

The 139th Liberal Party Assembly



**The Great Barr Hotel,
Birmingham, B43 6HS
5th October 2024**

139th Liberal Party Assembly.

Great Barr Hotel, Birmingham

Programme of Events.

- 9:00** **Registration**
- 9.30-10.00** **Opening Address – Cllr Steve Radford, Leader of the Liberal Party**
- Agenda – Cllr Charles Shaw, Chair of the NEC**
- 10.15-12.30** **Session One:**
- Motions**
- The Liberal Response to the Civil Unrest of 2024**
- The Liberal Party Response to the Forth Coming Autumn Budget**
- The Regulation of Royal Mail**
- 12.30-13:45** **Lunch**
- 13.45-14.30** **Afternoon Session.**
- Party Business. Session only open to Party Members.**
- Small Business Big Communities Policy Initiative – Allan Steele, Scottish Liberal Association**
- Duty of Candour in Public Bodies – Policy Update**
- A Financial Transaction Tax – Policy Update**
- Constitutional Review**
- Motions**
- An Appeal to those of a Liberal Persuasion and Religious Faith**
- Justice for Local Government**
- An Appeal to Trade Unions and Working Class Voters**

14.30-15.00 Afternoon Break

15.00- 16.30 Final Session.

Motions

**A Liberal Response to the Extension of the Ban on Smoking
in Public**

The Funding of Young Adults in Council Care

A Windfall Tax on the UK Banking Sector

Awards, Presentations and Guest Speak

Assembly to be followed by a short National Executive Committee meeting.

Motions for Debate

The Liberal Response to the Civil Unrest of 2024

The Liberal Party condemns the violence which afflicted the United Kingdom in August 2024 which had no substance in its motivations other than to cause injury and destruction of property.

Whilst we acknowledge immigration was touted as a motivational factor, we believe that whilst social media was used by the far-right during the unrest it did not provide a decisive factor in people resorting to violence

Whilst we welcome the civil response from communities to repair and renew, we believe that many communities continue to harbour a feeling of being left behind.

We believe that the systematic closure of youth centres has added to issues in local communities by leaving young people with no constructive activities.

The party calls for a tough but fair response to those convicted of offenses in the courts.

The criminal justice system is already seeing a crisis in prison numbers, and we believe extended community sentences and a fine as opposed to prison would be a better course of action for most low and middle level offenders.

The Liberal Party NEC

The Liberal Party Response to the Forth Coming Autumn Budget

The Liberal Party believes that this Octobers Autumn Budget by the chancellor should be an opportunity get the UK working and bring about much needed reforms to taxation and the business environment.

We believe the £22 billion blackhole in government finances has been used as a distraction to justify cuts to the winter fuel payment, the refusal to lift the two-child benefit cap or combat child poverty.

The government gloomy assessment of the economy is having a detrimental effect on business and consumer confidence, harming investment and spending and a more positive but realistic vision must be delivered.

The party does not begrudge public service works a long overdue pay rise but fully acknowledges that it will put pressure on budget in the public sector without adequate funding.

We believe modest adjustments to tax rebates, allowances and exemptions would provide the chancellor with adequate funds to do so without necessarily raising income tax.

The Regulation of Royal Mail

The Liberal Party acknowledges the sale of International Distribution Services, owners of Royal Mail to the Czech owned Křetínský's EP Group.

The party urges the regulator OFCOM to work with the new owners to maintain the universal delivery services in the UK, removing the emphasis on parcel delivery to the detriment of letter's and to ensure compliance with the Royal Mail charter.

The regulator also has a responsibility to safeguard Royal Mails pension fund and ensuring regular payments are made into the fund by its new owners.

Royal Mail retains almost all its surface mail sorting infrastructure despite the drop in letter volumes.

If Royal mail is to be allowed to continue to expand its parcel operation, premises could be better utilised by a rationalise of its letter sorting service.

The Liberal Party NEC

Duty of Candour in Public Bodies – Policy Update

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

All public bodies to have a duty of candour, enshrined in law.

Withholding information from a court or public enquiry would become a criminal offense.

The Liberal Party NEC

A Financial Transaction Tax – Policy Update

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

'Implement a Financial Transaction Tax of 0.05% on all financial instruments (bonds, shares, commodities etc.) in the UK and as a result raise between 50 and 100 billion a year.'

Arguments in favour:-

- 1) Reduce speculation on the UK Stock Market
- 2) Raise revenue in order to fund public services
- 3) Curbing volatility of Financial Markets

Kayed Al-Haddad and Stephen Graham

Constitutional Review

The emphasis on *property* in the pre-amble

Preamble

1. The Liberal Party exists to build a Liberal Society in which every citizen shall possess liberty, *property* and security, and none shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity. Its chief care is for the rights and opportunities of the individual and in all spheres it sets freedom first.

The Liberal Party NEC

An Appeal to those of a Liberal Persuasion and Religious Faith

The Liberal Party makes an appeal as the party of conscience as the LibDems change to be a conformist party unwelcoming to people who express their faith openly.

As a party we do not judge people by their faith or method of adherence to their religion and we are not embarrassed by their views when stated in a responsible manner in a public space.

We only ask that people subscribe to our constitution and values or where they disagree, they do so in a constructive manner which does not bring the party into disrepute.

We do believe in the secular separation of church and state.

The Liberal Party NEC

Justice for Local Government

The Liberal Party calls for a fair and sustainable funding scheme for local government to protect core public services.

Despite recent increases in funding, the central support grant from central government is still 27% below the figure in 2010.

Further pressures have been imposed on council budgets by the cost-of-living crisis and inflation at a time when the demands for services have increased.

A lack of funding has led to many councils into making ill-informed investments in commercial property to increase their revenue streams but has instead exposed them to substantial financial liabilities.

The party calls for funding support to allow local councils to refrain from further investments and to legally unwind such contracts.

The Liberal Party support's Land Value Taxation(LVT) as its preferred method of funding local services supported by a local property tax to ensure councils are held to account by the electorate.

The Liberal Party NEC

An appeal to Trade Unions and Working Class Voters

The Liberal Party would like to make a direct appeal to working class voters unsure of the future direction of the Labour party under its current leadership or unwilling to lend their vote to the Conservatives again.

The Liberal Governments of 1906 – 1914 laid the foundations of the welfare state; broke the power of the Lords to stand in the way of popularly elected governments; secured the future of the trade union movement; introduced old age pensions; ensured that those injured in workplace accidents were provided for and introduced measures to improve working conditions for those in low paid 'sweated' industries.

Furthermore, the party appeals directly to aspirational working-class voters who don't believe that Labour or indeed The Conservatives are able to fulfil such aspirational needs and who are looking for an alternative beyond the two main parties.

The Liberal Party exists to create a liberal society, in which every citizen shall possess liberty, property and security, and none shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity. Its chief care is for the rights and opportunities of the individual, and in all spheres it sets freedom first - <http://liberal.org.uk>

The Liberal Party NEC

A Liberal Response to the Extension on the Ban on Smoking in Public

The Liberal Party has broadly supported moves to outlaw smoking in public buildings, and public transport which reduces the harmful effects of passive smoking.

The party has however reservations over further restrictions being extended to pub gardens, parks and outdoors spaces.

We would support the Australian scheme by which such venues are divided into smoking and none smoking areas to reduce the stigma imposed on smokers.

The claim that smoking is a major drain on the NHS overlooks the effects of alcohol, obesity and the damaging effects of excess sugar and salt in the diet.

However damaging smoking is to the individual, it is a personal choice by that person to commence and continue smoking and there are many sources of help to assist people to quit.

Restrictions are already in place to prohibit access to tobacco products to those under the age of 18.

The Liberal Party NEC

The Funding of Young Adults in Council Care

The Liberal Party notes the increased costs of the use of private providers in the provision of services to those young people with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) or subject to a Deprivation of Liberty (DoL) order.

The private care industry is a £1.6 billion industry, owned by a raft of financial institutions, lacking transparency or the regulation of staff and facilities, or any assessment of its value for money.

The party believes that whilst the private sector can deliver benefits to the public sector it should not be the preferred supplier of care services which should be delivered where at all possible within the familiar surroundings of the community.

We believe council services should be adequately funded to support the care and development of those in their care within any community. The current deficit in funding in the UK has risen to £3.2bn since 2019, according to the County Council Network.

The Liberal Party NEC

A Windfall Tax on the UK Banking Sector

The Liberal Party notes media reports that the Government is planning a windfall tax on the UK banking sector.

The party believes that however pressing a government may believe its own financial position to be, the monies it would receive have come in the first instance from business and domestic customers pockets and accounts.

As such we believe it would be fairer if banks, and private utilises were instead instructed to make refunds direct to their customers or reduce the fees on services such as those provided to business customers.

The Liberal Party NEC