

**Liberal Youth Policy Register**

*Spring 2011*

This document records the full text of all policy motions passed by Liberal Youth Conferences (as amended) up to and including the indicated conference. It is therefore the definitive record of Liberal Youth policy in case of conflict with the Liberal Youth Policy Book and other records. This document supersedes all previous versions of the Policy Register.

Policy Committee 2011

*Index*

<a href="#">Animal Welfare</a> .....	10
<a href="#">Bill of Rights – Protecting Non-Conformists</a> .....	14
<a href="#">Child Detention and Improving the Rights of Asylum Seekers</a> .....	16
<a href="#">Applicability: Federal</a> .....	17
<a href="#">Civil Liberties</a> .....	18
<a href="#">Competition in the Media And Software Industries</a> .....	20
<a href="#">Creating a National Union for Students</a> .....	22
<a href="#">Dentistry and Orthodontic Provision for Children and Young People</a> .....	24
<a href="#">Development</a> .....	25
<a href="#">Digital Britain</a> .....	26
<a href="#">Conference Notes:</a> .....	26
<a href="#">Conference Believes That</a> .....	26
<a href="#">Conference Therefore Proposes</a> .....	27
<a href="#">Conference Therefore Resolves That</a> .....	27
<a href="#">Applicability: Federal</a> .....	28
<a href="#">Embargoes</a> .....	29
<a href="#">Employment Rights; The National Minimum Wage And Part-Time Workers</a> ..	30
<a href="#">Encouraging female participation</a> .....	31
<a href="#">Conference notes</a> .....	31
<a href="#">Conference believes</a> .....	31
<a href="#">Conference resolves</a> .....	31
<a href="#">Environmental Education</a> .....	32
<a href="#">Ethical Investments In The FE/HE Sector</a> .....	33
<a href="#">Fair Deal for Students and young people: Houses of Multiple Occupation</a> ....	34
<a href="#">Faith Schools (Multiculturalism and Religious Segregation) [consolidation]</a> ...	36
<a href="#">Applicability: England and Wales</a> .....	36
<a href="#">Free Contraception for All</a> .....	37
<a href="#">Freedom, Crime and Young People</a> .....	38
<a href="#">Freedom for Nuclear Power</a> .....	40
<a href="#">Greater London Authority</a> .....	41
<a href="#">Applicability: England</a> .....	44
<a href="#">HIV and Rights</a> .....	45
<a href="#">Housing for Students and Young People</a> .....	47
<a href="#">Human Rights in Burma</a> .....	49
<a href="#">Identity Cards</a> .....	51
<a href="#">Immigration in the EU</a> .....	52
<a href="#">International Students</a> .....	53
<a href="#">Landmines</a> .....	56
<a href="#">Land Value Taxation</a> .....	57
<a href="#">Legalisation of Cannabis</a> .....	58
<a href="#">The Military Covenant</a> .....	63
<a href="#">Mosquito Devices</a> .....	64
<a href="#">National Union of Students</a> .....	65
<a href="#">Nationalisation of Exam Boards</a> .....	66
<a href="#">Non-Violent Direct Action</a> .....	69
<a href="#">Oil</a> <a href="#">Conference Notes:</a> .....	70
<a href="#">Opposing a European Ban on Political Symbols</a> .....	72
<a href="#">Plastic Bag Tax</a> .....	73
<a href="#">Pornography in the Internet Age</a> .....	74
<a href="#">Practising Homosexuals and Giving Blood</a> .....	76
<a href="#">Privatisation of Halls</a> .....	77

<a href="#">Prostitution .....</a>	<a href="#">78</a>
<a href="#">Public Transport.....</a>	<a href="#">79</a>
<a href="#">Referendum on the European Constitution.....</a>	<a href="#">84</a>
<a href="#">Same-Sex Marriage.....</a>	<a href="#">85</a>
<a href="#">School Attendance .....</a>	<a href="#">86</a>
<a href="#">Conferences notes .....</a>	<a href="#">86</a>
<a href="#">Sex Education In Schools.....</a>	<a href="#">88</a>
<a href="#">Student Debt.....</a>	<a href="#">91</a>
<a href="#">Student Health and Housing .....</a>	<a href="#">92</a>
<a href="#">Students with Disabilities .....</a>	<a href="#">93</a>
<a href="#">Student Loans Company .....</a>	<a href="#">95</a>
<a href="#">Conference Notes.....</a>	<a href="#">95</a>
<a href="#">Liberal Youth believes:.....</a>	<a href="#">95</a>
<a href="#">Liberal Youth resolves:.....</a>	<a href="#">95</a>
<a href="#">Sustainable Marine Management.....</a>	<a href="#">96</a>
<a href="#">The Abolition of Democracy .....</a>	<a href="#">98</a>
<a href="#">The Arms Trade.....</a>	<a href="#">99</a>
<a href="#">The Global AIDS Epidemic.....</a>	<a href="#">101</a>
<a href="#">The Role of Church and State.....</a>	<a href="#">102</a>
<a href="#">Tibet .....</a>	<a href="#">103</a>
<a href="#">Towards A Democratic Head of State.....</a>	<a href="#">104</a>
<a href="#">Trade Unions .....</a>	<a href="#">105</a>
<a href="#">Conference Notes: .....</a>	<a href="#">105</a>
<a href="#">Trident.....</a>	<a href="#">107</a>
<a href="#">Voluntary Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide.....</a>	<a href="#">111</a>
<a href="#">Voting System (Referendum).....</a>	<a href="#">112</a>

**A Liberal Youth Response to the Federal HE/FE policy paper**

Conference Notes:

1. The full replacement of higher education maintenance grants by student loans by the Labour government in 1998, despite the recommendations of the Dearing Committee
2. The introduction of up front tuition fees for higher education courses of up to £1,025 by the Labour government in 1998
3. The current debate within the Federal Party over the report of the Federal Working Group
4. That the topic of Higher Education, in addition to an overarching review of 5-19, will be debated at the Harrogate Federal Conference in Spring 2009
5. The lack of consensus among the members of the Liberal Democrats

Conference Believes:

1. The role of Liberal Youth is to campaign on all issues, but with focus on issues which effect Students and Young People
2. This is an issue where members of the party will listen to what we have to say
3. This represents an opportunity to make party members more aware of Liberal Youth and of our position and philosophy

Conference resolves

1. Liberal Youth believes in the principal of no fees for students in higher education

## A fair deal for Pubs

### Conference notes:

1. The figures released on 22 July 2009 by the British Beer & Pub Association, showing a greatly-increased figure of 39 pubs closing each week in the United Kingdom, resulting in the loss of over 20,000 jobs in the last year.
2. The Government announcement on 29 July 2009 of a consultation on revoking the Land Agreements Exclusion Order 2004, a measure blamed for allowing anti-competitive practices run by many large pub management companies (pubcos).
3. The submission on 24 July 2009 by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) of a consumer 'super-complaint' to require the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) to fast-track consideration of anti-competitive practices in the UK pub market which are resulting in high prices in pubs, lower amenity, restricted choice and pub closures.
4. Pubcos resulted in a 1986 decision by the then Conservative government to limit the number of holdings which could be owned by breweries.
5. Pubcos are mainly backed by venture capitalists which during the economic recession are less able to maintain funding marginal establishments and are forced to close loss making establishments or raise the rents on establishments.
6. The number of pub premises available has increased for sale or lease since the beginning of the economic recession.
7. A common practice by pubcos and breweries is the use of beer-ties in contracts, where some or all of the licensed intoxicating liquor sold are bought from the landlord, this is also known as a tied-tenancy.
8. 84% of rural villagers believe the local pub to be as essential as the local post office for community relations and the continuation of village life.<sup>1</sup>
9. The CAMRA campaign to support microbreweries and the Local Ale campaign for locally sourced Real Ale and Bitter.
10. The formation of the new Independent Pub Confederation on 14 October 2009
11. The increased availability of non-alcoholic versions of beers and ales available in pubs and notes the continued improvement in quality and taste.

### Conference deplores:

1. The market dominance of the largest pubcos and the way some of them, along with some large breweries, have skewed the tied system so hugely in favour of the property owning company and against the small business operators actually operating the business.
2. The manner in which the tied tenancy mode, in particular the "beer tie" is being operated by the large pubcos, specifically the manner in which the pubcos secure huge discounts from breweries but fail to pass these on to the lease holders.
3. Restrictive covenants which prevent future purchasers from using the building as a public house deprive a community of a valuable resource.

4. The restrictive levels of rent which often restrict the ability of tenants to earn a living from the operation of the premises often imposed as a penalty on success, by increasing charges proportionally based on turnover.
5. The lack of access and barriers to market entry for smaller and more local breweries, including microbreweries restricts customer choice.
6. The weak position of pubs in current planning law being classified as any other business with no provision for their status as community facilities.

Conference therefore calls for:

1. A limit of 2000 as the number of pubs owned by a pubco, the same maximum applied to breweries in 1986.
2. The number of pubs owned by a pubcos not be geographically concentrated preventing local and regional monopolies. This shall be regulated by new powers for the OFT and Competition Commission.
3. Tenants to be offered the opportunity to choose between a tied tenancy and a rental tenancy by seeing the two proposals, including figures, side by side.
4. Action to be taken to give publicans choice to avoid the inflated prices that pubcos can charge for their product to tied tenants, by legal protection to be able to buy supplies free of tie.
5. The support of micro-breweries and the Local Ale campaign.
6. The continued increase in the number of non-alcoholic lines of beer and ale available and the continued improvement in quality and taste.
7. A mandatory statutory code of practice that creates transparency, a register of rental values and an agreed form of profits-based valuation that takes account of the real costs incurred by tenants.
8. The use of restrictive covenants, that prevent pubs being sold prohibiting their future use as pubs to be outlawed immediately.
9. Existing lease holders are given the right to buy the freehold of their pub if the owner puts the premises up for sale, at a value to be determined by an independent mediator.
10. A separate planning use class for rural pubs to be created, with planning guidance recognising the role of rural pubs as community facilities and requiring planning permission for demolition of a rural pub.

**Abortion (Northern Ireland)**

## Conference notes:

1. That women in Northern Ireland have no automatic right to an abortion
2. This includes women who have been raped, victims of incest and women whose baby has been diagnosed as profoundly disabled or will not live at birth.
3. Women in England, Scotland and Wales are entitled to a legal, safe abortion on the NHS and have been for the last 40 years.
4. Women from Northern Ireland who do not feel that they can continue their pregnancy have to travel to the rest of the United Kingdom, where they organise and pay for their own abortion. This option is only available to those women who are able to raise the money to pay for their procedure within the legal time limits, as well as the costs of their travel and accommodation, which can add up to thousands of pounds.

## Conference believes:

1. That all women have a right to exercise control, freedom and choice in their sexual and reproductive lives
2. That every woman has a right to choose to have an abortion, and that access to abortion services should be free and fair to all who choose to use them
3. No woman should be forced to carry on a pregnancy against their will
4. No woman's health or life should be put at risk by unsafe abortion practices
5. No woman's life or health should be put at risk as a consequence of being denied medical treatment when faced with an unplanned pregnancy
6. No woman should be deterred from seeking medical care for fear of being reported to the police by medical professionals who suspect unlawful behaviour
7. All women in Northern Ireland should have the right to abortion services based on need, rather than personal conscience and religion

## Conference resolves:

1. To support the Family Planning Association's campaign, "Time for Change"
2. To take a motion to Federal Conference in Birmingham calling on the Federal Party to support the campaign.

## **An evidence based drugs policy**

### Conference Notes

1. The Government claims to value facts and independent advice
2. The Home Office has repeatedly disregarded scientific evidence from the advisory council on the misuse of drugs
3. With dismay the removal of Professor Nutt, as chair of the advisory council on the misuse of drugs

### Conference Believes

1. The removal of Professor Nutt by the Home Secretary Alan Johnson was a disgraceful and politically motivated action taken to suppress scientific evidence
2. Whilst Ministers make the final decision on drugs policy, they should do so on the basis of sound science, not chasing tabloid approval

### Conference Resolves

1. Professor Nutt should be reinstated immediately as the Chair of the advisory council on the misuse of drugs
2. Future drugs policy must be evidence led, with support from a royal commission to provide a comprehensive review of drugs policy
3. Alan Johnson must resign immediately

## **Animal Welfare**

### Conference Notes:

1. That in 2000 (the last year statistics were available for) over 2.71 million experiments were performed on animals in the United Kingdom
2. Recent developments in alternatives to animal testing, including the announcement in March 2002 that Xgene Corporation had succeeded in developing novel skin development technology
3. That two key European Union (EU) animal protection measures - the ban on the import of furs from countries using the leghold trap and the prohibition on the marketing of cosmetics tested on animals - have been unravelled as a result of fears by the EU that they could not survive World Trade Organisation (WTO) challenges
4. In 2000 a Medical Research Council (MRC)/MORI poll found that 58% of those questioned supported the statement that animal experimentation for medical research purposes should only be conducted for life threatening diseases

Conference welcomes the vote by the European Parliament on April 10 2001 to ban the sale of all cosmetics tested on animals within five years and the announcement made on 3 January 2002 by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) of the launch of a consultation to review out-dated laws on animal welfare.

### Conference believes:

1. That animal suffering, except where a significant benefit to human kind is sufficiently likely to justify it, is totally unacceptable
2. That basic scientific research, on invertebrates meets this standard and should continue
3. That circuses and zoos cannot sufficiently recreate natural environments for their animals
4. That the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) rules must be reformed to allow the European Union (and other WTO members) to introduce trade-related measures which are genuinely aimed at securing improved standards of animal welfare

Conference expresses its concern for the welfare of all animals, in whatever environment they may be and calls for:

1. The compulsory publication of all results from experiments on vertebrates (to prevent unnecessary repetition of testing)
2. The government to offer support, and incentives, for research into alternatives to animal testing
3. A ban on the use of wild animals in circuses and regulation to govern the use of domestic animals
4. An immediate end to the use of animals in the development and testing of household goods, tobacco and weapons tests.
5. An end to all tests on animals once a suitable scientific alternative to animal testing has been found
6. Animal welfare considerations to be a valid factor within the rules of the World Trade Organisation

## The Arab Spring

### Conference welcomes:

1. The recent popular movements in pursuit of liberal democracies in countries across the Middle East and North Africa, and the progress that has since been made in some of these countries towards democratisation and constitutional reform.
2. The humanitarian assistance to the people of Libya as a result of UN Security Council resolution 1973.
3. The joint statement signed by the Network of Arab Liberals, Liberal International, the European Liberal Democrats and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats in regard of supporting freedom, popular uprisings in the Arab World and strengthening fora and tools for future cooperation, signed on the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2011.
4. The Federal Conference motion, Arab Awakening including its recognition of young protesters, and the encouragement in the debate for Liberal Youth to work with liberal youth organisations in these countries.

### Conference recognises

1. in particular the role played by young people and women in these popular movements.

### Conference regrets:

1. The past links between the government of the UK and regimes in the Middle East and North Africa
2. The sale of arms to repressive regimes across the Middle East and North Africa by British arms traders, and the continued promotion of the British arms trade to transitional countries and governments.

### Conference condemns

1. repression of human rights such as democracy, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and self-determination wherever it may occur, and therefore condemns the violent repression of these rights in Bahrain, Syria, Libya and Yemen.

### Conference calls for:

1. Governments in the region to respect human rights and freedoms, and to respond peacefully to any further popular uprisings.
2. The international community to increase its support for democratic processes in countries in the area currently undergoing political and economic transition.
3. Cooperation with sister parties in the region, including the umbrella organisation for liberal youth in Africa, OALY-LEAD, to promote the inclusion of young people in the development of liberal democracies.
4. The \$20 billion promised to Egypt and Tunisia to be delivered under the Deauville partnership.
5. **For a portion of this \$20 billion to be set aside for youth projects to encourage the involvement and participation of young people in the political process, as well as the collaboration of those from different groups in society.**

## Assisted Suicide

### Conference Notes

1. The Director of Public Prosecutions statement of 25 February clarifying the position of people who help other people who assist others to take their own lives.
2. The 1961 Suicide Act which makes suicide legal but still makes assisted suicide illegal.
3. The Dimbleby lecture given by Sir Terry Pratchett asking for tribunals to be set up for those wishing to end their lives in order to determine the legitimacy of their intentions.

#### Conference Believes

1. In the intrinsic human right of an individual to determine the nature of their death
2. Relatives of individuals seeking an assisted death should not be left in legal limbo

#### Conference Resolves

1. Assisted Suicide should be made available to those of have been found to be of sound mind by a tribunal who wish for it.
2. Relatives assisting in the death of a family member should be free from prosecution if a tribunal finds in that family member's favour.

Applicability: Federal

## Asylum Seekers Right to Work

### Conference Notes:

1. Asylum seekers who have been refused asylum but for some reason cannot be immediately returned to their country of origin, or those awaiting a hearing are not allowed to work to support themselves and their families
2. The European Convention on Human Rights says asylum seekers have the right to work
3. If Asylum seekers receive just 75% of normal income support – around £40 a week, this is well below the poverty line (£58 per single adult with no dependants after housing has been deducted)
4. The Still Human Still Here campaign is dedicated to highlighting the plight of tens of thousands of refused asylum seekers who are destitute in the UK. Supporters of the campaign believe that the denial of any means of subsistence to refused asylum seekers as a matter of government policy is both inhumane and ineffective.
5. Still Human Still Here is a coalition of 43 charities
6. In the Liberal Democrat constitution it states, “allow asylum seekers to work, saving taxpayers’ money and allowing them dignity earning their living instead of having to depend on hand-outs”
7. The British Red Cross had to assist more than 11,600 destitute asylum seekers in need of emergency assistance last year.

### Conference Believes:

1. Removal of people’s ability to support themselves, through with work or benefits does little to encourage failed asylum seekers to leave voluntarily (Centre for Social Justice)
2. Forced destitution will not encourage people to leave voluntarily
3. There is a backlog of 280,000 failed applications which could take 20 years to clear. (Centre for Social Justice) The economy is suffering by these people being refused permission to work.
4. Without being able to work, asylum seekers are unable to adapt into the community and so they are being segregated against and it is fuelling discrimination.

### Conference Resolves:

1. To campaign To remind the Liberal Democrats of our manifesto promises
2. To support the Still Human Still Here campaign
3. To lobby our Ministers and MPs to support permission to work for asylum seekers left in limbo

Applicability: Federal

**Conference Notes:**

1. The British Humanist Association's campaign displaying the slogan "There's probably no God, now stop worrying and enjoy your life".
2. The complaints made against the BHA and its campaign to the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) by Stephen Green of Christian Voice.
3. The ruling of the ASA in favour of the BHA with regards to the case cited in [2].

**Conference Believes:**

1. Freedom of speech and expression applies to all people, regardless of their religious views or beliefs.
2. That within that caveat fall those without religious views, including those who subscribe to any strain of agnosticism.
3. That this campaign has been largely welcomed by the British public.
4. That current law satisfactorily deals with the fine line between freedom of expression and incitement to hate/violence/murder.
5. That the silencing of any freedom of expression within the law is illiberal, counterproductive, and wrong.

**Conference Resolves:**

1. To maintain Liberal Youth's commitment to free speech in the UK and around the world.
2. To support the liberal principle of opposing oppression of on the grounds of religious belief, or lack thereof.
3. To support the BHA campaign, should they choose to continue it.

**Conference Notes:**

1. The policy, determined by Portman Capital and the Lib Dems' Treasury Parliamentary Committee, that would see shares in Government-owned banks distributed among citizens of the UK.
2. That this policy has been backed by Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg.
3. That the shares would be distributed to "all adults on the electoral roll".

**Conference Believes:**

1. That this policy is a positive way to repay the public for bailing out the banks.
2. That any such policy should include a way to distribute shares to young people, whose futures were gambled with when the banks were bailed out.
3. That any such policy should inherently take account of intergenerational fairness.

**Conference Resolves:**

1. To lobby Liberal Democrat MPs to ensure that if this policy does become fully formulated, it includes intergenerational fairness at its core.
2. **That no UK citizens are left out of this payback scheme.**

**Conference notes:**

1. The 2010 Presidential election in which Alyaksandr Lukashenka was re-elected with 79.7% of the vote.
2. OSCE standards were not met in this election.
3. The state has taken on the work of journalists, lawyers and human rights activists – as a result heavily restricting their work.

**Conference further notes with concern**

1. Belarus has been named “The last dictatorship in Europe” by Condoleezza Rice
2. The recent arrest of prominent Belarusian human rights activists and former presidential candidates.<sup>1</sup>
3. That awareness of the situation in Belarus is limited amongst the British public

**Conference welcomes:**

1. The recent statement by Nick Clegg on Belarus, his meetings with exiled opposition leaders, and his broadcast on European Radio for Belarus showing solidarity with Belarusian protesters.

**Conference condemns:**

1. Repression of human rights such as democracy, freedom of expression, freedom of association.

**Conference Calls for:**

3. Any financial aid given to Belarus to be dependent on the release of political prisoners, and for no further arrests to be made, thus guaranteeing the safety of protesters in Belarus.
4. The international community to pressure President Lukashenka on the purgatory for lawyers, journalists and human rights activists.
5. Liberal Youth to work alongside IFLRY and LYMEC in campaigning for political reforms in Belarus and the protection of young liberal protesters.

**Notes:**

<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/belarus/74657>

*Around 15 people remain in prison convicted under articles of the Criminal Code for organisation or participation in the Ploscha events on December 19, including three ex-presidential candidates: Andrey Sannikov (5 years), Nikolay Statkevich (6 years), Dmitriy Us (5.5 years). Ales Byalyatsky, chairperson of the Human Rights Center Viasna has also been in prison since 4 August on tax evasion charges.*

**Bill of Rights: Protecting Non-conformists****Conference notes:**

1. That on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1992 the Court of Appeal upheld the convictions of 5 men for participating in sadomasochistic practices.

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<sup>1</sup>

2. That the "offences" for which the men were convicted took place with the full consent of those involved, and that none of the participants required medical treatment as a result of their participation.
3. That the sentences originally handed down to these men were in some cases equivalent to those frequently handed down for rape.
4. That the preamble to the constitution of the Liberal Democrats states: "The Liberal Democrats exist to build and safeguard a free, fair and open society... in which none shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity."

Conference believes:

2. That these convictions represent the antithesis of a free, fair and open society and are an attempt to impose conformity.
3. That the prosecution and conviction of these men is an example of anti-gay prejudice in the police and judiciary involved.
4. That a properly drafted Bill of Rights would be a powerful weapon against such prejudice and would be a powerful weapon in the hands of those who wish to defend their rights to freedom of sexual expression.

Conference therefore:

1. Condemns the prosecution and conviction of these men.

Conference resolves:

1. To continue working and campaigning for a Bill of Rights as an essential part of any constitutional settlement.
2. To condemn and work against any form of prejudice that conflicts with the vision of a free, fair and open society.
3. To urge all Liberal Democrats to support efforts to gain justice for those convicted.

Conference notes

1. that nearly 1 in 4 people in the UK say they feel unhappy about their bodies, and that the prevalence of eating disorders amongst young people doubled between 1996 and 2011.
2. that children and young people see thousands of images every year through media and advertising.
3. the Campaign for Body Confidence, founded in Parliament by Liberal Democrats Jo Swinson and Lynne Featherstone, is considered by ministers to be “*at the core of the [Coalition] government’s message on health and well-being*”.

Conference believes

1. many images used in advertising create a culture of conformity, not individuality, and often don’t reflect the real society we live in, or the myriad values that make lives worth more than physical appearance.
2. that the pressure to fit to impossible stereotypes can damage our sense of well-being and lead to unhappiness, anxiety, low self-esteem, depression and eating disorders, particularly amongst young people and children.

Conference reaffirms

1. that no-one should be enslaved by poverty, ignorance, and conformity.

Conference believes

1. that appearance-related concerns need to be tackled at their earliest onset, namely in adolescence and during puberty.

Conference resolves

1. to fight for the rights of every young person and student to feel comfortable with their body image, and to have the knowledge to critically assess differences between beauty and advertising;
2. to support the Campaign for Body Confidence in schools and colleges;
3. to ask the Executive, Committees, State Organisations and Regional Council to work together on a programme of implementing a campaign pack for use in talks, mock elections, lessons, student voice media, teaching unions, and other groups considered relevant;
4. that Liberal Youth should support other parts of the Liberal Democrats in promoting the Campaign for Body Confidence, including support for related activities and drop-in articles for leaflets and newspapers.

*Background information for the “Body Confidence Campaign” motion:*

*Liberal Youth Policy Motions: “School Attendance”, “Dentistry and Orthodontic Provision”.*

*Liberal Democrat Policy Papers: “Real Women”, “Moving Ahead”.*

*Internet links [at October 2011]:*

<http://campaignforbodyconfidence.wordpress.com/>

<http://www.endangeredspecieswomen.org.uk/>

<http://www.mediasmart.org.uk/resources-body-image.php>

<http://hls.uwe.ac.uk/research/car.aspx>

Conference Notes

1. The release of the British Youth Council (BYC) Manifesto on 22 February 2010
2. Liberal Youth is the only youth and student organisation of any major political party affiliated to the BYC

Conference Believes

The 5 Key Aspects of the BYC Manifesto are in line with the aims of Liberal Youth.

Conference Resolves

To support and assist the 2010 BYC in the Liberal Youth Manifesto and the BYC manifesto campaign both during and after the election.

Applicability Federal

## Child Detention and Improving the Rights of Asylum Seekers

### Conference Notes:

The detention of children in immigration detention centres has been ended, as a result of the actions of Liberal Democrats in Government

Social workers are given as little as three days of training in age-assessment, yet their assessment is relied on by the authorities in preference to those of paediatricians and child psychologists.

Asylum seekers who made their claims before 5<sup>th</sup> March 2007, and who wish to submit fresh evidence, are forced to travel to an office in Liverpool rather than be allowed to post or email it and receive neither transport or accommodation costs in order to do so.

**In 2010 the Independent Chief Inspector of the UK Border Agency reported** that the summer 2011 deadline for clearing the current backlog of asylum cases ("legacy cases") may not be met, and that the Home Affairs Select Committee report of July 2010 on the performance of the UKBA raised concerns that the backlog will end with the UKBA failing to establish what has happened to the claimants in as many as 61,000 cases.

Asylum-seeking children are excluded from official poverty statistics, despite the fact that many asylum-seeking families are trapped in poverty.

The British Red Cross reports that it had to assist more than 11,600 destitute asylum seekers in need of emergency assistance in 2009.

That those who work contribute to the economy by paying taxes on their incomes

Most asylum claims are reviewed and granted based on whether or not people are being individually persecuted or targeted by their country of origin

Since 2004, refused asylum seekers including pregnant women, children, and terminally ill patients have not been allowed to receive secondary healthcare on the NHS unless they pay for it themselves.

A Department of Health Review of access to the NHS by foreign nationals, which ran until June 2010, proposed the re-instating the exemption to NHS charges for secondary healthcare for refused asylum seekers who are in receipt of financial support from the UK Border Agency (UKBA).

### Conference Believes:

1. It is not just that, as set out in the report, 'Does Every Child Matter?' from Refugee and Migrant Justice Asylum seeking children are subject to "a hostile legal process, sometimes without adult representation or support, and often facing a 'culture of disbelief' when recounting their traumatic histories".
2. It is not acceptable for many asylum seekers to be left in limbo for months or years without clear decisions about their future, and are unable to start rebuilding their lives.
3. Asylum seekers, who have been waiting for over 6 months for their cases to be heard, should be allowed to work, thereby reducing the cost to the taxpayer and allowing a small number of asylum seekers to support themselves and their families while contributing to the economy.
4. The stigma and destitution associated with the use of vouchers for asylum seekers is unjustifiable and mean-spirited
5. Allowing asylum seekers to be self-sufficient saves the taxpayer's money by not having to provide support
6. The economic benefit of allowing asylum seekers to work while their case is being reviewed outweighs the potential costs of an increase in those claiming asylum despite being economic migrants
7. Many people are fleeing widespread human rights violations, and terrible unsafe conditions- yet they might not be personally targeted

8. Many asylum seekers are being denied asylum, yet not being deported due to unsafe conditions in their country of origin; therefore are staying in the UK without opportunity to work or leave the country
9. All people residing in the UK or awaiting on a decision for UK residency should have access to free universal healthcare should they have need of it.
10. The Department of Health proposals would require NHS staff with no knowledge of immigration procedures to be able to identify the difference between: refused asylum seekers receiving UKBA support; those who are eligible for such support but are still waiting for it to be provided; those whose support has been cut off and who may or may not be entitled to it again; and those who are not entitled. Conference further believes this is not practical, will lead to confusion among medical staff and administrators, and may lead to people being denied treatment even when they are entitled to it

#### **Conference calls on the Government to:**

1. Ensure there is appropriate and accurate assessment of the age of asylum seekers to prevent children being detained in future
2. Provide asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute with sufficient cash support so that they can meet their essential living needs until they are returned to their country of origin or are given permission to reside in Britain;
3. Improve efficiency of the decision making process to reduce the unacceptable time taken to determine cases
4. Provide assistance to those wishing to travel to Liverpool to present fresh evidence or enable such information to be provided by post, fax or email
5. Publish statistics on the outcome of appeals against refusal of asylum in children's cases, against removals and on the length of detention of asylum seekers;
6. Ensure all unaccompanied child asylum seekers are given proper support and are treated appropriately and professionally by those questioning them.
7. Automatically grant both asylum seekers and failed asylum seekers permission to work after six months of filing their claim, as long as their claim is still active
8. Set up a separate committee to review the cases of asylum seekers from countries the UK is unwilling or unlikely to deport people to, including but not limited to; Zimbabwe, Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Eritrea
9. Sign up to the EU Returns Directive which sets a maximum time limit of 18 months on detention of asylum seekers
10. Set a time limit on reviewing and deciding cases of asylum seekers for all countries except those listed in Conference Resolves 7). This time limit should not exceed 18 months
11. Allow refused asylum seekers to be exempt from NHS charges.
12. Issue clear guidance to all NHS institutions and staff clarifying that all asylum seekers, refused asylum seekers and refugees are entitled to free NHS treatment and services.

Applicability: Federal

## **Civil Liberties**

### Conference Notes:

1. The recent Law Lords ruling on the illegality of detaining terror suspects without trial
2. The Government proposals in response whereby ministers can place terrorists under house arrest
3. That the Government's proposal contravenes the European Convention on Human Rights
4. That whilst terrorist cases can involve sensitive information, the Government is not proposing trial in secret – rather, no trial at all.

### Conference Believes:

1. That host house arrest may be one solution to issues of terrorism, the Government proposal is entirely the wrong way of approaching it. This is illegal, illiberal, ill thought out and likely to be ineffective.
2. That if there is sufficient evidence to charge a suspect with terrorist offences, they should be charged, and that otherwise they should be released.

### Conference Resolves:

1. To oppose the Government's proposals, and to call on Lib Dem MPs and Peers to do likewise.
2. To call for a judicial commission to investigate legal alternatives to the government's proposals – for example widening the rules of admissibility of evidence in terrorist cases.

## **Charges within the NHS (UK regions)**

### Conference Notes

1. The founding principle of the NHS is free health coverage for all procedures for all patients.
2. Prescription charges within the National Health Service (NHS) in England.
3. The abolition of prescription charges in Wales.
4. Charges for parking in hospital car parks in the United Kingdom (UK).
5. The abolition of charges for parking in NHS hospitals in Scotland.
6. Charges for dentistry and optical services within the NHS in the UK.
7. The HC1 form for applying for help with health costs.
8. The HC2 and HC3 certificates for exemptions and limits on health costs within the NHS in England.
9. The HC2 and HC3 forms help with travel costs as well as standard charges while under the care of a consultant.

### Conference Believes

3. The original principle of the NHS must be upheld.
4. All charges within the NHS must be fully and immediately abolished.
5. Different regions within the UK must not have charges for services which are free of charge in other regions of the UK.
6. The HC1 form is a bureaucratic and in some cases preventative way for some people to fully claim all the relief they are entitled to for help with health costs.
7. The different HC2 and HC3 form certificates create an unnecessary distinction between those who most need help with paying for standard healthcare.
8. Help must be given to those who cannot afford travel costs when under the care of a consultant that is a long distance from where they live.
9. A system of hospital parking based upon the requirement to use hospital facilities should be introduced.

### Conference Resolves

1. All charges within the UK must be free at the point of use regardless of the ability to pay.
2. To highlight the help available to all people in Higher Education through the HC1 form.
3. To campaign for the abolition of charging within the NHS.
4. A system of ticket validation based upon the validation of tickets at hospital departments and ward receptions should be implemented.

Applicability: Federal

## **Competition in the Media And Software Industries**

Conference notes:

1. The unresolved dispute between BSkyB and Virgin Media regarding Cable TV.
2. The subsequent loss of Sky One and other channels suffered by Virgin Media customers.

Conference believes:

1. That BSkyB is behaving in an anti-competitive manner.
2. That markets benefit from competition.
3. That the toleration of monopolies in the media industry parallels that of the software industry.

Conference resolves:

1. To write a letter of complaint to the Competition Commission and the appropriate Secretary of State to urge them to examine whether there has been a breach of competition law.
2. To campaign for the breaking up of monopolies in the media and software industries, by legislation if necessary.

## **Contact point Database**

### Conference Notes

3. The report released by the Times regarding the ContactPoint database being “not stable and there is scope for “colossal abuse of the system”
4. ContactPoint is a database of all 11 million children in the United Kingdom Containing all such information as Age, Gender, School and GP details.

### Conference Believes

1. The large number of people who have access to the database leaves data theft a high likelihood
2. Vulnerable children need to be treated personally and individually
3. ContactPoint is a wasteful intrusion into children’s Civil Liberties.

### Conference Resolves

1. This Conference opposes the expansion of ContactPoint
2. To support alternative systems that protect children as autonomous Individuals.
3. That Liberal Youth lobby the Liberal Democrats and write to the Liberal Democrats Federal Executive to support this policy.

Applicability: Federal

## Creating a National Union for Students

Conference notes that the National Union of Students:

1. Has been discussing reform since the late 1980s, if not before, and has failed to reform itself for ten years;
2. Is hijacked at National Executive level as well as every Conference by small cliques who represent the needs of their faction - not the needs of students;
3. Wastes half a million pounds every year at its Conference on an agenda that is never completed, hundreds of pointless procedural motions and opportunities for extremists to storm the stage (as they do every year);
4. By contrast, spends as little as £15,000 on liberation and social policy campaigns;
5. Has prioritised a policy debate on NUS Reform at National Conference 2002.

Conference believes that NUS has to change to become once again a positive campaigning force for students, and that reform should be based around:

1. Ensuring Annual Conference remains the sovereign body of NUS, whilst redirecting its resources towards effective campaigning and representation of its members;
2. Ensuring the maximum possible participation of both Further and Higher Education students at all levels of NUS;
3. Democracy, decentralisation and diversity as the key principles guiding reform.

Conference calls on NUS to campaign for:

Increased accountability and involvement by:-

1. An extra round of Regional Conferences every July, to ensure year-round accountability of the National Executive;
2. For VP Further Education and Union Development (FEUD) to be elected by FE students only.
3. Retaining the vital link for FE colleges currently provided by Areas by reforming the structure of NUS Regions using the model of Areas, so that they are properly funded, and that such funding is not subject to review by the National Executive and are charged with servicing FE colleges, maximising membership of colleges and bringing NUS closer to its constituent members;
4. Upholding the autonomy of the Liberation Campaigns;
5. Abolishing the powers of the President to appoint chairs of Conference, reallocate responsibilities without the consent of the National Executive, and to ignore Conference mandates without immediate censure.

Transparency and openness in the elections process, by:-

1. Rejecting calls to end the political backing of candidates as antidemocratic and unworkable, but;
2. Introducing a financial limit for campaign materials for candidates running in election as per many students' unions, obliging that receipts be provided, financial sponsors be published, and that overspending leads to instant withdrawal from that election; and
3. Taking the local government example of statutory declarations of memberships of relevant political groupings.

1. Re-affirming the sovereignty of NUS Annual Conference as the primary decision-making body of NUS (as well as its most democratic body at present), and the right of students' unions to submit motions, amendments and to composite.
2. A strictly-enforced word limit on motions and amendments to Conference;
3. Root and branch reform of Compositing ("drafting commissions") to make them more accessible and less controversial;
4. Amendment of Standing Orders to ensure that Conference completes its business; to give ordinary delegates a greater chance to speak; and to tackle the perennial allegations of intimidation at Conference;
5. Halving the size of Higher Education Students' Union delegations to give greater parity to Further Education delegates, and to bring Conference to a size that can fit into venues other than Blackpool (preferably on University accommodation which would make significant cost savings);
6. Reform NUS' finances by an independent review, focusing particularly on its Services division (NUSSL).
7. To use the savings made by reform of Conference to increase campaign resources in the first instance, including reinstating staff support for Liberation Campaigns; and in the longer-term to increase support to individual Unions and reduce affiliation fees.

Conference further believes that the attempts of some leading NUS factions will make NUS worse, not better; and that our representatives at NUS Conference should oppose any such attempts.

## **Dentistry and Orthodontic Provision for Children and Young People**

### Conference notes:

1. The NHS document, "Modernising Orthodontic Services" includes proposals that dentists should limit free orthodontic treatment to children whose teeth are so crooked that they physically endanger their health. This would withdraw the right to free orthodontic work and mouth braces from an estimated 50,000 children a year.
2. Children with crooked adult teeth are subject to psychological damage, and bullying. Their teeth are harder to clean, more difficult to care for, and commonly do not fit the mouth nor leave space for wisdom teeth.
3. The annual cost of orthodontic care to the NHS has doubled to about £80 million since the mid-1990s as a result of an identified clinical need, availability new unobtrusive dental braces and glues, and as a result of the reduced stigmatism suffered by brace-wearers.

### Conference believes:

1. The crooked teeth of up to 50,000 British children may go uncorrected because their parents cannot afford treatment, as a result of Government plans to restrict NHS orthodontic care.
2. The Government has underestimated the bullying and psychological stress suffered by children with poor teeth.
3. The Department of Health proposals are too inflexible. Many dentists are concerned that children from less privileged backgrounds will suffer.
4. It is not uncommon for patients to wait two years for treatment, while some hospital out-patient waiting lists were up to four years long.

### Conference calls for:

1. The government to abandon these proposals.
2. The views of dentists and other health professionals such as doctors to be fully taken into account when decisions are made about the range and extent of services offered by the NHS.
3. The Department of Health to truly "Modernise Orthodontic Services" by providing sufficient resources to allow waiting lists to be reduced without denying care to those whose clinical need has been identified.

## Development

### Conference Notes:

3. The endemic poverty in many third world nations.
4. The large government subsidies many producers receive in developed nations.
5. The tariffs and quotas imposed by the developed world upon goods from poorer nations.
6. The inability of third world countries to trade on equal terms with developed nations.
7. That aid alone is not enough to bring third world countries out of poverty.
8. The lack of democracy and democratic institutions in many nations.
9. The Liberal tradition of support for free trade dating back to the campaign against the Corn Laws.

### Conference Believes:

1. That the inability of third world nations to trade on equal terms with developed nations contributes to their poverty.
2. That tariffs and subsidies help prevent fair trade between the developed and less developed world.
3. That lifting tariffs and subsidies would help third world nations to help themselves.
4. That developed nations should not place unfair restrictions on developing nations' trade.
5. That helping developing nations to help themselves is more effective than creating dependence on Western aid payments.
6. That democracy is a positive thing that should be actively encouraged through peaceful means where it is not present.

### Conference therefore resolves:

1. To campaign to end subsidies on goods competing with those from the developing world, especially the CAP.
2. To campaign to end tariffs and quotas on goods from the developing world.
3. To campaign to encourage the practice of micro credit lending in developing nations.
4. To campaign to encourage democracy through peaceful means across the world.
5. To call for developing countries to lower the trade barriers between themselves.

## Digital Britain

### Conference Notes:

- 1 The Report "Digital Britain", released in full on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2009 by Lord Carter, minister for communications, technology and broadcasting
- 2 That Digital Britain sectors account for nearly 10% GDP<sup>2</sup>
- 3 The increasing efforts of the Music Industry to combat piracy with projects such as Spotify
- 4 Sales of music sales have fallen dramatically- by 50% from 1999 to 2004 for example<sup>3</sup>
- 5 Digital Rights Management (DRM) has annoyed many purchasers of legitimate electronic files
- 6 The current term of Copyright for Sound Recordings is 50 years
- 7 66% of young people do not see illegally downloading free music as morally objectionable<sup>4</sup>
- 8 The software industry is rapidly changing and demands a high level of flexibility
- 9 That there remains some ambiguity over software copyright, and that some software becomes dormant but still protected by copyright.
- 10 The introduction of the 15a classification in Irish Cinemas

### Conference Believes That

- 1 The report "Digital Britain" lays out some of the necessary steps in modernising this country, and preparing the economy for a more technology orientated world.
- 2 Access to broadband should become a right, not a privilege, and therefore needs funding and planning for universal access
- 3 The money raised by the 50p Landline tax is highly unlikely to raise sufficient revenue for nationwide access to broadband, particularly in rural areas
- 4 Internet piracy represents a threat to many creative arts industries, particularly music and film
- 5 The threat of disconnecting piracy offenders is, however, excessive.
- 6 The current copyright time frame for sound recordings should not be modified
- 7 Switching off analogue radio services by 2015 is a necessity, but one which must be carefully carried out to ensure that support is available for those people who struggle to switch, particularly for financial reasons.

<sup>2</sup> As reported on BBC website, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2009

<sup>3</sup> As reported by IFPI

<sup>4</sup> As reported by the BBC

8 The proposals on the age rating of video games do not tackle the fundamental problem that they are subjective and unnecessarily proscriptive

#### Conference Therefore Proposes

1 A more effective approach to internet piracy would be a government instituted scheme of fines, perhaps linked to a proportion of the monetary value of the illegal goods, up to a maximum amount. This must be linked with the removal of DRM from legitimately purchased goods to provide people with the flexibility they deserve.

2 To strongly oppose disconnection as a disproportionate punishment and to seek to ensure that civil suits no longer result in damages greater than the fines imposed.

3 However, where there is reasonable doubt as to the offender on a particular network, or where children may be involved, steps must be taken to ensure that innocent people are not fined, and that children understand fully the nature of piracy

4 Children of secondary school age should therefore be educated and debate the issues surrounding and the legal aspects of piracy as part of the citizenship curriculum

5 Further areas of funding need to be found to make the roll-out of universal broadband credible.

6 That an internet speed promise of 2Mbps must be matched by careful observation to ensure this is achieved. Many broadband companies have offered very fast speeds but subsequently found themselves unable to deliver on these promises at any but the quietest times.

7 To reject the EU proposals that would increase the term of copyright for sound recordings to 99 years plus the life of artist. The length of copyright for motion pictures should be lowered to 50 years, and software be placed at 25.

8 Software which has been copyrighted and used for commercial purposes but is no longer used on an active commercial basis be exempted from copyright provision

9 That 15a and possibly even 18a be considered as viable age ratings for films shown in licensed cinemas. Both of these require the young person to be older than the previous category, i.e. for a 15a you must be at least 12, and for an 18a you must be at least 15.

10 That a more effective method of age ratings for Video games would be to enforce the PEGI ratings (currently advisory), and not require restricted games to have two separate ratings.

11 That while labelling of films is under review, we should push for Epilepsy warnings on DVD boxes and film trailers, if appropriate to the content

#### Conference Therefore Resolves That

1 These proposals be submitted to any relevant consultation on the report

2 These proposals be submitted to Liberal Democrat Spring 2010 Conference for consideration by the Federal Party



## Embargoes

### Conference notes:

1. There are discussions in the EU about ending the arms embargo on China
2. There are still political prisoners in China from the Tiananmen Square protest
3. North Korea has an appalling human rights record which is well documented elsewhere
4. In 2003 the government arranged trade fairs to promote arms sales. These were attended by representatives from North Korea and China, in addition to 12+ countries on Amnesty's list of top human rights abusing nations despite the fact arms could not be sold to these countries under the EU embargo?
5. ELDR have been attempting to block the lifting of the arms embargo.
6. China continues to pursue a policy of repression and human rights abuses in Tibet
7. Burma has an oppressive military dictatorship and atrocious human rights record, going so far as to place the democratically elected president under house arrest
8. Liberal Youth has policy on non violent direct action (nvda) available on the website @ <http://www.Liberal Youth.org.uk/web/policy/directaction.html>
9. Liberal Youth has policy on the arms trade available on the website @ <http://www.Liberal Youth.org.uk/web/policy/armstrade.html>

### Conference believes that:

1. It is inappropriate to sell arms to authoritarian governments with appalling human rights records
2. It is utterly inappropriate to place an arms embargo against a country, yet still promote arms sales to that country
3. It would be utterly inappropriate to ignore the Tiananmen Square massacre.

### Conference proposes:

1. To use all available powers to prevent the lifting of the arms embargo on China
2. That the Liberal Youth executive should write a letter to Graham Watson,
3. Head of ELDR and to the Federal Party to express its views and state that it is willing to work with either to achieve its aims.
4. For Liberal Youth to act on its own to achieve these aims, if necessary.
5. To oppose any attempts by China or any other such nations to attend British arms fairs.

## **Employment Rights; The National Minimum Wage And Part-Time Workers**

### Conference Notes:

1. The Government's recent announcement to raise the hourly rate of National Minimum Wage by 10p to £3.70 from December 2000, and the Development Rate (which applies to under 22s and trainees) by 20p to £3.20.
2. That on the basis that the NMW was introduced in April 1999, this represents an increase far below the Retail Price Index, let alone current wage inflation. Moreover, these rates are equivalent to the levels recommended by the Low Pay Commission to be implemented from July 2000 in their original recommendations.
3. The EU Social Chapter calls for member organisations to grant part time workers the same rights as full time workers.
4. Recent Government proposals to grant part time employees the rights of full time workers, explicitly excluding the 99% of part time workers in the UK (mostly women) who are not legally defined as an employee (i.e. do not have a contract of employment).

### Conference Believes:

1. Employment rights are human rights and as such should be applied as universally as possible, while mindful of economic circumstances.
2. The NMW has had a beneficial effect on the lives of millions of UK workers and that the apocalyptic predictions of right wing economists about its introduction have been proven groundless.
3. The Government should show more faith in the NMW by raising the hourly rate at least in line with the RPI.
4. The Liberal Democrats were right to recognise and support the success of the NMW, and the Westminster Parliament should be in future responsible for setting UK wide minimum standards, including setting a National Minimum wage; although the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, Northern Ireland Assembly, Greater London Assembly, regional chambers and any future English regional directly elected tier of government should be empowered to implement a "top up" on the hourly rate where they wish to do so.
5. The Government's proposals to give employment rights to part time "employees" rather than "workers" is against both the letter and spirit of the EU Social Chapter and was not called for by business.

### Conference Calls For:

1. The National Minimum Wage to be annually increased at least in line with the Retail Price Index.
2. Regional chambers and all devolved assemblies and Parliaments within the UK to be empowered to introduce a "top up" on the hourly rate if they so wish.
3. All part time workers to be granted the same employment rights as full time workers.
4. The EU Social Chapter to be implemented into UK law in full.

## **Encouraging female participation**

### Conference notes

1. Currently only 125 of 650 MPs are women, equating to 19%, less than 1 in 5.
2. There are only 7 female Liberal Democrat MPs.
3. 5 out of 8 General Executive Members elected in the last Liberal Youth election were female.

### Conference believes

1. The way to improve the number of female MPs is not by the Liberal Democrats introducing quotas or all female shortlists.
2. Liberal Youth can play a vital role in getting more women to take up key positions within the party.
3. Women who wish to be involved in Liberal Democrat politics should be easily able access training that will help develop their skills and careers from a young age.

### Conference resolves

2. The Liberal Youth Executive will formulate training specifically designed for new female members.
3. The Liberal Youth Executive will engage with Women Liberal Democrats, the Campaign for Gender Balance, and similar non- partisan organisations to encourage more female activists.
4. The Liberal Youth Executive will vote against any proposals for all female shortlists, or the introduction of quotas, that maybe put to future Liberal Democrat Federal Conferences, and will lobby against such policies.

## Environmental Education

### Conference notes

1. Current Party policy and the genuine commitment to the Environment within the Liberal Democrats.
2. The publication of "Environmental Responsibility: an agenda for further and higher education" by the Department for Education and the Welsh Office on 2/2/93.

### Conference believes

1. That "Environmental Responsibility" is a positive step towards taking local action to improve the global situation.
2. That a basic level of environmental awareness is needed across the workforce as a whole. Both Further and Higher Education establishments have an important role to play in developing this awareness.
3. That funds should be provided, by the Government, for a national programme to support the development of environmental education.
4. That students themselves are a resource to be drawn on when developing extra-curricular environmental activities.

### Conference supports

1. Moves to urge the Further and Higher Education Funding Councils to encourage and reward the adoption of sound environmental practice in the institution which they fund.
2. Moves to develop the environmental understanding of students whose courses are not specifically "environmental", and greater promotion of environmental education across the curriculum.
3. Greater dialogue between employers, students and FHE on the provision of environmental education.
4. The Toyne Report which called for the adoption of comprehensive environmental policy (including an action plan for implementation), covering all aspects of its environmental performance, by the beginning of academic year 1994/5, in every FHE institution.
5. The development of a coherent policy for environmental education by government, both local and national.

### Conference resolves

1. That the Student Executive should implement a campaign on "greening the curriculum" as a priority, and to write to Parliamentary spokespersons on Education and the Environment.

## Ethical Investments In The FE/HE Sector

### Conference notes:

1. The attempts of students over the years to influence their institutions to stop investing in the arms trade, and in organisations which are involved in the arms trade, international crime and sweatshop labour.
2. That millions of pounds per year are invested in ethically poor companies by FE and HE institutions, which ignore the will of students and cause suffering around the world.

### Conference believes:

1. That a campaign in campuses across the country on the issue of ethical investment would immediately raise this issue into the limelight, shaming some institutions, and giving positive publicity to those already practicing effective ethical investment.
2. That by creating laws prohibiting investment in ethically unsound companies, the government could dissolve the problem of the market disadvantage that would at first be experienced by FE and HE institutions practicing ethical investment.

### Conference resolves:

1. To immediately campaign on ethical investments in the FE/HE sector.

### Conference Believes

1. That students and young people, have the right to safe, secure and affordable housing.
2. That Liberal Democrat Policy should focus on improving the standards of accommodation for all types of housing.
3. In the right of individuals to be free to choose the area in which they live.
4. That the Early Day Motion and Council Policy passed by Bristol city council on HMOs were designed to restrict the creation of new student properties.
5. That restricting HMOs to existing areas and/or properties is not a valid method of improving community cohesion
6. That there is a need for proactive dialogue and innovative projects and regulation to resolve the issues of studentification and those of HMOs at a local level, and that knee-jerk policy is not helpful.
7. That restricting HMOs to a particular area will reduce choice and competition, reducing the incentive for landlords to improve standards above the legal minimum requirement and driving up the cost of rent.
8. That the stereotyping of HMOs as solely 'student' accommodation and the perception that all students are undesirable in a community is implicit in these policies, and is a dangerous viewpoint.
9. That what is an implicitly discriminatory policy would not be acceptable if those most affected by it were another sector of society; such as ethnic minorities or those on a low income, and it is entirely unacceptable against young people and students.

**Fair Deal for Students and young people: Houses of Multiple Occupation****Conference notes**

1. That there are approx 7.5 million FE and HE students in the UK
2. That HMOs are not solely occupied by students, many other sections of the community, such as young professionals, low income workers, migrant workers and single people choose this type of accommodation.
3. That the call of a minority of local parties for the Federal Liberal Democrat Party to support Labour's EDM on HMO's, and the actions of the Bristol Local Party have severely damaged the parties reputation amongst young people and students.
4. The last NUS housing survey, which showed that 23% of students live with rats, 75% live with damp, and before the introduction of the Tenancy Deposit Scheme 33% experienced difficulties getting their deposit back. Burglary rates in some student areas are as high as 1 in 10 student properties.
5. That residential area's with a high student population face many different challenges to other areas.
6. That a high student population is often beneficial to the local economy and that students contribute a high number of volunteer hours nationally.
7. That most Student Union's run schemes to promote community cohesion.
8. The UUK Studentification report
9. EDM 1488 set down by Roberta Blackman-Woods,
  - a. "That this House supports moves to unify the definition of houses of multiple occupation; calls for the Government to bring forward proposals to amend the Housing Act 2004 so that all student properties are subject to licence and measures are introduced to control saturation in defined areas; urges local authorities to use the planning system to encourage the establishment of harmonious balanced communities throughout all areas of towns and cities; and welcomes the establishment of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Balanced and Sustainable Communities as a forum of discussion for these issues."
10. The 2004 Housing Act

Conference resolves

1. To deplore Labour's EDM on HMO's.
2. To maintain the drive for better housing set in motion by the Housing Act 2004, and calls for stronger action, and greater resources to ensure that this legislation can be fully implemented.
3. To call for the enforcement of minimum legal standards on all HMOs including those which are not currently licensable.
4. To support the use of successful housing accreditation schemes as a voluntary means of improving standards.
5. To call for councils to be given improved resources to tackle problems of poor housing, and to resolve the issues of studentification.

**Faith Schools (Multiculturalism and Religious Segregation) [consolidation]**

## Conference notes:

1. On the 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2005 there were race riots between people of Asian and Afro-Caribbean origins in Birmingham where one man was stabbed, one shot and many more injured.
2. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of October Ruth Kelly, the Education Secretary, introduced the 'Higher Standards, Better Schools for All,' a White Paper, on the future of education.
3. The White Paper is proposing the creation of 'Trust Schools' that can admit pupils on the basis of faith.

## Conference believes:

1. Segregation can lead to tensions based on misunderstanding, particularly at an early age.
2. Faith schools are a form of segregation.
3. If cities such as Birmingham, Bradford and Oldham had less faith schools there would be less tension based on misunderstanding.
4. If more faith schools are built, as proposed by the Government's recent White Paper, there will be an increase in the number of these race riots.
5. That there should be a moratorium on any further state funded faith based schools, and that existing state based faith based schools should be weaned out of the system in the longer term either through secularisation or replacement.
6. That state schools should aim to be ethnically mixed, should be representative of the community which they serve and avoid indulging any single local ethnic or religious community at all costs, even at the expense of some parental choice.
7. That fair and unbiased religious education should form a central plank in education at all levels alongside citizenship education.

## Conference resolves:

1. To campaign for schools which have a diversity of class, faith, ethnicity and ideas
2. To write a letter to Ruth Kelly and the Party's Education Spokesperson bringing to their attention the contents of this motion.

Applicability: England and Wales

## **Free Contraception for All**

### Conference notes

1. The Government's continuing underfunding of the NHS.
2. The recent announcement of an increase in prescription charges as of April.
3. Many people rely on free contraceptives from family planning clinics and GPs.
4. The Government's recent proposals to put all free contraception into prescription.

### Conference believes

1. Free contraception should be available to all regardless of age, sex and
2. The removal of free contraception will increase the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV.
3. The removal of free contraception will also increase the number of unwanted pregnancies.

### Conference resolves

5. To draw this matter to the attention of the student community.
6. To promote the campaign through the StAR network and Free Radical.

## Freedom, Crime and Young People

### Conference notes

1. Trespass is, in effect, a criminal offence as anyone who is in a trespassory assembly which fails to comply with a police request will be committing a criminal offence and the police have powers to enforce five mile exclusion zones around alleged sites for such assemblies.
2. Where an area has been specially designated under section 132 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 no person may protest in that area. A designated area includes the area around Parliament.
3. There is an offence of aggravated trespass, defined as intimidating or disrupting lawful activity in the open air. The police are able to arrest you, without a warrant, if they suspect that you are, have, or are able to commit this offence.
4. Trespass has been a civil offence for over 800 years and the government is now considering changing this.
5. That the juvenile offenders that the Government wants to incarcerate in new "secure units" are currently aged 14 or less.
6. The estimated costs of keeping a juvenile offender in a secure unit will be over £2000 per week.
7. That if juvenile offenders are given opportunities for training and rehabilitation, the incidence of re-offending is greatly reduced.
8. The cuts in central and local Government funding to the Youth Service, youth projects and voluntary organisations, which have greatly reduced the ability of these organisations to carry out their work.

### Conference believes that

1. The measures in notes 1-4 represent a serious attack on civil liberties and put far too much power in the hands of the Government, the police and the wealthy and removes power from the poor, the needy and the homeless.
2. That all citizens should have equal access to the law, regardless of age.
3. That the effects of government policies on housing, social welfare, health and education have had a direct bearing on the increase of crime generally, and particularly amongst juveniles.
4. That custodial sentences in secure units should only be used as a last resort for persistent or violent offenders.
5. That secure units should place an emphasis on caring and education and rehabilitation, not merely on enforcing discipline.
6. That alternatives to custodial sentences, such as community service and rehabilitation, should be tried as much as possible.

Conference resolves

1. To actively oppose the measures in notes 1-4 and work to repeal them.
2. To be prepared to work with other groups which oppose the measures in notes 1-4 and form a united front on this issue, and as part of this approach other groups opposed to these measures to develop and implement a joint strategy for stopping them.

Conference calls for

1. The Liberal Youth Executive to ensure that Conference Resolves 1 and 2 are put into action.
2. The powers of the juvenile courts to be extended so that juveniles may be tried there for any and all crimes of which they stand accused.
3. An increase in government funding for the Youth Services, which in turn fund many of the voluntary organisations which provide support and leisure activities for young people.
4. Social Services to be empowered to investigate the home environment of juvenile offenders, to identify and tackle any factors which lead to increased cases of crime amongst those under the age of 16.

## Freedom for Nuclear Power

### Conference Notes:

1. The weight of scientific evidence behind the link between rising global temperatures and the amount of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>.
2. Nuclear power is a large-scale carbon neutral fuel.
3. Current scientific evidence suggests that new IV generation reactors are dramatically safer than previous models.
4. 97% of nuclear waste from advanced reactors, given adequate facilities, can be reprocessed into nuclear fuel, leaving 3m<sup>3</sup> of high-grade nuclear waste per gigawatt-year.
5. Raw nuclear fuel is easily and safely obtainable from 'secure' nations (such as Canada), and thus benefits from security of supply, unlike oil or natural gas.
6. That renewable energy sources currently produce a small percentage of the UK's energy and that the Government's projected level of growth in this percentage is insufficient to replace fossil-fuel generated power in the foreseeable future.

### Conference Believes:

1. The only realistic way Britain will generate 100% of its electricity through carbon-neutral means is by endorsing nuclear reactors for civil power generation.
2. That, in the long-term, renewable and fusion power should be the preferred methods of energy generation.
3. Given adequate reprocessing facilities, nuclear fission represents no significant threat to Britain's environment or national security.
4. Standardising any reactors build would significantly reduce constructional and running costs.
5. That inadequate funds have been laid aside for research into viable nuclear fusion reactors.

### Conference Resolves:

1. Nuclear power stations should be exempt from the Climate Change Levy (2001) due to its carbon-neutrality.
2. That all of Britain's 12 nuclear reactors designated for decommissioning should be replaced with IVth Generation nuclear reactors.
3. That reprocessing facilities similar to Sellafield should be constructed to adequately handle and reprocess nuclear waste produced.
4. The remaining waste should be vitrified into borosilicate glass and stored in suitable facilities above ground for 50 years to allow the material to decay to reduce its activity, before being buried in suitable geological strata.
5. That adequate funding should be made available for research into viable nuclear fusion reactors.

## Greater London Authority

### Conference notes

1. The Government's consultation Paper on proposals for a Greater London Authority and elected Mayor.
2. The Liberal Democrats have the election of a Mayor but support the election of an Assembly for London.

### Conference further notes

1. 43.16% of London's population is aged 30 or under and therefore proposals for the new Government for London have many implications for young people.
2. The strong emphasis on the GLA's role in reducing crime may end up making young people the problem for the GLA to sort out, rather than a group of people who should be represented.
3. There is no organisation in London that can speak on behalf of young people in the capital, and as a result young people have not been openly solicited for their views on the proposals.

### Conference believes

1. The age for candidature and voting for this new authority should be 16.
2. There should be a place on all appointed boards for representatives of young people, taken from young people themselves.
3. That the proposed Police Authority must have at least one young person elected to its board.
4. That youth culture must be a recognised part of the remit of the authority and treated equally to all other art and leisure forms, and that priority be given to provide facilities close to local residents at an affordable rate.
5. That organisations that work with and speak for young people are consulted on any strategy that might affect young people.

### Conference calls for

1. A London Youth Council that will ensure the voice of young London is heard within this new authority.
2. The Liberal Democrats to ensure that there is a young candidate placed in a winnable position.
3. Liberal Youth to campaign for all the proposals mentioned in this motion.

## Higher Education

### Conference Notes

1. The United Kingdom currently has over 120 recognised Universities, of which, one the University of Buckingham is a private University.
2. That standard undergraduate degrees are three years or four years in length and the introduction of two year “fast-track” undergraduate degrees.
3. The introduction of student tuition fees in 1998 and variable tuition fees in 2006 both funded by student loans and administered by the Student Loans Company (SLC).
4. The original statement made by the then Prime Minister Tony Blair were variable tuition fees would not rise above £3000 without a joint resolution of both houses of Parliament.
5. Student tuition fees for 2009-10 stand at £3255 and for 2010-11 fees stand at
6. The estimated government subsidy toward each English home student in 2009 was £8000 per year.
7. Student quotas restricting the number of places which receive government funding and the introduction fines for exceeding students quotas.
8. The removal of all government funding for all postgraduate masters programs in 2006.
9. The removal of all government funding for students applying to undertakes an equivalent or lower class of qualification.
10. The target set by the government in 2001 that 50% of 18 – 35 year olds to attend university has largely been dropped and reduced to a “university experience” as opposed to attending university.
11. The announcement by the secretary of state in charge of Universities that £900 million would be cut from the budget for higher education starting in 2010.
12. The closure of university departments which serve a social and economic purpose but do not run at a profit, such as the University of Reading closing its department of Physics and its department of Health and Social Care.
13. The Demos Report “Service Nation” published 6 December 2009 calling for compulsory civic service for all people aged 18-24.
14. The Demos report calls for 100 hours of community service to form a compulsory part of an undergraduate degree for all English based home students, funded by charging interest on student loans.
15. The backlog of undergraduate student loans for the Autumn term of 2009 was only cleared when the next series of student loan payments were required at the start of the Winter 2010 term.
16. The privatisation of student loans debt under the Sale of Student Loans Act

## Conference Believes

1. The introduction of higher education tuition fees has led to an increase in student debt, deterring a proportion of students attending university who would benefit from a university education.
2. Community service should be undertaken on a voluntary basis with no form of compulsion attached.
3. The Imposition of any increase in the current rates of interest on Student Loans will only lead to students being indebted further and will deter more potential students from entering higher education.
4. The imposition of interest rates above the current level will lead to student loans never being repaid by a vast majority of students.
5. Education must be a right accessible to all and not to just the very poorest who receive means tested grants and the very wealthy.
6. The imposition of interest on student loans will further increase debt levels of students and will result in fewer people attending university and will lead to loans never being repaid and university graduates being permanently indebted throughout their entire working life.
7. The government should not have raised the level of fees above £3000 under any circumstances, as a £3000 cap on the maximum value of variable tuition fees until 2010 was a commitment during the passage of the Higher Education Act 2004
8. The sale of Student loans will result in less control over terms and conditions for the government and reduced accountability in the governance and collection of student loans.
9. Government cuts in higher education funding will restrict the ability of universities to conduct research, and offer a full range of courses especially courses which do not run at a profit, particularly the arts and sciences.
10. Specific departments which are of importance to the country as a whole such as Theoretical and Experimental sciences must be protected from closure.

## Conference Resolves

1. To reject all calls for compulsory civic, community, or national service from all who propose such measures.
2. The student loans company must be kept within public ownership to enable regulation and control of this critical part of the current Higher education system to be done by accountable officials, preventing changes to terms and conditions and resale of debt to unscrupulous companies and institutions who may summarily call in debts owed.
3. To consolidate all existing policy on Higher Education and Higher Education funding in to one policy entitled Higher Education and Funding.
4. To campaign for the abolition of tuition fees as set out in the 2010 General Election Manifesto of the Liberal Democrats and to follow the party position on the abolition of tuition fees.

Applicability: England

Conference Notes:

1. The Conclusions of the Browne Report made public earlier in October 2010.
2. The initial response of the government made in a statement by the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and skills within which the secretary of state welcomed the report as being on broadly 'the right lines' and stated that the government was looking at a median fees level of around £7000
3. That the report calls for the cap on fees to be removed, that this would lead to a market in education and much higher levels of student debt.
4. That the report has some positive recommendations, such as removing upfront fees for part time students, and the raising of the threshold to £21,000.
5. The economic and political environment and government cutbacks.  
Conference notes the Lord Browne report on alternative ways of funding Higher and Further education.
6. Conference notes Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills Vince Cable MP calling on Lord Browne to consider a graduate contribution in his report.
7. Conference notes the commitment of Liberal Youth and the Liberal Democrats to education being free at the point of access, and for the scrapping of tuition fees.
8. Conference notes the "Ensuring Fairness in a Time of Austerity" motion passed at federal conference calling for the party to investigate a graduate tax and the possibilities of it.

Conference Believes:

1. Fundamentally that Education should be free at the point of use and funded from general taxation, that it should remain policy for both the Liberal Democrats and Liberal Youth to scrap a student tuition fee or graduate contribution in any form and that the party should continue to argue for this as the ideal.
2. That in the current political and economic environment this objective is not possible in this parliament.
3. That the Browne review as implemented would be unacceptable to students and Young People, put off those from poorer backgrounds from seeking a higher educational degree, leave a legacy of debt that the majority would never be able to pay and create a market in education which would mean only those with the ability to pay would be able to access the best Universities and courses.
4. That the overriding ambition of the Youth party should be to scrap a higher education funding system based on student fees and debt and replace it with a fairer and more progressive system.
5. Conference believes young people in Britain rely on the Liberal Democrats to stand up for students and the abolition of tuition fees.

Conference Resolves:

1. To campaign against a rise in tuition fees and defeat a government proposal based partly or wholly on the recommendations of the Browne Report.
2. That the executive should investigate and promote alternative funding structures which would eliminate student fees, the danger of a market in education and high levels of student debt.
3. To work with other stakeholders with an interest in this field in order to meet these goals.
4. Conference resolves to call on the Federal Party, Federal Conference and the Liberal Democrats Policy and Response Unit to not adopt a graduate tax as Liberal Democrat policy for the 2015 general election or for any other election.

Applicability: England

## HIV and Rights

Conference notes that

1. HIV disease (infection with HIV with or without symptoms) is a world-wide epidemic affecting every country.
2. HIV disease is not contagious. Casual contact presents no risk of infection.

Conference believes that

1. All governments and all national health organisations should treat HIV disease positively and rigorously as a chronic, manageable condition. Ensuring access and availability of treatment must be part of the social and moral obligation of governments to their citizens.

Conference demands

1. An international charter of rights to acknowledge and preserve the humanity of people with HIV disease. The Charter must include:
  - a. anti-discrimination legislation protecting the jobs, housing and access to services to people with HIV disease
  - b. the right to active involvement in the affected communities of people with HIV in decision-making that may affect them
  - c. access to anonymous and absolutely confidential HIV antibody testing. Pre- and post- test counselling must be available
  - d. the right to medically appropriate housing
  - e. no restriction on the international movement and/or immigration of people with the HIV disease
  - f. full recognition of lesbian and gay relationships
  - g. no mandatory testing under any circumstances
  - h. no quarantine under any circumstances
  - i. special attention to the unique needs and problems of intravenous drug users, including the provision of clean needles on demand
  - j. special attention to the unique needs and problems of the prisoners with HIV disease and guarantees that they receive the same standard of care and treatment as the general population, including the provision of free condoms
  - k. the provision of reasonable accommodation in services and facilities for disabled people
2. Criteria for the approval of drugs and treatment should be standardised on an international basis so as to facilitate world-wide access to new drugs and treatment.
3. International education programs outlining comprehensive sex education, supportive of all sexual orientations in culturally-sensitive ways and describing safer sex and needle practices and other means of preventing HIV transmission must be made available, recognising and combating the unequal social position of women in many countries which may affect their access to such information.

Conference instructs the Executive

1. To produce a leaflet based on this motion.
2. To submit this motion in an appropriate format to the Federal Conference of the Liberal Democrats.
3. To publicise this motion widely, using as many different forms of media as possible.
4. To write to ACT-UP branches in the UK to inform them of our stance, subscribe to their newsletter and ask to be kept informed of their activities.

## Housing for Students and Young People

Conference notes that over one and a half million people live in shared housing; often as personal preference, though many young people are forced to do so, being unable to find or afford suitable housing to live alone and calls for the following measures:

1. The term “Housing in Multiple Occupation” (HMO) to be properly defined as a property occupied by persons who do not form a single household.
2. A mandatory licensing scheme for shared housing, to act as a “kite mark” for good quality housing, administered by local authorities and ensuring shared houses meet minimum standards of health and safety.
3. A local authority administered central deposit protection scheme for HMOs, with deposits held by the local authority which licensed the property and returned when the landlord and tenant agree upon a fee to be refunded, the local authority to act as arbitrator in case of dispute.
4. The abolition of the single room rent restriction, which effectively requires under 25s to share accommodation.
5. All HMOs to be properly insulated as a condition of being licensed, saving money and energy and protecting the environment and peoples’ health.

Conference notes the discriminatory nature of housing benefit entitlement and calls for:

1. The restoration of students’ entitlement to housing benefit.
2. 16 and 17 years olds to be given the same entitlement to housing benefit as over 18 year olds.

Conference notes the increasing amount of privatised university housing and though not opposed to privately owned housing, expresses concern at the lack of value-for-money offered by some developments and therefore calls for:

1. An end to “rip-off” phone lines, which often operate on a national rate “0870” basis, meaning students calling one another locally are forced to pay national prices as a result of lack of competition in this area.
2. Universities to be compelled to provide accommodation accessible to any student with disabilities.
3. Universities to favour University owned housing over privatised housing, unless it maintains or betters the standards of cleanliness, safety, comfort and value-for-money.

Conference notes that young people often have trouble finding a first home, often due to issues of affordability or availability and calls for the following action to help tackle this problem:

1. Second homes to pay the full rate of Council Tax and the extra cash to be channelled into affordable housing.
2. Unoccupied former military homes to be released onto the market.

Conference believes that youth homelessness is a national disgrace and would tackle it in the following ways:

1. Require Local Authorities to produce an Empty Homes Strategy to bring empty housing units in their area into use and secure accommodation for 16-18 year olds along with any additional support they may require.
2. Homeless persons to be given assistance obtaining tenancies, advance funding of furniture grants and rent deposit loans or bonds, and housing benefit.
3. Health authorities to be made responsible for ensuring that patients discharged into the community have somewhere to live.
4. The establishment of “foyers” which combine accommodation with training, to give people the skills they need to avoid homelessness.
5. The establishment of a Royal Commission to investigate and report on the current problem of homelessness, assess the existing provision and propose remedies for the longer term.

## **Human Rights in Burma**

### Conference Notes:

1. The recent pro democracy protests in Burma (September/October 2007)
2. The recent action of the military junta who resorted to violence to put down a peaceful protest

### Conference Believes

1. in the right of peoples to freedom of expression, and democratic government
2. that the break-up of a peaceful protest by forceful means is abhorrent in the extreme
3. that Liberals and Democrats should speak up for peaceful democratic change

### Conference resolves

1. to endorse the executive and relevant committees to take campaigning action on this issue
2. to work with our international allies to put pressure on the Burmese government and her allies to pursue a more peaceful course, and encourage long term the opening up of Burmese society and democracy

## Human Trafficking

### Conference Notes:

1. Human Trafficking is a wide-spread global organised crime, in which the World's most vulnerable people are bought and sold for as low as \$20.
2. An estimated 2-4million people are trafficked every year, 1.2 million of which are children.
3. Some 4,000 women are estimated to have been trafficked into the UK for sexual exploitation.
4. Britain's only specialist police anti-trafficking unit is to be shut down due to cuts in funding from £1.8m to £700,000 by the Home Office.

### Conference Believes:

5. Human Trafficking is a horrific crime to be inflicted on any person; no one should be bought or sold.
6. Human Trafficking is a global problem that is in urgent need of being tackled by a global solution.
7. Britain's anti-trafficking unit should receive the money it needs to tackle this crime.

### Conference resolves to call for:

1. The Government to keep the police anti-trafficking unit operational, and provide the level of funding it needs.
2. The Government to work with other countries and the EU in tackling Human Trafficking.
3. Liberal Youth to act on and publicise this issue, and encourage the Federal Party to adopt a similarly stronger position.
4. Liberal Youth to communicate with European partners over this issue.

## Identity Cards

### Conference notes:

4. The Government's consultation paper "Entitlement Cards and Identity Fraud"
5. The motion "F24 Identity Cards" passed by Liberal Democrat Conference on 25th September 2002

### Conference condemns:

1. The Government's moves towards increased gathering of data in central databases
2. The Government's claims that identity cards would increase national security and that honest people have nothing to fear from the introduction of identity cards
3. The Liberal Democrat Conference's failure to reiterate its opposition to any form of Government sponsored national identity card

### Conference believes:

1. That the Home Secretary, Rt. Hon David Blunkett MP, belongs in an Orwellian nightmare, rather than in a 21st century United Kingdom Government
2. That the state does not have the right to hold information about people, except when it would mean the state could not continue to function without such information (e.g. for taxation)
3. That the introduction of Government-sponsored identity cards would not increase national security
4. That provision of health care, education and benefits should be dependent on need and free at the point of delivery, not on production of an "Entitlement Card"

### Conference calls:

1. For the Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Parties continue to oppose national identity cards, whether compulsory or not.
2. For the Liberal Democrats to continue to champion the rights of people not to have unnecessary constraints placed upon them by the state.

## **Immigration in the EU**

### Conference Notes:

1. The recent government decision to limit immigration from Bulgaria and Romania when those countries join the EU on 1 January 2007.
2. That this is contrary to previous practice with new member states in the EU.
3. The greater economic growth in EU members which allowed unrestricted immigration from new member states in 2004

### Conference believes:

1. That immigration is important to our economy, and new workers from Eastern Europe are a net benefit.
2. That Romanian and Bulgarian immigrants should receive the same treatment as workers from current EU member states.
3. That it would nevertheless be useful, and more politically practical, for EU member states to develop an integrated approach to immigration from new members.

### Conference therefore resolves:

1. To have Liberal Youth policy in favour of free movement of labour within all EU countries
2. To request Liberal Youth Executive to submit policy on this issue to the Liberal Democrat's Federal Conference.

## International Students

### Conference notes

1. The speech given to the House of Commons Theresa May on 22 March 2011 which outlined proposals to reduce the number of student visas issued and to scrap the post study work visa.
2. The Tier 1 post study work visa allows international university graduates to get up to two years work experience after completing their degree
3. The 2010 CBI Education and skills survey: businesses identified graduates' foreign language skills and international cultural awareness amongst the four skills with which they are least satisfied.
4. The report by CentreForum that said moves to tighten the restrictions on overseas students will risk nearly 12,000 jobs in education and another 12,000 in the wider economy
  5. That access to pre-degree level courses will be severely restricted for international students under the proposed changes
6. That in a survey run by the University of Manchester Students' Union and filled by over 1000 international students, 71.3% said they wouldn't have chosen to study in the UK without the post study work visa as the opportunity to gain experience and give back made the UK very attractive.
7. International students are the group least likely to settle in the UK. Just 1 per cent of migrants granted settlement in the UK in 2009 progressed directly from the study route.

### Conference believes

1. International students provide Universities with a large amount of revenue that will be increasingly important in light of on-going cuts to Higher Education.
2. International students are vital to the research capabilities of the United Kingdom.
3. The Tier 1 post study work visa improves the attractiveness of studying in the UK and that many businesses and charities also benefit from the international competencies and exposure of these graduates. Therefore, closing this route is disadvantageous to both the appeal of studying in the UK and global competitiveness of businesses all over the country.
4. That through exposure to different cultures we all gain cultural awareness and key competitive skills.
5. That restricting the ability of students to bring dependents to the UK and the ability for the dependents to work will be detrimental to international mature students, as they would be forced to choose between studying in the UK and their family. Many also rely on income from a partner to cover household expenses.
  6. That there is no conclusive evidence supporting the view that the Post Study Work Visa must be closed as it leads to large numbers of students permanently staying on in the UK. Nor is there any evidence of displacement of UK graduates.
7. The effect of these proposals would, overall, be negative on the ability of the UK to compete globally for the best and brightest. While we welcome weeding out abuse in the system, we believe these proposals are not effective in doing so. They would penalise legitimate students, reduce the attractiveness and ability of the UK to compete in the global market without necessarily reducing the risk of abuse in the system.

### Conference resolves to call on the Government to

1. Retain the option for international students to remain in the UK to work for up to two years after completion of their studies.

2. Continue to allow international students studying for a period of six months or more to bring with them their dependants to the UK.
3. Provide support to the Home Office in eradicating abuse of the current system by finding and closing “bogus colleges”.
4. Defend international students and encourage recruitment of the best and brightest from the around the world to UK institutions
5. Support regions in campaign against identified “bogus colleges” using any methods thought fit to bring about their closure legal under the common & civil laws of the relevant jurisdiction, including picketing, letter-writing, and occupation.

Applicability: Federal

Conference Notes:

1. That the Darfur Conflict is part of a wider war between Chad and Sudan, with Chad and Sudan both allegedly backing rebels in the other's country.
2. The continuing violence in Darfur region of Sudan.
3. The apparent collaboration of the Sudanese government with the *janjaweed* militia.
4. That the government of Sudan has refused to allow a UN peacekeeping force to enter the Darfur region.
5. That Russia and China have blocked attempts to introduce economic sanctions on the government of Sudan.
6. The strong economic ties China and Russian have with the Sudan.
7. The resolution by the US congress describing events in Darfur as 'Genocide'.
8. That LYMEC and Liberal Youth are planning a joint statement on the crisis with Liberal Youth.

Conference believes:

1. That long term peace and security for the people of Darfur can not be achieved without a lasting settlement between all parties in the wider Sudan-Chad conflict.
2. That, in the short term, to protect the people of Darfur and to prevent apprehended genocide, it is vital that peacekeepers remain in Darfur for the foreseeable future.
3. That, in light of the opposition to non-African peacekeepers in Darfur, it seems likely that extending the current African Union mission with increased numbers and support from the international community may be a more feasible alternative to UN Peacekeepers.

Conference Resolves to:

1. Call on Liberal Youth members to write to companies with economic links to the regime in Khartoum to encourage them to 'divest' from Sudan.
2. A member of the executive should contact the embassies of the Peoples Republic of China and the Russian Federation to express our grave concerns about their actions vis-avis the situation of ongoing 'genocide'.
3. That Liberal Youth International Committee should liaise with LYMEC with a view to collaborating on this issue.

## **Landmines**

### Conference notes

1. Landmines claim victims every 20 minutes; totalling 2000 people killed or maimed monthly.
2. Landmines are unable to discriminate between a soldier's boot and a child's foot.
3. The British Government supports using landmines as 'legitimate defensive weapons'.
4. The UN conference on landmines in Ottawa in December 1997.
5. Under international agreements, civilians have the right to protection from violence; landmines violate this every 20 minutes.
6. Recent publicity given to landmines by Diana, Princess of Wales.

### Conference believes

1. Landmines are the world's worst serial killer.
2. Efforts should be made to ban the use of landmines.

### Conference welcomes

1. The work of charities such as Oxfam, Red Cross, and HALO Trust to highlight suffering caused by landmines.

### Conference resolves

1. To support the work of organisations dedicated to the banning and clearing of landmines.

## **Land Value Taxation**

Conference notes:

1. That the UK currently has no system for taxing land values.
2. That since May 1997, house prices have almost trebled.
3. That there is a long-standing Liberal tradition of support for Land Value Tax.
4. That at the previous general election, the Liberal Democrats proposed replacing the council tax with local income tax.

Conference believes:

1. That the introduction of a land value tax would contribute to a more progressive tax system.
2. That a land value tax would increase the supply of affordable housing.
3. That land is a fixed asset and that as a consequence a tax on it is hard to evade.
4. That a tax on land does not reduce incentives to work, save or invest.
5. That Lib Dem policy on local government finance at the last election was an area of weakness rather than strength.

Conference resolves:

1. To make it Liberal Youth policy to support the financing of local government through a land value tax rather than council tax or a local income tax.
2. That a member of the executive will write to the Liberal Democrat's Shadow Chancellor and Local Government spokesman expressing Liberal Youth's support for land value taxation.

## Legalisation of Cannabis

### Conference Notes:

1. That the “War on Drugs” and the policies employed to “fight the battle” are widely acknowledged to have failed to achieve their stated aims of the eradication of drug taking and addiction, drug offences have tripled in the last 10 years threatening the working of the criminal justice system and the very legitimacy of the state.
2. That Drug Tsar, Keith Halliwell admitted that his anti-drugs strategy had ended its first year with a 13% rise in drug convictions in England and Wales.
3. Each year around one in ten people aged between 16 and 59 use drugs; the majority take cannabis and do so on a recreational basis; 2,000 addicts account for most of the £4 billion worth of drug related crime in Britain.
4. That cannabis is an intoxicating drug and that driving while intoxicated is a danger to others.

### Conference Welcomes:

1. Mo Mowlam MP and Matthew Taylor MP’s recent admissions to using cannabis when they were younger.
2. The report of the Police Foundation Inquiry into drugs, which called for the downgrading of offences for individuals caught in possession of cannabis and other soft drugs.
3. The increasing realisation of those in authority that legalisation and regulation of drugs should be considered as a solution to the “war on drugs”.
4. The proposed amendment to the Misuse of Drugs Act that would allow for the use of cannabis to alleviate pain under medical supervision.
5. Recently sponsored Government research into using cannabis as a tool for alleviating pain, in similar ways that morphine is utilised.

### Conference Resolves:

1. In the short term
  - a) to legalise the use, possession and sale of cannabis, including the distribution of information, seed for home growing and cannabis itself through government regulated centres;
  - b) to decriminalise the use and possession of LSD and ecstasy;
  - c) to target the resources of the Police and Customs & Excise on tackling the suppliers of more dangerous drugs.
2. In the medium term, to establish a Federal Commission to investigate all issues around the balance of harm caused by, and laws surrounding, recreational drugs.
3. To encourage and support research in the use of cannabis in the fight of diseases for example, MS and Epilepsy.
4. To encourage schools and youth organisations to offer advice and guidance to young people concerning the misuse of drugs.
5. To tax cannabis at similar levels to the taxes on tobacco where cannabis is sold to be smoked, and at a lower rate where cannabis is to be ingested in less harmful ways; to use part of the revenue raised through this taxation to alleviate the deprivation and social marginalisation that has led to disproportionate levels of drug addiction.

6. To call for the commissioning of research into the intoxicating effects of cannabis and the development of a simple test for the drug in the body which can be administered by police officers. When this is complete, legislation akin to the drink-driving laws should be introduced.

## Living Wage

### Conference Initially Notes

1. It is more expensive to live, work, and study in certain places than in others; for example, the difference between studying in the South and the North-East is huge, but the support available to all is the same.
2. A "regional top-up" is available in London to support the high cost of living but that no other such arrangements suited to local conditions apply in other parts of the country such as Oxford or Bristol.
3. The operations of Living Wage units in Manchester and London, performing similar reviews to the National Low Pay Commission on a local level and supporting an opt-in scheme for local businesses to pledge a wage that enables those to live fairly and free from poverty.
4. That the Liberal Democrats supported arrangements like this for a national minimum wage (NMW) scheme after the 1992 recession, and reaffirmed the basic principle of a devolved NMW in the 2003 paper *Setting Business Free*.
5. That the Liberal Democrats proposed a minimum income standard for all - youth and students, pensioners to postmen - in the 2001 manifesto *Freedom, Justice, Honesty* and continue to see it as a long-term goal.
6. The excellent support for young people in the party's 2010 Youth policy paper.

### Conference Initially Believes

1. If it can realistically be decided how much more London deserves, and if Living Wage units in London and Manchester can determine how much support every person should get based on living costs, then it is feasible to devolve the levels of student support and the NMW across the country on a council-by-council basis.
2. That in the Low Pay Commission's 1998 initial report, the "substantial variation within individual regions" in respect to living costs could be addressed by a devolved minimum wage.
3. That in the same report, a lower "Development Rate" for under 21s was recommended on the express understanding that government and employers would work to implement effective strategies for training and education opportunities; and that this no longer happens for a number of reasons.

### Conference Subsequently Notes

1. The National Union of Students continue to support the Government's position on student finance while accepting that drop-out rates are dramatically rising, salaries to pay off debts are falling, and that students are spending too much time working in part-time jobs when they are full-time students.
2. That devolving the minimum wage would necessarily mean a lower 'absolute floor' at a federal level.

### Conference Subsequently Believes

1. That the present system of providing students finance is fundamentally flawed.
2. That adequately funded students benefit the economy in all sorts of ways, from relieving burden on their parents and family to stimulating demand in their place of study, and in being able to enter ladder systems such as the housing market without a significant debt burden.
3. That student debt cannot be counted as a reliable source for future government income and is fiscally irresponsible for all parties.
4. That the present system of the national minimum wage is not working for young people and fails in its key aim to move people, from welfare or dependency, into working.
5. That the benefits to individuals and communities across the country from a minimum wage that is more responsive to needs and costs would outweigh the concerns of a lower federal rate.
6. That student finance and the NMW can and must be reformed into working.

### **Conference Resolves**

To work towards ambitiously liberal reforms of how student maintenance grants are allocated, and to provide young people with the support needed to succeed in life, by the following proposals:

1. Take into account local factors and costs when allocating student maintenance, revised on a yearly basis.
2. Consequently, advocating the return of administering student finance back to local authorities, and avoiding centralised incompetence from dealings with Student Finance Direct and its successors.
3. Ensure equality in living conditions by making sure students receive living 'wages' based on these local factors, enough to pay for their bills without needing to resort to commercial debt or loan sharks.
4. Recommend that the model and practices behind the valuation of living costs in Manchester and London be piloted in several other conurbations, with a view to extending it into rural areas, towns, and cities across the country.
5. Recommend that the national minimum wage is frozen for two years while local areas gather sufficient information to implement these methods and train their staff.
6. Encourage students to take an active role in their welfare by creating regional bargaining structures involving councils, students' unions, and participatory budgeting.
7. Continue the existing campaign to equalise the National Minimum Wage for 16-21 year olds, and look into decentralising it along the same lines as the above maintenance proposals.
8. Recommend that as this policy is aimed at reducing welfare dependency that money is diverted from the overall welfare budget to pay for some of the costs of setting these schemes up, again liaising with the Living Wage units in London and Manchester for best practice.
9. Recommend that an independent commission looking at seeing these arrangements as a holistic whole for young people and students be set up, to work in conjunction with the Low Pay Commission.

**Mature Students**

## Conference notes:

1. That the maximum age limit for financial support in the form of a Student Loan for students is 54.
2. That less than 1% full-time undergraduate students in UK higher education institutions are aged 50-plus, however the figure is 10 per cent among part time students.
3. In most higher education institutions, the number and proportion of undergraduates over 50 is fewer than two per cent.
4. Membership of university clubs and societies is reduced among mature students, suggesting that they are generally withdrawn from university life.
5. A working group set up by the government has recommended that the government either
  - a. Abolish the age limit on tuition loans but retain the limit for maintenance
  - b. Abolish the age limit on tuition loans but raise the limit for maintenance to pension age or 65
  - c. Or scrap the age limit altogether

## Conference believes:

1. No-one should be enslaved by ignorance.
2. Every individuals right to develop their talents to the full.
3. Education is the process of acquiring knowledge and skills.
4. Access to Education should be open equally to all individuals, regardless of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, membership of the Traveller community, HIV status, or political affiliation.
5. The abolishment of Student grants, introduction of Tuition fees, and the forthcoming introduction of Top-Up Fees have all discouraged potential mature students.
6. The current age limit for student loan applications is one of the most blatant pieces of age discrimination in any area of public policy

## Conference calls for:

1. The Maximum age limit for student loans to be abolished.
2. Student branches of Liberal Youth to actively campaign on this policy on behalf of Liberal Youth.
3. Liberal Youth Student clubs and societies to hold events and activities that appeal to all Liberal Youth members regardless of their gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, nationality or HIV status.
4. Liberal Youth to support calls for a Mature Students Officer on the National Executive Committee of the National Union of Students.

## The Military Covenant

### Conference notes:

1. The military covenant states that soldiers have a) the right to have adequate resources to carry out the tasks the politicians demand of them; b) the right to be properly cared for in the event of injury; c) the right to know that, in the event of their death, their families will be looked after properly.
2. Accommodation for military personnel and their families has been described by General Mike Jackson, former chief of the general staff, as 'frankly shaming'
3. Specialists at King's College London estimate that around 1 in 4 service personnel returning from Afghanistan and Iraq are suffering from anxiety and depression yet, between January 2003 and October 2006, only 2,123 military personnel received treatment for mental health conditions from the MoD
4. Britain is the only Western country without a dedicated military hospital.

### Conference believes:

1. Whether or not we agree with the operations our armed forces partake in, the government has an obligation to provide adequately for the men and women risking their lives in these operations
2. That service personnel deserve specialist treatment from specially trained medical staff
3. That the government is failing to provide adequate housing or medical care for our troops

### Conference calls for:

1. The government to uphold the military covenant
2. Liberal Youth to back the proposals made at Liberal Democrat Federal Conference for a cross-party committee to be created to assess whether the military covenant is being upheld
3. The executive to be mandated to campaign on this issue

## Mosquito Devices

### Conference notes:

1. There are estimated to be around 3,500 'mosquito' devices active within the UK, and the number is rising. These devices emit a high-pitched sound of a frequency that can generally only be picked up by under-25's. They are mainly used to disperse groups of youths gathered outside shops in the evening.
2. Mosquito devices are made by the firm Compound Security Systems whose website proudly announces that 'teenagers are acutely aware of the mosquito and move away from the area within just a couple of minutes' under a picture of hooded youths putting their hands over their ears.
3. Such devices could potentially disturb young people who happen to live near to where the devices are employed
4. On February 11<sup>th</sup> 2008, Sir Albert Aynsley-Green, the Children's Commissioner for England called for the device to be banned

### Conference believes

1. The device is used on the assumption that a group of young people congregating must be 'up to no good', and does not discriminate between those who are breaking the law and those who are not
2. There is often no obvious place for young people to socialise in a particular area
3. The manner in which Compound Security Systems are marketing this device is adding to the demonization of young people in popular consciousness, such as tabloid hysteria over 'hoodies'
4. The use of this device, and its indiscriminatory nature, indicates an absolute lack of respect for young people, increasing feelings of marginalisation from society, and having an adverse effect on any desire to improve young people's behaviour
5. A better way to tackle anti-social behaviour perpetrated by young people would be to
  - a. Make sure that more young people leave school with better qualifications
  - b. Improve social services to that young people from 'troubled backgrounds' are better supported
  - c. Get local authorities to stop cutting their youth services budget
6. If this is an attempt to stop antisocial behaviour being perpetrated by young people, it is equivalent to cracking a nut with a sledgehammer. The way to punish anti-social behaviour by young people is to deal with each incidence on a case-by-case basis through a fair judicial process, rather than denying young people their basic freedom to gather in a public area

### Conference calls for

1. The mosquito device to be banned, and the federal party to be lobbied to adopt this position

## National Union of Students

Conference notes that NUS is the largest body representing students in Higher and Further Education in the UK.

Conference Believes:

4. That politics within NUS has long been exclusive, deeply factional, inflexible, and often illiberal and thus alienates many of its members.
5. That making NUS more effective is vital to increasing the influence students have in British politics.
6. That Liberal Youth members - and Liberal Youth itself - have a valuable role in working to make NUS more open, plural, inclusive, campaign-oriented, transparent and democratic.

Conference Resolves:

1. To campaign with NUS and Student Unions where their aims and policies are in keeping with those of Liberal Youth.
2. To urge student members and branches to be active within their Unions.
3. To encourage Liberal Youth members to stand for NUS committees at all levels and attend NUS Conference.
4. To support the NUS Liberation Campaigns in their fight against oppression, discrimination and prejudice.
5. To campaign for Liberal Youth policies to be adopted by the NUS.
6. To advocate membership of and involvement in Liberal Youth and NUS as an effective way of campaigning on issues of interest to students, including education funding, student welfare and fighting discrimination in society.

Conference further resolves that to achieve these aims, the objects of Liberal Youth organisation within NUS shall be:

1. To incrementally increase the number of official Liberal Democrat candidates on NUS Committees at all levels and to campaign vigorously, each year, to elect a Liberal Youth member to the NEC.
2. To maximise the number of student members attending NUS Conference as delegates of their Students' Unions and to keep these student members updated with details of candidates and Liberal Youth activity.
3. To raise Liberal Youth and the Liberal Democrats' profile within NUS, particularly at NUS Conference, but balancing this effort with the negative effects that can come from being seen as 'just another faction'
4. To campaign to get Liberal Youth policy passed and acted upon within NUS at all levels.

That Liberal Youth should work to ensure maximum participation of all students at all levels of NUS, with particular attention to further education students.

## Nationalisation of Exam Boards

### Conference Notes

1. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), and is governed by a board appointed by Secretary of State for Education. QCA maintains and develops the National Curriculum, assessments and has overall responsibility for regulating the public examination system.
2. The National Assessment Agency (NAA) is a subsidiary of the QCA, and is now directly in charge of public examinations.
3. All major examination boards enjoy charitable status, and do not come under the control of the QCA, NAA, nor the DfES.
4. Exam Boards charge schools and colleges varying fees for providing examinations and marking.
5. The recent history of various 'gaffes' by the exam boards.
6. QCA consultation with a selection of teachers revealed a desire for 'a body publicly taking responsibility for the conduct and performance of the exam boards.'

### Conference Believes

1. It is an important goal for schools to offer a broad, challenging and balanced education, providing opportunities for students to enjoy all aspects of the curriculum: academic, physical and vocational.
2. This goal is undermined by the effects of the current system of competition between exam boards:
  - a. Exam boards only provide exams in subjects which are commercially viable.
  - b. The current educational climate means exam results are crucially important to schools, therefore they choose what they perceive to be the easiest exam syllabus, and exam boards try to create the easiest possible syllabuses.
  - c. Competition between exam boards could therefore be responsible for allegations about 'dumbing-down'.
3. The Government should have indirect control of an essential accessory to the education system - the exam system.
4. In particular, since the Government wishes all final year secondary students to take compulsory exams, and is trying to increase the popularity of vocational subjects, it should indirectly decide the content, implementation, and marking procedures for these exams.

Conference therefore calls for

1. In the interests of simplicity and clarity, financial efficiency, control over educational standards, and an enhanced ability to achieve its aims the Government should take indirect control of providing examinations, by empowering, and compelling the QCA or NAA to set its own syllabuses.
2. QCA/ NAA to determine how many different syllabuses to offer per subject, taking account of the demand, justifying themselves to the Secretary of state for Education if necessary.
3. State educational institutions to be obliged to use the new syllabuses provided by QCA/ NAA.
4. QCA/ NAA to determine an appropriate fee to charge, for each examination taken. It would be up to each educational institution to decide whether or not to pass this fee onto the candidate.
5. State educational institutions to continue to receive funding for exam fees, under the existing model.
6. QCA to stop its existing function of accrediting and regulating the standard of qualifications offered by the existing exam boards.

**No Platform is No Solution****Liberal Youth Notes:**

1. The policy of 'No Platform' within the National Union of Students and many students' unions.
2. That this policy seeks to take away the right of free speech groups whose views are considered 'extremist', by definition of the NUS and these students' unions.

**Liberal Youth Believes:**

1. That 'No Platform' is used by bodies such as the NUS to silence opponents, ignore views they disagree with and promote their own biased agenda.
2. That everyone has the right to freedom of speech and expression within the law, regardless of their views.
3. That 'No Platform' has allowed free publicity to be given to groups mentioned and targeted by 'No Platform' policies.
4. That the best way to defeat extremist ideology is to engage those with such views in debate and not silence them in the same way they aim to silence us.
5. That rescinding 'No Platform' policies within NUS and students' unions would enable students to exercise the right to make up their own minds and engage within politics at all levels.

**Liberal Youth Resolves:**

1. To actively oppose 'No Platform' and any attempt to stifle free speech in all forms and all organisations.
2. To pro-actively campaign when and where possible for the end to 'No Platform' within NUS and students' unions.
3. That the focus of Liberal Youth's presence at NUS Conference 2010 will be in opposing 'No Platform'.
4. That any candidate standing for an NUS position or SU position under an official Liberal Youth banner should be urged to run on a ticket of opposition to 'No Platform'.

## **Non-Violent Direct Action**

### Conference believes

1. That Liberal Democrats want to create a pluralist and participatory society where each individual can lead their own life the way that they want to.
2. Our role as political activists is to help organise people in communities to take and use political power, to use our political skills and to represent people at all levels of the political structure.
3. We live in an increasingly undemocratic society.
4. In a dual approach to politics acting both inside and outside the institutions of the political establishment.
5. That if we want to change the system we must work within it where effective and outside it where necessary.

### Conference notes

1. The growth of unelected unaccountable quangos.
2. The failure of Parliament to stop the Poll Tax, protect Twyford Down, Wanstonia, end the Government's road building programme, ban hunting or help the homeless.
3. The campaign strategies of the suffragettes, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King (notorious law breakers).

### Conference declares

1. Liberal Democrats support non-violent direct action – including breaking the law – when working in the established political system fails.
2. This motion to be circulated to the Parliamentary Party, Federal Policy Committee, Policy Unit and Liberal Democrat News.

**Oil**

## Conference Notes:

1. The rising cost of crude oil, showing no signs of falling
2. The centrality of oil to the global economy, and in particular the dependence of the British economy upon a cheap source of energy for electricity and transport, plastics, and fertilizer.
3. The continuing problems caused by the burning of oil and the release of Carbon Dioxide into the atmosphere.
4. The Liberal Democrats' commitments to the Environment in order to enhance well-being and provide for the future and to the British economy and Britain's competitiveness in the world.
5. The refusal of the Saudi Arabian government to allow independent verification of the extent of their oil reserves

## Conference Believes:

1. Demand for oil is likely to increase over time; not only in the developed world but also in the developing world: in places such as India and China.
  2. Supply of Oil, globally, is likely to plateau or fall in the coming years as oil fields come to the end of their life, fewer new discoveries are made, and research and extraction costs rise, though conference acknowledges that without accurate data on oil reserves and demand prediction of the timing of a plateau is difficult.
  3. The combination of unprecedented demand and restricted supply will lead to further oil price rises, possibly very sharply as the extent of the restricted supply of oil becomes known.
  4. Such a continued price rise will eventually make alternative fuels and technologies more appealing, but there are currently few viable alternatives to oil available not only due to lack of technology, but lack of appropriate infrastructure
  5. It is in the interests of Britain and the British economy to:
    - a. Go through re-hab and break our addiction to oil.
    - b. Be at the forefront of the development of alternative technologies and associated infrastructure as this is likely to be a huge export market in the years ahead.
- c. Start putting the infrastructure in place to cope with a continued surge in oil prices.

## Conference Calls For:

1. The system of taxation to be changed to get people used to higher energy prices, to reduce oil demand and to artificially encourage development of new technology and infrastructure.
2. Government to work closely with the energy industry to ensure that Britain is prepared for the future.
3. Government to lead the way in commissioning new alternative infrastructures in its building, in its travel uses and so on.
4. A national campaign to encourage individuals to be more efficient in their oil usage.

## Conference resolves:

1. To campaign on these issues, particularly those relating to energy efficiency.

2. To write to and lobby Liberal Democrat MPs to make them see the importance of this issue for the environment and for the economy.

## Opposing a European Ban on Political Symbols

### Conference Notes

1. The Controversy both in the UK and across the European continent that has been caused by a photograph on Prince Harry wearing, at a fancy dress party, an armband bearing a Nazi swastika.
2. The announcement on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2005, that Luxembourg which currently holds the presidency of the European Union, is to campaign for the introduction of an EU-wide ban on the use of Nazi symbols.
3. Calls, on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2005, from a number of centre-right MEPs from Western European member states to incorporate within such a ban the soviet "hammer and sickle" logo.
4. That such a proposal is likely to include other images of totalitarianism, such as the symbols of Italian fascists.

### Conference Further Notes:

1. That the fundamental Charter of rights and Freedoms, which is incorporated within the EU constitutional treaty, specifically protects the right to free political expression,
2. That such a right is recognised by the European Convention on Human Rights to which all member states are signatories and which is incorporated within the law of the United Kingdom.

### Conference Believes:

1. That the right to free political expression is an inalienable right which applies even to those with extreme and distasteful political opinions.
2. That the fundamental purpose of a liberal democracy is to allow those with different opinions to peacefully express those opinions without fear of recrimination from the state.
3. That the proposed ban on the political symbols thus represents a fundamentally offensive assault on the political freedoms of the citizens of the European Union.
4. That, in the interests of democracy, all European liberals thus have a moral duty to protect the rights to the peaceful freedom of expression of those who disagree with them.

### Conference Therefore Resolves:

1. To resolutely oppose the banning of political symbols of any nature across the European Union and throughout the world.
2. To call upon the MEPs of the UK Liberal Democrats, the ELDR Party as a whole, to oppose this ban on political symbols within the European Parliament.
3. To call upon the United Kingdom Government to oppose this ban on political symbols and to exercise its veto on the issue within the EU Council of Ministers.
4. To campaign within the Party, the European Liberal Youth and the ELDR Party in furtherance of these aims.

## Plastic Bag Tax

### Conference Notes:

1. There are 15 billion plastic bags distributed in the UK every year. They are often non-recyclable so either are put into land fill sites or burnt, releasing damaging carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, contributing to Global warming.
2. The worrying reduction in capacity of land-fill sites in the UK, of which the plastic bag is a huge offender and the UK's record as the one of the worst recyclers in the EU.
3. The harm to dolphins and sea-dwelling creatures, blocking of drainage systems and the general litter nuisance caused by plastic bags.
4. A lack of legislation or even policy to try and reduce the wastage of plastic bags in this country.
5. In 2002, Ireland imposed a tax on every plastic bag given to customers in order to reduce consumption of plastic bags. Bangladesh banned polythene bags altogether and Singapore and Taiwan look set to do the same.
6. Ireland's plastic bag tax reduced plastic bag consumption by over 90%. The tax in Ireland was a huge success credited with raising public awareness of litter, pollution and recycling.

### Conference Believes:

1. That all citizens should have a duty to protect the environment, by contributing to environmental schemes financially, and by reducing their wastage of plastic bags. This can be done by taxing the distribution of each plastic bag in this country.
2. Plastic Bag tax would provide the Government with extra revenue which could be used specifically to pay for environmental and recycling projects, in order to increase public acceptance and approval of the tax.
3. It is not a compulsory tax, it is not even an unavoidable tax, the consumer only has to pay the tax if they believe taking a new plastic bag is absolutely necessary, ie they could reuse old plastic bags.
4. Shops and supermarkets who produce excessive numbers of plastic bags as a marketing tactic and for customers' 'convenience' will be under less pressure to produce huge numbers of plastic bags because public demand for plastic bags (that they pay for the cost of producing) will be reduced massively, possibly enabling the money they will save to be passed on to the consumer, meaning the plastic bag tax will not adversely affect consumers' shopping bills.

### Conference Resolves:

1. Every eligible shop must pay 10p to the Government for every plastic bag distributed to a customer. The shop would be legally obliged to pass on this cost to the customer.
2. All plastic bags are included, except those plastic wrappings covering meat, fish and dairy products. It is hoped shops selling these products could be encouraged to reduce production and wastage of these products.

## **Pornography in the Internet Age**

### Conference notes:

1. That most pornographic material is no longer produced solely for heterosexual men, but encompasses a much wider audience.
2. The proliferation of pornography in line with the growth of the World Wide Web and the proliferation of adult content broadcast channels in line with increased consumer demand.
3. The recent minor relaxation in censorship of magazines, films and television programmes regarding acceptable sexual content.
4. The government's white paper "A New Future For Communications", and its calls for changes to the film classification system, with responsibility for video classification being taken from the British Board of Film Classification and handed to OFCOM.
5. Events in the past few months which have led to increased censorship on the web; with companies such as e-bay and yahoo introducing blanket bans.
6. The abnormalities and contradictions that currently exist within UK law on pornography.
7. That the content of much of the pornography in the United Kingdom is influenced by our current indecency laws. Laws that have recently been ruled as unfair by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).
8. That R rated films can only be distributed on video and sold in licensed sex shops.

### Conference Believes:

1. That the consensual viewing of pornography that portrays all forms of sexuality involving consenting adults is acceptable in today's society.
2. That pornography portraying sexual acts with un-consenting adults, those illegal as outlined by law or those involving persons under the age of consent is always unacceptable.
3. Pornography should be available to buy from, safe reliable sources, giving a 'fair deal' to all involved.
4. People should be given detailed information about the contents of programmes, videos and movies so that they can make appropriate choices about what they watch.

Conference therefore calls for:

1. Relaxation of censorship laws so that all pornography depicting consensual sexual activity is available to adults over the age of 16 who wish to purchase it, and in so doing remove contradictions in the current laws surrounding pornography.
2. Revision of the R18 rating to R16, whilst maintaining the tight and responsible enforced licensing of sex shops.
3. Reductions in the cost of licensing a sex shop, discouraging people from buying less reliably sourced material over the internet; and moves towards future regulation and licensing of on-line sex shops.
4. Work with our European Union partners to initiate similar regulation of cross-border trade in pornographic material.
5. OFCOM also to be given powers to regulate all stages of the production of pornographic materials within the United Kingdom so as to ensure good working conditions and the protection of human rights. This would include ensuring fair pay and high standards of health and safety, that all contractual arrangements are fair and freely entered into, that those involved have not in anyway been coerced, and the prevention of public nuisance.
6. The effects of ECHR rulings on UK indecency laws should be incorporated into law as soon as possible.
7. That all broadcasters be required to display standard information prior to a screening of a programme that may offend or distress or that contains sexually explicit material.
8. That, provided they operate appropriate safeguards, digital or terrestrial television should be allowed to show material currently rated as R18 on a pay per view basis.

## **Practising Homosexuals and Giving Blood**

### Conference notes:

1. The national blood service states that you should never give blood if: you are a man who has had sex with another man, even 'safe sex' using a condom
2. All potential blood donors are screened for diseases including HIV, Hepatitis B, & Hepatitis C, regardless of their stated sexual history.
3. HIV contraction is not limited to practising homosexuals
4. That blood transfusion is an important public service, and currently demand for donated blood outweighs supply

### Conference believes:

1. That NBS should be encouraging blood donations from all groups of people
2. That being a practising homosexual does not infer HIV contraction
3. That the refusal to even screen practising homosexuals is ultimately harmful to the potential beneficiaries
4. That the NBS' policy on practising homosexuals giving blood is wantonly discriminatory

### Conference calls for:

1. The NBS to scrap this discriminatory policy
2. For the policy committee to propose a policy on this matter to Liberal Democrats Federal Conference
3. For the executive to be mandated to lobby the Federal Party to campaign on this issue

## **Privatisation of Halls**

Conference believes:

1. That the standard of residential accommodation in which students live, is an important factor in their both health and academic achievements.
2. That all students living in University Halls of Residence should be entitled to a decent standard of accommodation at a reasonable price.
3. That University halls offer several social, welfare and other advantages over private residences.
4. That privatised University Halls of Residence, on reasonable terms and conditions, are better than no Halls.

Conference notes with concern:

4. The increasing number of student halls of residence, which are being privatised by Universities.
5. That Private Finance Initiatives, Public Private Partnerships, or full scale privatisation of student Halls, has led in many cases to significant increases in rent to students.
6. That such initiatives taken by Universities often lead to private control of cleaning and maintenance within student halls, often leading to lower living standards for students.
7. The large financial and often stress burdens placed on students attending University.
8. That the Labour Government have cut higher education funding whilst increasing pressure on universities to accept additional student numbers.
9. That universities are currently struggling or failing to provide basic services and facilities, and that this is at least partially due to lack of funding.
10. That many universities do not have sufficient funds to improve their accommodation to a reasonable standard, or invest in additional accommodation.
11. That companies and housing organisations have more money to invest in university accommodation than universities do.

Conference resolves:

1. To call for and campaign for an end to privatisation of university halls of residence and college where it becomes a threat and to support it where it offers improved or additional facilities on terms that students view as being reasonable.
2. To campaign for Universities to ensure that students living in their residences, enjoy a clean, safe and comfortable living environment, at a reasonable price.

## Prostitution

### Conference notes:

1. The rise in the illegal forced trafficking of women for the sex trade, and the atrocious conditions in which trafficked women are often kept
2. That a large amount of police time and resources is spent attempting to tackle prostitution
3. The success of Edinburgh's non-residential informal prostitution tolerance zone in reducing the number of street prostitutes; reducing violence, exploitation and drug abuse; and providing advice and assistance for prostitutes on health and safety issues, and on exiting the profession
4. The decision by Liverpool city council in 2005 to make a formal request to Government for an official tolerance zone

### Conference believes:

1. That licensing prostitution, and criminalizing unlicensed prostitution, would create an incentive against forced prostitution
2. That prostitutes in countries where *voluntary* prostitution is tolerated and regulated are less likely to engage in unsafe practices such as unprotected sex, more likely to receive proper health attention, less likely to be kept forcibly in prostitution, and less likely to suffer physical abuse
3. That legalising voluntary prostitution in the UK would thus lead to an improvement in the lives and working conditions of prostitutes
4. That police resources would be better spent tackling forced prostitution, and trafficking in women for prostitution, than on enforcing current prostitution laws.
5. That though some object to prostitution on moral and religious grounds, liberal principle should uphold the right to such activities where the participants are consensual and do not cause harm to other people.

### Conference therefore resolves:

1. To call for the legalisation of voluntary adult prostitution, male and female, with the following provisos
  - i) Designated zones for street prostitutes/brothels
  - ii) Facilities to assist prostitutes with such issues as personal safety and drug addiction; and to facilitate exit routes
  - iii) Safeguards against people being forced into prostitution, for example as an alternative to losing job seeker's allowance
  - iv) New criminal offences of having sex with an unlicensed prostitute, being an unlicensed prostitute, and living off the earnings of unlicensed prostitutes
  - v) Tougher penalties for those who force people into prostitution
2. To call for greater resources to be devoted to tackling forced trafficking and prostitution, funded as far as possible by shifting current resources directed against voluntary prostitution

## Public Transport

Conference notes:

1. That Liberal Youth Conference in Cambridge held a consultative session on public transport policy in November 2003.
2. The paper 'Young People and Public Transport' was the product of this discussion.

Conference calls for more reliable public transport through:

1. The establishment of a Sustainable Transport Authority to regulate bus and train services to create a better integrated, more reliable and safer transport system.
2. Improved information to be provided through a National Public Transport Information System and electronic timetables at bus stops
3. Greater powers to be given to local authorities to improve local public transport including renegotiations with private bus companies
4. The Creation of a Rural Transport Regeneration Fund to improve access to public transport.

Conference calls for fairer fares through:

2. Giving local authorities a greater say over bus fares by reforming contracts between bus providers and councils.
3. Encouraging the use of ID travelcards recognised by more than one transport provider and regulated by the local authority.
4. Providing funds to extend off peak travel on buses to those with disabilities and introduce reduced fares for students.
5. Provide funds for local authorities to subsidise rural services and night buses where necessary.
6. Encourage the use of innovative ticket distribution systems such as availability of bus tickets in bars and clubs.

Conference calls for safer public transport through:

1. Creating and providing funding for 'Home Zones' and 'Quiet Zones' where pedestrians and cyclists have legal priority, and cars are limited to very low speeds.
2. Guaranteeing funding for local transport packages including safe routes to schools, traffic calming, and cycle and bus lanes, paid for from car parking charges, traffic fines, and urban road pricing.
3. Encouraging use of bus conductors on services in cities, providing a speedier, safer and cleaner bus service.
4. Require local authorities with responsibility for school transport to have a 'Travel to School' officer
5. Requiring Schools to have safe routes to school policy and plans, which will be distributed to parents.
6. Encourage replacement of old brick bus shelters with glass shelters, and ensure that they are placed in the most visible areas where possible.

Conference calls for making transport to school easier through:

2. Encouraging development and take up of low cost solutions such as 'walking buses'.
3. Provide funding for local authorities to pilot new schemes such as American style 'Yellow School Buses'.
4. Where dedicated school buses exist, encourage teachers to make use of them, improving behaviour of pupils on buses.

Conference further calls for:

1. Making complaints procedures more open and accessible by ensuring that complaint numbers and emails are printed on tickets, timetables and at shelters and. procedures as simple as possible.
2. Setting of locally determined targets for train and bus operators to reduce number of complaints received for unclean buses/trains.
3. Encouraging young people to drive less polluting cars by reducing car tax on the least polluting and most fuel-efficient cars and motorcycles, abolishing it all together for some. We would increase the tax differential between normal and low-sulphur diesel.
4. Tie fuel duty rebates for bus operators to those running the most environmentally friendly vehicles, particularly those using alternative fuels.
5. Promote car share schemes through local authorities along the lines of shareajourney.com, with taxi replacements if lift can't make it.
6. Public authorities to include 'bike allowance' in expenses schemes for claimable journeys made by bicycle, and encourage employers to do the same.

## Reaffirming our opposition to tuition fees

This conference notes

8. The current Liberal Democrat policy to abolish tuition fees in full-time higher education (HE), to extend financial support to part-time degrees and Level 3 further education (FE).
9. Speculation at the Liberal Democrat Autumn Conference in Bournemouth that the policy may not be affordable in the current climate and consequently may not be a manifesto promise in its current form at the next General Election.
10. The letter written to the Guardian during the conference, signed by 18 members of the Federal Policy Committee assuring the public that, should a proposal be brought before them to drop the current fees policy, they would vote against it.
11. That the said Federal Policy Committee must approve any policy addition, deletion or amendment.
12. Graduate unemployment is increasing each quarter.
13. The respective identical motions passed by South-East region Liberal Democrats and South-Central region Liberal Democrats at their respective annual conferences in 2009.

This conference believes

2. That the Liberal Democrats remain the only one of the three mainstream political parties to decide policy democratically and that we should be proud of such a distinction.
3. That access to higher education should always be based on academic ability and never on the financial capability of the individual or their families.
4. That the spiralling debt of undergraduates especially those who are not mature students as a result of fees, high cost of living and poor financial support deters those from poorer backgrounds accessing and remaining in higher education.
5. That the National Union of Students has failed students around the country by caving in to the concept of fees.
6. That the Liberal Democrats continue to lead the fight against fees, contrasted with the other two parties who have broken their promise to higher education students at various points in the past 12 years.
7. That the Liberal Democrats can and should retain this policy.
8. That the financial foundations of Labour's tuition fees as they stand are unsound and neither the Government nor any commercial buyer of student debt can expect returns on their investment.
9. That tuition fees leave graduates in an awkward position with a minimum of £20,000 worth of debt with little chance of full repayment due to their employment prospects.

This conference resolves

2. To reaffirm our position, both in Liberal Youth policy and as something that very much embodies what our organisation stands for, that we are against tuition fees and will abolish them in the first term of a Liberal Democrat government or coalition agreement.
3. To write to the Federal Policy Committee, the Leader of the Liberal Democrats and the Liberal Democrat Shadow Chancellor informing them of the above decision and to urge them to ensure that the abolishment of tuition fees will become a reality in the first term of a government containing Liberal Democrat ministers.
4. To work with South-East region and South-Central region Liberal Democrats in continuing opposition to tuition fees within the Liberal Democrats.

**Reclaiming our Liberty**

## Conference Notes:

1. Conference regrets that the previous Labour Government have done so much damage to our Civil Liberties.
2. Conference notes that Liberal Youth have a strong record standing up for Civil Liberties

## Conference Believes:

1. Conference believes our data must be protected.
2. Conference further believes that civil liberties are a right not a privilege
3. Conference reaffirms the commitment in the Preamble to the Constitution to build a fair, free and open society, where people of all ages are freed from poverty, ignorance and the obligation to conform.
4. Conference notes the European Court of Human Rights has rejected the British government's final appeal over section 44 stop and search powers.

## Conference Resolves:

## Proposals for databanks, including:

1. The reduction in use of the Prum Framework for all but the most serious crimes. The option of using this system should not be predetermined. The abolition of the ONSET profiling database. Our children cannot and must not be profiled as potential offenders. We believe such profiling is socially destructive and may infringe the Human Rights Act. Probability is not the same as guilt. Removing the 500,000 innocent people from the National DNA Database, and removing the 39,000 under eighteens on said database for all but the most serious
  2. Scrap the Communications Database. The internet was not invented to be used against us.
  3. Prevent the NHS Detailed Care Record. Too many people have too much access.
  4. Abolish any form of National Identity Register
  5. Restricting the Audit Commission National Fraud Initiative as its use is a violation of the Data Protection Act
  6. Not replacing the ContactPoint database in any way, shape or form, and not bowing down to pressure to do so
  7. The Common Assessment Framework should be scrapped with immediate effect
  8. Proposals to strengthen young people's civil liberties, including:
  9. the abolition of Mosquito Devices, by not differentiating between criminals and other young people, these devices are discriminatory against young people in our society. It has also not been proven that they do not cause long term damage.
  10. End the curfews police can impose on under sixteen year olds after 9pm
  11. Preventing Connexions sharing personal data with Local Government Authorities and agencies and the Government
  12. Abolish the national identity number given to children under plans from the children's green paper. This will prevent a database will be built up about them and shared amongst authorities and agencies.
  13. Any Identification, Referral and Tracking (IRT) systems should be abolished with immediate effect

#### Proposals on policing and crime

1. Increased regulation on CCTV and especially 'smart CCTV' to prevent the current uncontrolled invasion into our privacy
2. Stand in absolute opposition to Control Orders, Guilt is a binary state, Control orders force a grey area to emerge.
3. Pre-charge detentions reduced dramatically to seven days, with the option for individual cases to be extended by a Judge in the event of exceptional circumstances.
4. Allowing peaceful protests
5. Changing the legislation to ensure that membership of a non-violent political protest organisation is never a criminal offence
6. Amend Section 44 to ensure the system cannot be abused any longer. There are dramatic failings in the current system and the potential for abuse is large.
7. Adjust Antisocial Behaviour Order legislation to ensure only illegal activities are in breach them; that children will not receive prison sentences for committing legal activities whilst under the Order.
8. Ensure that this Government and any future Government of the United Kingdom is not complicit in the torture of suspects here or abroad. Where this is breached; individual complicit members of the Government and agencies will be held to full account in a court of law.

#### Proposals for Extraditions

2. No fast-track extradition to any country
3. No extradition without evidence which would stand in a British Court
4. No extradition to countries/states who have been found complicit in torture
5. No extradition to countries where a fair trial cannot be guaranteed.

Conference encourages Liberal Democrats in Government to include all the above in the Freedom Bill

### **Conference notes**

1. Liberal Youth and the Liberal Democrats are supporters of the Votes at 16 campaign.
2. Over 1.5 million 16 and 17 year olds are currently denied the vote in the UK.
3. At 16, the law allows people to;
  - give full consent to medical treatment
  - leave school and enter work or training
  - pay income tax and National Insurance
  - obtain tax credits and welfare benefits in their own right
  - consent to sexual relationships
  - get married or enter a civil partnership
  - change their name by deed poll
  - become a director of a company
  - join the armed forces
  - become a member of a trade union or a co-operative society.

### **Conference believes**

Lowering the voting age will;

- engage 16 and 17 year olds at the ballot who hold many responsibilities in our society
- empower 16 and 17 year olds, through a democratic right, to influence decisions that will define their future
- inspire young people to get involved in our democracy.
- Increase political and social awareness in young adults

### **Conference calls for**

1. Liberal Youth to continue to lobby for votes at 16 .
2. Liberal Youth to continue supporting the Votes at 16 campaign.

## Conference notes:

1. That we are the only principled pro-European mainstream party in the country.
2. That currently we don't use this properly to the party's benefit.
3. That the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP)'s potential splintering because of Kilroy poses both a threat and an opportunity, as both are likely to contest both Council and Parliamentary seats at the next election.
4. That although Europe has brought us many benefits, people are often only informed of the problems.
5. That already Lithuania, Hungary and Slovenia have ratified the constitution through their parliaments.

## Conference further notes:

1. That unlike UKIP, we are not a shallow single-issue party.
2. That we know that people don't want Europe shoved down their throats, but risk voting no because they don't always get given the full picture by the media.
3. Recognises that the current constitution proposal isn't perfect- but that, like the House of Lords reform, it is one step in an ongoing process.
4. That we need to work harder now to raise the profile of our MEPs to demonstrate to people that every person in the country is represented by a Liberal Democrat at European level and so Lib Dems CAN "Win here"..
5. That Liberal Youth already benefits from the support of MEPs, LDEG (the Liberal Democrat European Group) and that as young people and students with more opportunities than ever before we should be helping to promote the benefits of Europe.

## Conference resolves:

1. To take positive action to promote Europe both internally within the party, to its members and also to the public in general.
2. To start actively campaigning towards the referendum bearing in mind that the case for Europe cannot be a "once in a generation" activity.

## Conference calls:

1. For its members active in local parties, youth/students groups and the like, to encourage more small articles in FOCUS Newsletters to include the European dimension.
2. For Liberal Democrats to help dispel the myths while out canvassing for the General Election and prepare the ground for the referendum campaign.

## Same-Sex Marriage

### Conference Notes:

1. The historical and ongoing commitment of Liberal Youth and the Liberal Democrats to equality and diversity
2. That despite recent advances, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual people are still subject to both legal and social discrimination in the UK
3. That same-sex couples have the legal right to marry in Spain, Canada and Norway
4. Other forms of gay marriage are recognised in several other countries

### Conference Believes

2. That where the state has any dealings in individuals' domestic relationships it should do so without discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation
3. That although it is legally similar to heterosexual marriage, the separate status of the present Civil Partnership sends a poor message about the UK's commitment to gay equality

### Conference Resolves

1. To campaign for legal recognition of same-sex partnerships as equal before the law and for gay marriage in all parts of the UK
2. To mandate the executive to speak out and campaign against examples of homophobic prejudice, discrimination and hypocrisy wherever they occur
3. To renew and continue to work of the Homophobia is Gay campaign

## School Attendance

### Conferences notes

1. Government proposals announced in the Queen's Speech on truancy, including the power to prosecute parents of truant children.
2. Over 1 billion hours of teaching were missed during 2002/03 by children in England alone.
3. The current government has set targets for reduction of unauthorised absences ('truancy').
4. Studies highlighting that many schools consider parentally condoned absence to be a more widespread problem than truancy<sup>1</sup>
5. The Audit Commission recommendation that LEA's focus on all school absences, not just 'truancy'.
6. Research indicating a link between poverty and poor school attendance.
7. Recent government moves to impose fines upon parents for holiday absences.
8. National and international research indicates that parental prosecution, benefit sanctions and truancy sweeps have statistically insignificant impacts upon school attendance levels.

### Conference believes

1. That a good education for all is a cornerstone of a functioning liberal democracy
2. That poor school attendance reduces a child's chances of receiving a good education
3. That the causal link between attendance and attainment runs in both directions
4. That many children in the UK have been lost without trace from school rolls.
5. The current government's moves to promote parental prosecutions for non attendance has led to some Education Welfare Services moving away from crucial work dealing with the welfare of children.
6. The setting of targets to reduce exclusions can lead to a rise in tolerated absence or 'backdoor exclusions'
7. That setting targets for 'truancy' can lead to a rise in authorised absence.
8. The police service and courts have more important work to do than deal with absent school children.
9. That prosecuting or fining parents for their child's absence is often a costly and ineffective means of improving a child's attendance.

Conference therefore resolves

1. To focus on all absence from school as opposed to just unauthorised absence or other manipulable statistics
2. To promote greater co-operation between Local Education Authorities and other agencies dealing with young people to ensure no child becomes 'lost' from school rolls.
3. To provide more support for children returning to school after periods of absence in order to break the cycle of non-attendance
4. To promote greater use of an alternative and more relevant curriculum for those children with little interest in or use for 'academic' subjects.
5. To end reliance upon truancy sweeps and replace them with systems of targeted first day contact with absent children and their parents.
6. To end reliance upon parental prosecution for non-attendance in all but the most extreme cases and use the funds saved to invest in welfare support for absent children.
7. To abolish fines for term time holidays and work with the travel industry to reduce the cost of non-term time holidays for parents of school age children.

## Sex Education In Schools

### Conference Notes:

1. The high number of teenage pregnancies;
2. The prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases, and young people's lack of awareness of them;
3. The appalling state of sex education in today's schools;
4. The fact that many children receive no sex education at any point in their lives;
5. The impending tenth anniversary of the passing into law of Section 28 of the Local Government Act (1988) on May 24<sup>th</sup>, and the Liberal Democrats' honourable and long standing commitment to repeal it.

### Conference Believes:

1. That every child should be taught the dangers, problems and practicalities of sexually transmitted diseases and teenage pregnancy;
2. That sex education should not be one lesson, but a series of lessons given by teachers who are properly trained to teach in this area;
3. That the lesson should be compulsory rather than optional at the parents discretion;
4. That sex education lessons should begin no later than when students enter secondary education;
5. That Section 28 has been used to avoid teaching children about the diversity of sexual education and relationship structures;
6. That sex education lessons should provide students with positive images of, and information about, bisexuality, homosexuality, heterosexuality, monogamy, polyamory, and transgender issues.

### Conference Resolves:

1. To put a motion to Federal Conference at the first opportunity reflecting the ideas of this motion.

## Student Debt

Conference notes:

1. The seismic shift in UK government higher education policy in the 1990s and 2000s:
  - a. The shift to personal payment for tuition.
  - b. A removal of maintenance support during the academic year and summer, as yet untested by recession.
  - c. A shift from quality provision to quantity provision in H.E.
2. Growth in mean student debt (including student loans, bank loans, overdrafts and credit cards) to well over £12,000 per student on graduation, expected to rise to £30,000 by 2010.
3. Graduate pay is falling. The Times 20/08/2004 stated that a government sponsored report by Warwick University found that graduate pay has fallen by up to 20% in real terms since 2000, and for women the problem is worse.
4. The announcement, on 30 July 2004, by the Bank of England, that British household borrowing had passed the £trillion mark.

Conference further notes that average earnings figures indicate that the average mortgage (3 times salary) on the average priced house (£192,335) means that the average person aged 21-25 earns £24,000 too little per year to afford to enter the property market, and that first-time buyers are being forced out of the market.

Conference believes:

1. The financial services sector is being naïve in its belief that most people are borrowing within their means, and that loans and financial services are being sold too aggressively on the basis of unprecedented low interest rates which are unlikely to be sustained.
2. That the government has transferred debt from itself, a gilt listed institution to the poorest sectors in society and those with the least worthy credit ratings.
3. That loading debt onto young people creates a long term problem in personal and home finance and pension provisions. The government risks an inequitable and divisive generational split in society.
4. That the evidence above points to cracks in the Brownian economic legacy.

Conference Resolves

1. To continue to campaign for quality higher education where tuition and maintenance grants are funded by general taxation and education is valued for the benefits it brings to the whole of society.
2. To campaign for improved benefit rights for students, especially during summer.
3. To campaign to reign in profligate financial service providers through statutory "cooling off" periods and by empowering the Citizens' Advice Bureau to offer free independent financial advisors at their 2800 national outlets for all persons with annual income below £20,000, and that these services should be properly funded by financial service providers, and not reliant on volunteers.
4. To publicise the Citizens Advice Bureau's top ten tips to deal with debt amongst our membership and amongst our target youth and student catchment groups.

## Student Health and Housing

### Conference Notes

1. That there are a large number of unscrupulous landlords who are able to jeopardise students' lives both health-wise and financially.
2. That one major problem is an unfair refusal to return deposits. This puts the onus on the student to sue the landlord thus incurring further cost.
3. That some student unions in cities like Oxford, Leeds and Belfast have joined with local Councils and housing rights groups to produce a Register of Landlords to ensure that students cannot be exploited.
4. That some have introduced a central deposit-holding fund. If landlords wish to dock some of the deposit, they must convince the organisers of the fund (usually the Local Council) that it is for good reason, otherwise the money gets refunded to the tenant. This prevents landlords profiteering from students' deposit cash.

### Conference Further Notes

1. That the Tory Government abolished free eye and dental checks, which has had a highly detrimental effect on student health. The Labour Government has done nothing to change this.
2. That the formula for calculating eligibility for free prescriptions is harsher than it was, ensuring that fewer students are eligible.

### Conference Resolves

1. To support the creation of local landlord registers and the establishment, with local councils and housing rights groups, a deposit fund.
2. To re-affirm Liberal Youth' commitment to the restoration of free eye and dental checks and encourage students to use HC1 forms.
3. To campaign for a relaxation of the rules on eligibility for free prescriptions and, in particular, abolish the ridiculous rule that loans count as income even if one is not taken.
4. To push for all multiple occupancy student accommodation, including University Halls of Residence, to be brought under existing legislation on HMOs.
5. To campaign for Government to release money in the form of grants to invest in Houses of Multiple Occupancy.

## Students with Disabilities

Conference notes:

1. The Government's Controversial plans to overhaul the welfare state.
2. The first step of these reforms involved cutting benefits for single mothers. This was widely condemned, opposed by the Liberal Democrats and brought about rebellion of 47 Labour MPs over the issue;
3. The existing Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) is presently only available to full time undergraduate students in higher education;
4. Under the previous Government's plans from 1998 the DSA will no longer be means tested and the amount allocated for a non-medical helper will be increased by £4,000 to £10,000;
5. Many students must study part time due to the nature of their disability and are therefore not entitled to the DSA or an equivalent;
6. Disabled access in colleges and university is often inadequate – especially in the further education sector – due to under funding and the lack of strong enough legislation;
7. The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) does not cover disabled access in educational institutions, except in an ad hoc way for staff and for buildings open to the general public;
8. Responsibility for providing transport for disabled further education students is split between Local Education Authorities and Social Services. However, as neither body is obliged to provide funds, students can often be left with an insufficient service. This creates the situation whereby people with severe learning disabilities or mobility problems are given college places which they are unable to take up;
9. The general lack of understanding about the entitlement for students with disabilities for benefits such as housing benefit, income support and incapacity benefit. Students with disabilities often have their benefits erroneously cut due to lack of training by Benefits Agency staff;
10. Incapacity Benefit is often completely cut when people with disabilities take up part time work or any kind of study.

Conference believes:

1. While it cannot be questioned that benefit fraud is an unacceptable drain on resources and that there is always room for improvement, in an imperfect world it must be recognised that there can be no simple solutions and that some fraud and inefficiency will always exist in any system;
2. It is unquestionable that the recent cuts to single parent benefits were implemented solely to provide funding for the Governments unrealistic spending plans and were in no way the interests of single parents. This sets a bad precedent for further Labour welfare reforms;
3. The impending reforms of the DSA are welcome, but care should be made to ensure that the level of individual cover does not diminish as the number of qualifying students rises;
4. There is still a need for funding students with disabilities in part-time and post graduate higher education;
5. Every student with a disability should have full access both to and within college;
6. Not requiring educational institutions to provide disabled access effectively guarantees that little or nothing will get done to improve it;
7. It is the responsibility of Local Education Authorities, the Further Education Funding Council, Social Services and the government to ensure they fulfil their present obligations to students with disabilities;
8. Cutting Incapacity Benefit for people with disabilities taking up part-time work or study is a huge disincentive for claimants to improve qualifications or work experience. This in turn leads to long term dependence which is ultimately a far greater drain on resources.

Conference calls for:

1. The Disabled Students Allowance to be expanded to cover part-time students in higher education;
2. Research Councils to be given the ultimate duty to provide transport to and from colleges for students with disabilities;
3. Local Education Authorities to be given the ultimate duty to provide transport to and from colleges for students with disabilities;
4. Legislation on disabled access to be expanded to cover educational institutions;
5. The Benefits Agency to draw up improved guidelines on benefit entitlement to students with disabilities and ensure that staff are aware of them;
6. A change in the rules for benefits to allow people with disabilities to keep a proportion of their benefit entitlement once they begin part time work or training.

Furthermore, Conference calls for the Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Party to:

1. Monitor the impending DSA reforms to ensure individual funding is sufficient;
2. To examine future Government proposals to welfare reform with rigour and an open mind, and to oppose any cost-cutting measure a dressed up as "reducing dependency".

## **Student Loans Company**

### Conference Notes

1. As of 4 October, of the record one million students who had applied for funding this year, 16% had not received any loans or grants.
2. First-time applicants had been hardest hit, with just 72% of applications dealt with.
3. That this is causing financial hardship for many students, as courses have already started

### Liberal Youth believes:

1. That the silence of the political classes on the failure of the Student Loans Company is disappointing

### Liberal Youth resolves:

1. To call for the resignation of Ralph Seymour-Jackson, Chief Executive of the Student Loans Company
2. To call for the resignation of Michael Hipkins, Director of Student Finance Strategy at the Department for Innovation Universities and Skills
3. To call for extra resources to be given to the Student Loan Company immediately, to ensure that applications can be processed and all outstanding funds can be given to students by the end of October
4. To call for a “full independent review of the Student Loans Company, with particular emphasis on whether the organisation is properly resourced to carry out the required function”
5. To request the parliamentary party to use the next opposition day debate to discuss this matter and other parliamentary time to pressure the government on this issue.

## Sustainable Marine Management

Conference notes:

1. *Safeguarding our Seas: A Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Development of our Marine Environment*, the first government Marine Stewardship Report published in November 2002 and the publication of 'A Future for Our Seas' and the Marine Charter
2. Current threats to the marine environment including recently reported controversy US Navy 'ghost ships' (November 2003) and new research (December 2003) into the danger of North Sea cod extinction
3. The historical and contemporary importance of the marine environment particularly given the situation of Britain as an island nation

Conference acknowledges the following problems with current marine legislation:

1. Marine legislation has evolved on an *ad hoc* basis. For example, 77 Acts govern activities relating to marine and coastal environment in Scotland alone
2. Marine governance is conducted by sector, e.g. fishing
3. There is no infrastructure to verify and enforce compliance with marine legislation

Conference welcomes '*Safeguarding our seas*' as a statement of intent and commends work done to ratify and meet international and EU obligations but regrets the relative lack of concrete commitments to new domestic policy

Conference believes that an integrated policy on marine environments should:

1. Maintain the integrity of marine ecosystems and their biodiversity
2. Ensure that marine resource use and development is straightforward and economically viable in so far as is consistent with clause 4(a)
3. Seek to increase and broaden our understanding of marine environments and ensure the accessibility of this information
4. Bring decision-making on marine issues as close to the people whom it affects as appropriate given the discordance between marine areas and political land boundaries, and to nurture new initiatives and technologies

Conference resolves to adopt "*Sustainable Marine Management: a policy paper*" as a statement of Liberal Youth policy, especially its stated objectives to:

1. Comply fully with all relevant European and international agreements and obligations relating to the marine environment
2. Enhance accountability by designating a single minister within DEFRA with overall responsibility for co-ordinating government policy on the marine environment, while maintaining the existing departmental responsibilities.
3. Adopt the "*precautionary principle*" in marine decision-making,
4. Adopt an integrated approach to all marine activities and developments based on coherent geographical and/or ecosystem-based areas managed so far as possible through regional government
5. Improve enforcement and observation of the marine environment

Conference further resolves as part of a wider body of policy:

1. To adopt the provisions of the failed Marine Wildlife Conservation Private Member's Bill, introduced in 2001
2. To propose amending the Habitats Directive to mitigate against continuing by-catch by gill nets and in open sea fisheries
3. To incorporate marine conservation issues into vocational training, e.g. fisheries colleges, and to improve the availability and accessibility of such information to the general public
4. To require local authorities and statutory bodies to keep designated bathing beaches free of debris throughout the year
5. To relocate inappropriately located fish farms based on fish carrying capacities and to encourage the growth of sustainable fish farming as a source of cheap, plentiful protein
6. To eliminate inadequately treated sewage discharge into coastal and marine waters, to reduce diffuse nutrient pollution and litter inputs and to tackle the formation of algal blooms.

## **The Abolition of Democracy**

### Conference Notes

1. The proposed Legislative and Regulatory Reform bill before parliament, which would allow the executive to amend laws already passed without going through parliament and recently received its second reading
2. That this law would allow the creation of new criminal offences punishable by up to two years in prison, without the need for parliamentary approval
3. That whilst the new law contains guidelines for ministers wishing to invoke it, these are based on their own judgment, and not subject to review by other bodies
4. That the act will be subject to its own provisions; that is ministers will be able to use it to increase its own scope

### Conference believes

1. That this bill undermines parliament, and is a deeply worrying threat to civil liberties and democracy
2. That with the second reading already passed it is vital for those opposed to this bill to campaign on it now, and raise awareness of its potential implications

### Conference therefore resolves

1. To oppose this bill
2. To mandate the Chair to write to the party leader urging him to oppose this bill, and to make campaigning against it an urgent priority.

## The Arms Trade

### Conference notes:

1. That the UK is the second largest exporters of arms in the world, exporting £992m in 2003.
2. UK arms companies received £420m of direct subsidies in 2003 from various Government departments.
3. The Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO) is a sub-division of the Ministry of Defence and works to promote British defence companies domestically and abroad.
4. All UK arms companies must apply for a licence from the Department of Trade and Industry before arms may be exported.
5. Arms sold to undemocratic Governments have frequently been used to strengthen their positions, and carry out abuses of human rights
6. Tony Blair is now justifying the UK's role in offensive military action in Iraq as 'stopping human rights abuses'.
7. The popular assertion that the Government and British companies are simply servicing a very lucrative industry, essential to the stability and strength of our economy, which if ended, would simply be absorbed by another country.

### Conference believes:

1. International conflicts should be solved by peaceful means not military action wherever possible.
2. Tony Blair's justification for British offensive military action is undermined by the history of arms trade with those who later use British-made weapons to carry out direct infringements of human rights.
3. The assertion that Britain is servicing the demand is speculative, and it is more likely that it is creating the demand.
4. The assertion is further undermined when considered that many of the components are made abroad, and therefore service foreign employment.
5. That it is ethically wrong for the Government to encourage the British arms trade through the DESO and export subsidies.
6. The principal reason why the DTI's licenses require 'paper thin' assurances of the final use of the equipment is to shield the Government from criticism when exported equipment is misused.
7. All opponents of the Arms Trade should, and do have the right to protest, as contained in the European Convention on Human Rights (Section 11).
8. Use of the Terrorism Act (2001) to detain and search random groups of protestors is:
  - a. In direct conflict with the ECHR.
  - b. An attempt to dissolve peaceful protest.
  - c. Wrongly confusing political demonstrators with terrorists.

Conference calls on the government to

1. Stop subsidising private companies in the armaments trade.
2. Abolish the DESO.
3. Make it mandatory for the Police to fully investigate allegations concerning the sale of banned weapons within Britain.
4. Immediately ban all specialised torture equipment and equipment that will inevitably be used for the purpose of torture, including passive items such as restraining chairs.
5. Allow protestors their right to 'peaceful assembly', by amending the Terrorism Act if necessary.
6. Further regulate the licensing of the Arms trade, in order to:
  - a. End exports to undemocratic, oppressive, or regimes with poor human rights records.
  - b. End exports to countries involved in illegal military action
  - c. End exports to countries who break their 'final-use' assurance.
  - d. Treat the licensing of components the same as the licensing of complete systems.
  - e. Prevent the sale of arms via third party countries
  - f. Stop considering the potential value of the applicant's contract to the economy.

Above all, Conference resolves to

6. Support international measures to regulate and reduce the Arms trade, ideally through an International Arms Trade Treaty, and the UN's Arms Conference in 2006.

## The Global AIDS Epidemic

### Conference notes:

1. That the AIDS epidemic is failing to stabilise. For example: 7,000 people are infected with AIDS every day around the world, 1.7 million people in Africa were infected in 1998 and a further 700,000 in Asia in the same year.
2. That lives already lost to AIDS now total 13.9 million and a further 8 million are forecasted to be terminally ill with AIDS by 2000 AD.
3. That preventative measures have so far not halted the epidemic and developing countries cannot afford the drugs that are used to treat, but not cure, AIDS.
4. More is now known about AIDS than any other virus. Experts (International AIDS Vaccine Initiative) claim there is a 90% chance that a vaccine could be found for AIDS. However, only 1% of money spent on AIDS goes to development of a vaccine.
5. For private pharmaceutical companies, development of drugs for treatment of AIDS is more lucrative than an actual vaccine for AIDS.

### Conference resolves:

1. To call on governments around the world to fund research for a vaccine for AIDS as an urgent priority.
2. That, in addition, research and co-ordination work funded by the United Nations, by either commissioning an existing pharmaceutical company or establishing a new International Medical Research Agency, should begin immediately.
3. That an ambitious target date should be set for the first trials of a vaccine for AIDS.
4. That Liberal Youth should form a working group to push for political action on this issue both within the Party and the public arena.
5. That a commitment is made to firm and pro-active international action against the global AIDS epidemic such as large-scale AIDS awareness and prevention campaigns.

## The Role of Church and State

### Conference notes:

1. That the legislative arm of the UK government includes members of the Church of England.
2. That this Church suffers from falling affiliation amongst the UK's population and fails to represent ethnic and religious diversity of the people of the UK.
3. That many countries around the world have constitutionally separated the role of churches from that of the state.
4. The clauses relating to freedom of conscience in the UN's Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the opt-outs obtained by the government for this Church on specific issues.
5. That a liberal, democratic society cannot function properly without a widely accepted moral framework.

### Conference believes

1. That the freedom of conscience is a fundamental human right and should be enshrined in the constitutional arrangements for the UK.
2. That the inclusion of religious organisations in government goes against the spirit of protecting this freedom.
3. That whilst most religions contribute toward generating and supporting a moral framework, this Church wields undue influence due to the existence of state sponsored religion.
4. That in creating a moral framework members of all religions and none should be invited to contribute.
5. Creating a moral framework should be achieved through the teaching and nurturing of basic moral standards in schools and communities.
6. That the opt-outs obtained for churches by the government from specific provisions of the ECHR diminishes their authority as moral guardians.
7. That the piecemeal approach adopted by the present government toward reform of the House of Lords does not serve the aim of separating the functions of churches and the state.
8. That disestablishment will give the Church freedom to flourish on a 'level playing field' with all other religions.

### Conference calls for

1. The existing representatives of the Church in the House of Lords to have their legislative rights removed.
2. All persons appointed or elected to the House of Lords, whether from a predominantly religious or secular background, should be on individual merit.
3. The separation of church and state to be an integral part of constitutional reform in the UK.
4. The government to reconfirm their commitment to supporting a widely accepted moral framework through the teaching and nurturing of basic moral standards in schools and communities.
5. The full application of the ECHR, incorporated in Human Rights Act 1999, to all places of religious worship in the UK.
6. The repeal of the 1701 Act of Settlement.

## Tibet

Conference notes that:

1. The Peoples Republic of China invaded the independent sovereign nation of Tibet in October 1950.
2. Around 1-1.2 million Tibetans have died as a direct result of the occupation.
3. Amongst others the fundamental freedoms of speech, expression, and worship have severely been curtailed by the occupiers despite the protection offered to the latter freedom under the 1982 Constitution of the Peoples Republic of China.
4. The traditional nomadic Tibetan way of life is threatened by the occupiers through mineral extraction, de-forestation and the large scale settlement by Chinese colonists.

Conference believes that:

1. The Peoples Republic of China should withdraw its forces and civilian employees from Tibet and grant it recognition as an independent sovereign nation.
2. In the event of withdrawal China should not fund/train any groups whose aim it is to destabilize Tibet outside of the democratic process.
3. Any new Tibetan Government should legislate to produce a codified Bill of Rights to ensure; freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, freedom of worship, freedom of expression and freedom of movement for both native Tibetans and any ethnic Chinese who should choose to remain in an independent Tibet.
4. The United Nations should review its decision taken on November 13th 1950, in which it rendered the Tibetan application to join the organisation as 'a communication from a non-governmental organisation'.

Conference resolves to:

1. Write to all 55 Liberal Democrat MPs to urge both personal and Parliamentary support for the above statements and beliefs.
2. Write to the Chinese Ambassador to condemn his country's occupation of Tibet.
3. Actively encourage and support, wherever possible, the Free Tibet Campaign and other such Tibet orientated organisations who promote the peaceful attainment of an independent Tibet.

Conference believes that in a year that saw many changes affecting the Royal Family, the constitutional position of our head of state needs clarification. In particular, Conference reiterates its belief that no one may be born into a position of power over others, but that such a position can only be given through a democratic mandate from the people.

Conference notes:

1. The stability given to our political system by the long reign of our current monarch
2. The likelihood that our current monarch's successor will not have as long a reign and the possibility that this will bring less stability.
3. The additional legitimacy given to our representatives by having a democratic mandate.
4. Liberal Democrat policy to remove the principle of heredity as a qualification for Parliament.
5. The use of the royal prerogative, to bypass parliamentary scrutiny

Conference calls for:

1. A referendum on the future form of the head of state of the United Kingdom to be held as soon as is practicable.
2. The referendum question(s) and voting system to be decided by a balanced and consultative process, but with the provision that it must offer a choice between the status quo and a democratic method(s) of selecting our head of state.
3. The Liberal Democrats to propose, as part of this process, that:
  - a) Our Head of State be elected for a fixed term, the length of which to be decided by a balanced and consultative process
  - b) If there are to be more than two options on the referendum ballot, the Alternative Vote (AV) method of polling should be used.
  - c) Members of the current monarch's family not be disbarred from standing for election.
4. The removal of the ban on Parliament discussing the nature of the United Kingdom's Head of State.
5. The crown prerogative to be put under the scrutiny of Parliament

## Trade Unions

### Conference Notes:

1. The possibility of other Unions disaffiliating from Labour in the near future as reported on the 7th February, before being ejected;
2. That already, the first to be thrown out by Labour, the RMT, in the last few years reduced its contributions from £112,000 a year to just £12,500;
3. That the government wants to invest some £10m of tax payers money into the unions for modernisation;
4. That some of our ideals are compatible:
5. Our belief in equal rights for all and our existing policy on the national minimum wage and part time workers;
6. Our existing commitment to end the inequality in the minimum wage for young workers;
7. That with increasing student debt young people are having to work more at a younger age;
8. Changes in the work force as a whole mean that people are changing jobs more often;
9. That as part-time or trainee workers that young people are more at risk of disciplinary action;
10. That often they are the least able to defend themselves and thus the role of the trade unions.

### Conference Believes:

1. That the party should work more actively with the Unions, especially in light of our recent relations with them and Labours decision to ignore one of their largest supporters;
2. That Union supporters should be given the opportunity to actively work, as a Union, with parties other than Labour;
3. That in some cases membership of a trade union can provide invaluable support in the unfortunate cases of disciplinary actions etc;
4. That the trade unions also play a valuable role in protecting the rights of their members;
5. That whilst we support the work of the Unions we cannot condone the use of public funds in the group which provides a large proportion of the funding for the same party which is in government;
6. That young people in work should be afforded all of the same rights and benefits experienced by older colleagues. Regardless of whether part time or full time;
7. That whilst this should all be encouraged, caution should be taken, as with any large group or donor, that we maintain our independence as Liberal Democrats.

### Conference Resolves:

1. That we encourage the Unions to actively move to disaffiliate from Labour, even if they do not face expulsion as was the case with the RMT;
2. That we support and encourage the work of the Liberal Democrats both with and within the trade unions;
3. That where it is relevant we encourage membership of unions to help protect the rights of individuals;
4. That as Liberal Youth we work to engage working youths within the Unions in the same way that we currently work to engage students through the NUS;

**Trident**

## Conference Notes:

1. Britain's Trident nuclear submarines will begin to be decommissioned in 2024.
2. Since the end of the Cold War, the policy of MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) is no longer relevant to British defence policy.
3. Britain currently needs to use American satellites to fire a nuclear weapon, and so does not have a genuinely independent nuclear deterrent. To develop an independent nuclear weapons capability would increase the cost dramatically.
4. It costs £1.5 Billion per year to maintain Britain's Trident system and nuclear weapon Research and Development facilities: more than it would cost to scrap student fees.
5. Under the terms of the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty), Britain has promised to decommission all its nuclear weapons.

## Conference believes:

1. That the indiscriminate slaughter of citizens is not liberal.
2. That no nuclear weapons system is foolproof, and the fewer nuclear weapons there are in the world, the less likely they fall into the hands of someone willing to use them.
3. That if we are to have a nuclear deterrent we should have an independent one.
4. That the financial, human, intellectual and material resources spent on nuclear weapons could be better spent on other projects.

## Conference calls for:

1. An end to Britain's nuclear weapon capability once Trident is decommissioned.

Conference Notes:

1. That in 2005 Turkey began assessment procedures to join the EU
2. Turkey held a referendum in 2010 which amended their constitution to abolish the death penalty and give more rights to the Kurdish community
3. The UK, Denmark, Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands are in favour of Turkey joining the EU
4. Turkey have completed, or nearly completed, 8 of 35 assessment chapters laid out in the agreement to start the process of joining
5. Turkey is an important arbiter of the Middle East
6. Turkey had the 15<sup>th</sup> largest GDP and is a founding member of the OECD and a member of the G20.

Conference Believes:

1. Europe's hopes of joining the 'G3' alongside China and America will increase with Turkey onside
2. The EU could play an important part in the territorial dispute of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
3. Turkey has vastly improved Human Rights in the country and is moving towards a position the ECHR is content with
4. Turkey's geographical position is not an important factor in accepting Turkey into the EU
5. Standard of living in Turkey will improve if Turkey joins the EU

Conference Resolves:

1. To support Turkish accession to the EU on completion of the 35 chapters set out in the accession agreement
2. To continue supporting the enlargement and advancement of the EU
3. To continue supporting the ideal of a Federal Europe
4. To make contact with young Turkish Liberals, through IFLRY and the International Officers

## Victims Surcharge

### Conference Notes

1. The introduction of a “Victims Surcharge” as part of a conviction for all criminal offences.
2. The surcharge is only applicable if the conviction is bought before a court.
3. Plans by the Ministry of Justice to impose the surcharge for all offences, including offences which carry on-the-spot fines and minor motoring offences.
4. No Judicial oversight is planned for the expansion of the Victims Surcharge program.
5. Some minor offences have no judicial oversight such as speeding and breach of the peace.
6. A total of £4.5 million was been raised in 2007/8 and £8 million was raised in 2008/9 to fund programs such as the victims support unit.<sup>1</sup>

### Conference Believes

1. Victims of crime should be able to recover from crimes committed against them, with the help of specialists at a reduced fee or free of charge.
2. The victims surcharge must only be applied to crimes where there is a tangible victim and not a “potential” victim. Examples of offences with no tangible victim include protesting in Parliament Square and minor motoring offences.
3. The imposition of the victims surcharge must only be imposable with judicial oversight.
4. The imposing of a separate victims surcharge is an additional fine on top of the fines set out in the standard scale.
5. The victims surcharge should only be collected as part of the fines imposed as part of the standard scale and not as an additional charge or as a part of costs.

### Conference Resolves

1. To have the Liberal Youth Federal Executive write to the Ministry of Justice opposing the widening of the imposing of the victims surcharge and for the victims surcharge to come out of fines imposed upon conviction by a court and not on-the-spot fines.
2. To campaign for the funding of victims services to be done in a transparent and open way and not by the imposing of additional charges on top of fines imposed by a court.

Applicability: England and Wales

**Violent Crime (attacks with glass bottles)**

Conference Notes

1. The figures released by the Home Office on 27 February 2010 showing, over 6500 citizens were the victims of attacks by Glass.
2. The Golding family campaign to ban Glass in city pubs and clubs.

Conference Notes

1. The Labour Government has been totally negligent at letting so many youths and students be scarred for life
2. The Conservative party policy is inept on the issue and would do nothing on this issue.

Conference Resolves

1. Liberal Youth to sign up and release a press release announcing the signing up to the Golding Campaign
2. Demand all Liberal Democrats MPs to sign the Early Day Motion supporting the Golding Campaign

Applicability England and Wales except Conference Resolves 2 which is Federal

## **Voluntary Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide**

### Conference Notes:

1. That polling has repeatedly found widespread public support for the principle of voluntary euthanasia.
2. The right to religious freedom and individual conscience enshrined in the preamble to the Constitution of the Liberal Democrats and the Human Rights Act 1998.
3. The current unwillingness of the legal system to enforce the current law regarding assisted suicide.

### Conference Believes:

1. That, as a point of principle, the individual should have power over their own life, including power over the manner of their death if they so wish.
2. That the participation of any and all parties in the process of euthanasia must be wholly voluntary.
3. That the role of the state in the regulation of decisions leading to death should be protecting the vulnerable, not enforcing any specific group's moral code.
4. That the current law is not only an abuse of personal liberty but also fails to protect vulnerable persons.

### Conference Resolves:

1. That the law should be amended so as to allow voluntary euthanasia and medical assisted suicide.
2. That the amending legislation should contain safeguards that would protect the principle that all parties should be consenting, at a minimum:
  - a) That all parties are fully kept fully informed of their rights and the course of action that is to be followed at all times.
  - b) That there is no element of coercion by or of any party involved, including medical staff.
  - c) That the patient is mentally competent to make such a decision and has been made fully aware of all their options, for example palliative care.
3. In cases of dispute the presumption shall be of a lack of consent.

## **Voting System (Referendum)**

### **Conference Notes:**

1. There are currently many different types of voting systems used in the United Kingdom to elect representatives:
  - a. Northern Ireland Assembly: Single Transferable Vote
  - b. Welsh Assembly: Top-up lists
  - c. Mayor of London: instant run-off final round preference voting
  - d. House of Commons : First Past the Post
  - e. European Parliament: Closed party lists
2. The First past the post system is the only system currently used which does not give any degree of proportionality whereas all of the other voting system gives some degree of proportionality.
3. The Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011, allowing for a referendum on changing from First Past the Post to the Alternative Vote for House of Commons elections.
4. The Alternative Vote is a fairer system requiring all MP to gain at least 50% support to get elected.

### **Conference Believes:**

1. The Fairer Votes referendum is the first step towards full proportional representation in the United Kingdom.
2. The British public are already familiar with the concept of proportional voting systems as they are regularly used in elections throughout the United Kingdom.
3. The opponents of Fairer Votes are either misguided ideologues wanting full Proportional Representation now or draconian dinosaurs protecting their own limited self-interest.

### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To support the Fairer Votes campaign in the referendum.
2. To campaign for further proportionality in elections to be introduced in the United Kingdom.

Applicability: Federal

**Vulture Funds**

## Conference notes

1. Private equity firms and hedge funds who purchase debt of countries who are usually unable to finance their debts are commonly referred to as "Vulture Funds"
2. The Developing Country Debt (Restriction of Recovery) Bill introduced in the 2008-09 parliamentary session
3. That debt relief offered to developing nations only covers government-to-government debt and does not cover commercial debts
  4. Hamsah Investments Lt. & Wall Capital Lt.(the 2009 funds) Versus the Republic of Liberia (the 2009 case) on 27 November 2009 in the high court of England and Wales, which ruled Liberia was responsible for financing its commercial debts
5. The resale of debt multiple times transfers ownership away from the original owner and makes negotiations on the repayment of debts impossible for the original debtor
  6. In the 2009 case the original debt was owed to US based bank Chemical Bank and was worth \$6.5 million dollars in 1978. The 2009 funds seek £12 million plus interest back dated to 2002
  7. In 2002 the 2009 funds won a case against Liberia in the US courts demanding repayment of the outstanding debt, Liberia ignored the ruling due to civil war in Liberia at the time of the ruling.
8. In 2002 Zambia settled a £27.5 million debt for £7.7 Million with Donegal International, after the original debt was owed to Romania worth £1.6 million from 1979.

## Conference Believes

1. Vulture funds should be barred from purchasing debts at a reduced rate where a country who originally took out the debt is no longer able to repay the money owed.
2. Money loaned to governments particularly to developing nations should not be resold or sold on to a third party.

## Conference resolves

1. To support any and all future introductions of the Developing Country Debt (Restriction of Recovery) Bill
2. To call for the outlawing of developing countries being taken to court in the United Kingdom by companies based overseas and by companies based in offshore tax havens.

Applicability: Federal