

Motions Passed at
The 138th Liberal Party Assembly
Pickering Memorial Hall, Potter Hill, Pickering, North Yorkshire, 7th October 2023

The Global Challenge of Climate Change and Net Zero

The summer of 2023 has again shown the world's vulnerability to the effects of climate change and the importance of a solid commitment to cutting carbon omissions and the use of fossil fuels.

Whilst the possibility of containing global warming to a further 1.5C increase in global temperature is increasingly unobtainable, effects to reduce humanities impact on the planet and its climate must continue.

The commencement of the next El Nino is likely to be intensified by the continued accumulation of heat in the world's oceans offering the prospects of further extreme weather records being broken.

We believe that direct investment must be made in renewable energy sources and offline battery storage and a national grid infrastructure upgrade as they offer the most immediate benefits both environmentally as well as economically, creating jobs and economic activity.

We believe all new builds should contain solar panel provision and funds made available for the retro fitting of current building stock where feasible.

We remain committed to a limited development of nuclear energy as a baseline for a modernised national electricity grid able to accommodate renewable energy on a realistic feeder tariff.

Future Independence Referendum's in Scotland and Northern Ireland

The Liberal Party wishes to re-iterate it is a Unionist Party which believes in greater devolution in a federal United Kingdon.

We do fully accept that all nations and regions have the right to seek independence via a referendum after an informed debate but believe such a vote should be a once in an decade event.

In the case of Northern Ireland, the Secretary of State has the prerogative to call a referendum only once a clear and sustained vote for unification with the Republic of Ireland is deliverable.

We believe similar powers should be extended the Secretary of State for Wales as or when a referendum is desired by a majority of the population.

In the case of Scotland, we do not believe the status que has shifted since the 2014 referendum and we would reject the need for a return to the ballot for the foreseeable future.

Channel Migrant Crisis

The party recognises the continued channel migration crisis, with a surge in small boat crossings as the calm weather conditions recede moving into winter.

The Government has yet to implement a plan for the acceptance and processing of asylum applications at embassies abroad as a first step to easing the flow of new arrivals.

Whilst the party understands community's concerns at asylum seekers being housed in their vicinity, be that in former military bases, barges, or other facilities, such provision needs to be made to accommodate these people until they have been processed and assessed for their needs.

We re-iterate our belief that asylum seekers with a compelling case should be allowed to work whilst their application is processed.

Those applicants who cannot support an application for asylum should be promptly returned to their country of origin as a disincentive to others.

Empathetic Liberalism - The Liberal Challenge to the Excesses of Populism

Liberalism is our cause. The word has been abused and misused more than most in politics.

We believe that one of the greatest dangers faced today is the rise of populism from both the left and right. Many movements have honourable objectives, but, unchecked some can go too far and lead to imbalance and injustice. That is where liberals have a part to play. We must stand up for individual rights but balanced with common sense and compassion.

For that reason, we propose the slogan '*Empathetic Liberalism*'. We will fight for the individual, but we never lose sight of the feelings of any. That will require us to speak up against the excesses of certain political movements that transcend party politics. In our view, we must be brave and resist the 'cancel culture' and movements that seek to impose guilt for past wrongs on the generations or demonise those whose views do not correspond to the latest fashion. We must be anti-populist and brave. In practical terms, we need to adopt specific causes as a party and champion the underdog, particularly if that involves taking risk.

Allan Steele WS, Defence Spokesperson

Reform of NHS and Public Reporting of Potential Misconduct or Malpractice

Referred back

Delays to the Parliamentary Ombudsman Report on Pension Changes for Women

The Liberal Party notes with considerable disappointment the continued delays to the publication of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) report into changes to the state pension for women and the financial hardship this has caused.

Changes to pension entitlement meant that 3.8 million women born in the 1950's saw their age of entitlement raised without proper consultation or publicity.

This gave many insufficient time to plan ahead and make further financial provision for their retirement.

Continue delays in closing the gender pay gap further disadvantages women in funding their pension provision and maintaining financial independence.

The Liberal Party fully supports the Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) in their campaign for justice and compensation for the financial distress they have find themselves in.

A Digital Currency for the UK

The Liberal Party notes the publication of the Government consultation paper “The digital pound: a new form of money for households and businesses?”

Whilst the party recognises the potential benefits of a modern approach to finance, we believe that a digital currency for the UK is premature and requires considerably more understanding of the financial and security implications.

Cybercrime and manipulation of cryptocurrencies has highlighted the immaturity and vulnerability of much of the underlying technology and its susceptibility to criminal intent.

Concepts such as a digital wallet and mobile banking are widely understood, however a considerable number of people in the UK are still without a bank account or access to cash for everyday transactions.

We believe that traditional financial instruments remain relevant for the foreseeable future and should be accessible to all.

Free School meals for Primary and Secondary School Pupils

The Liberal Party proposes the introduction of free school meals for all primary and secondary state school pupils to combat poverty and improve health.

Studies have shown that children receiving a nutritional breakfast and lunch are more attentive, have a more productive educational outcome and develop healthy eating habits which last a lifetime.

Any upfront cost now would be offset by the long-term health benefits and would deliver free school meals to all children attending statutory education.

This policy would eliminate the stigma of mean testing, creating an inclusive environment and avoid admin costs by preparation on school premises.

Any monies allocated to fund the provision of free school meals should be ring fences for that purpose.

Appendix A – Policy Items approved February 2023

Items 1- Accepted

Reform inheritance tax: increase the threshold from the current £325,000 to £500,000 (1 million including couples) and thus abolish all tax reliefs:

- Anything above £500,000 there would be a 25% tax rate.
- Anything above 1 million there would be a 50% tax rate.

To the following:

Reform inheritance tax: increase the threshold from the current £325,000 to 1 million (2 million including couples) and thus abolish all tax reliefs:

- Anything above 1 million there would be a 25% tax rate.

Item 2 -Delete

Could you change the following:-

Overhaul all UK political donations – strict limits to be applied to individuals, companies and trade unions:

- It would be linked to inflation, and we would only allow individuals, companies and trade unions to donate a maximum of £1,000,000 each to a political party per year.
- During election campaigns political parties would only be allowed to spend a maximum of 10 million pounds each.

Item 4 - Delete

Could you please change the Wealth Tax motion that is sent you before to 1% over and above 5 million?

Item 5 - Amend

Ensure that there is at least one Faith School (no particular recognised religion – depending on local needs) and Grammar School in every County Council.

To the following:

We support the right of communities to create schools where there is sufficient parental support.

Appendix B Policy Review – Items for Debate

Crime + Justice (Police/Prisons), Civil Liberties and Law (Drugs)

Crime + Justice

Reform criminal record disclosure rules so that people do not have to declare irrelevant old and minor convictions, and remove questions about criminal convictions from initial application forms for all public-sector jobs:

When someone is tried for a crime, they should remain anonymous - **delete line**

If you've served a full sentence for a minor crime, it shouldn't be on your record – **delete line**

Prisons

Amend

All prisons should be publicly run.

To

All prisons should be publicly run but we see merit in private and voluntary sector providers delivering education, rehabilitation, and training within the prison establishment.

Defence

Delete

Get rid of Trident and replace our Nuclear arms with a system of 'point defence' anti-nuke missiles. These smaller missiles will protect us from other nations' nuclear supplies, and because they will take the appearance of the Israeli 'missile shield' across the entire nation – allowing for employment power and military presence to be diffused throughout the whole country:

Replace with

- a. Retain the UK's nuclear deterrent whilst working with the international community to pursue multinational disarmament. We believe that the UK must work towards ridding the world of nuclear weapons, but this is not the time to take any unilateral action and any reduction should be in cooperation with others who may seek to harm us.

The UK would remain fully engaged in international nuclear disarmament efforts

Add

- b. We support the creation of an Armed Forces Federation; something akin to a trade union, but with no power to undertake industrial action, and which would represent our Armed Forces personnel.

Economics, Fiscal Policy (Government Expenditure + Tax Evasion/Avoidance) and Monetary Policy

Taxation – Reform of VAT - withdrawn

VAT-free shopping for tourists visiting the UK - withdrawn

Education

Remove references to Grammar Schools

I new state schools should either be Community Comprehensive Schools, Faith Schools **or Grammar Schools** therefore Academies/Foundation/Free-Schools/Academy Trusts/Secondary Moderns will eventually be replaced.

Ensure that there is at least one Faith School (no particular recognised religion – depending on local needs) and **Grammar School** in every County Council.

Local Government -

Three layers of Local Government – Regional Assemblies, County Councils, Town Councils:

To

Four layers of Local Government - Regional Assemblies, County, District Councils, Town, or Parish Councils:

The Liberal Party believes that planning applications, environmental health and none strategic highways should be dealt with at county or lower.