



**Liberal Democrats**   
**North West**

**Spring 2023 Conference Agenda**



# Conference Agenda

Time	Main Hall	Other Areas
11 00	Welcome - <b>Rob Herd</b> , Lib Dem Candidate in the recent City of Chester Parliamentary Byelection	
11 15	Policy Debate 1: <b>The Degradation of Health and Social Care Services in England.</b>	
11 35	Policy Debate 2: <b>Green Energy, Coastal Defence and Levelling Up</b>	
12 00	<b>House of Lords Report:</b> Speaker: Lord Stunell	
12 30	<b>Lunch Break</b>	
1 30	Policy: <b>Air Pollution and the Tram Solution.</b> Speaker: Jim Harkins, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Light Rail	1 30 - 2 30 Training in room 1: <b>Getting Out The Postal Vote this April</b>
2 05	<b>Youth Report</b> Speaker: Tom Sutton, Chair Young Liberals North West.	
2 15	<b>Ally Is A Verb</b> - Panel with speakers from LGBT+ Lib Dems, Women Lib Dems and Lib Dems for Seekers of Sanctuary	
2 50	<b>Council Elections 2023</b> Speaker: Paul Trollope	
3 00	<b>House of Commons Report.</b> Speaker: Tim Farron MP	3 00 - 4 00 Training in room 1: <b>Getting Out The Vote On May 4<sup>th</sup></b>  Training in room 2: <b>Local Party Treasurer</b>
3 20	<b>Tony Greaves Memorial Lecture.</b> Speaker: Paula Keaveney	
3 50	<b>Closing Remarks</b> Speaker: Jackie Pearcey, North West Chair	
4 00	<b>Close of Conference</b>	

# Welcome



Welcome to Chester!

Thank you for joining us here.

Over the last few weeks our Regional Conference and Policy teams have been working hard to assemble our first in-person Spring conference since February 2020.

We have a great programme to look forward to as a result. It includes a policy discussion on the state of NHS social care services, and one on energy following on from our Autumn guest lecture about tidal power.

For a region with so much coastline - indeed this goes for Great Britain as a whole - making use of the 'always on' tidal energy that surrounds us feels like a no-brainer, even without the impetus given to energy security by the war in Ukraine.

We follow Autumn's policy guest lecture with one around public transport.

Finally in the light of recent news stories from Warrington and Knowsley a timely panel about liberal responses in the 'culture wars'.

Jackie Pearcey  
Chair  
Liberal Democrats North West

# Policy: Motion 1

## The Degradation of Health and Social Care Services in England

Mover: tbc

Summator: tbc

### A. Conference notes with concern;

- I. The report by the Royal College of Emergency Medicine, 'Crowding and Its Consequences', which estimated that over 4500 patients died as a result of overcrowding and delays, often of 12 hours or more, in Emergency Departments in England in 2020-2021.
- II. Their more recent estimate that between 300 and 500 excess deaths a week are occurring due to delays in A & E.
- III. That, prior to any industrial action, over 40% of patients arriving at hospitals by ambulance waiting more than 30 minutes to be seen.
- IV. The BMJ report in December 2021 of 11,000 ambulances per week waiting for more than an hour to handover patients.
- V. The Liberal Democrats' series of freedom of information requests to England's 10 ambulance trusts which revealed that, prior to any industrial action or the current winter crisis, category one calls, which should be responded to within seven minutes, were taking up to 14 minutes or more.
- VI. The continuing scandal, now evident over a period of years, of 12,000 or more persons in England occupying acute hospital beds when they are ready for discharge, but with no suitable care arrangements to permit this.
- VII. Discharge delays are very often also to the detriment of the patients concerned whose health and mobility can suffer from remaining bedridden for longer than is necessary.
- VIII. There is an acute lack of dedicated facilities to support the convalescence and rehabilitation of those principal health issue is frailty.
- IX. The BMJ report of December 29, 2022 to the effect that 33% of junior doctors are planning to begin work in another country within the next 12 months and that a further 7% are seeking alternative employment.

### B. Conference believes;

- a. That whatever disputes there may be over exact numbers, each week many hundreds of people who should have years of life ahead of them are dying unnecessarily.
- b. Hundreds of people each week face hours of avoidable pain and distress as they await the arrival of a long overdue ambulance with many of those who survive facing avoidable life-changing consequences of accident or illness as a result of further delays in treatment on arrival at hospital. This is a national tragedy for which the Government should be held to account.
- c. A significant factor in the serious structural and financial problems afflicting our Social Care Services is the Government's failure to implement the 2014 Social Care Act or introduce any comparable alternative.

# Policy: Motion 1

- d. While we should extend a warm and grateful welcome to medical and social care practitioners from around the world, it is a matter of national shame that, having denied suitably qualified people access to rationed training places at home, we are often poaching staff trained at significant expense by countries who can ill afford to lose them.
- e. Although developed countries such as those in the EU are themselves facing some staffing issues the failure to recruit and retain Health and Social Care staff is especially acute in the UK.
- f. That while “here today gone tomorrow” Ministers may be needed for crisis management there would be fewer and less serious crises if all parties could agree the basis of an enduring Strategy for Health and Social Care, so that those with the experience and expertise to manage services can look beyond the next election and plan for the long-term.
- g. That, with suitable concern for privacy, new technologies and devices can, now and in the future, play a significant and laudable role in helping those with disability or infirmity to maintain their independence, and investment in research and staff development should be encouraged. So-called “virtual wards” may have a role to play as part of a care package but should only be used as part of a suitable care setting and not as a substitute for one.

## **C. Conference condemns**

Government incompetence in failing to address predictable additional pressures arising from COVID and a Winter Flu peak, taking actions that were far too little and far too late and precipitating a near collapse of the NHS.

## **D. Conference commends**

- i. The Party’s call to improve social care workers’ recruitment and retention by increasing pay with a £2 per hour uplift over National Minimum Wage rates funded through increasing taxes on the profits of online gambling providers.
- ii. The work of all concerned in the development of Policy Paper F 30 ‘A More Caring Society’ and looks forward to the formal adoption as party policy of its key findings and recommendations.
- iii. The recognition by the party and its spokespersons over several years that both the NHS and Social Care Services require a long-term strategic framework covering structures finance and management.

**E. Conference reaffirms** its belief that an all-party, all stakeholder Convention should determine an enduring framework for the long-term future structure, staffing, funding and management of the NHS and Social Care in England.

## **F. Conference Calls for;**

1. A Public Enquiry into the failure of the NHS and Social Care system during the winter of 2022/23.
2. The formation of an all-party, all stakeholder, National Health and Social Care Convention on securing and planning for the long-term future of these services, with the Invitation to Participate to be extended also to the devolved administrations.
3. Emergency Action Committees, covering the areas of each local acute hospital trust, with representatives of relevant stakeholders and local authorities. These EACs to be tasked with producing, by August 2023, a local plan for the elimination of acute bed occupancy by those with no further clinical need through the better integration of health and social care provision. These plans should include the

# Policy: Motion 2

identification of permanent facilities for the short-term convalescence and rehabilitation of the frail and infirm while their care package is developed.

4. A review of medical, nursing and social care practitioner training and research with the aim of establishing care for the frail as a speciality that is adequately supported.
5. An offer of freedom of movement into the UK for suitably qualified medical and social care practitioners from EU member states.
6. Action on the elimination of the pensions taxation anomaly that is causing experienced doctors to leave the NHS.
7. The implementation within three months to remedy the projected loss to the NHS of up to 40% of junior doctors.

## **Green Energy, Coastal Defence and Levelling up; The case for a Morecambe Bay “Pathfinder” Tidal Range Energy Project**

Mover: tbc

Summator: tbc

### **A. Conference Notes**

- I. That the United Kingdom arguably has greater potential for the exploitation of tidal range energy than any other country in the world, with a particularly favourable locations to be found in the North West of England and along other western UK coasts.
- II. That worthwhile early-stage development of other forms of marine energy; tidal stream energy and wave energy has been supported in the UK, but we have no operational tidal range energy scheme.
- III. The only operational tidal range energy scheme in Europe, La Rance, in Brittany has been onstream since 1966, has repaid its capital investment cost many times over and generates the cheapest electricity in France.
- IV. That with an operational life of circa 130 years, which be extended through refurbishment tidal range energy schemes are unique in their longevity and may require a fresh approach to ownership and funding models compared to wind and nuclear.
- V. The 2016 report by Charles Hendry, a former Conservative energy minister. This report;
  - Recognised that the cost of raising capital for tidal range energy is a major factor in the price that consumers would need to pay for such energy.
  - Noted that financing costs tied as closely as possible to Government borrowing costs may be desirable.
  - Drew attention to, but failed conclusively to recommend, an ownership model based on a not-for-profit/reinvest surpluses business which could raise finance through bond issues.

# Policy: Motion 2

- Proposed that the 'uncertainty premium' inherent in any new form of green energy generation should be addressed by means of a Pathfinder Project to kickstart a major programme during which costs would be progressively driven down.

V.1. In addition to providing a major new source of green energy to combat climate change tidal energy schemes can also help mitigate its effects. The seawalls constructed to house turbines for generating tidal range energy can also serve as coastal defences that would otherwise be unfeasible on cost grounds, offering protection from rising sea levels and storm surges.

V.II. This protection for the intertidal area, together with design features that help to protect habitats, mean that, as climate change accelerates, tidal range energy schemes could be viewed as having a positive rather than a negative environmental impact.

## **B. Conference Believes**

- a. That, in addition to the primary green energy objective, there are significant potential economic development advantages to be derived from the construction of tidal range energy schemes. These include.
  - Direct employment in construction, and in the manufacture of pre-fabricated structures, turbines and other equipment.
  - The possibility to incorporate within schemes, options such as energy storage facilities, or hydrogen production. There are also opportunities for the productive uses of green tidal energy generated during the night by high electricity consumption industries such as electric arc green steel production.
  - Economic regeneration opportunities for areas adjacent to the sea wall including new tourism and leisure opportunities
  - At some locations the construction of new transport links across the sea wall can significantly enhance the economic benefits.
  - A tidal range energy scheme's grid connectivity can reduce the cost of exploiting other forms of green energy in closely adjacent locations. These could include other sources of power from the oceans (tidal stream energy, wave energy) as well as wind and solar.
- b. A strategy for tidal range energy involving the sequential implementation of schemes should be developed as a matter of urgency with the objective of contributing a minimum of 10% of UK electricity needs by 2035.
- c. Morecambe Bay is a prime candidate for a Pathfinder project to kickstart this programme for the following reasons;
  - If tidal range energy is to make a meaningful impact on climate change goals, then the time for promoting any smaller scheme as the first step has passed.
  - Morecambe Bay is on a sufficient scale to serve as an exemplar for others.
  - It would provide an excellent demonstration of the coastal defence benefits and of developing an optimal strategy for protection of the intertidal zone environment.
  - The economic development benefits of a road across the barrage and the leveraging of economic regeneration potential are compelling. This would be a significant levelling up opportunity.

## **C. Conference condemns**



# Policy: Motion 2

Government failure to include tidal range energy from the UK energy mix by adopting the 'Micawber strategy' of waiting for something to turn up. What is needed is a clear implementation strategy involving recognition of the wider economic and coastal defence benefits and the opportunity to use a Pathfinder project to address the 'uncertainty premium' associated with early stage development of renewable energy programmes and help drive down the costs of subsequent projects.

## **D. Conference commends,**

The Collaborative Offshore Wind Research into the Environment (COWRIE) programme supported by the Crown Estate as owners of the seabed. We believe that a similar scheme could make a necessary and valued contribution to the exploitation of tidal range energy. We welcome the decision to make surplus Crown Estate income generated from its offshore wind licences available for use in the public interest.

## **E. Conference calls for;**

1. The urgent establishment of a task force involving all stakeholders to develop a strategy for the exploitation of tidal range energy, including the expediting of a Morecambe Bay Pathfinder project. This task force to be the precursor of a Marine Power Development Agency. The MPDA would drive implementation of the complete strategy, evaluate progress, provide a regulatory framework for the emerging industry and help drive down costs.

Early tasks would include;

- Discussions with the Crown Estate both for licensing purposes and for the establishment of a collaborative environmental research programme for tidal range energy similar to COWRIE in the offshore wind sector.
  - A design competition for a Morecambe Bay barrage that would serve a coastal defence need, include a dual carriageway road connecting West Cumbria and North Lancashire and incorporate features such as energy storage facilities within and adjacent to the structure.
  - A call for proposals for developing an environmental impact assessment and strategy,
  - A call for proposals for the establishment in the North West of a facility for the prefabrication of concrete substructures.
  - The development of a substantive levelling up strategy to identify and pursue economic regeneration and tourism/opportunities, arising from or enhanced by, the construction of a Morecambe Bay tidal range energy scheme .
  - An evaluation and monitoring strategy for each stage of the Pathfinder to inform the development of subsequent schemes and drive down their construction costs.
2. A commitment from Government to provide financial support for the Pathfinder's wider public interest benefits; coastal defence, environmental protection, transport link and economic regeneration.
  3. The dedication of surplus funding from Crown Estate offshore wind licences toward support to mitigate the 'uncertainty premium' associated with the early phases of a tidal range energy programme.
  4. The establishment of a not-for-profit company UK Marine Power publicly owned but independently managed as a commercially focused business committed to reinvesting surpluses and capitalised by a special bond issue.

# Guest Speakers

## Lord Stunell

Andrew Stunell is the former MP for Hazel Grove. He held the seat for 18 years from 1997 until stepping down in 2015.

Andrew was born in Sutton, Surrey and educated at Surbiton County Grammar School for Boys, he went on to study Architecture at University of Manchester and Liverpool Polytechnic. He became an architectural assistant upon graduation.

As a DCLG Minister he took the lead in developing and bringing the Localism Act into law, which handed decision-making power back to local communities and local councils from Whitehall. Andrew also raised building standards, lifting the required energy performance of new buildings by a quarter in October 2011, and putting in place plans to achieve 'Zero Carbon Homes' by 2016.



## Tim Farron MP

Spokesperson for Housing, Communities & Local Government, and Food & Rural Affairs. MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale.

Since becoming an MP in 2005 Tim has held hundreds of advice surgeries all over Westmorland and Lonsdale, helping tens of thousands of constituents along the way. Everyone locally knows someone who has been helped by Tim!

This culminates in his annual summer tours, when he visits rural villages and communities around South Lakeland, where surgeries wouldn't normally occur.

He was party leader 2015 - 2017, and party president 2011 - 2014.

# Guest Speakers

## Ally Is A Verb Panel

Many minority and marginalised groups in our society are facing growing and organised hate attacks in the press and in person. In recent weeks we have seen high-profile examples of that here in the North West.

This is a common situation during economic downturns as scapegoats are sought - and Brexit has brought us a long sharp economic downturn.

Most liberal-minded people are disturbed at this but as individuals and as Liberal Democrats what can we do?

Speakers:

Em Dean, LGBT+ Liberal Democrats (Lesbian Gay Bi & Trans) national executive.

John Skipworth, Lib Dems for Seekers of Sanctuary national executive.

Donna Harris, Liberal Democrat Women national executive .



## Tony Greaves Memorial Lecture

Paula Keaveney is a Senior Lecturer in politics. She is a former BBC Journalist and Public Relations and Communications expert with a degree in Philosophy and Politics and postgraduate qualifications in journalism, Public Relations and teaching in Higher Education.

Tony Greaves (27 July 1942 – 23 March 2021) was the mover of the 1970 Liberal Assembly motion on Community Politics, which is credited with much of the party's successes in the 1970s and 1980s. He was made a Life Peer in 2000 as Baron Greaves of Pendle.

## Post-Conference Social

North West Young Liberals and LGBT+ Lib Dems are organising a joint social in a nearby pub after conference.

Visit their stalls in the exhibition area for details.



