



Autumn Conference 2017 |

Day-By-Day Motion Summaries

Your Liberal Britain would like to acknowledge and thank Charlotte Baker, Maxine Johnson and Sam Lawson for delivering this initiative along with the help and kind support of each of the authors of the motions included herein.

Please note: Your Liberal Britain is neutral in all Conference debates. The motion summaries presented in this document are written by the authors of the motions in question, at Your Liberal Britain's invitation, with the intention of providing an accessible summary of each motion only.

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Overview

We think that one of the greatest things about the Lib Dems is our party's approach to giving every member an equal voice in shaping who we are and what we stand for.

To that end, any member can propose the adoption of a new policy, or a new way of working internally. They do this by submitting a motion for debate at Conference. Members can also submit amendments to those motions. Members at Conference then vote for or against the amendments and the motion as a whole.

But motions are hard to read: they're written in a very technical format. To help you out, we've asked each author of the motions up for debate at Autumn Conference 2017 to write a short summary explaining what each motion is about.

This pack is your guide to the motions being debated at Autumn Conference 2017, each of which will be subject to debate at the times indicated in the following pages. We hope you find it useful!

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09.25 - 10.10 F4 Learning to Communicate in English

This motion is submitted by members of Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary (LD4SOS) and others. It recognises the difficulties experienced by asylum seekers in developing an understanding of both written and spoken English and calls upon the government to develop an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) strategy for England similar to that in the devolved administrations with appropriate funding provided.

It recognises that being able to communicate in English is one of the most crucial elements in enabling asylum seekers and others that are now residing in the UK to contribute to the local community and ultimately gain employment, as so many express the strong desire to do.

ESOL teaching is best done locally and it calls for local authorities to have key responsibilities in the deliverance of such strategies.

11.40 - 12.30 F6 The Paris Agreement and UK Climate Change Policy

The motion aims to allow conference to debate the party's approach to climate change, a key part of our environmental policy programme.

It reiterates existing policy: the aim of a zero-carbon Britain by 2050 (i.e. a 100% reduction in net UK greenhouse gas emissions, from 1990, in place of the government's aim of an 80% reduction) - arguing that this is necessary to achieve the aims of the Paris Agreement on climate change - together with investment in renewable energy, energy efficiency, low-carbon transport, carbon capture and storage and afforestation, as means of achieving this target.

It adds four new elements to existing policy: condemnation of President Trump's decision to withdraw the US from the Paris Agreement; criticism of the Conservative government for repeatedly delaying the publication of its proposals for climate policy; an interim target of an 80% reduction in

greenhouse gas emissions by 2040; and a call for the closest possible cooperation with the EU on energy and climate policy.

14.10 - 15.25 F8 The Impact of Brexit on Public Services

The Liberal Democrats' position on the importance of Britain being part of the European Union is very well known. But Brexit will pose some particular and severe challenges to crucial public services such as education, health and others. These services currently rely on large numbers of teachers, nurses, doctors and paying students from other EU countries. Following the Brexit referendum last year, many of these people are now considering leaving the UK, and numbers coming to the UK have fallen precipitously in the last twelve months.

As well as these very serious workforce challenges, there will be many other financial challenges to maintaining good public services, starting with a 15% increase in the cost of all medical and other supplies from outside the UK, due to the fall in the value of the pound.

It is clear that these are major challenges to vital public services such as social care and health, which are already finding it difficult to maintain high quality services in current conditions.

The Conservative and Labour 'hard' approach to Brexit will maximise the difficulties of tackling these challenges, and miss opportunities to mitigate them. The motion sets out measures to tackle these severe problems for public services, including:

- Guaranteeing the right of EU citizens in the UK to remain here, ending their uncertainty
- Prioritising maintaining UK membership of the single market, to mitigate many of these difficulties
- Continuing access for British institutions to European programmes for academia and research
- The Government publishing an urgent assessment of staffing shortfalls in public services.

15.45 - 17.00 F10 Natural Environment Policy

A strong, fair society depends on a new approach to environmental protection.

Social divides are worsened by environmental inequality: polluted air, flood risk and lack of green places all affect the poorest, most vulnerable people most. Economic prospects are jeopardised by a focus on short term goals: resources are asset-stripped, soils are drained of nutrients, and water is polluted and over-abstracted. The habitats and species we enjoy today may not be around for future generations to appreciate.

We can no longer afford to treat our environment as free and invincible.

By contrast, investing in nature and accounting for its value across Government can save billions of pounds, and improve efficiency and sustainability in business as well as save and enhance lives.

All this was true before Brexit, but leaving the EU would multiply the risks to our environment. Our most effective environmental laws come from Europe.

This motion proposes a new approach. Instead of staving off environmental losses, we take a positive approach to environmental improvement and investment, including:

- Legally-binding targets for improving our environment
- Major investment plans for nature: city, coast and countryside
- Modern institutions for environmental reporting and accounting.

It mandates Federal Policy Committee to develop these ideas further.

10.00 - 10.45 F16 Armed Forces Personnel: Recruitment, Retention and Welfare

Armed Forces personnel statistics show that manning is over 5% below the minimum level laid out in Security and Defence Review 2015. The Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey shows a majority (61%) describing morale in the Services as “low” and historic numbers of personnel are leaving before the end of their contracted time. The motion aims to highlight the manning shortfall, particularly shortfalls in specialist areas that take years and significant investment to train, and the implications for the UK’s defence and international interests in an uncertain post-Brexit world.

The reasons for recruitment and retention problems are complex: the Armed Forces have faced considerable change over the last decade, including a significant manning reduction, the outsourcing of services like accommodation and catering, pension changes, and budget cuts. Attitude surveys indicate that these policies have led to a reduction in satisfaction.

The motion lays out a number of policies aimed at improving recruitment and retention, including: improving the experience for military families; addressing the adverse impact of certain MOD policies, particularly on accommodation; lifting the pay freeze; protecting personnel community, welfare and accommodation budgets; improving the implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant; healthcare; and initiatives targeted specifically at specialists.

15.30 - 16.45 F21 Safe Building Standards for all Homes

This motion expresses the party's deep regret at the appalling Grenfell Tower fire.

It calls for the public inquiry to be full and as swift as possible, and commits Lib Dems to implementing quickly any recommendations it makes. It then goes on to call for a number of fire safety measures to be implemented

immediately in all social or privately rented homes, including annual fire checks for all tall buildings, and having fire drill evacuation practices for very tall buildings.

It calls for a new requirement for electrical safety tests in all rented homes.

It finishes up with demands for a complete review of building regulations especially in relation to cladding and sprinklers, and a review of council emergency arrangements.

16.45 - 18.00 F22 Centenary of Balfour Declaration

This conference motion marks the centenary of the Balfour Declaration, a document published by the British government in 1917 outlining its support for the creation of a home in Palestine for the Jewish people. The Declaration paved the way to the creation of Israel just over thirty years later.

The motion highlights that the Balfour Declaration also made provisions for the protection of the rights of non-Jewish communities in Palestine.

The motion reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to a peaceful two-state solution between Israel and Palestine. It condemns ongoing violence committed by both sides, and highlights that other countries in the region will need to buy into any peace agreement.

The big policy change is that the motion calls for the British government to immediately recognise the state of Palestine, with no conditions, but with the expectation that free and fair elections will be held subsequently.

10.00 - 11.00 F24 Defeating Terrorism, Protecting Liberties

Britain has recently and repeatedly come attack from terrorism. In the modern world, the security threats we face are complex, challenging and diverse; the continued fallacy peddled by Government is that by increasing surveillance and destroying our civil liberties we will be more safe. This motion rebuts that notion and instead calls for:

- Proper funding of the police to enable them to work in communities to tackle all types of crime, including violent extremism
- The creation of a community-led, counter-radicalisation programme in place of the failed *Prevent* strategy
- The scrapping of legislation allowing for the collection of internet connection records, instead focusing on the legitimate investigation and surveillance of suspects and those involved in criminal activity.

The motion also recognises the borderless nature of the modern terrorist threat and therefore the need to work with others to combat and ultimately defeat terrorism. It calls on for the continued membership of key EU crime-fighting tools such as Europol, European Arrest Warrant, SIS II and Prum.

14.10 - 15.10 F26 Employment in the 21st Century

Until a few years ago, most people with jobs were employed directly by an organisation, with all the employment rights that that confers. A much smaller number of people were officially self-employed. In recent years the nature of employment has changed significantly, with the growth of different employment arrangements including those in the 'gig economy' such as Uber taxi drivers, as well as zero-hours contracts with other employers.

It has been widely recognised that the existing law does not relate well to the existing situation. The government has commissioned Matthew Taylor to conduct a review and recommend appropriate changes to update the law.

Liberal Democrats have already committed to help people on zero hours contracts, including a formal right to request a fixed contract.

This motion welcomes the recommendations of the Taylor report, notably to create a new legal status of 'dependent contractor', which recognises the semi-independent status of some workers, but also some of the companies' responsibilities to them. People with this status would then acquire some employment rights, depending on the extent of the employer's control of them, the number of hours worked and other factors.

The motion supports new forms of unionisation and worker cooperatives relevant to this employment market, and greater enforcement by HMRC and employment tribunals of employment rights. Finally it calls for some reforms to make Universal Credit more supportive of the self-employed.

15.30 - 16.30 F28 Encouraging Companies to be Responsible Corporate Citizens

Like it or not, large companies are major parts of our society and have a big impact on all our daily lives. This is usually positive, but some examples of bad corporate behaviour have damaged public trust in corporations. This motion sets out some reforms to the way companies work which should mean they work better in the public interest, as well as to help repair public trust in them.

It is already Lib Dem policy to encourage staff involvement in management of companies, to encourage mutuals, co-operatives and other types of ownership, and to increase transparency in corporate ownership.

This motion sets out a range of further measures, including:

- greater diversity on boards of under-represented groups, as well as employees;
- giving company directors wider duties for the behaviour of their supply chain as well as for the longer term interests of the company;
- various measures for shareholders, including institutional shareholders to be more actively involved in managing their

companies;

- making company responsibility for criminal behaviour easier to establish;
- and strengthening rules on declaring companies' "beneficial owners", or the people who ultimately own them.

09.00 - 09.35 F30 European Atomic Energy Community

In the Prime Minister's letter invoking Article 50 to formally begin the process of leaving the European Union, Theresa May confirmed that the UK would also withdraw from the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM). Founded in 1957, EURATOM is a separate legal entity from the EU and regulates the nuclear industry across Europe.

This motion expresses the party's deep concern at the Government's ideological opposition to the role of the European Court of Justice as the court of arbitration, which is the reason for their withdrawal from EURATOM.

This motion also expresses concern at the impact withdrawing from EURATOM will have on the safety of UK nuclear industry and healthcare provision, the UK's ability to promote scientific innovation, and the free movement of nuclear materials.

It is currently Lib Dem policy to maintain membership of EURATOM, ensuring continued nuclear co-operation, research funding, and access to nuclear fuels. This motion reaffirms this policy and calls for the UK Government to remain a full member of the EURATOM Treaty and to re-join the current renegotiations of the EURATOM Treaty.

It then goes on to call for Liberal Democrat Parliamentarians to push likeminded Parliamentarians to join with them in holding the Government to account on their plans to withdraw from EURATOM.

11.10 - 11.50 F32 Protecting Small Businesses

N.B. No summary was submitted for this motion.

12.10 - 12.50 F34 Gun and Knife Crime

There was a 13% increase in gun and knife crime across the country in 2016, and there have been at least 21 deaths of children and teenagers already in 2017, many in London. This has led to increasing risk to young people and rising concern.

Effective responses require police, public authorities, faith groups and relevant and experienced voluntary groups and individuals to work better together, dealing not just with the crimes but the wider economic and social issues. We must also be careful that stop and search does not make problems worse.

We propose:

- Regular - not occasional - gun and knife amnesties
- Better cross-community local responses
- Additional funding for more effective community policing and community initiatives
- A mentoring programme for all teenagers
- Conflict prevention, conflict resolution and mediation being taught in all secondary schools.

The logo for 'Your Liberal Britain' features the word 'Your' in a stylized orange font, followed by a graphic of three orange wings or leaves, and then the words 'Liberal Britain' in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

Your Liberal Britain

A members' volunteering initiative within the Liberal Democrats, Your Liberal Britain exists to help and encourage the party become more of a social movement. We help party bodies find ways to challenge and empower Lib Dem members.

