

Liberal Party Special Assembly 7th February 2021

Motions for Debate

Environmental Policy

The following motions need to be debated and passed to become official of the party policy.

Nuclear Power

The Liberal Party opposes the long-term generation of electricity by nuclear fission but accept there are limitations on the availability of wind and solar power on a 24-hour basis and that the global Climate Change crisis dictates prompt action.

The Party acknowledges that largescale offline storage for solar and wind power is still a decade or more away and there is a current need to maintain a baseline on the national grid to prevent rolling blackouts at times of peak demand.

As such the party believes that the current proposals for Hinckley Point C and Sizewell C represent the best short-term solution to providing low CO2 energy whilst maintaining the reliability of the UK's power supply until new storage technologies are available.

Liberals remain committed to the long-term phasing out of the use of nuclear fission but support the continued research and development on nuclear fusion. As such these stations should be the last constructed in this country.

The party believes that the long-term solution lays in better battery capacity and a smart national grid to accommodate green energy and calls for intensified research and investment in these areas.

Open Access - Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

The UK is an island nation constrained in its available land for the competing needs of housing, business, and agriculture.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 introduced a limited right to roam over uncultivated and unenclosed land but was limited in its reach and this country retains some of the most restrictive land access in Europe.

The Liberal Party believes that the concept of Open Access should be expanded and renewed to allow responsible access to fields outside the crop growing season and in the absence of livestock.

Access to the countryside provides for better mental health and healthy recreation pursuits which contribute to the nation's wellbeing and as such the countryside should be accessible to all within reasonable boundaries.

As such safeguards need to be introduced to limit damage to crops, harassment of livestock and invasive activities such as unauthorised metal detecting.

Electric Vehicles

The Liberal Party views the expansion in the use of electrically powered vehicles as a key step in tackling global warming by reducing CO₂ emissions, and improving air quality by the reduction of particulate emissions as well as subduing noise pollution.

However, we believe that in the rush to adopt these, issues ranging from the provision of electrical charging points to the consumption of raw materials in the manufacturing of cars and their batteries, have been overlooked.

Provision of electrical charging point on a national basis also implies an increase in electrical consumption moving the source of pollution from vehicles themselves to power generation.

We see the goal of ceasing the sale of diesel and petrol cars and vans from 2030 as an ambitious target but believe it will need to be supported with increased spending on infrastructure and a trade-in scheme to encourage the take-up of newer vehicles.

The Liberal Party see's driverless car as the way forward but we believe that the long-term aspiration should be the availability of on demand transport, not ownership of such vehicles.

As such we would encourage the creation of car share schemes as well as leasing schemes which would cover the entire life and recycling of such vehicle.

Solar Power

Solar panels provide an immediate way of substituting a part of our domestic electrical consumption from a natural source of energy.

We believe the country should adopt a policy of solar panels on every domestic property and business and that all new build and regenerations schemes should seek to accommodate solar provision in their submissions.

As such we urge local councils to utilise section 106 payments to support solar panels in community buildings.

This should be supported by the restoration of a realistic Feed in Tariff (FIT) for the domestic generation and export of energy to the national grid to encourage domestic installations coupled with investment in a national smart grid to accommodate renewal energy generation.

A Manifesto for Interim & Post Pandemic Recovery & Renewal

The following motions are for inclusion in our Post pandemic Manifesto and are presented to stimulate debate before their final inclusion in the published document.

The Cashless Society and access to Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs)

The increasing trend towards a cashless society has been further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic where contactless transactions have been promoted as way of further enhancing social distancing.

The decline of cash payments in society has been compounded by a decrease in the availability of ATMs.

We believe Internet banking and electronic payments should be an alternative payment method and not a direct replacement. Services such as pre-paid meters are largely cash driven and many charities rely on spontaneous donations of small change.

The party also notes the vulnerability of electronic payment service with a series of digital banking failures such as that at the TSB. In such circumstances cash is the only payment method to purchase goods and services.

The Which? Magazine report of December 2018 highlighted the fact that more than 1.3 million people in this country still have no bank and 2.2 million rely almost exclusively on cash transactions on a day-to-day basis.

We believe that once the pandemic is over a managed rolling back from card only transactions should be initiated.

We believe that bricks and mortar premises remain relevant to providing services to those in need of banking services such as the elderly and those in rural locations as well as opportunities to act as local hubs for postal services and other community needs.

Entertainment Industry

The Liberal Party is concerned at the long-term damage being done to entertainment venues, theatres, and museums by the restrictions brought in to contain the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Such venues are especially vulnerable due to the nature of their enclosed and intermit environment and the extended time people are in contact even with social distancing.

Those venues in the public sector stand a better chance of survival than those in the private sector which cannot reply on the public purse for funding.

As a short-term action we believe regional TV and radio can provide an outlet for live broadcast for seasonal shows as a way of maintaining contact between the public and entertainers.

With the loss of the valuable Christmas period many venues have lost their largest infusion of funds which would have cushioned their finances for the next 12 months.

We believe that assistance should be given to allow them to remain viable until the pandemic has subsided and to assist them to retaining their premises and staff.

This may come in the form of bounce back grants or extended furlough for staff.

Women's role in Society

The Covid-19 pandemic has had an adverse effect on women in both the domestic and the work environment and has set back the course of gender equality.

Many working women have found themselves propelled back into the world of childcare and domestic management and they have been forced to juggle career and increased childcare responsibilities due to school closures.

This has often been at short notice and they have had to rely on the goodwill of their employer. As such we believe working parents should be offered additional paid leave or included in a special funder furlough scheme to assist them.

The lockdown has also highlighted the disparity between the division of domestic activities carried out by men and women.

Many women in low paid service jobs may not have the resources to retrain into new careers once the economic recovery resumes and should be provided with the financial support to do so in the form of grants or bursaries.

The protracted lockdown in the spring of 2020 has also highlighted the intolerable situation many women find themselves with the threat or actual impact of domestic violence or abuse relationships.

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