get more volunteers and how to organise them

East Drawing Room, 14.00-14.45

Adding campaign value on social media

East Drawing Room, 14.45-15.15

Saturday 27th February

Simple campaign activity you can do now for 2016 and beyond

09.45-10.30, West Drawing Room

How to make phone calls to voters

10.30-11.15, West Drawing Room

How to get more volunteers and how to organise them

15.45-16.30, West Drawing Room



Friday 26th 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

1 Conference notes:

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

24 Conference believes:

- 25 1) Liberal Democrats believe no one should be enslaved by poverty. Liberal
26 Democrats should therefore seek to eradicate fuel poverty in the estimated

Motions

- 27 101,500 homes (46.7%) across the north of Scotland and islands that suffer from
28 the highest fuel poverty. Reducing the cost of unfair electricity bills is one such way.
- 29 2) Essential universal services such as the delivery of electricity, telecommunications
30 and post should not be subject to locational variations in charging.
- 31 3) The removal of geographic variations in delivery charges for essential services would
32 result in simpler, fairer and more competitive markets with potential benefits to
33 consumers all over the country.
- 34 4) Regulation of essential service provision should encourage competition that works
35 for all consumers. Suppliers should not be able to cherry-pick cheaper-to-serve areas
36 in a way that harms those seeking to provide an affordable service to all.
- 37 5) Universal charging for electricity distribution could be implemented with minimal
38 disruption to existing arrangements by aggregating the existing costs incurred by
39 electricity network operators centrally to determine a level national price. Regional
40 variations in cost could still be published alongside other indicators of performance
41 in an accessible form to strengthen the accountability of network operators.
- 42 Conference resolves:
- 43 a) To work alongside campaigners in the north of Scotland and islands, other affected
44 parts of the UK and consumer organisations in support of a flattened electricity
45 distribution price.
- 46 b) To call on the UK Government to maintain the Hydro Benefit Replacement Scheme
47 and immediately bring forward the introduction of a cross-GB cost recovery
48 mechanism for Shetland's separate distribution network.
- 49 c) To call upon the Scottish Government and all major energy companies to state their
50 position and work with Ofgem and the UK Government in campaigning for action.
- 51 d) To make the case for equivalent reforms, where required, to ensure a high quality
52 universal service can be delivered to all consumers via the UK postal and
53 telecommunications markets, including fast broadband and the delivery of goods
54 purchased via internet or telephone.
- 55 e) To make the design of fair market arrangements to secure a high quality universal
56 service in the provision of essential services a key plank of Liberal Democrat policy
57 for the 2019 European elections and a core principle of the harmonisation of market
58 arrangements across Europe.

Deadline for amendments is midday 24th February.

Send to: linda.wilson@scotlibdems.org.uk

SC2: Tackling climate change and protecting nature

Policy committee

Mover: Tavish Scott MSP

Summator: Charles Dundas

1 Conference believes:

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

14 Conference notes:

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

27 Conference calls for the Scottish Parliament elected in May 2016 to take steps to tackle

28 climate change by:

- 29 1. using its new powers, to address fuel poverty and support warmer homes, including
- 30 by introducing new catch-up zones in remote areas where more flexibility is required
- 31 in the delivery of effective support for hard to heat homes;

- 32 2. introducing new building standards for greater energy efficiency, restarting the
33 review cancelled by the Scottish Government in September 2015, with an ongoing
34 plan to reflect the experience in Denmark where standards were increased
35 incrementally over decades;
- 36 3. maintaining a complete moratorium on planning permission and licensing for
37 fracking and unconventional gas extraction in Scotland for the next parliamentary
38 term to allow for a full assessment of the risks involved and long term implications;
- 39 4. ending all open-cast coal mining in Scotland;
- 40 5. not enacting any substantive cut in Air Passenger Duty;
- 41 6. investing in research into the optimum way of converting domestic heating systems
42 away from dependence upon fossil fuels.

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

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

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

Consultation session: local tax reform

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

A summary guide for the discussion will be produced to help members participate and will be sent to members in advance of conference.

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

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: Kristian Chapman

1 Conference notes with concern that:

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

15 Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to:

- 16 1. A federal UK, noting that all successful federal nation-states maintain pan-national
17 fiscal balancing. FFA would remove pan-UK fiscal transfers (and therefore an
18 important economic stabiliser for Scotland).
- 19 2. A prosperous Scotland and low unemployment.
- 20 3. Government that is transparent and accountable.

21 Conference calls on the Scottish Government to:

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

Deadline for amendments is midday 24th February.

Send to: linda.wilson@scotlibdems.org.uk

12.30-14.00 Lunch

12.45-13.45 Fringes

The afternoon session runs from 14.00 to 16.45.

SC4: A plan for the islands

Orkney Liberal Democrats

Mover: Tavish Scott MSP

Summator: Liam McArthur MSP

1 Conference notes:

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

14 Conference believes:

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

- 30 for home visits to patients on the smaller isles can appear disproportionate when
31 visits more often deliver social interaction than healthcare provision.
- 32 ● NHS Orkney and NHS Shetland have been underfunded by the Scottish
33 Government, as assessed by the Government's own NRAC formula and confirmed
34 by Audit Scotland. This has led to a squeeze on NHS budgets and services, already
35 stretched by the costly nature of the provision of services in island communities.
 - 36 ● Good, reliable and affordable broadband is essential. For the Northern Isles,
37 however, the current broadband roll out is only set to see 75% of premises covered
38 by the end of 2016. This compares to a figure of 84% for the Highlands and Islands
39 region as a whole and 95% nationally.
 - 40 ● Some council ward boundaries do not take account of transport or the differences
41 between island communities, meaning that island residents can be under-
42 represented.
- 43 Conference resolves that a future Islands (Scotland) Bill should:
- 44 A) Subject all legislation proposed by the Scottish Government to 'Island-Proofing' to
45 reflect the needs of island communities. 'Island-Proofing' should be extended to
46 Scottish Government negotiations with the UK Government and with the European
47 Union.
 - 48 B) Give Scottish Government ministers the power, only at the request of local
49 authorities, to issue statutory guidance in relation to island communities which
50 relevant public bodies would be required to adhere to.
 - 51 C) Ensure the ownership and management of the seabed round the islands should be
52 devolved not just to Edinburgh, but passed to the islands.
 - 53 D) Give Highland Council and Argyll and Bute Council the powers over the waters
54 round their islands.
 - 55 E) Reform Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rules to help in efforts to reduce bills
56 and tackle fuel poverty.
 - 57 F) Extend the statutory protection of the Shetland and Orkney seat to Na h-Eileanan an
58 Iar.
 - 59 G) Give island councils the power to make the case to the Local Government Boundary
60 Commission for Scotland for the introduction of single or two member wards where
61 there is a strong geographical case.
 - 62 H) Introduce a working, active "Islands Plan" to provide a framework to address the
63 interests of the islands. A new Scottish Government should be required to present a
64 draft plan within 3 months of its appointment, then subject to consultation before a
65 final plan is set within 6 months of the election to last the full parliamentary term.

66 Conference resolves that a future Islands Plan should:

67 1. Make provision to meet the costly provision of services faced by island communities,
68 such as the recruitment of NHS staff and the provision of mental health services.

69 2. Work with relevant parties, including Loganair, to examine the longer term provision
70 of this lifeline service.

71 3. Ensure significant decisions are not taken without proper consultation, such as the
72 decisions of the SNP Government to exclude business from the Air Discount
73 Scheme and the exclusion of Orkney and Shetland from any mechanism to reduce
74 ferry fares.

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

77 Conference resolves that the Scottish Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Party should:

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

Deadline for amendments is midday 24th February.

Send to: linda.wilson@scotlibdems.org.uk

SC5: Empowering public sector workers

Policy Committee

Mover: Katy Gordon

Summator: Elisabeth Wilson

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

6 A) The extra bureaucratic burden on teachers from the reintroduction of national tests
7 in schools from P1 to S3;

8 B) Complaints from the Scottish Police Federation of a target culture being imposed on
9 rank-and-file officers which they say encourages, “policing for statistics instead of
10 policing for the public”;

11 C) Serious concerns about back office support functions for the police, particularly
12 cutting the number of call centres;

13 D) The crisis in the recruitment and retention of GPs and other health professionals with
14 unprecedented joint statements from the Royal Colleges that the targets and

15 working practices imposed on health workers are “skewing clinical priorities and
16 wasting resources” and that this is a key area to be addressed if NHS Scotland is to
17 remain sustainable;

18 E) Serious teacher recruitment shortfall in the North and Northeast;

19 F) Lack of adequate workforce planning by the Scottish Government given it takes ten
20 years to train a GP; it takes four years to train a nurse, teacher or social worker; it
21 takes two years to train a police officer; and fire fighter training is lengthy and
22 ongoing.

23 Conference also notes:

24 A) The warning from Audit Scotland of the risks of too narrow a focus on targets;

25 B) Experience of public service reform from around the world where frontline
26 professionals have been empowered to use their skills and experience;

27 C) The report of the Christie Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services
28 which noted that “international and cross-sectoral research shows that workers
29 value respect for their knowledge and experience” and “they place a high premium
30 on being valued for what they do, and trusted and empowered to do a good job”
31 and its recommendation for reform “to empower front-line staff and allow them to
32 give of their best”.

33 Conference believes:

34 a) The introduction of national tests in schools from P1 to S3 opens up the return of
35 league tables for primary schools in Scotland, abolished by the Liberal Democrats in
36 the Scottish Government in 2003, a move welcomed by the SNP at the time;

37 b) These national tests also increase the burdens on teachers and league tables will
38 lead to teaching to the test;

39 c) The growing pressures on the health service and the challenges of integrating health
40 and social care will need the skills and judgements of professional public sector
41 workers to be used to the fullest extent, and this is hampered by restrictive top-
42 down target-setting;

43 d) Community safety can be promoted most effectively by decentralising control of the
44 police and respecting the role of individual officers;

45 e) That the need for professional public sector workers to have the discretion to act in
46 the best interests of public service echoes the longstanding value of localism, held
47 by the Scottish Liberal Democrats.

48 Conference calls for:

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

Deadline for amendments is midday 24th February.

Send to: linda.wilson@scotlibdems.org.uk



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

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

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

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

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

20 Conference welcomes:

- 21 ● That Scottish Liberal Democrats have secured the end of illiberal and discredited
22 so-called consensual stop and search through successful amendments to the
23 Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill, in addition to the introduction of a code of conduct
24 for statutory searches.
- 25 ● The establishment of the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility Advisory Group by
26 the Scottish Government, in response to efforts by Scottish Liberal Democrats to
27 raise the age of criminal responsibility to 12 through the Criminal Justice (Scotland)
28 Bill.
- 29 ● The publication of the joint report, *Equally Protected: A review of the evidence on*
30 *the physical punishment of children*, by Children and Young People's Commissioner
31 for Scotland, Children 1st, Barnardo's and the NSPCC.

- 32 ● MSPs voting unanimously to lower the voting age to 16 for all future Scottish
33 Parliament and local government elections, but is deeply disappointed that the UK
34 Government overturned a bid by the House of Lords to extend the franchise to 16
35 and 17-year-olds for the forthcoming EU referendum.
- 36 ● That the Scottish Government's 2016/17 draft budget allocates an additional £50
37 million over five years to mental health, part of which is intended to improve child
38 and adolescent mental health services, but considers that a further £10 million a
39 year is nowhere near enough to provide the step change required, particularly given
40 the share of the NHS budget spent on mental health has consistently fallen.
- 41 However, conference calls for:
- 42 1. The Scottish and UK Governments to incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights
43 of the Child into Scots and UK law by primary legislation in the Scottish Parliament
44 and UK Parliament.
- 45 2. The Scottish Government to ensure that the stop and search code of conduct fully
46 recognises the unique vulnerability of children and to listen to the persuasive
47 evidence against the introduction of a potential new search power for children based
48 on the possession of alcohol.
- 49 3. The Scottish Government to raise the age of criminal responsibility in Scotland to 12
50 by the amendment of Section 41 of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995,
51 bringing it into line with the age of criminal prosecution.
- 52 4. The Scottish Government to legislate to prohibit all physical punishment of children.
- 53 5. The UK Government to extend the voting franchise to 16 and 17-year-olds for all
54 future UK and European Parliament elections and referendums.
- 55 6. Substantially increased investment in child and adolescent mental health services to
56 enable the step-change in prevention, early detection, treatment and recovery that is
57 desperately needed in Scotland, ending the scandal of waits of up to a year and
58 long journeys to access treatment.

Deadline for amendments is midday 24th February.

Send to: linda.wilson@scotlibdems.org.uk

EM1: Emergency motion

The deadline for emergency motions is 5pm on 25th February, to be considered for debate on 26th February or 5pm on 26th February to be considered for debate on 27th February. Send to linda.wilson@scotlibdems.org.uk or if you are submitting an emergency motion for debate on 27th February, leave a copy at the registration desk at conference.



Meet our key candidates for 2016

Close of session 16.45

17.00-18.00 Fringe meetings



Conference dinner

Friday 26th February, 19.00 for 19.30

The Scottish Café and Restaurant at the National Gallery of Scotland

Guest speaker: Alex Cole-Hamilton, candidate for Edinburgh Western and Lothian list

Tickets £45 for welcome drink, 3 courses and coffee

Advance purchase only – call 0131 337 2314



LYS Quiz

Friday 26th February, from 19.30 till late

Canon's Gait pub, 232 Canongate (Royal Mile)

Tickets £5 entry on the door

Join LYS for special guests, prizes and a drink or two

Saturday 27th February

The morning session runs from 09.30 to 12.00.

Party AGM

EM2: Emergency motion or topical issue

The deadline for topical issues is 5pm on 25th February. Send to linda.wilson@scotlibdems.org.uk

The deadline for emergency motions is 5pm on 25th February, to be considered for debate on 26th February or 5pm on 26th February to be considered for debate on 27th February. Send to linda.wilson@scotlibdems.org.uk or if you are submitting an emergency motion for debate on 27th February, leave a copy at the registration desk at conference.

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.



Motions

SC7: Fit For The Future – the pre-manifesto of the Scottish Liberal Democrats

Policy Committee

Mover: TBC

Summator: TBC

- 1 Conference calls for the 2016 Scottish Liberal Democrats' manifesto to be a liberal
- 2 plan founded on liberal values.
- 3 Conference endorses Fit for the Future, the pre-manifesto, and agrees for it to be
- 4 combined with other conference policy motions and then fully costed, using up to
- 5 date information, to form the basis of that manifesto.
- 6 Conference welcomes the commitments in Fit for the Future to:
 - 7 A) Help every individual to achieve their potential by:
 - 8 a) Investing a Penny for Education to transform the life chances of people in
 - 9 Scotland through expanded early years education, a pupil premium, support
 - 10 for colleges and a reversal of council cuts to services;
 - 11 b) Supporting universities and science;
 - 12 c) Providing a diverse and well-educated and trained workforce for Scottish
 - 13 business.
 - 14 B) Tackle social and economic injustices that limit freedom by:
 - 15 a) Transforming mental health, giving it equal status with physical health and
 - 16 expanding access to treatment;
 - 17 b) Investing in more GPs, working in a safe NHS;
 - 18 c) investment in health promotion in areas of deprivation to tackle health
 - 19 inequalities;
 - 20 d) Increasing the amount of socially rented housing being built and re-
 - 21 establishing it as a valid long term option for people;
 - 22 e) Moving to reform the treatment of addiction, treating drug abuse as a health
 - 23 issue and adopting effective evidence-based practice from around the
 - 24 world;
 - 25 f) Building a consensus on the creation of a Scottish social security system
 - 26 that is accessible, fair, suited to the needs of Scotland and underpinned by
 - 27 respect for the dignity of individuals.

Motions

- 28 C) Trust communities and individuals with the power to control their own lives by:
- 29 a) Giving power back to local authorities and communities;
- 30 b) Bringing back democracy into Police Scotland;
- 31 c) Stopping the Scottish Government's ID database;
- 32 d) Supporting diversity, tackling bullying and hate crime, and addressing
- 33 inequality.
- 34 D) Pass on a sustainable legacy which will benefit future generations by:
- 35 a) Meeting climate change targets by investment, including in warm homes and
- 36 renewable heat;
- 37 b) Giving Scottish business the best skills in the world through a diverse and well-
- 38 educated workforce, full super-fast broadband and mobile phone coverage
- 39 across Scotland, and good transport connections;
- 40 c) Supporting a Fair Business Pledge;
- 41 d) Bringing government, business, colleges, universities and councils together in
- 42 regional deals to develop their local economies.
- 43 Conference agrees:
- 44 1) To use the progressive powers over income tax to provide a Penny For Education to
- 45 transform educational attainment in the next five years;
- 46 2) To make a priority for future income tax changes the establishment of a zero-rate
- 47 band in Scotland to raise the personal tax-free allowance above that elsewhere in
- 48 UK, in preference to any proposal to raise the Higher Rate threshold above inflation
- 49 which would benefit only the very wealthy;
- 50 3) To have a competitive level of business taxation.
- 51 Conference further agrees that the challenges ahead to make Scotland fit for the future
- 52 will require a full five year term of focus and therefore must not include a second
- 53 referendum on independence.

Deadline for amendments is midday 24th February.

Send to: linda.wilson@scotlibdems.org.uk

Party Awards

Close of session 16.45

arctic
hare



Scottish 
Liberal Democrats
for Scotland's future.