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Friday 10th

10:00 SC1: Net Zero and support for greener cars - Carried

Submitted by: Liam McArthur MSP and 9 Members

Proposer: Liam McArthur MSP

Summator: TBC

Conference notes:

1. Since the Climate Change Act 2009, the Scottish Government has missed 4 out of 11 annual targets. In 2020, the latest year for which official data is available, Scotland met its interim emissions reduction target, largely driven by a temporary reduction in transport emissions of 26% due to Covid-19 lockdowns. UK-wide data for 2021 suggests Scottish emissions will rebound in 2021.

2. Transport is the largest-emitting sector in Scotland. The Scottish Government's latest Climate Change Plan seeks to dramatically reduce emissions from the transport sector, to 53% of 1990 levels by 2030. As part of this goal, the Scottish Government aims to facilitate the ending of the sale of all new petrol and diesel cars by 2030 and reduce overall car kilometres driven by 20% by 2030 compared to 2019 levels.

3. In its latest Scottish Progress Report (the Report), the UK Climate Change Committee highlights a lack of detail on how Scotland will achieve its emissions reduction targets, stating, "The Scottish Government urgently needs to provide a quantified plan" for achieving these.

4. Regarding the Scottish Government's target to reduce overall car use, the Report notes that the consultation on a full delivery plan is yet to be produced, and that promises to publish a car demand management framework in 2025 will likely come too late to deliver on the target. The Report stresses that these "must be delivered at pace and with ambition" to achieve the 20% objective.

5. In March 2022, the Scottish Government ended its interest-free loan scheme for the purchase of new EVs, despite the fact that EV uptake is lower in Scotland than the rest of the UK, and despite the Report's recommendation that the scheme be maintained to encourage uptake.

6. Scotland has more public EV charging stations per vehicle than the rest of the UK, outside of London. However, while Transport Scotland reports a 2% failure rate for public charging stations, a recent investigation by the BBC suggests this may actually be as high as 25%.

Conference believes:

1. Given average temperatures have already risen by 0.5C in Scotland in the last 30 years, this decade is crucial for achieving net zero in Scotland.

2. Despite establishing ambitious and challenging decarbonisation targets, Scotland lacks detailed, quantified plans to achieve these. This lack of detail, and of a broader coordinated approach from the Scottish Government for reducing emissions, seriously threaten Scotland's ability to meet its net zero targets.

3. Insufficient support for EV uptake, issues with reliable access to and provision of EV charge points, and the lack of a clear trajectory for reducing overall car use all represent major barriers to reducing emissions in the transport sector.

Conference calls for:

1. Scottish Government to reinstate the interest-free loan scheme for the purchase of new electric vehicles in order to encourage the increase of EV use in Scotland
2. Transport Scotland and ChargePlace Scotland to expand significantly the network of charge points, with the right charger in the right place, as well as improve the reliability of Scotland's public EV charging network, ensuring details of charge station failures are accurate and up-to-date, and that failures are reported and resolved in a timely manner.
3. Scottish Government to publish a comprehensive strategy for reducing car kilometres by 20% by 2030 relative to 2019 levels as a matter of urgency, in line with the Climate Change Committee's recommendations, so that there is sufficient time to deliver on this target.

Amendments:

Submitted by: Bruce Wilson and 4 others

Add to the calls for section between Lines 62 and 63. No such lines – but probably a new calls for between 2 and 3 and renumber

'That payment for charging can be facilitated with a simple contactless payment and without the need to download phone apps or order RFID cards.'

Cards:

Liam McArthur MSP	Orkney	called	
Bruce Wilson	Edinburgh South	called	
Sanne Dijkstra-Downie	Edinburgh North & Leith		Called
Flora Sharp	Edinburgh West	called	
Luca Allen	Aberdeenshire East	called	
Michael Crichton	Dundee	called	
Willie Wilson	P&K	called	
Scott Simpson	Glasgow City	called	
Claire McLaren	P&K	called	

Votes:

Amendment – carried unanimously

Motion – carried nem con

11:00 Speech – Christine Jardine MP

11:20 SC2: Supporting resilience in Island Communities - Carried

Submitted by: Beatrice Wishart MSP and 9 Members

Proposer: Beatrice Wishart MSP

Summator: Liam McArthur MSP

Conference notes:

A. Connectivity issues to and between Scotland's island communities and a lack of resilience in lifeline services are driving depopulation, undermining local economies and causing serious disruption to livelihoods.

B. Scotland's ferry service has declined since the SNP Government came to power in 2007 with the rate of vessels being replaced falling to less than one new vessel every three years compared to every fourteen months between 1993 and 2007.

C. The internal ferry fleet in Orkney and Shetland fell below minimum standards in the Scottish Government's National Ferries Plan in 2013 and have been excluded from its successor, the Islands Connectivity Plan, as well as the Strategic Transport Project Review 2 despite obvious concerns about their age, reliability, accessibility and impact on the environment.

D. A lack of adequate freight capacity on the external Northern Isles ferry routes is also having a detrimental impact on the local economies along with the halt to mixed household cabins and repeated delays to advance bookings.

E. The Scottish Government's delayed rollout of superfast broadband continues to have a disproportionate impact on rural and island communities.

F. The vulnerability of island communities, where damage to infrastructure can cause serious disruption, has been evidenced by Shetland's telecommunications outage in October 2022 due to damage to subsea cables and power cuts in December 2022 due to severe weather.

G. Proposals to build a 220MW subsea cable between Orkney and the Scottish mainland, which would better share the islands' world-leading renewable potential and in turn help achieve our national net-zero targets and energy security needs.

H. The requirements of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 for relevant authorities specified in the Act to review the impact of their policies, strategies and services on island communities and concerns that these requirements have become box ticking exercises.

Conference believes:

i – Island communities across the UK should remain viable 29 places to live, work and study.

ii – Depopulation can be reversed with proper support for transport and communications infrastructure, helping to boost resilience and improve the sustainability of those communities affected.

iii – Policies, strategies and services developed by governments and public authorities must reflect the particular needs of island communities.

iv – Scotland's island communities have been let down by the SNP Government and deserve fairer support and more equitable treatment.

Conference calls for:

1. The Scottish Government to launch a public inquiry into the construction of ferries in Scotland, in particular the construction of vessels 801 and 802 at Ferguson Marine shipyard which are more than 5 years behind schedule with costs rising above £250m to the taxpayer.

2. The Scottish and UK Governments to jointly commission feasibility studies into fixed links, such as tunnels and bridges, between island communities to improve connectivity resilience, particularly in Shetland, and ensure investment continues in lifeline services whilst these feasibility studies are underway.

3. The Scottish Government to ensure the recently established ferries taskforce with Orkney Islands Council agrees the procurement and delivery of new, low-emission ferries which are supported by fair government funding.
4. The Scottish Government to reverse the exclusion of internal air and ferry services operated by local authorities in the Islands Connectivity Plan.
5. The Scottish Government to increase freight capacity on island ferry routes to ensure reliable and adequate provision all year round, particularly at peak times for movement of livestock on Northern Isles routes.
6. The Scottish Government to deliver Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) on Pentland Firth routes, fulfilling their promise to do so in 2018 and following the delivery of RET on West Coast routes in 2007.
7. The Scottish Government to reinvest the £5m fund which was allocated to the Islands Bond scheme to support the resilience of island communities.
8. Ofgem to commit to delivering a 220MW interconnector between Orkney and the Scottish mainland to strengthen renewable energy development.
9. The Scottish and UK Governments to pool resources and accelerate efforts to plug remaining gaps in the provision of superfast broadband and 4G mobile coverage in island communities.
10. The Scottish and UK Governments to improve communications resilience for island communities, ensuring support in the event of power or communications outages.
11. The Scottish Government to ensure that the spirit of the Islands (Scotland) Act is upheld with robust and meaningful assessment of the impact of policies, strategies and services on island communities.

Cards:

Beatrice Wishart MSP	Shetland	called
Claire McLaren P&K		called
Alistair Carmichael	Orkney & Shetland	called
Jack Norquoy	Orkney	called
Jenni Lang	Edinburgh North & Leith	called
Liam McArthur MSP	Orkney	called
Fraser Graham	Edinburgh South	called

Votes:

Motion – Carried nem con

EM1 - A better alternative to the small boats legislation - Carried

Conference notes with concern the Conservative UK Government's alarming Illegal Migration Bill, which was introduced to Parliament on 7th March.

Conference further notes that:

- I. Under this policy, anyone who enters the UK via a small boat crossing will be immediately detained and deported to another country as soon as possible.

II. An analysis of Home Office statistics by the Refugee Council showed that in 2022, 48% of those who crossed the channel were from just 5 countries, all with asylum grant rates over 80% - Afghanistan, Eritrea, Sudan, Syria and Iran.

III. The 1951 Refugee Convention, of which the UK is a signatory, confirms that asylum seekers have a right to not be penalised for illegal entry to a country.

Conference believes that the Government's plans to stop small boats:

A. Is immoral, ineffective and incredibly costly for taxpayers.

B. Will do nothing to address the criminal gangs responsible for arranging these dangerous crossings, and instead punishes the victims of human trafficking.

C. Betrays the UK's proud tradition of providing sanctuary to refugees fleeing war and persecution, and breaches our commitments under international law.

Conference further believes that the best way to stop these dangerous crossings and tackle smuggling and trafficking is to provide safe and legal routes to sanctuary for refugees.

Conference calls on the UK Government to:

1. Immediately scrap the Illegal Migration Bill.
2. Fix the broken asylum system by taking powers away from the Home Office and establishing a new, dedicated unit to make decisions quickly and fairly.
3. Provide safe and legal routes to sanctuary for refugees from all countries, including:
 - 3.1. An expanded, properly-funded refugee resettlement scheme.
 - 3.2. A new scheme to resettle unaccompanied child refugees from elsewhere in Europe.
 - 3.3. Reuniting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in Europe with family members in the UK.
 - 3.4. Expanding the scope of refugee family reunion, including enabling unaccompanied child refugees in the UK to sponsor close family members to join them.
 - 3.5. Humanitarian visas that would allow asylum seekers to travel to the UK safely to proceed with their claims.

Conference calls on the UK Government and Scottish Government to:

I. Work together to ensure that refugees are welcomed across the UK with compassion and dignity.

Cards:

Alistair Carmichael, Orkney & Shetland called
Jacquie Bell East Lothian called
Sheila Ritchie Aberdeenshire East called
Sir Robert Smith Aberdeenshire West called
Christine Jardine MP Edinburgh West called
Fraser Graham Edinburgh South called
Lorna Cammock South Lanarkshire called
Lin Macmillan East Lothian called
Richard Coxon Edinburgh North & Leith called
Michael Turvey Aberdeenshire West called

Willie Wilson P&K called

Votes:

Motion -

12:30 Lunch

14:00 SC3: New Hope - A Blueprint for CAMHS & Psychological Therapies - Carried

Submitted by: Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP and 9 Members

Proposer: Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP

Summator: TBC

Conference notes:

A. The Scottish Government has never met the 18-week waiting time target, introduced in 2014, for either children and young people (CAMHS) or adults (psychological therapies).

B. The Scottish Government has promised to clear mental health waiting lists by March 2023.

C. The mental health waiting times target was missed for 1 in 5 children when the Health Secretary launched the NHS Recovery Plan in August 2021. A year later this stood at 1 in 3. Scottish Liberal Democrat research has also revealed hundreds waiting over two years.

D. Polling in December 2022 for Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity showing 6 in 10 parents believe their child has experienced mental ill health.

E. The Royal College of Psychiatrists finding there is only one consultant psychiatrist for every 10,250 people and only one CAMHS consultant psychiatrist for every 16,351 children.

F. £38m was cut from the mental health budget in 2022/23 in response to the cost of living crisis.

Conference believes:

i. The SNP Government has let down a generation of children and young people.

ii. Poor mental health prevents people from getting on in life, and that the shadow of lockdown and soaring cost of living have materially worsened Scotland's mental health.

iii. Staff, services and early interventions have never received the resources they need, meaning they are overwhelmed and people routinely can't access help quickly, easily or close to home.

iv. Scottish Liberal Democrats have led the campaign for better mental health in Scotland and are proud of our achievements, including winning £120 million more for mental health in the 2021/22 Scottish Budget and leading Parliament in declaring a mental health emergency.

Conference calls on the Scottish Government to produce a new blueprint to cut mental health waiting times and give all of those waiting new hope through:

1) Returning to appointing a dedicated Mental Health Minister.

2) Increasing the number of training places for psychiatrists and clinical psychologists, especially those specialising in CAMHS.

- 3) A new target for additional mental health professionals working with GPs, in A&Es, and alongside police and prison staff.
- 4) A new target for the rollout of counsellors to ensure access in all schools and at every stage of education.
- 5) Adding counsellors to NHS workforce planning so their skills can help more people.
- 6) Listening to the experience of frontline mental health staff through a staff assembly.
- 7) Ramping up training so that every workplace can be offered the benefit of a mental health first aider.
- 8) A single point of contact for those on waiting lists so people only need tell their story once.
- 9) The creation of new dedicated specialist mental health beds for children and young people north of Dundee, and beds for new mothers north of Livingston, ending the scandals of long journeys for treatment and people being separated from their support networks.
- 10) A fresh ambition to reduce waiting times. 18 weeks is too long to wait for mental health treatment to begin and should not be the normal target in the long-term. When that target is finally met, for the first time ever, it should trigger a new ambition to progressively lower the target to 9 weeks.

Note: This presents the current situation in CAMHS and Psychological Therapies with some new calls in Calls for 1 and 10 which would provide some slightly newer party policy on mental health, an area where the party has done a lot of good work.

Cards:

Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP	Edinburgh West	called
Jack Norquoy	Orkney	called
Conrad Wood	Aberdeenshire East	called
Christine Murdoch	West Dunbartonshire	called
Fiona Corps	North East & Central Fife	called
Tim Brett	North East & Central Fife	called
Grant Toghill	Paisley & Renfrewshire	called
Neil Alexander	Moray	called
		Did not put in a card to me
Ross Stalker	Paisley & Renfrewshire	called
Lewis Younie	Edinburgh West	
Lorna Cammock	South Lanarkshire	called
Louise Young	Edinburgh West	called

Votes:

Motion – carried nem con

15:00 Speech - Sir Ed Davey MP Leader of the Liberal Democrats

15:30 SC4: Taking Action on the Cost of Learning Crisis - Carried

Submitted by: Dundee Liberal Democrats

Proposer: Lewis Miller

Summator: TBC

Conference notes with concern:

A) Recent NUS figures stating that 12% of students in Scotland have experienced homelessness, 35% percent have considered withdrawing from their studies due to financial difficulties, and that a quarter have been unable to pay their rent.

B) That existing financial support is insufficient, with the NUS similarly finding that 65% of students who have applied for discretionary funding have not received sufficient support.

C) That the Mental Health Foundation's Thriving Learners report has found 65% of Further Education students in Scotland to be suffering low mental well-being and that 37% of Further Education Students had experienced food insecurity.

D) That the effect of the cost of living crisis on students has a detrimental effect on their learning; requiring students to spend more time at work and away from studies, the emotional and mental strain created by poverty and the cost of living, and the uneven effect the cost of further and higher education has on potential students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds or with additional support needs.

E) Conference notes similarly the already disrupted educations of existing and prospective students due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Conference believes that:

i) The cost of learning crisis limits; the opportunities to learn for existing students to engage with their learning, future students concerned about the affordability of education, and the whole of society from the damage to students' education.

ii) That the current level and structure of support for students in further and higher education is insufficient and letting down Scotland's students.

iii) The value of education is not just beneficial for the individual but also for society as a whole.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment:

1. To widening access to universities for all, including those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and those with caring responsibilities.

2. To increase the number of places at Scottish Universities for Scottish students.

3. To increase support for student mental health services at Universities.

4. To remove the requirement to repay student loans if incomes are below £25,000.

Conference calls for the Scottish Government to:

1) Increase the amount of available money to students through Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS), allowing student the choice to borrow more if they feel that is the correct choice for them.

2) Provide greater financial support to existing student support schemes available through Universities, particularly as these come under increased demand.

3) Show leadership on this issue and provide guidance to students in how to access existing funds and services at Universities and Colleges and aiding in the sharing of best practice between Universities and Colleges.

4) Urgently increase financial support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and/or with additional needs through the provision of Scottish grants and bursaries.

5) Recognise and take action to apply these policies beyond University undergraduates, particularly regarding further education, apprenticeships, post-graduate learning, and post-graduate research.

6) To take urgent action to provide support to University and wider mental health services.

Cards:

Lewis Miller Dundee called

Daniel Coleman Dundee called

Fraser Graham Edinburgh South called

Molly Nolan Highland called

Lewis Younie Edinburgh West called

Paul McGarry Central called

Michael Crichton Dundee called

Stephen Harte Edinburgh North & Leith called

Robert Brown Rutherglen & Hamilton West called

Louise Young Edinburgh West called

George Lewes Edinburgh North & Leith called

Thomas Arensbach Dundee called

Votes:

Motion – Carried nem con

16:30 In Conversation with Christine Jardine & Sir Ed Davey

17:00 End of Day

Saturday 11th

09:30 Private Business

09:50 CA1: Constitutional Amendment - Defeated

Submitted by: North Edinburgh and Leith Liberal Democrats

In Article C6 add at end:

Any member with an Membership Address outwith Scotland shall be referred to for the purposes of this Constitution as a “member outwith Scotland” or a “MOS”.

Add new article H7A:

MOS shall have the right to participate in internal candidate selections, provided that they have been a member of the Scottish Liberal Democrats for at least 12 months.

When a MOS joins the Scottish Liberal Democrats, or when a member becomes a MOS by moving their Membership Address outwith Scotland, they will be asked to allocate themselves to one Scottish Parliamentary Constituency within which they shall be considered to be an eligible voter.

They will then be able to participate in the selection of Scottish Parliament Constituency candidates under Articles H11 and H12 in this allocated constituency.

For the selection of Scottish Parliament Regional candidates under Article H20, they shall be considered an eligible voter for the Region in which their Constituency lies.

Such allocation can be changed at the request of the MOS, but not more than once in any five-year period.

MOS shall not be eligible voters for the purposes of Article H26 for the selection of council candidates.

Cards:

Richard Coxon	Edinburgh North & Leith	called
Stephen Harte	Edinburgh North & Leith	called
John Lawrie	Edinburgh South	called
Fraser Graham	Edinburgh South	called

Votes:

Motion - defeated

10:20 Speech - Kira Rudik Leader of Golos, Ukraine

10:40 SC5: Loss and Damage – carried unamended

Submitted by: David Green and 9 Members

Mover: David Green

Summator: TBC

Conference notes with concern:

1. Floods and cyclones in the last 12 months have washed away homes, schools, roads, habitats, and the rights of people to lead their own lives across Pakistan and Bangladesh.
2. In East Africa, the climate crisis has caused the worst drought in over 40 years with the World Food Bank warning 23 million people face severe hunger.
3. The economic damage of the climate crisis with African countries facing GDP growth falling by up to 64% by the end of the century, according to a study by international development charity Christian Aid.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to:

1. Spending 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income on aid, prioritising development that both helps the poorest and ties in with our strategic international objectives on gender equality, climate change and the environment, human rights, conflict prevention and tackling inequality.

Conference welcomes:

1. The historical agreement at COP27 to create a loss and damage fund to help communities in the Global South adapt to the effects of the climate crisis.
2. The £7 million total commitment of the Scottish Government to enable communities to take direct action to address the impacts of loss and damage.

Conference believes:

1. While the agreement at COP27 to create a loss and damage fund is welcome, leadership is needed to resolve the decisions concerning who pays in and who is eligible.
2. Wealthy countries have historically done more to cause the crisis, but it is poor countries and the most marginalised that are facing the gravest consequences, and therefore the UK has an obligation to act.
3. Without urgent action and investment, up to 3.6 billion people living in climate-vulnerable countries [according to the IPCC] have little hope of adapting to the devastating effects of both climate stresses such as sea level rises, and increasingly intense climate shocks.
4. The cost-of-living crisis is devastating for the people living in poverty in the UK, but so too globally, and rejects the false choice between responding at home and fulfilling the UK's responsibilities to the world's most in need.

Conference calls on Scottish Liberal Democrat parliamentarians to campaign for:

1. The UK Government to formally establish a loss and damage fund, separate from and in addition to the international aid budget, to pay towards damages to lives, livelihoods and infrastructure.
2. The UK Government and Scottish Government to adopt and consult on a "polluter pays" approach and require fossil fuel companies to contribute to the costs of loss and damage.
3. The UK Government and Scottish Government to work together and with other countries to ensure loss and damage finance - and the decision making on how best to spend it - is put in the hands of the poorest and most vulnerable communities affected.

[Amendments:](#)

Submitted by Michael Turvey and 4 others

Amend "Calls on" item 2 as follows: "The UK Government and Scottish Government to adopt and consult on a "polluter pays" approach and require fossil fuel companies to contribute to the costs of loss and damage. [...] by developing an effective carbon economy for consumer goods, whereby the carbon footprint of a product is measured, taxed and labelled in a consumer-friendly manner to enable consumers to take informed and empowered choices about the product they buy."

Cards:

Michael Turvey	Aberdeenshire West	called
Charles Dundas	Edinburgh North & Leith	called
David Green	Highland	called
Conrad Wood	Aberdeenshire East	called
Helen Smith	Edinburgh North & Leith	called
Ross Stalker	Paisley & Renfrewshire	not called
Jeff Goodhall	Aberdeenshire East	called
Sanne Dykestra-Downie	Edinburgh North & Leith	called
Malcolm Bruce	Aberdeenshire West	not called
Chris Lewcock	Highland	not called

Votes:

Amendment – count required for:28 Against:29 - defeated
Motion – carried

11:40 Q&A with Kira Rudik

Jacqui Bell	East Lothian
Lorna Cammock	South Lanarkshire
Alan Bain	Edinburgh West
Bruce Wilson	Edinburgh South
Fraser Graham	Edinburgh South
Jeremy Purvis	Borders

12:30 Lunch

14:00 EM2 - Violence in Schools - Carried

Conference notes:

1. According to the trade union Unison, 22,507 violent incidents were recorded by Scotland's 32 councils between April 2021 and March 2022 with the majority against teachers and classroom assistants.
2. The level of violence in schools has increased since the pandemic.
3. Staff at Bannerman High School in Glasgow went on strike because of unacceptable levels of violence.
4. EIS members at Northfield Academy in Aberdeen balloted for strike action because they'd had enough of the violence and behaviour issues occurring without adequate support.
5. The video of the violent attack at Waid Academy in Fife.

6. The response to violence in schools has been held back by a fall in specialist teachers, long waits for mental health treatment, a reduction in classroom assistants, insufficient educational psychologists and not enough staffed spaces to provide appropriate support to pupils.

Conference believes:

1. There is a conspiracy of silence and of under-reporting among the Scottish political and education leadership who cannot admit the severity of the problems or that the current approach is just not working.
2. The failure to admit there is a problem undermines trust with teachers and staff.
3. Mainstreaming and inclusion is right but it can't be done on the cheap.
4. While restorative approaches can help tackle the root causes of violent behaviour, and simply punishing the symptoms can cause a child or young person to be resentful of punishment rather than reflective of their actions, this requires resourcing.

This conference calls for:

1. Sufficient investment in core education provision.
2. Teachers and staff to receive the resources, support and training to respond effectively and reduce the violence.
3. More specialist provision such as classroom assistants, educational psychologists and specialist teachers.
4. Cuts to the waits for child and adolescent mental health services.

Cards:

Willie Rennie MSP	North East Fife	called
Aude Boubaker-Calder	Dunfermline, West Fife & Kirkcaldy	called
Sean Dillon	Fife	called
Fraser Macpherson	Dundee	called
Michael Crichton	Dundee	
Galen Milne	Stirling & Clack	called
Christine Murdoch	West Dunbartonshire	called
Beryl Leatherland	Dunfermline & West Fife	

Votes:

Motion - carried

14:30 SC6: Generating energy and renewables wealth for Scottish Communities –
carried unamended

Submitted by: Highland Liberal Democrats

Proposer: Cllr Angus MacDonald

Summator: TBC

This motion seeks to enable more communities to gain from a higher share of Scotland's vast renewable energy wealth by reforming the way in which community benefit is paid by windfarm developers.

Conference notes that:

1. Windfarms have become extremely profitable due to the price of gas increasing globally, largely driven by the Russian invasion of Ukraine combined with the closing of legacy nuclear and coal power stations.
2. Currently Scottish Government guidance suggests that communities 'near' an onshore windfarm should benefit from £5,000 per megawatt (with inflationary increases), regardless of the value of electricity generated.
3. Under Scottish law there is no statutory obligation for wind farm developers to pay community benefit, nor any planning consideration, rather it is viewed as a voluntary contribution.
4. Currently an average windfarm of 12 medium-sized 2.3MW turbines generates £138,000 per year for communities located in the development's area of benefit. Communities in close proximity to several windfarms can generate an annual income of several hundred thousand pounds.
5. The geographic boundaries that constitute an area of benefit are inconsistent and ill defined in legislation. Many communities just beyond the area boundary miss out on financial benefit entirely, which has created large wealth disparities amongst rural communities.
6. In recent months, the revenue generated at the current wholesale energy price has risen from £30 per megawatt hour to £150 per megawatt hour. A 12-turbine wind farm, each turbine generating 2.3 megawatts constructed today will generate £13.4 million worth of electricity per year before costs. More recent turbines are much larger and therefore achieve substantially higher revenue.

Conference believes that:

1. The growing substantial profits from wind power in Scotland should be rebalanced in favour of Scottish communities.
2. A fairer community benefit settlement could be used to distribute funds to address increasing rates of fuel poverty in rural Scotland.
3. Community benefit funds should be distributed within a wider geographic area in order to benefit as many people as possible.
4. The Scottish and UK Governments both have a role to play in rebalancing benefit schemes in favour of local communities.

Conference calls for the Scottish Government to:

1. Implement new guidance to developers to state that 5% of the gross revenue of new windfarm developments should be paid to community benefit funds.
2. Implement new guidance to developers with the aim of increasing the number of communities around new windfarm developments which receive shares of community benefit funds, to limit the wealth disparity amongst rural communities.

Conference calls for the UK Government to:

1. Enshrine community benefit rights in law, to ensure that communities surrounding Scottish windfarms have a statutory right to benefit from local renewable energy development.

Amendments:

Delete "Calls on the Scottish Govt" section

Replace "Calls on the UK govt" section as follows:

"Implement new statutory rights for local authorities to raise a local tax of up to 5% of all the profits made on any new onshore wind development in their area over the life-cycle of the asset. The tax rate shall be set by the local authority prior to the development of the field."

Cards:

Jacqui Bell	East Lothian		
Eugene Clarke	Central and North East Fife		
Molly Nolan	Highland	called	
Angus Macdonald	Highland	called	
Chris Lewcock	Highland		
Declan Gallacher	Highland	called	
Lorna Stirling	Aberdeenshire East	called	
Michael Turvey	Aberdeenshire West	called	
Jeff Goodhall	Aberdeenshire East		
Liam McArthur	Orkney	called	
Scott Simpson	Glasgow City	called	
Conrad Wood	Aberdeenshire East	called	

Votes:

Amendment – defeated

Motion - carried

[15:10 Financial Appeal – Willie Rennie](#)

[15:20 Speech - Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP Leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats](#)

[15:45 SC7: The Evidence for a Four-Day Week – Carried as amended](#)

Submitted by: Scottish Policy Committee

Proposer: Fiona Campbell Trevor

Summator: Fiona Campbell Trevor

Conference notes:

A. The decision of the Scottish Liberal Democrat Autumn 2022 Conference to reference back the motion SC2: Moving to a 4-Day Working Week to the Policy Committee and the stated reason for this – a lack of clear calls in relation to workers beyond the Scottish Government.

B. A four-day week is when people work one less day per week but are still paid the same salary. It is not the same as compressed hours (working four longer days instead of the traditional five).

C. Research published by the Productivity Institute in December 2021, Scotland's Productivity Challenge: Exploring the issues, found that Scotland's productivity "has been very weak" over the last decade and trails behind similar foreign economies.

D. Scottish Liberal Democrat freedom of information requests have found mental health-related absences soaring across the public sector.

E. The think tank Autonomy has published a number of reports on the four-day week. The benefits reportedly include making it easier to attract and retain talent, increases in productivity, reduced childcare and commuting costs, a reduction in harmful emissions, reductions in work-related stress, reduced sick days and long term sickness, and an improvement to the work/life balance.

F. The Chartered Institute of Personnel Development's report published in October 2022, The four-day week: Scottish employer perspectives, and its key findings:

a. Employees' preference for working patterns differ and many don't currently work a five-day week.

b. 63% of people say they are happy with their hours, 30% would like to work fewer hours, but only 12% are willing to work fewer hours for less pay.

c. A challenge for those employers that had reduced working hours was that it did not suit everybody in their organisation. The CIPD also considered that it may be that shorter working hours are possible in some industries more than others.

d. A shorter week raises the question of how to manage atypical or non-salaried workers.

G. There are several trials of shorter working weeks for staff across a range of organisations:

a. The largest pilot of shorter working hours was in Iceland, replacing 40 hours with 35 or 36 hours for 2,500 government workers. However, many of the other trials around the world are either small in scale or have yet to begin.

b. A six-month trial involving 70 UK companies in which 3,000 people worked fewer hours for 100% pay concluded on 6 December 2022, with an evaluation due to be published in 2023 and overseen by researchers from Oxford University, Cambridge University, Boston College (Massachusetts) and Autonomy.

c. The Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2021/22 committed to establish a £10m pilot fund to support companies explore the benefits of a four-day working week and the 2022 Resource Spending Review committed to invite parts of the public sector to participate.

d. Liberal Democrat-run South Cambridgeshire is the first council to implement a four day working week pilot from January 2023, operating for three months for 470 desk based staff, with further trials involving bin crews to follow if it is successful.

e. The Scottish Liberal Democrat Executive approved a proposal from the Chief Executive to introduce a trial of a 32-hour four-day working week for two centrally employed Scottish Liberal Democrat staff, to operate from 1 December 2022 to 31 May 2023.

Conference believes:

i. Everyone deserves the opportunity to work hard, be paid a fair wage, achieve their potential and build a good life for themselves, their family and their community.

ii. Companies and organisations should be forward-thinking in how they provide the best working environment for their staff, helping to retain and recruit talented people.

Both employers and employees benefit from flexible workplace policies and respect for a healthy work-life balance. Staff who are happier are more motivated and creative.

iii. Scottish Liberal Democrats must be conscious of the context of the serious challenges to the continued operation of many businesses, organisations and public services, including the cost of living crisis, the impact of Brexit, acute labour shortages and the lasting impacts of the pandemic.

iv. All organisations attracted to the purpose of a four-day week should take the opportunity to experience it and demonstrate its benefits to others. The culture of a five-day week is deep-seated and public attitudes are embedded. A different approach would need to be backed by robust evidence if it is to persuade organisations that it is in the best interests of their staff, profit and sustainability.

v. A four-day week should not be imposed on any organisation and there should be recognition that it will not necessarily suit every employer or employee and that reported benefits are unlikely to be replicated across all sectors.

vi. It could be problematic for the economy and public services if dividing lines on the four-day week were to be drawn based on factors such as whether roles are low wage/high-wage, knowledge-based/non-knowledge-based, or public/private sector.

vii. Post-covid, where recruitment is harder, and the mental health and wellbeing of employees is more important than ever, we should be looking to new ways of working which places emphasis on wellbeing whilst ensuring productivity and service levels are not diminished, and that those priorities are not mutually exclusive.

Conference calls for:

1. The Scottish Government to bring forward overdue specific proposals and launch the pilots it announced in September 2021.
2. The Scottish Liberal Democrats and other organisations engaged in pilots to fully evaluate these and produce findings that can be drawn upon by other parts of their organisations, and to share this more widely where this is appropriate and possible.
3. The Scottish and UK Governments to establish a four-nations expert group to bring together the learning on four-day week arrangements and pilots, monitor the benefits and barriers experienced by organisations, and to establish a knowledge-hub and advice service available to both employees and the full range of employers from large public sector organisations to micro businesses.
4. Scottish Liberal Democrat elected representatives to encourage the rollout of further four-day working week pilots, including through progressive public procurement.
5. All Scottish Liberal Democrat elected representatives to support fair work, flexible working for a better work/life balance, greater employee ownership and staff representation on boards, the right to disconnect, the rollout of the living wage and stable contracts, measures to protect against the casualisation of the workforce, and to tackle Scotland's weak productivity through policies that will lift business investment in innovation and research and development, offer start-up and scale-up help, and fill the gaps in digital skills and people management.

Amendments:

Insert at end of Conference notes G (b), "Further notes that analysis of the trial was published on 21 February 2023, and that of the 61 companies that completed the trial, 56 said they would continue with the four-day week, and of those 18 said the policy was a permanent change."

Cards:

Fiona Campbell Trevor Edinburgh Westcalled

Joe McCauley Glasgow called

Votes:

Amendment – carried

Motion – carried as amended

16:00 SC8: Scotland, the United Kingdom and Europe - Carried

Submitted by: Rutherglen & Hamilton West Liberal Democrats

Proposer: Councillor Robert Brown

Summator: Nigel Lindsay

This Conference of the Scottish Liberal Democrats:

1. declares its faith in a European future for Scotland and the United Kingdom, with Scotland as part of a federal UK in membership of the European Union;
2. deplores the continuing economic, social and political damage done to our people and to the international standing of our country in the world by the Conservative Government's Brexit arrangements;
3. notes that, without Brexit, GDP would now be £120bn higher, and tax revenues £40bn higher every year;
4. notes that the UK is the only major European economy not to have returned to its pre-pandemic size;
5. regrets the dishonesty of Conservative and other Leave politicians who claimed that Brexit would mean £350m a week more for the NHS, while the reality has been £750m a week less; and the refusal of the Labour leadership to face the facts about Brexit;
6. welcomes the growing majority view shown by recent opinion polls that Brexit was a mistake which has delivered negligible benefits and has done substantial damage to Britain.

Conference notes the overwhelming evidence that the supposed benefits of Brexit have proved to be a fantasy, and recognises that Britain now exercises less control over the forces that determine its future than it did inside the EU, at a time when the challenges the world faces, from the climate and nature emergencies to an aggressive Russia and an assertive China, require more international cooperation, not less.

Conference calls on Scottish Liberal Democrat MPs, MSPs, and party members and activists to organize a long-term, sustained communications campaign explaining the benefits of EU membership and building popular support for re-joining the Single Market, the Customs Union, and the EU.

Conference calls on the Scottish Government:

1. to use every opportunity to underline how Brexit has harmed the interests of people who live and work in Scotland;
2. to use all means at its disposal to maintain and develop mutually beneficial relations between itself and the European Union; and
3. to work with the next UK government to develop closer partnership with Europe and re-entry to the Single Market and Customs Union as steps towards renewed membership of the EU, recognising that such arrangements would enable Scotland to benefit from being inside both the UK and EU trading arrangements.

Conference calls on the next UK government:

1. to make a Declaration of Intent that the era of Brexit is over;
2. to abandon the disastrous plan to make trade even more difficult by "reviewing or revoking" EU rules which the UK still accepts, a move which the CBI says is likely to produce "a further drag on growth";

3. to develop a roadmap towards re-joining the EU and initially re-joining the Single Market and Customs Union, thereby

- bringing full access to EU and EFTA economies for UK goods and services,
- resolving many of the problems around the Northern Ireland Protocol,
- helping to create a more united UK,
- opening up freedom of movement
- helping to relieve the pressures caused by Brexit for British enterprises and public services, including the NHS and social care, and
- enlarging opportunities for British citizens;

4. In the meantime to seek the closest possible alignment between the UK and the EU including the maintenance of strong trade, diplomatic, developmental, defence and security, judicial, educational, health and scientific cooperation, and specifically to deepen the trade relationship with the EU by:

a. maintaining dynamic alignment with EU legislative and regulatory changes in order to avoid regulatory divergence between the two jurisdictions;

b. a comprehensive review of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, noting that, in any case, it allows for the UK to join EU programmes by mutual agreement;

c. a commitment not to lower standards of labour, environmental, animal welfare and consumer protection in the UK.

Conference calls for Liberal Democrats, as the leading pro-European Party, to put campaigning for our European future at the heart of our approach, linked to long overdue constitutional reforms, including proportional representation for Westminster elections within a federal UK, to enable the populist misrepresentations which produced Brexit to be overcome.

Cards:

Fraser Graham Edinburgh South called
Jacquie Bell East Lothian called
Sheila Ritchie Aberdeenshire East called
Arietta Knezevic Dundee called
Robert Brown Rutherglen & Hamilton West called
Norman Rae Rutherglen and Hamilton West called
Nigel Lindsay East Lothian called
Vaughan Moody East Dunbartonshire called
Ewan Redpath Edinburgh South called
Lewis Gordon Miller Dundee called
Willie Wilson Perth & Kinross

Votes:

Motion – carried

17:00 Close of Conference

Party Awards

Award	For	New Recipient
The Helen Watt Quaich	Diversity	Rachel Palma Randall
The Sheila Tennant award	SYL member LYS	Ed Thornley
The John Morrison award	Local Government	Fraser Macpherson
The Russell Johnston Trophy	Speech to Conference	Fraser Graham

The Ray Michie Quaich	Membership	Rutherglen Local Party
The Robbie Simpson award	Service to the party over many years	Not awarded