

Conference Daily

Sunday 17 March



Spring Conference 2024 York



Information from the Federal Conference Committee (FCC) for Sunday 17 March and report back for Saturday 16 March. Please read in conjunction with the *Agenda & Directory* and *Conference Extra*.

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13.00 Close of Conference	

*If no page number is indicated, there are no changes or additional information to the information in the **Conference Agenda & Directory** or **Conference Extra**. Please note that some items of business may occur earlier than indicated. Members wishing to speak should submit a speaker's card as soon as possible.*

Report back for Saturday 16 March

F2	Report: Federal Conference Committee	Approved
F3	Report: Federal Policy Committee	Approved
F4	Policy motion: Sport for the People	Passed (Amendments One and Two passed)
F5	Policy motion: Boosting Cancer Survival	Passed (Amendment One passed)
F7	Policy motion: Liberal Values in a Dangerous World	Passed (Amendments One, Two, Three and Four passed)
F9	Constitutional amendment: Federal Appeals Panel	Passed
F11	Policy motion: Are You Drinking What We're Drinking?	Passed
F13	Policy motion: Tackling Persistent Absence	Passed (Amendments One and Two passed)
F14	Policy motion: 40 New Hospitals	Passed
F15	Reports: Parliamentary Parties	Received

For the text of motions and amendments, please refer to the Spring 2024 Conference Agenda & Directory and Conference Daily for Saturday 16 March.

Environment Q&A

Sunday 17 March 11.00–12.00

with Tim Farron and John Russell; Chair: Duncan Brack.

Lendal Room, York Barbican.



Party members may submit questions using the Q&As online form at:
www.libdems.org.uk/conference/submissions

Sunday 17 March

F16A

F16A Emergency motion: Navalny

11 members

Mover: Christine Jardine MP.

Summation: David Chalmers.

1 Conference notes that:

- 2 I. Alexei Navalny, the leader of democratic opposition to Vladimir
3 Putin in Russia, was killed on 16 February 2024.
- 4 II. Navalny's widow, Yulia Navalnaya, has said that Navalny was
5 'tortured, starved, cut off and killed by Putin'.
- 6 III. Navalny had been serving a sentence at an Arctic penal colony,
7 after being arrested upon his return to Russia in January 2021,
8 having previously spent months recovering in Germany following
9 a Novichok assassination attempt.
- 10 IV. Other democratic activists imprisoned in Russia include Vladimir
11 Kara-Murza, British-Russian dual national and member of our
12 sister party Yabloko; there is now a real risk that he is also killed.

13 Conference believes that:

- 14 A. Navalny's tragic death, at the hands of Putin, cannot and will not
15 stifle the democratic ideals that he fought for.
- 16 B. Navalny cast a light on the corruption of Putin and his cronies.
- 17 C. Following Navalny's death, the UK Government did sanction some
18 individuals operating the Arctic penal colony, but they have failed
19 to sanction the entirety of the 'Navalny List'.
- 20 D. Navalny's opposition to Putin is embodied in the brave resistance
21 of the Ukrainians.
- 22 E. We must be emboldened to stand with Ukraine, even as US
23 support wavers, and help them resist Vladimir Putin's forces and
24 liberate their territory.
- 25 F. The UK must do all it can to secure the release of Vladimir Kara-
26 Murza.

27 Conference accordingly calls on the UK Government to:

- 28 1. Sanction the rest of the Navalny List.

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- 29 2. Make it a diplomatic priority to secure the release of Vladimir
30 Kara-Murza.
- 31 3. Support Vladimir Kara-Murza and all other British dual nationals
32 in similar situations by enshrining in law a right for British
33 dual nationals who have been politically detained to access UK
34 consular services.
- 35 4. Stand with Ukraine as the country resists Putin's invasion, by:
- 36 a) Beginning the seizure of frozen Russian assets in the UK, with
37 proceeds repurposed to finance support for Ukraine.
- 38 b) Immediately repurposing the interest accrued on frozen
39 Russian assets for the good of Ukraine, following the plan set
40 out by Belgium.
- 41 5. Take steps to tackle economic crime, including flows of money
42 from Putin's cronies, by:
- 43 a) Publishing the long overdue review of 'golden visas', the Tier
44 1 (Investor) visa scheme.
- 45 b) Close loopholes in economic crime legislation.
- 46 c) Properly fund the National Crime Agency, so that they can
47 pursue Russian economic crime in this country.

Applicability: Federal.

Mover: 5 minutes; all other speakers 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see pages 44–45 of the Agenda & Directory.

Background briefing

This motion creates new policy in response to the death of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

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F16B

F16B Emergency motion: Beyond Rwanda: A Fairer Way Forward on Asylum

11 members

Mover: Max Wilkinson.

Summation: Danny Chambers.

1 Conference notes with grave concern the Conservative Government's
2 latest efforts to push through their failing Rwanda scheme amid
3 general chaos in the Home Office – including their controversial
4 Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill which has passed
5 through the House of Commons in January and February and is now
6 in the House of Lords, the sacking of David Neal as Independent Chief
7 Inspector of Borders and Immigration in February, and near-constant
8 political infighting.

9 Conference further notes that:

- 10 I. Under this policy, refugees removed to Rwanda will not be
11 eligible to return to the UK, even if their asylum claims are
12 successful.
- 13 II. The Supreme Court has already ruled that the scheme is illegal
14 due to serious deficiencies in the Rwandan asylum system.
- 15 III. More than £241 million has already been spent on the scheme,
16 despite no flights taking off – equivalent to the cost of delivering
17 more than 5.7 million GP appointments.
- 18 IV. The Home Office's own figures show that it will cost £69,000
19 more to send each asylum seeker to Rwanda, compared to if they
20 remained in the UK.
- 21 V. The Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill has been
22 described by some lawyers as "legislating for a lie", declaring
23 Rwanda as a safe third country – despite the Supreme Court
24 upholding that it is not and Conservative ministers own
25 admissions it currently is not.
- 26 VI. A similar Israeli program of sending asylum seekers to Rwanda
27 resulted in most of them being smuggled out of Rwanda in the
28 hands of criminal gangs.

29 Conference believes that the Government's Rwanda policy:

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- 30 a) Has been an extraordinary waste of time and money.
31 b) Is immoral, ineffective and incredibly expensive for the taxpayer.
32 c) Will do nothing to stop dangerous Channel crossings or combat
33 people smuggling and human trafficking.
34 d) Fails to address the backlog of asylum applications that has
35 ballooned under this Conservative Government.
36 e) Betrays the UK's proud tradition of providing sanctuary to
37 refugees fleeing war and persecution, and breaches our
38 international law commitments.

39 Conference further believes that the best way to stop these dangerous
40 crossings and tackle people smuggling is to provide safe and legal
41 routes to sanctuary for refugees.

42 Conference therefore calls on the UK Government to:

- 43 1. Abandon the Rwanda scheme and related legislation with
44 immediate effect.
45 2. Reaffirm its commitment to upholding important human rights
46 legislation, including the European Convention on Human Rights,
47 the UN Refugee Convention and the Human Rights Act.
48 3. Fix the broken asylum system by establishing a new, dedicated
49 unit to make decisions quickly and fairly.
50 4. Provide safe and legal routes to sanctuary for refugees from all
51 countries, as outlined in policy motion Safe and Legal Routes to
52 Save Lives.
53 5. Manage the costs of the asylum system by giving asylum seekers
54 the right to work and introducing a service standard of three
55 months for all but the most complex claims to be processed.

Applicability: Federal.

Mover: 5 minutes; all other speakers 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see pages 44–45 of the Agenda & Directory.

Background briefing

This motion updates and develops policy on refugees and asylum, in particular responding to the government's Rwanda scheme.

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It builds on existing policy as set out in the pre-manifesto policy paper 153, *For a Fair Deal* (September 2023), policy motion *Protecting the European Convention on Human Rights* (September 2023) and policy motion *A Better Alternative to the Small Boats Legislation* (March 2023).

F17 Federal Board Report

Q1. Submitted by John Grout

Since 01/01/2020, how many in-person Conferences have been cancelled to date, and what is the total aggregate financial cost to the Party of those cancellations? Given the number of conference cancellations in recent years, and the possibility of yet another in the autumn, on what grounds does the Federal Board believe that any party member should arrange to attend any party conference ever again?

Q2. Submitted by Abrial Jerram, Michael Berwick-Gooding, and Adam Roberston

How successful have you been in achieving the objective of “developing a compelling and distinctive narrative” and how important is it compared to the other organisational priorities listed in the report? The slogan ‘For a Fair Deal’ could be open up to interpretation, and therefore could mean something different to each individual. When we are talking about ‘Fairness’ is it the overarching theme of equality of opportunity or economic equality?

Note: All three submitters of this composite question will be entitled to a supplementary question.

Q3. Submitted by Daniel Jones

Given the advice to all members regarding antisemitism and the risks of being drawn into conspiracist thinking online (especially on social media), what is the board doing to support members (especially those involved in vetting council candidates) in spotting and being aware of such arguments?

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Q4. Submitted by John Grout

How can we give LGBT+ candidates confidence and support given the culture wars the opponents of the Lib Dems are likely to be fighting on at the General Election?

Q5. Submitted by Mark Johnston

In cases that were already several years old, why did it take six months for the dismissal of eight so-called 'transphobia' complaints to be communicated to the members concerned? In the Board's view, do these unjustified delays and associated uncertainties caused by the party constitute victimisation within the meaning of Section 27 of the Equality Act?

Q6. Submitted by Zoe Hollowood

Has the Federal Board been given direct access to, and discussed, the legal advice commissioned by the party after the adoption of the Revised Definition of Transphobia? If not, why not?

Q7. Submitted by Zoe Hollowood

Has all the expert legal advice commissioned by the party into the Definition of Transphobia consistently confirmed that the holding and expressing of gender critical beliefs by members is protected by law under the Equality Act and the European Convention on Human Rights (Arts 9 & 10), and that members must be allowed to express those beliefs freely, as long as they do not harass or discriminate against trans people or create an environment that is hostile or discriminatory to trans people?

Q8. Submitted by Alisdair McGregor

In the wake of the case of Ali vs Green Party, is the Federal Board confident that our disciplinary procedures are robust and fit for purpose in removing transphobes and others who are not aligned with the values of the party?

Q9. Submitted by Toby Keynes

Will the Federal Board take steps to disassociate the Party from the incendiary and grossly offensive assertion, in a motion adopted by English

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Council Executive in November 2022, that allowing party members to hold and express gender critical beliefs is “equivalent to allowing the holding and expressing of white supremacist or anti-Semitic views”?

Q10. Submitted by Juliet Line

In 2022 the ex-Chair of FPDC commented that it was working on a whistleblowing policy for volunteers. When can members expect its completion, who has been consulted and how will it be communicated?

Q11. Submitted by Toby Keynes

On 19/11/2022, I volunteered to train as an e-ballot administrator. The first initial training session offered was in December 2023. It is now 15 ½ months since I first applied, and I am still waiting to be offered the final-stage training programme. Is there a shortage of trained e-ballot administrators, and how long is the average wait time from volunteering to completing training?

Q12. Submitted by Wendy Horton and Dionne Daniel

Could Federal Board put the 2022 presidential hustings videos online and link them to the 2022 President election results page as they seem to have been taken down after briefly being available on you tube?

Note: Both submitters of this composite question will be entitled to a supplementary question.

F18 Campaign for Gender Balance Report

Q1. Submitted by Alison Jenner

Numerous councillors and local party executives have told me their experiences of sex discrimination within the party, from being advised not to stand due to having young children, to refusal to make accommodations regarding meeting times. What is the Party doing to support women in this position, educate other councillors and exec members and help stop this happening?

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F19 Federal Communications and Elections Committee Report

Q1. Submitted by John Grout and Adam Roberston

What more support can be given to T2/Moving Forward seats to help as many as possible become the target seats of the future? How are the Federal Communications and Elections Committee ensuring that Development and Start-Up seats are being supported for the General Election, with the County Council Elections being the main priority and the potential for many Liberal Democrats being elected to County Councils in 2025 and being in power?

Note: Both submitters of this composite question will be entitled to a supplementary question.

Q2. Submitted by Abrial Jerram

What is the process for a constituency that does not hit targets and does this process differ between held seats and non-held seats?

Q3. Submitted by Chris Butler

Why has the committee not disseminated the findings of the Campaigns Innovation Fund that it commissioned on the effectiveness of digital and non-digital campaigning?

Q4. Submitted by Abrial Jerram

How many seats are in each tier and do you expect these numbers to change between now and the election?

F21 Federal Council Report

Mover: Cllr Prue Bray.

F23 The Funding Crisis in Local Government

The FCC has agreed to make the following drafting amendment to the motion:

- 1 In c) (line 36), after 'leisure centres,' insert 'swimming pools,'.

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F23

Amendment One

Sheffield

Mover: Andrew Sangar.

Summation: Joe Otten.

1 *After v) (line 25), insert:*

2 vi) Councils are struggling to fund the increase in the need for
3 homeless placements and supported accommodation.

4 *After b) (line 32), insert:*

5 c) The government's approach to encourage councils to use
6 reserves and capital receipts to subsidise their revenue
7 expenditure is fundamentally wrong and unsustainable.

8 *After e) (line 42), insert:*

9 f) Liberal Democrat councillors up and down the country have a
10 strong record in community engagement and delivering good
11 quality, value for money local public services to respond to local
12 need.

Background briefing

This motion updates and develops policy on local government, and creates new policy in response to the local government funding crisis.

It builds on existing policy as set out in the pre-manifesto policy paper 153, *For a Fair Deal* (September 2023), and policy paper 130, *Power for People and Communities* (September 2018).

Live stream

The conference will be streamed live, in case you miss any sessions or want to watch again, at: libdems.org.uk/conference-live

Lost Property

Any lost property will be handed in to the Information Desk in the York Barbican Foyer.

Conference timetable 2024

14–17 September 2024, Brighton

Drafting advice deadline (motions)	13.00	Friday, 5 June 2024
Motions deadline	13.00	Wednesday, 19 June 2024
Drafting advice deadline (amendments, emergency motions)	13.00	Monday, 19 August 2024
Deadline for amendments to motions, emergency motions, topical issues, questions to reports	13.00	Monday, 2 September 2024



We want to hear from you!

We will be sending round a feedback survey link soon.
Please let us know about your experience of conference.

Spring Conference Welcome to the Conference Appeal



The General Election is coming.

I realise we ask so much of you, and now we are asking more. On behalf of the party, the country and people who are desperate for change, we need you.

We are putting huge efforts into our fundraising, and we are seeing results. But with the other two main parties raising a huge amount of money, we need your support more than ever.

We have an incredible opportunity. This will be our most exciting election for a generation. However, it is also a huge challenge.

The Tories are changing the goal posts for their own advantage, from GDPR to how much a party can spend in the short campaign. And they have the deepest pockets.

Please donate as generously as you can to the Party today, so that we can elect as many new Liberal Democrat MPs as possible, and change the direction of this country now and for the generations to come.

Your support is pivotal in our journey towards a fairer, more progressive society. We are in this together. And together, let's go and make history. Thank you.

Scan the QR code with your camera to donate
or visit libdems.org.uk/appeal