

Motions passed at the Liberal Party Assembly on the 2nd June, held in Newcastle upon Tyne.

Promotion Growth of small businesses, social enterprises and charities

Whilst the Conservative Party presents itself as a champion of small businesses and community charities Liberals note that all these organisations are under increasing burdens of legislation with little proven benefit but great and disproportionate cost.

We call upon the reporting accounting threshold for charities set in 2006 at £25,000 be immediately raised to £50,000 and a less onerous accounting structure be set for charities with income levels between £20,00 and £50,000.

The Liberal Party calls for all small businesses with an income level of below £85,000 or the current threshold of VAT be exempted from applying for workplace pensions.

The level of administration has meant many small businesses and charities has reduced the intent to recruit employees and shifted employment to agency and casual work detrimental to both employees and society.

Expansion of Grammar Schools

The Liberal Party notes with grave disapproval the latest Conservative Party attempt to expand and legitimise the grammar school system in this country whilst not giving equal provision for the expansion of good non selective community schools.

Proposals to create a 50-million-pound fund for grammar school using a provision to encourage applications from disadvantaged families are simply a distraction to justify the building of 'satellite' sites which are arguable new school premises.

The Liberal Party opposes selective education which advantages only a minority of the families whilst denying fair educational opportunity and social mobility for the majority.

We support the objections from the teaching trade unions and professional associations.

Rather than increase the number of grammar schools the Liberal Party calls for an increased investment in existing schools to ensure that children of all abilities are engaged, challenged and developed so that each can achieve at the highest level of their ability. Further the Liberal Party calls for a culture of 'parity of esteem' between vocational and academic education to be fostered and promoted.

This is in line with our party constitution which calls for a Liberal Society in which every citizen shall possess liberty, property and security, and none shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity.

Gaza violence

The Liberal Party views with horror the catastrophic escalation in violence along the border between the Gaza strip and Israel on the day of the official opening of the US embassy in Jerusalem.

Media reports speak of dozens killed and hundred's wounded as Israeli forces respond to mass demonstration and attempted breaches of the contested boarder.

Coming on the 70th anniversary of the creation of the Israeli state and the simultaneous expulsion of Palestinian's from the disrupted territories, the US decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem is both highly provocative and callous act.

The Liberal Party yet again calls for a negotiated settlement to the issues of the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem and calls upon all nations and international bodies to act to resolve the open-ended suffering of the Palestinians in their struggle for statehood.

National water resource management

The Liberal Party notes the latest Environment Agency report on water resources, long-term consumption and water quality in England.

The reports catalogue's the realities of excessive water extraction, unlimited usage and loss in transit and highlights the long-term environmental and human cost of living beyond our means.

We all have a part in securing the supply in this country, be it consumers consciously reducing domestic use or privately-owned water companies working to reduce leakage from their network which alone accounts for an astonishing 3 billion litres a day!

The Liberal Party believes that both a national education campaign is needed to make the public fully aware of the situation, and a comprehensive and swift scheme to refurbish the nations water pipe network.

Although no obvious decline in overall rainfall has been noted, seasonal changes dictate that water consumption urgently needs to be managed for the benefit of both human and environmental needs.