

## Contents

Friday 20th February .....	2
09:30 First Timer's Session.....	2
10:00 Welcome .....	2
10:10 Motion SC1 - Ending Medical Misogyny .....	2
Which EM1 to take? .....	4
10:50 Holyrood Campaign Briefing with Wendy Chamberlain MP and Paul Trollope.....	4
11:05 Motion SC2 - Tackling Loneliness as a Public Health Emergency .....	4
11:45 Motion SC3: Building a Stronger Scotland Through Youth Work .....	6
12:20 Fundraiser .....	8
12:30 Speech: Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP .....	8
13:00 Lunch Break and Fringes .....	8
14:30 In Conversation with Our Candidates.....	8
15:10 Mini Motions: Planning Reform.....	8
15:50 Discussion Panel: Being a First-Term Councillor .....	9
16:20 Manifesto Q&A with the Policy Committee .....	9
Saturday 21st February .....	10
9:30 Annual General Meeting .....	10
10:00 Speech: Sir Ed Davey MP .....	10
10:25 Motion EM1: Communities Missing Out on Renewables Wealth .....	10
10:55 Motion SC4 - Game On: Supporting Scotland's Gaming and Digital Media Sectors.....	11
11:25 Motion SC5 - Pre-Manifesto: Change with Fairness at its Heart.....	13
12:15 Lunch Break and Fringes .....	14
14:30 Motion SC6 - Restoring and Protecting Scotland's Rural Bridges.....	14
15:00 Speech - Adam Harley Candidate for Strathkelvin & Bearsden.....	15
15:07 Motion SC7 - Safe and Ethical AI Deployment in GP Practices and NHS Scotland.....	15
15:37 Speech - Yi-Pei Chou Turvey, Candidate for the North East Scotland region .....	17
15:45 Motion SC8 - Safeguarding the Scottish School Estate .....	17
16:25 Tribute: Lord Wallace of Tankerness .....	18
16:35 Motion EM2: Emergency in Accident and Emergency: relieving the pressure at the 'front door' and 'back door' of the hospital.....	18
17:00 Motion SC9 - Digital Inequality as Modern Poverty .....	19
17:40 Party Awards .....	21
Close of Conference .....	21

## Friday 20th February

### 09:30 First Timer's Session

### 10:00 Welcome

Chair: Fraser Graham

Welcome: Cllr Robert Aldridge, Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh

### 10:10 Motion SC1 - Ending Medical Misogyny

Chair: Paul McGarry

Aide: Leo Dempster

Submitted by Scottish Liberal Democrat Women

Mover: Christine Jardine MP, Edinburgh West

Summator: Cllr Sally Pattle, West Lothian

Conference notes that:

- i) The Scottish Government began developing the Women's Health Plan in 2021, which led to the appointment of Professor Anna Glasier as the first Women's Health Champion in 2023.
- ii) The first phase of the Women's Health Plan was published in 2024, and while some steps have been taken to address health inequality, by almost every measure the SNP were forced to admit those inequalities are only widening.
- iii) In Scotland, it takes an average of 7.5 years to be diagnosed with endometriosis, that cancer screening and diagnosis waiting times are longer than in other parts of the UK, and that Scottish women are far more likely to be living with undetected heart disease than in other parts of the UK.
- iv) Recent figures published by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) show that waiting lists for gynaecological care in Scotland have risen by more than 250% in seven years, with more than 66,000 women currently waiting for diagnosis and/or treatment across Scotland.
- v) In 2024, the House of Commons' Women and Equalities Committee published a report, "Women's Reproductive Health Conditions", detailing the shocking levels of medical misogyny experienced by women at every stage of their reproductive health over their life course. While necessarily limited to women's experiences in England, it is beyond doubt that similar failings are occurring in Scotland's NHS.

Conference believes that:

- i) Together, we must acknowledge the failings of the NHS, the Scottish Government and years of negligence towards women.

ii) We must take all necessary steps to move towards a system that will enable every woman, at every stage of their lives, to regain confidence that their concerns are valid and will be treated accordingly by those medical professionals in whom we place so much trust.

Conference therefore calls for the Scottish Government to:

i) Urgently publish the second phase of the Women's Health Plan, laying out clear goals to tackle health inequalities, and a clear pathway to achieving those goals.

ii) Commit to reprioritising health investment and enabling the NHS to deliver the capacity needed to make real changes to women's lives.

iii) Work with MSPs, experts and medical professionals to build on the findings of the Women's Reproductive Health Conditions report to include the experiences of women here in Scotland, and to develop recommendations to end the medical misogyny faced by more than half the population seeking help over their life course.

iv) Instruct Public Health Scotland to launch an awareness raising campaign for both medical professionals and the wider public aimed at ending stigma faced by women seeking help for their reproductive health over their life course.

v) Improve access to diagnosis, including an end to the dismissal of symptoms and normalisation of pain faced by so many women.

vi) End the postcode lottery with better access to treatment and support, including pain relief, and a better understanding of conditions both rare and common, including but not limited to, endometriosis, the menopause, polycystic ovary syndrome, hyperemesis and ectopic pregnancies.

vii) Embed a better understanding within the health service of the effects that reproductive health conditions have when considered alongside women's mental health, period poverty, and women in the workplace.

viii) Vastly reduce waiting times for referrals, and then treatment, particularly in gynaecology and urology.

ix) Improve training and standards across NHS services in Scotland.

x) Increase research into reproductive health over a woman's life course, moving away from the belief that this is a 'niche' area.

## Amendment

Insert a new 'Conference Notes' point after 4 and renumber:

Approximately 610 new cases of ovarian cancer are diagnosed in Scotland every year. Ovarian cancer is the sixth most common cancer affecting those born with ovaries. Ovarian cancers are usually diagnosed late because symptoms are often non-specific and there is no routine screening available. Survival is dependent on the stage of cancer at initial presentation.

Insert two new 'Conference calls for' points after 6 and renumber:

Implement a targeted screening programme for everybody born with ovaries and a family history of colon ovarian and/or breast cancer.

Provide an annual routine gynaecological examination for women over the age of 40 that incorporates blood tests and ultrasound.

### Cards:

Mover: Christine Jardine MP, Edinburgh West, called  
Summator: Cllr Sally Pattle, West Lothian, called  
Move Amd: Kirsten Herbst-Taylor, called  
Jackie Bell, East Lothian, called  
Lucy Smith, Central Scotland, called  
Amanda Clark, Perth & Kinross, called  
Aude Boubaker-Calder, Dunfermline & Kirkcaldy, called  
Lin Macmillan, East Lothian, called  
Beatrice Wishart, Shetland, called  
Christine Murdoch, Dumbarton, called  
Caron Lindsay, West Lothian, called

### Votes:

Amendment: carried

Motion as amended: carried

### Which EM1 to take?

EM1(A) or EM1(B): Option B – Communities missing out on Renewables Wealth

EM2(A) or EM2(B): Option B – Emergency in A&E

## 10:50 Holyrood Campaign Briefing with Wendy Chamberlain MP and Paul Trollope

## 11:05 Motion SC2 - Tackling Loneliness as a Public Health Emergency

Chair: Sanne Dijkstra-Downie

Aide: Mel Sullivan

Submitted by member signatories.

Mover: Paul McGarry, East Dunbartonshire

Summator: Jane Alliston Pickard, Edinburgh West

Conference notes that:

- i) The Scottish Household Survey conducted in 2024 showed that 1 in 5 adults in Scotland experienced feelings of loneliness in the previous week.
- ii) Further research from Age Scotland in 2025 showed nearly half of all (46%) Scots aged over 50 experienced loneliness all or some of the time. It reports particularly high levels among unpaid carers.
- iii) Studies by the Scottish Public Health Network shows a link with loneliness and increased risks or mental or physical health illness.

iv) A recent report from Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland showed that those who report as lonely cost health services around £900 extra per person per year.

v) Evidence from the COVID-19 Pandemic in Scotland showed a sharp rise in reported loneliness, particularly among young adults and those facing financial insecurity.

vi) A link between poor public transport and increased loneliness, suggesting that car-dependent environments and reduced bus services contribute to isolation, especially in rural areas.

Conference believes:

i) Loneliness should be treated as a public health priority, alongside other major risk factors.

ii) Tackling loneliness requires investment in social infrastructure, places, services and relationships, not only individual 'resilience'.

iii) Interventions to reduce loneliness must be inclusive, reaching older adults, disabled people, carers, young people, migrants, LGBTQ+ people and others who are disproportionately affected.

iv) Better public transport and safe, welcoming spaces are central to reducing loneliness

Conference recognises the tremendous success of schemes such as the befrienders programme in East Kilbride founded by Avril Anderson and run alongside Calderglen High School. It builds a long standing bond that is multi-generational and has provided a valuable lifeline for many in the community and mutual benefits for all involved.

Conference therefore calls for the Scottish Government to:

i) Recognise loneliness formally as a public health emergency, with a cross-government strategy and clear targets to reduce chronic loneliness over the next decade.

ii) Expand social prescribing through GPs, community link workers, schools and mental health services, ensuring people can be referred into community groups, arts, sport, volunteering and peer-support networks.

iii) Invest in evening and weekend community spaces, including and further developing existing warm spaces, intergenerational cafes, youth hubs and arts venues, with a particular focus on high-poverty and rural areas.

iv) Work with local authorities and transport operators to improve and, where appropriate, subsidise off-peak public transport for social and community activities, recognising its role in preventing loneliness.

v) Fund a Neighbourhood Connector Network of paid or supported volunteer roles tasked with identifying isolated individuals, connecting them to local opportunities and supporting them to attend.

vi) Ensure that loneliness impact is routinely considered in public and budget decisions, especially those affecting community facilities, transport, housing and digital access.

## Cards:

Mover: Paul McGarry, East Dunbartonshire, called  
Summator: Jane Alliston Pickard, Edinburgh West

Jackie Bell, East Lothian, called  
Barry Riddes, Dumfries & Galloway, called  
James Calder, Dunfermline & West Fife, called  
Malcolm Wood, Edinburgh West, called  
Tom Leatherland, Dunfermline and West Fife, called  
Chris Young, Highland, called  
Fraser Graham, Edinburgh South, not called

## Votes:

Motion: carried

## 11:45 Motion SC3: Building a Stronger Scotland Through Youth Work

Chair: Jenny Lang

Aide: Leo Dempster

Submitted by member signatories.

Mover: Michael Gregori, Dumfries and Galloway

Summator: TBC

Conference notes that:

- i) Scotland has a proud youth work tradition delivered through local authorities, voluntary organisations, uniformed groups, community projects, and national youth organisations.
- ii) The Scottish Government's real-terms cuts to local authority budgets have forced many youth services to close or reduce provision, leaving significant inequalities in access across Scotland.
- iii) Particular challenges are faced by young people in rural, island, and deprived urban communities, where access to safe spaces and extra curricular opportunities is limited.
- iv) Care-experienced young people, disabled young people, LGBTQ+ youth, young carers, and those facing poverty or discrimination continue to experience the greatest barriers to support.

Conference believes that:

- i) Youth work is an essential part of Scotland's education, wellbeing, and community infrastructure.
- ii) Youth workers are skilled professionals who require stable funding, proper pay, and clear progression pathways.
- iii) Young people's voices must be embedded at every level of decision-making - local, national, and within service design.
- iv) Scotland needs a long-term, cross-government plan for youth work.

Conference calls for the Scottish Government to deliver:

- i) A National Youth Work Guarantee for Scotland that includes:

- a) A commitment that every young person aged 11-25 can access high-quality open-access youth work in their community.
- b) Statutory protection for youth work within local authority budgets, supported by increased government funding.
- ii) New Ideas for Innovation and Access, such as:
  - a) Youth Work on Wheels - a national programme of mobile youth work units to serve rural and island communities, staffed by qualified youth workers.
  - b) Youth Worker First Aid & Wellbeing Training – a standardised wellbeing support qualification enabling youth workers to deliver early mental health interventions.
- iii) A Stronger Workforce and Sector, through:
  - a) A funded national strategy to recruit and retain youth workers, including bursaries, apprenticeships, and clearer professional accreditation.
  - b) Multi-year grant funding for voluntary youth work organisations to replace the current patchwork of short term competitive bids.
- iv) An Embedded Youth Voice and Participation, with:
  - a) A statutory requirement for meaningful youth participation in local authority and Scottish Government policy development.
  - b) A national annual 'Youth Work Hearing' in the Scottish Parliament, led by young people and youth workers, to scrutinise progress.
  - c) Expansion of participatory budgeting to ensure young people directly influence local spending priorities, including on youth services.
- v) Improved Safety and Wellbeing, through:
  - a) A trauma-informed youth work framework for all services with specialist support for care-experienced young people and those affected by violence, exploitation, or homelessness.
  - b) Collaboration between youth work, schools, mental health services, and community safety partnerships to ensure early intervention and shared pathways of support.

## Cards:

Mover: Michael Gregori, Dumfries and Galloway, called

Summator: Michael Gregori, Dumfries and Galloway

Lewis Younie, Edinburgh West, called

Daniel Khan-O'Malley, Glasgow, called

Michael Turvey, Aberdeen West, called

Jackie Bell, East Lothian

Fraser Graham, Edinburgh South. called

Pauline Flannery, Edinburgh, called

Corey Bonniface, Highland, called

Willie Wilson, Perth & Kinross, called

Christine Murdoch, Dumbarton, called

Sally Pattle, West Lothian, called

Alastair Thompson, Glasgow, called

## Votes:

Motion: Carried

12:20 Fundraiser

12:30 Speech: Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP

13:00 Lunch Break and Fringes

14:30 In Conversation with Our Candidates

15:10 Mini Motions: Planning Reform

MM1 Title: Homes Around Stations: Fast-Track Urban Housing Delivery

Submitter – Andy Williamson

### Policy Suggestion:

We recommend introducing “station growth zones” to speed up approval of high-quality, higher-density private housing in city centres and within easy walking distance of rail and major bus stations. These zones would use clear design codes and faster planning timetables to unlock under-utilised land around transport hubs, including low-density sites currently dominated by surface car parking.

### Policy Benefits:

**More Homes Where People Want to Live:** Increasing density in the most accessible locations boosts supply where demand is highest, easing pressure on rents and prices.

**Better Use of Land:** Making smarter use of space around stations reduces sprawl and protects greenfield land.

**Lower Car Dependence:** Homes near transport hubs cut car use, congestion, and emissions, supporting climate goals.

**Faster, More Certain Planning:** Zoning and design codes reduce delay and risk, helping viable schemes get built.

**Stronger Local Centres:** More residents near stations increase footfall for shops and services.

Focusing growth and density around stations delivers more homes, better connectivity, and greener urban growth while keeping design standards high.

### Contributors:

- Fraser Graham, Edinburgh South
- Colin Brown
- Norman Ray
- Chris Young, Highland
- Flora Sharp, Edinburgh West
- Michael Turvey, Aberdeen West
- Clare McLaren, Perth & Kinross
- Artie Knovanov
- Michael Crighton, Dundee

- Amanda Clark, Perth & Kinross

## MM2 Improving Space Standards for Student Accommodation

Proposer: Artie Knovanov

Policy Proposal:

Require all local councils to require Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) to meet the same space standards as for any other residential dwelling,

Policy Benefits:

Improved Living Conditions - Currently many students living in PBSA are in tiny rooms with little storage space or facilities. This is because developers squeeze space to squeeze in students, whilst rents are often higher than the market rents for equivalent flats. Why should students be treated less fairly than other residents?

Adaptability - When current PBSA properties are no longer needed as student halls, they would not be able to become housing without a complete strip out and rebuild to meet space standards. By having these halls meet the housing space standards, flexibility is created for reuse.

Diversification of Development - In many cities with a high student population, developers are incentivised to build PBSA over other housing types, as they get a better return on investment due to having more occupants on the site, and are often exempt from Affordable Housing Requirements. By reducing this incentive we may see more mixed use development or new housing during this current housing emergency.

Contributors

- Fraser Graham, Edinburgh South
- Alex Ashford, Midlothian
- Ronan Grey
- Michael Turvey, Aberdeen West
- Andy Williamson, Edinburgh South
- Jane Pickard, Edinburgh South

### Indicative Votes:

Homes around stations: to be take forward to Policy Committee

Space Standards: to be taken forward to Policy Committee

## 15:50 Discussion Panel: Being a First-Term Councillor

## 16:20 Manifesto Q&A with the Policy Committee

Please note that for all of these sessions, questions should be submitted in advance via question cards, rather than being taken from the floor. These can be requested from the front desk or speaker's table.

## Saturday 21st February

### 9:30 Annual General Meeting

- Convenors Report: Accepted
- Policy Convenor's report: Not delivered
- Conference Committee: Accepted
- Campaigns and Candidates: Accepted
- Treasurer's Report/Accounts: Accepted

### 10:00 Speech: Sir Ed Davey MP

### 10:25 Motion EM1: Communities Missing Out on Renewables Wealth

Mover Alistair Carmichael

Conference notes that:

1. After 12 years, the SNP Government is finally proposing and consulting on new guidance on community benefit from offshore renewable energy developments.
2. The SNP Government announced on 18 February that it proposes only increasing the recommended annual rate of community benefits per MW of onshore wind by just £1000 (from £5000 to £6000). This does not keep pace with inflation or reflect the rise in electricity prices, falling short of the expectations of communities and people struggling with fuel poverty.

Conference believes that:

1. Communities are undergoing enormous upheaval to host turbines, pylons and battery storage plants, as well as the infrastructure associated with offshore wind.
2. A fair rate of community benefit must be a foundational requirement in order to strengthen communities, deliver energy security and build a rich legacy, and that without this it will not be possible to unlock the benefits of wind, solar and pumped hydro storage.
3. Community benefit should be used to support economic development and investments that have a lasting legacy.

Conference reaffirms that the profits from renewables should be rebalanced in favour of Scottish communities, as set out in SC6 Generating Energy and Renewables Wealth for Scottish Communities, passed at Spring' Conference 2023.

Conference further notes and endorses the calls from Shetland Liberal Democrats that Shetland should receive its share of the ScotWind revenues, all of which have been seized by the SNP Government, as part of a wider bid to further devolve the Crown Estate.

### Cards:

Mover: Alistair Carmichael MP, Orkney & Shetland, called  
Jackie Bell, East Lothian, called  
David Green, Highland, called  
Fraser Graham, Edinburgh South, called  
Michael Turvey, Aberdeen West, called

Jeff Goodhall, Aberdeenshire East, called

## Votes:

Motion: carried

## 10:55 Motion SC4 - Game On: Supporting Scotland's Gaming and Digital Media Sectors

Chair: Kevin Lang

Aide: Jacquie Bell

Submitted by member signatories.

Mover: Neil Alexander, Highland

Summation: Cllr Michael Crichton, Dundee

Conference believes that:

i) The Scottish video games sector makes a massive contribution to the Scottish economy and culture, producing worldwide success stories. The gaming industry now generates larger revenues globally than the film and music industries combined.

ii) According to the UK-wide games trade body, UKIE, the games sector contributes £188.4m annually to the Scottish economy and employs over 2,181 full-time staff.

iii) Despite Scotland's games and digital sectors making a meaningful contribution to the economy and employment, the overall ecosystem remains smaller, more fragile, and less coordinated than those of comparable European nations. Scotland's current approach is fragmented, with games, digital media, and technology businesses often treated separately across economic, digital, skills, and cultural strategies, limiting collaboration, scalability, and long-term resilience.

iv) For Scotland to reach its full potential, the digital media and video games sectors must be supported to grow nationwide, creating opportunities for new start-ups and long-term economic development in rural, Highland and island communities.

Conference notes with concern that:

i) Video games and digital media companies face significant financial challenges during their initial startup phase, before products are ready for market. Following Brexit, Scotland's games and digital media companies lost access to vital funding streams. The UK Trade and Business Commission estimates that the EU's Creative Europe Project would have delivered £163m in arts funding had the UK Government not decided to pull out of it during the Brexit negotiations.

ii) Despite success stories across the sector in Scotland, significant difficulties remain, evidenced by the closure of Axis Animations (resulting in over 160 job losses) and mass redundancies at companies such as Build A Rocket Boy, where over 300 staff were cut.

iii) There are well-documented concerns within the industry regarding exploitative practices such as 'crunch culture', where employees are routinely expected to work excessive and often

unpaid hours to meet deadlines, as well as alleged union-busting. Despite these issues being widely recognised, no action has been taken by either the UK or Scottish Governments to address them.

iv) While Techsaler Hubs offer tech start-ups paid hot-desking and bookable event spaces, these are not ideal for new studios, which are better suited to group office environments, nor are they specific to digital media and video games. Furthermore, provision is geographically sparse; for example, the Highlands & Islands region has only one such hub.

v) Research on the Scottish Games Ecosystem by the University of Glasgow and the University of Stirling found significant challenges facing the industry, including a deficit in business skills within games companies, a lack of dedicated funding and academic support, poor understanding of the industry, and the absence of a central gaming 'hub' or support body.

Conference calls for the Scottish Government to:

i) Formally recognise the video games sector as a distinct industry in its own right, with tailored policy support reflecting its specific challenges; embed the sector across all relevant digital, economic and technical strategies; and recognise eGaming as an emerging part of Scotland's sporting and cultural landscape.

ii) Establish regional 'Hubs' across all areas of Scotland for both digital media and the video games industry, providing low cost office space for both sectors, rather than just rent-a-desk options currently available within Techsaler Hubs.

iii) Create a Games Innovation Centre to act as a central hub for research, development and expertise sharing, to support the development of regional hubs that facilitate upskilling new start-ups with vital business skills, ensuring long-term survival and encouraging good practices against exploitative design mechanics.

iv) Work with the Scottish Games Network in enacting the Scottish Games Action Plan, which has been co-created with all key stakeholders within the industry.

v) Launch a new pilot fund specifically dedicated to both industries and targeted at sector growth for newer start-up studios, with specific consideration for the cultural significance of the projects.

vi) Condition access to any public funding or support body on games companies adhering to fair work policy practices, such as Fair Work First, to ensure the fair treatment of all employees within the industry across Scotland.

vii) Engage with the industry, alongside the UK Government, to define and support established trade union bodies for the industry, and take steps to prevent any 'union-busting' practices by companies.

viii) Develop a new educational strategy which moves beyond relying on past success by actively attracting industry leading experts and developing the next generation of high quality university courses, putting practical experience, such as guaranteed industry placements, at the core to address barriers to entering the sector.

ix) Explore business rate exemptions for digital media and video games start-ups for the period of a 'first product release window' while these companies establish a steady revenue stream.

## Cards:

Mover: Neil Alexander, Highland, called  
Summation: Cllr Michael Crichton, Dundee  
Christine Jardine, Edinburgh West, called  
Lewis Younie, Edinburgh West, called

## Votes:

Motion: carried

## 11:25 Motion SC5 - Pre-Manifesto: Change with Fairness at its Heart

Chair: Jenni Lang

Aide: Paul McGarry

Submitted by member signatories.

Mover: Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP, Edinburgh West

Summation: Neil Casey, Central Scotland

Conference accepts 'Change with Fairness at its Heart' - the premanifesto of the Scottish Liberal Democrats and calls for it to be combined with additional points of detail and further relevant provisions, further proposals made at conference, and with up-to-date budget and economic forecasts, to provide the basis for the manifesto for the 2026 Scottish Parliament elections.

The full pre-manifesto document can be found on the conference hub at [scotlibdems.org.uk/conference/pre-manifesto](http://scotlibdems.org.uk/conference/pre-manifesto)

## Cards:

Mover: Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP, Edinburgh West, called  
Summation: Neil Casey, Central Scotland, called  
Richard Coxon, Edinburgh North East & Leith, called  
Kevin Lang, Edinburgh West, called  
Neil Alexander, Highlands, called  
Sally Pattle, West Lothian, called  
Sanne Dijkstra-Downie, Edinburgh North East & Leith, called  
Jane Alliston Pickard, Edinburgh West, called  
Flora Sharp, Edinburgh West, called  
Amanda Clark, Perth & Kinross, called  
Christine Murdoch, Dumbarton, called  
Alan Reid, Argyll & Bute, called  
Jeff Goodall, Aberdeenshire East, not called

## Votes:

Motion: carried

## 12:15 Lunch Break and Fringes

## 14:30 Motion SC6 - Restoring and Protecting Scotland's Rural Bridges

Chair: Mel Sullivan

Aide: Ross Stalker

Submitted by member signatories.

Mover: Isobel Knights, Angus & Mearns

Summation: TBC

Conference notes that:

- i) Scotland's local authorities are responsible for maintaining 33,534 miles of roads and 13,350 bridges, of which approximately 9,200 are in areas classified as rural.
- ii) In 2023, RAC Foundation research estimated the bridge maintenance backlog across Scotland's local authorities to be £918,257,831. Local authorities reported that they wish to return a combined total of 302 bridges to full carrying capacity, but that at current funding levels they would only be able to do so for 20 of these by 2027/28.
- iii) The maintenance backlog is disproportionately distributed across local authorities, with Aberdeenshire reporting an estimated figure in 2024 of £100 million.
- iv) In 2023, the Scottish Government opted not to renew the Local Bridge Maintenance Fund.

Conference also notes with concern that:

- i) There is a dual crisis facing rural infrastructure:
  - a) Economically damaging weight restrictions on bridges that are backlogged for maintenance to bring them back to full carrying capacity.
  - b) Deteriorating bridges on lifeline routes that are at risk of total closure which would isolate communities.
- ii) The absence of a dedicated fund for bridge maintenance means that rural council are forced to prioritise keeping lifeline routes open over restoring full capacity, effectively engaging in the managed decline of the rural road network.

Conference believes that:

- i) People in Scotland deserve to live in flourishing communities with the agency and resources to improve their local area.
- ii) Local authorities must receive fair and adequate funding to fully service their communities, moving away from short term 'patch-up' repairs towards long-term resilience.

Conference reaffirms the Scottish Liberal Democrat commitment to a strong rural economy and the protection of lifeline transport services.

Conference calls for the Scottish Government to:

i) Reinstate the Local Bridge Maintenance Fund as a multiyear capital programme, and expand it to cover two distinct funding streams.

a) A Strategic Capacity Stream to provide capital for strengthening bridges where load restrictions are creating a significant economic bottleneck, and

b) A Lifeline Resilience Stream to provide emergency capital for bridges where deterioration threatens imminent closure of a lifeline route.

ii) Work in partnership with COSLA to agree a Strategic Bridge Renewal Programme, with the explicit goal of delivering a year-on-year reduction in the maintenance backlog and the number of load restricted bridges.

### Cards:

Mover: Isobel Knights, Angus & Mearns, called

Summation: Michael Turvey, Aberdeen West, called

Steve Kew, Aberdeenshire West, called

Ali Ridha, Edinburgh North East and Leith, called

Jeff Goodall, Aberdeenshire East, called

Martin Knights, Angus & Mearns, called

Yi-pei Chou Turvey, Aberdeenshire West, called

### Votes:

Motion: carried

## 15:00 Speech - Adam Harley Candidate for Strathkelvin & Bearsden

## 15:07 Motion SC7 - Safe and Ethical AI Deployment in GP Practices and NHS Scotland

Chair: Fraser Graham

Aide: David Evans

Submitted by Paisley and Renfrewshire Liberal Democrats.

Mover: Ross Stalker, Paisley and Renfrewshire

Summation: TBC

Conference notes that:

i) According to the latest survey by the Royal College of General Practitioners Scotland, GPs spend around 22% of their day on administrative tasks that do not improve patient care.

ii) Rapid development of Large Language Models (LLMs) and Large Multimodal Models (LMMs) has led to American Big Tech firms now strongly pushing the narrative that these models represent a form of general purpose artificial cognition.

iii) There is growing evidence that LLMs and LMMs are not cognitive, but probabilistic, and therefore, issues such as confabulation, token bias and algorithmic pareidolia are ultimately not solvable.

iv) The increasing environmental cost of generative AI is particularly pronounced when the data centres powering the models are located in the United States.

Conference believes that:

i) While we should embrace the potential of technology to reduce the administrative burden on GPs, it is critical that a distinction is maintained between generative AI (which unreliably creates new content, even when it appears to be referencing existing knowledge) and extractive NLP (Natural Language Processing, which reliably organises and categorises data).

ii) The industry narrative suggesting that LLMs and LMMs possess 'cognition', 'reasoning' or 'understanding' is scientifically flawed, and dangerous when applied to a healthcare context.

iii) The use of models which are affected by token bias in a decision making context will inevitably introduce an unpredictable and unacceptable source of discrimination.

iv) the 'human-in-the-loop' principle is non-negotiable, and as such a GP or another appropriate clinician must remain the final author and auditor of all clinical decisions and communications.

v) Using generative AI for direct diagnostic purposes, such as interpreting medical imagery or data, or summarising unread patient histories, poses unacceptable patient safety risks.

vi) The appropriate use of AI in healthcare is proven, specialised tools that primarily assist with workflow management, rather than generative tools that make false claims of reasoning and dangerously overpromise on their capabilities.

Conference calls for Healthcare Improvement Scotland to:

i) Classify LLMs/LMMs as entirely unsuitable for diagnostic or clinical decision-making duties.

ii) Produce a Safe Transcription Standard for GP surgeries and consultants, such that voice-to-text tools are only permitted if they:

a) Incorporate preprocessing steps such as noise gating, voice activity detection and speaker classification to reduce the risk of confabulation.

b) Are limited to acting as transcription assistants, with a mandatory 'human-in-the-loop' verification step before any data is committed to the patient record.

iii) Ensure that only predictable, narrow-scope Computer Vision tools with medical device certification are deployed for patient image analysis.

iv) Require that NHS Scotland data remains within the European Economic Area of UK jurisdiction and that no model training or computation is carried out under a US Data Processing Agreement.

v) Permit the use of LLMs to generate synthetic training data only for the purpose of building smaller, more reliable, and fully auditable NLP tools.

vi) Promote the use of reliable extractive NLP technologies specifically designed to reduce the administrative burden on GPs.

## Cards:

Mover: Ross Stalker, Paisley and Renfrewshire, called

Summation: Grant Toghil, Paisley & Renfrewshire

Neil Casey, East Renfrewshire, M, Request for Reference Back  
Douglas Macdonald, Glasgow  
Artie Knovanov, Edinburgh South, called, NB  
Caron Lindsay, West Lothian, called  
Drummond Begg, Milgavie & Bearsden  
Malcolm Wood, Edinburgh West  
Mel Sullivan, Aberdeen & North Kincardine

### Votes:

Reference Back: to be heard

Reference Back: carried. Motion is referred back to the Policy Committee

## 15:37 Speech - Yi-Pei Chou Turvey, Candidate for the North East Scotland region

### 15:45 Motion SC8 - Safeguarding the Scottish School Estate

Chair:

Aide:

Submitted by member signatories

Mover: Noah McGarry, East Dunbartonshire

Summation: TBC

Conference notes that:

i) A Fire report for Lenzie Academy in 2025 found a 'substantial risk to life' because of broken fire doors and obstructions to fire exits.

ii) Lenzie Academy is over 68 years old. The discussion to rebuild the secondary school has been going on for over a decade. It is proposed that the school will be rebuilt, however, this is controversial because the identified site was deemed unsuitable for a school in 2018.

iii) Public consultation on the school site began only after the decision had already been made, and followed the rejection of an amendment by the Liberal Democrat Council group calling for a public consultation.

iv) In Scotland, six schools have been rated as in bad condition and 195 in poor condition. It should be noted that both the East Dunbartonshire Council and Scottish Parliament buildings are still in excellent condition. Only one council has a headquarters rated as being in bad condition.

Conference believes that:

i) No student or teacher should have to go to school wondering if the building is a fire trap or has other safety risks. Scotland should guarantee a safe place for every student.

ii) Waiting until something breaks before fixing it is not a good way for local authorities to run schools.

iii) The root cause of this mess is a failure to fund local authorities. For years, the Scottish Government has squeezed council budgets leaving them with no choice but to let buildings crumble. You can't fix a national infrastructure crisis with 'pocket change' and empty promises.

iv) Teachers are excellent and work hard for students, if they do not have the right environment of building or the correct facilities to teach students, then they are being expected to do the job with one hand tied behind their back.

v) A fair society requires that schools are 'fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century', and include ASN facilities and respond to climate change.

vi) We shouldn't have to send Freedom of Information requests just to find out if our school is safe. We have a right to know the truth about the buildings that students spend six to seven hours a day in.

Conference calls on the Scottish Government to:

i) Start a massive, independent fire safety check of every single school in Scotland right now, so no other school ends up in the same state as Lenzie.

ii) Establish a 'Duty to Maintain' that forces councils to be honest every year about what needs fixing and how they're going to pay for it over the next five years.

iii) Create a special fund to fix crumbling schools, and make them safe.

iv) Change how we build schools so that:

a) They actually ask us, the students and staff, what we need during the design phase.

b) Every new school s built for ASN students as standard, with sensory rooms and proper facilities included from the start.

## Cards:

Mover: Noah McGarry, East Dunbartonshire, called

Summation: Jamie Greene, Greenock, called

Stephen Harte, Edinburgh West, called

Lorna Cammock, Uddingston Bellshill, called

Ray Georgeson, Borders, called

Eliza Twaddle, Dunfermline & West Fife, called

## Votes:

Motion: Carried

## 16:25 Tribute: Lord Wallace of Tankerness

## 16:35 Motion EM2: Emergency in Accident and Emergency: relieving the pressure at the 'front door' and 'back door' of the hospital

Conference notes that:

1. On 18<sup>th</sup> February, the Royal College of Emergency Medicine (RCEM) published a report stating that waits of 12 hours or more to be admitted, discharged, or transferred, have

increased from 1,785 patients in 2015 to 74,052 in 2025. RCEM estimates 800 deaths occurred in 2024 as a result.

2. GPs see over 90% of all patient contacts in the NHS with ONLY 6% of the budget.
3. The Liberal Democrats secured an extra £20M for social care in this year's budget. While this additional funding is welcome, COSLA have stated that the budget still falls short of the £750 million in urgent investment that the sector truly needs.

Conference believes that every corridor bed is a social care failure disguised as a failure in A&E.

Conference calls for the Scottish Government to:

1. Rebalance the NHS and Social care budgets away from firefighting in hospitals towards preventative medicine with more for resource to GPs, dentists and mental health professionals to prevent conditions from becoming acute and therefore requiring expensive, urgent unplanned treatment.
2. Put in the further resources needed to alleviate the crises in social care and relieve pressure on hospital beds, all too often occupied by people who would be ready to leave if the right care and support were available.
3. Support community hospitals to relieve pressure where care at home is not yet an option.
4. Oppose Darzi-style walk-in centres which failed at huge cost in England.
5. To consider recurrent funding for community frailty teams to prevent admissions to hospital.
6. To consider ringfenced funding for step down beds.

## Cards:

Mover: Michael Turvey, Aberdeenshire West, called  
Drummond Begg, Milgavie & Bearsden, called  
David Ronald Evans, Aberdeenshire East, called  
Marion Ewenson, Aberdeenshire East, not called, F, withdrawn – had to leave to catch bus  
Martin Knights, Angus & Mearns, called

## Votes:

Motion: carried

## 17:00 Motion SC9 - Digital Inequality as Modern Poverty

Chair: Sanne Dijkstra-Downie

Aide: David Evans

Submitted by member signatories

Mover: Paul McGarry, East Dunbartonshire

Summation: TBC

Conference notes that:

- i) Audit Scotland reports that around 1 in 6 adults in Scotland lack essential skills for everyday life, and that 9% of households do not have an actual internet connection.
- ii) Current work on a Minimum Digital Living Standard shows that 60% of Scots fall below the designed standard. This means they lack sufficient devices, connectivity or the skills to access some essential services.

iii) Groups that are disproportionately affected by digital inequality include low-income households, disabled people, older people, carers and those who are in social housing or rural areas.

iv) Audit Scotland highlights that digital exclusion limits people's access to services and life opportunities, and many are excluded entirely from services that are 'digital by default'.

v) Evidence from the Scottish Census and local education statistics show that digital exclusion affects children and their ability to engage in remote learning, accessing resources and leads to a deepening in the attainment gap.

Conference believes that:

i) Digital Access is a basic necessity, not a luxury.

ii) Tackling digital inequality is essential to tackling poverty, reducing isolation, improving economic productivity and supporting participation in communities, society and wider democracy.

iii) Digital inclusion requires affordable connectivity, suitable devices, and the skills and confidence to use them safely.

iv) Digital-first service design must never mean digital-only, and offline routes must remain genuinely accessible.

Conference therefore calls for the Scottish Government to:

- 1) Introduce a Scottish Digital Access Guarantee, providing:
  - a) Affordable broadband and mobile data offers for low income households.
  - b) Device loan and repair schemes, particularly in social housing and schools.
  - c) Local digital skills hubs in libraries, colleges and community centres.
- 2) Conduct a feasibility study in offering free broadband across Scotland.
- 3) Work with social landlords and local authorities to roll out secure, shared Wi-Fi in social housing and community buildings, prioritising areas of high deprivation and rural communities.
- 4) Establish Digital Apprenticeships for Community Technologists, enabling people to gain qualifications while supporting their local community with skills training, device setup and troubleshooting.
- 5) Require all public bodies to provide non-digital access routes to essential services, and to assess the impact of 'digital by default' approaches on people at risk of exclusion.
- 6) Embed digital privacy, safety and confidence education across the Curriculum for Excellence from upper primary Information onwards, including consent, scams, misinformation and online mental health.
- 7) Commit to measuring progress towards a Minimum Digital Living Standard for all households in Scotland, with regular public reporting and targeted support where gaps remain.

## Cards:

Mover: Eliza Twaddle, Dunfermline & West Fife, called  
Summation: Paul McGarry, East Dunbartonshire, called  
Neil Casey, East Renfrewshire, called  
James Calder, Dunfermline & West Fife, called

Chris Young, Highland, called  
Jeff Goodall, Aberdeenshire East, called

### Votes:

Sep Vote; Conference calls for 1a: Clause is retained

Sep Vote; Conference calls for 2: Clause is retained

Sep Vote; Conference calls for 5: Clause is retained

Motion : carried

### 17:40 Party Awards

<b>Award</b>	<b>For</b>	<b>Spring 2026 Recipient</b>
The Russell Johnston Trophy	Speech to Conference	Kevin Lang, pre-manifesto
The Helen Watt Quaich	Diversity	Lauren Buchanan-Quigley
The Sheila Tennant award	SYL member	Leo Dempster
The John Morrison award	Local Government	Iain Yuill
The Ray Michie Quaich	Membership	Highland local party
The Robbie Simpson award	Service to the party over many years	Flora Sharp
The Hugh Waterfield award	Non elected, non staff, canvassing returns	2025: Tim Brett 2026: David Green

### Close of Conference