**Spring Conference Preliminary Agenda with Motions**

This document contains the motions selected for Scottish Liberal Democrat Spring Conference. As members you have the opportunity to review and propose amendments. To amend a motion, you require 5 supporting signatures.

**The deadline for amendments is 5pm, 31st March. Please send amendments to** hq@scotlibdems.org.uk

Mini Motions are not included in this document, the deadline for these is the 8th of March.

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**SC1: Restoration of the Bus Partnership Fund**

**Submitted by the Association of Scottish Liberal Democrat Councillors**

**Mover**: Sally Pattle **Summator**: Peter Barrett

Conference notes that the Bus Partnership Fund was:

1. initially confirmed to be worth £400 million in grants to local authorities and bus operators when introduced in 2022.
2. to enable the development of local bus investment partnerships that would deliver sustainable public transport alternatives to private car use across Scotland.
3. trumpeted by the Scottish Government as part of a raft of measures to help the country achieve net zero by 2045, with specific reference to the Scottish Government’s commitment to achieve a 20 per cent reduction in car usage by 2030.
4. intended as an effective measure for reducing congestion in urban areas, particularly during peak commute hours.

Conference further notes that:

1. In 2023, barely a year after coming into operation, the Bus Partnership Fund was ‘suspended’ having only distributed £21 million worth of grant funding.
2. Since 2022, Scotland has seen a dramatic drop in both operational bus routes and timetables, particularly during evenings and weekends.
3. Local authority funding has been continually reduced and ring-fenced in recent years, forcing the removal of route subsidies. This has led to the private bus companies that were deregulated by the SNP Scottish Government cutting non-profitable services.
4. The SNP Scottish Government is scrapping the Bus Partnership Fund to replace it with a ‘Bus Infrastructure Fund’, worth only tiny fraction of the original scheme. It is now worth only £10 million, as part of a merged ‘Support for Active and Sustainable Travel’ funding stream.
5. In December 2024, Transport Scotland revealed that a ‘Travel Demand Management Options Study’ had been commissioned in which several models of road user charging were explored.
6. A recent Audit Scotland report on the car use reduction strategy said, “A lack of leadership has resulted in minimal progress against the demanding policy intention. It is not clear if the Scottish Government remains committed to the target as key documents remain in draft form, there is no costed delivery plan or measurable milestones, and arrangements for monitoring and scrutinising progress are insufficient.”

Conference believes that:

1. If the car usage reduction target is to be met, bus routes and timetables must not only be protected from cuts but expanded.
2. Sustainable public transport is an equal partner to, but distinct from, infrastructure for walking, wheeling and cycling. The two policy areas should not be grouped under a single funding stream.
3. Road user charging, in which drivers pay per mile driven, unfairly penalises drivers as many do not have any alternative but to use their cars to commute to school or work.

Conference therefore calls for the Scottish Government to:

1. immediately restore the Bus Partnership Fund with the initial funding commitment so that local authorities and bus operators can start the vital work needed to develop long-term, sustainable bus networks.
2. restore the distinct funding streams for sustainable transport and active travel infrastructure.
3. instruct Transport Scotland that road user charging must not be used to meet National Transport Strategy goals and that no further consideration should be given to any such policy.
4. provide additional funding to local authorities for the establishment of community bus services.
5. give clearer guidance and direction to local authorities going forward on what their role in delivering the target of 20 per cent reduction in car use by 2030 is expected to be, with firm commitments on funding.

# SC2: Protecting Access to Banking Services

**Submitted by Member Signatories**

**Mover**: Jamie Stone **Summator**: David Green

Conference notes that:

1. Lloyds, Halifax, and Bank of Scotland will close 61, 61 and 14 sites respectively between May this year and March 2026. The UK-wide closures will bring the Lloyds brand down to 386 branches, Halifax down to 281 and Bank of Scotland to 90.
2. According to the consumer group Which?, more than 6,000 sites across the UK have closed since 2015. That equates to more than 60% of the UK’s banking network, at a rate of around 53 closures every month.
3. In the Highlands, closures in Wick and Kyle in 2025 will see the loss of the last bank in town. The recent closure in Golspie means the county of Sutherland is without a bank, a trend seen across the country.

Conference believes that:

1. Financial services support can be a lifeline for those who need it most, particularly during an ongoing cost of living crisis, and every citizen has a right to access safe and secure banking services.
2. While the country increasingly moves towards the digital age, the impact of bank closures increase the threat of isolation amongst older generations, people with disabilities and those without internet access.
3. Reducing bank branches has a disproportionate impact on rural communities where public transport is increasingly limited and town centres are struggling with declining retail and limited private sector investment.
4. The Federation of Small Businesses is right to warn of the impact of bank closures on small businesses, not least the loss of face-to-face interaction and a reduced ability to manage cash flow.
5. The establishment of Banking Hubs - owned by the not-for-profit company Cash Access UK and funded by nine high street banks to provide easy access to face-to-face cash and banking - are welcome innovations, but agrees with Age UK that it is unacceptable for there to be long delays between the last bank branch closing and a banking hub opening.

Conference calls on the Scottish Government to help protect communities from bank closures by exempting the “last bank in town” from business rates.

Conference further calls on the UK Government to:

1. Accelerate the establishment of Banking Hubs to ensure the banking services they provide are accessible before any community suffers a bank closure.
2. Instruct the high street banks that if they do not adequately fund the Banking Hub network, then it will be paid for by a levy on bank profits.
3. Commission an independent review on the effectiveness of the regulatory functions of the Financial Conduct Authority with regards to protections of cash deposit and withdrawal services.

# **SC3: Creating world-class drug services for Scotland by 2030**

**Submitted by Policy Committee**

**Mover**: Alex Cole-Hamilton **Summator**: Alex Cole-Hamilton

Conference notes that:

1. Scotland has by far the highest drug-related death rate in Europe, with 1,172 people dying in 2023 alone.
2. The 2024 Liberal Democrat manifesto’s commitment to treat Scotland’s drug deaths crisis as a public health emergency, and devolve powers for tailored solutions where necessary.
3. The party’s continued commitment to measures that will improve public safety, including the rollout of naloxone, drug checking facilities, heroin assisted treatment, and diverting people caught in possession of drugs for personal use away from prison.
4. The first safer drugs consumption facility opened in Glasgow in January 2025, allowing people to take substances under the supervision of clinicians in a safe and clean space.
5. Research by the Scottish Liberal Democrats showed at least 1,500 babies have been born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome since 2017 – showing signs of drug addiction because of their mothers taking legal or illegal drugs during pregnancy.
6. Scottish Liberal Democrat MSPs successfully secured further investment in drug and neonatal services totalling £2.6m, with a special focus on creating new services to help babies who are born addicted to drugs.
7. The People’s Panel on Reducing Drug Harm and Deaths in Scotland, commissioned by three Scottish Parliament committees, reported on 21 January 2025 that it was “shocked to learn about the lack of urgency and implementation, given the scale of the crisis, and asks the Scottish Government to provide longer term funding.”

Conference believes that:

1. Everything possible must be done to stop people dying.
2. There is now broader political support for some of the measures which the Scottish Liberal Democrats have long campaigned for, but that action continues to be too slow.
3. Safer drugs consumption facilities are proven to prevent fatal overdoses and present new pathways for treatment and recovery, and that these life-saving services must not be limited to one part of Scotland.
4. Every child deserves a good start in life, and few have it harder than babies born addicted to drugs.
5. Families need to be kept together during treatment and recovery through accessible women-specific services, both in the community and residential.
6. Drug laws need to back up the provision of safe and evidence-based harm reduction services, while robustly tackling organised crime which profits from the misery of communities.
7. Life-saving services shouldn’t constantly have to worry about their funding because this lack of stability has an impact on staff and service users.
8. After lagging behind other countries for years, all parts of Scotland should have fast access to world-class drug services by 2030.

Conference calls for the Scottish Government to:

1. Begin the roll out of a Scotland-wide network of safer drugs consumption facilities, continually learning from Glasgow’s experience while recognising that there is an inherent risk to life created by waiting three years for the full conclusions of that pilot before progressing with other facilities.
2. Rapidly deliver new Mother and Child Recovery Houses - residential rehabilitation beds for mothers and babies affected by substance abuse - and new intensive community-based perinatal services, using the funding secured by Scottish Liberal Democrats.
3. Introduce a long-term multi-year funding model for all drugs services, to give them the certainty they need to be able to invest in facilities, recruit staff, build up relationships with service users, boost access to care and open up new pathways to education and employment for people in recovery.
4. Take forward the recommendation of the People’s Panel on reducing drug harm and deaths in Scotland for “a well-publicised single point of access for specialised advice and support relating to alcohol and drug problems (like NHS 111, Childline or Samaritans)”, providing support and advice to people who use drugs and their loved ones, reducing the fear of criminalisation or stigma, and providing the option for NHS 111 and 999 services to redirect people where appropriate

# **SC4: Transformation of Children's Social Care**

**Submitted by Member Signatories**

**Mover**: Duncan Dunlop **Summator**: Hayley Bennie

Conference notes that:

1. Care experienced people have the worst outcomes from any section of Scottish society across all social wellbeing indicators, for instance:
2. they are six times more likely to be excluded from school than their non-care experienced peers, and are twice as likely to have no educational qualifications.
3. at least 25% of prisoners are care experienced, a more than ten-fold overrepresentation relative to the general population.
4. children living in the 10% most deprived areas are 20 times more likely to become care experienced than those in the 10% least deprived areas.
5. over a third of children in care have a significant mental health issue, and they are twice as likely to have poor general health.
6. they are twice as likely to have experienced adult homelessness and three times as likely not to have a full-time job at 26.
7. Recent University of Glasgow research has highlighted that care experienced people have a 5.5 times higher rate of premature death, despite the fact that they are not born physiologically different from the rest of the population.
8. The care system costs £1 billion per annum to deliver, while the consequences of the poorer life outcomes for care experienced people have a combined further public cost of at least £1.2 billion per annum.
9. The Promise Scotland was established in 2021 to facilitate change within the care system. However, its policy remit has not provided the detailed implementation roadmap necessary for achieving transformative change on the ground.

Conference believes that:

1. The Scottish Government's approach to care reform has lacked urgency and cohesion, resulting in a failure to achieve meaningful transformation and protect the rights of care experienced people.
2. The Scottish Government must prioritise the development of a comprehensive roadmap with clear actions and timescales if the transformation of care is to be fully realised.
3. Every child deserves to feel loved and to belong, and the best environment for establishing and sustaining lifelong loving relationships is within supportive families in their community.
4. Actively engaged and supportive communities are essential for helping vulnerable families and children thrive, requiring public education to promote understanding and responsive local solutions.
5. Accessible community spaces offering skilled, non-judgmental support and resources are essential for helping children thrive.
6. Institutional care has poor outcomes and is expensive, so should only be used for short term therapeutic support to enable children to form and maintain loving relationships.
7. Transparent and comprehensive data on the life chances of care experienced children is crucial to hold the state accountable in its role as their corporate parent.
8. Society has a moral duty to recognise the enduring impact of a care experience and to ensure access to lifelong additional support for care experienced people.
9. Current UK equalities legislation fails to protect care experienced people, who experience significant stigma and discrimination as a result.

Conference calls on the Scottish Government and the Education, Children and Young People Committee to expedite and strengthen the Promise Bill by:

1. producing a comprehensive Promise Roadmap outlining a time-bound action plan for realising each aspiration of The Promise, clearly identifying the responsible agencies and detailing the specific actions they must undertake.
2. amending existing legislation and guidance to reflect the principle that children should only be placed in institutional care for rehabilitative therapy that enables them to form and maintain lifelong relationships outwith that setting.

Conference further calls on the Scottish Government to:

1. launch a public awareness campaign to educate communities about the challenges faced by families in need and inspire local support for these families as vital sources of love and stability for their children.
2. immediately instruct Education Scotland to begin reporting the number of care experienced children who are excluded or placed on part-time timetables in their inspections.
3. annually publish the age-related mortality rate of care experienced people at a local authority level.

Conference additionally calls on:

1. COSLA to develop a best practice framework for the delivery of non-stigmatising, universally accessible early help services in every community.
2. the UK government to bring forward amendments to equalities legislation such that care experience is recognised as a protected characteristic.

# **SC5: Improving Scotland's Links with Europe**

**Submitted by Member Signatories**

**Mover**: Ray Georgeson **Summator**: Paul Kennedy

Conference notes that:

1. After the Rest of the UK, Scotland’s largest trading partner is the European Union.
2. Currently, the majority of goods being traded between Scotland and Europe must travel via the Rest of the UK, and via ports such as Newcastle, Hull, Harwich and Dover.
3. Currently, the only direct vehicle ferry link between Scotland and mainland Europe is from Aberdeen to Norway, though one previously operated between Rosyth and Zeebrugge. There is no direct passenger ferry connection with Europe. There are welcome reports of a possible new service from Rosyth to Dunkirk, with three sailings per week, but as yet this is not a concrete proposal.
4. Tourism from European visitors contributes strongly to the Scottish economy. For example, visitors to Scotland from the Netherlands in 2023 spent £165 million.
5. The UK’s withdrawal from the Single Market and Customs Union has negatively affected trade between Scotland and mainland Europe.
6. With increased customs checks being necessitated by post-Brexit regulations, haulage companies increasingly face delays when transporting goods to the EU.

Conference believes that:

1. Scotland’s businesses should be able to trade goods and services easily with our European neighbours.
2. Post-Brexit customs delays at UK ports may increase losses of perishable goods like fresh fish or dairy products.
3. If we are committed to reducing the carbon footprint of goods and services, providing a more direct link to mainland Europe is essential.
4. To reduce the carbon footprint of tourism to Scotland, we should providing air travel for transport by tourists.
5. Scotland and the UK should be seeking closer links with Europe as a large local trading partner and should be looking to smooth the flow of goods, services and tourism.

Conference calls for:

1. The Scottish Government to work with ferry companies to establish new passenger and cargo ferry routes between Scotland and mainland Europe. Preparations for this route should include the creation of an improved port facility with facilities to assist in meeting new EU trading regulations.
2. The UK Government, in the establishment of Great British Railways, and the construction of HS2, to explore options for the creation of a ‘Regional Eurostar’ direct rail service between Scotland and mainland Europe via the Channel Tunnel, removing the need to change trains in London.

# **SC6: Providing Support to Young Carers Through a Young Carers' Lead**

**Submitted by Member Signatories**

**Mover**: Wendy Chamberlain **Summator**: Wendy Chamberlain

Conferences notes that:

1. The Carers Trust Scotland estimate that 1 in 5 children in a classroom has a caring role, but the actual recorded number of young carers in school is much lower.
2. The most recent Carers Census showed that, where information was available, for only 55% of those surveyed with Young Carer Statements or Adult Carer Support Plans, these were complete. 38% reported an incomplete plan or statement.
3. Whilst absence rates from school for young carers has previously been recorded in England, it is not in Scotland. This makes it difficult to examine how young carers are coping within educational settings and to determine what action may need to be taken to help them.
4. Sir Ed Davey, Leader of the Liberal Democrats, has already written to the Prime Minister calling for the creation of this role in England, highlighting that often young carers struggle at school to balance education and their caring responsibilities.

Conferences believes that:

1. Young carers do an incredibly important job which they deserve more support for. Too often, they are forgotten and ignored.
2. Education and school should not be seen as difficult for young carers to attend, or as yet another obstacle in their lives. It should provide them with tools for the future, the opportunity to engage with their peers and, for some, a respite from their caring responsibilities.
3. Teachers and education staff work incredibly hard to support all the children and young people in education but they must have the appropriate tools to help provide support to young carers.

Conference calls for the Scottish Government to:

1. Work with local authorities to create the position of ‘Young Carers' Lead’ in every school and college in Scotland, which can provide support to those young carers currently in education and advice or training to teachers on how to best support pupils who are young carers.
2. Review the data it holds on the number of young carers in education settings and to undertake work to ensure this data is accurate.
3. Work with local authorities and the Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance, as well as other relevant organisations, to ensure that young carers across Scotland are aware of and can access all forms of support and pathways that are available to them.

**SC7: Protecting Young People from the Harms of Vaping**

**Submitted by Member Signatories**

**Mover**: Noah McGarry **Summator**: Susan Murray

Conference notes that:

1. The popularity of vaping among young people is increasing. Statistics from ASH Scotland indicate that 10% of 13-15 year olds have already tried vaping.
2. Many vapes feature cartoon-like animations in their designs, and the style of vape shops often resembles sweet shops.
3. The sale of single-use vapes will be banned from 1 June, but this does not affect availability of devices with inexpensive refill pods, which are marketed in a similar way.
4. While initially intended as a tool for smoking cessation, vapes have become a trendy gateway to nicotine addiction, particularly among young people.
5. There is growing concern among teachers and parents that vaping is becoming normalised among teenagers, despite the legal restriction prohibiting sales to those under 18.
6. Unlike tobacco, for which all forms of advertising, even on packaging, are effectively banned, vaping is widely promoted, particularly through social media and influencer marketing aimed at young audiences.

Conference believes that:

1. Vapes should be solely a tool for smoking cessation and not be marketed in a way that encourages vaping among non-smokers, especially young people.
2. While a welcome step, the ban on disposable vapes primarily addresses environmental concerns and does not tackle the underlying causes of youth vaping.
3. The promotion of vaping products, regardless of type, should be subject to the same stringent advertising and labelling restrictions as tobacco.
4. Further research is needed to fully understand the health effects of vaping, particularly on young people.
5. Given their particular appeal to children and the lack of evidence that they are significantly better for smoking cessation, flavoured vapes should not be allowed.
6. Policy on vaping must consider both the environmental impact and the consequences for public health beyond just its potential as a smoking cessation tool.

Conference calls on the Scottish and UK Governments to:

1. Restrict vape advertising in line with restrictions on tobacco products, particularly social media marketing and influencer promotions.
2. Establish stricter regulations of vape labelling and retail environments to prevent the use of designs and flavours that appeal to children and young people.

Conference further calls on the Scottish Government to:

1. Deliver more effective enforcement of existing age restrictions on vape sales, clamping down on retailers who sell to underage individuals.
2. Revamp the public health campaigns for educating young people about the risks of vaping and nicotine addiction.
3. Develop a national strategy for tackling youth vaping, in collaboration with schools, health professionals, and youth organisations

**SC8: Trump and the UK's Place in the World**

**Submitted by Member Signatories**

**Mover**: Christine Jardine **Summator**: Christine Jardine

Conference notes:

1. In the weeks since his inauguration, President Trump has made a range of alarming statements on the territorial integrity of Greenland, Canada and Panama, and claims the US will “take over” and “own” Gaza.
2. President Trump’s decision to withdraw from the Paris international climate change agreement.
3. A number of executive orders have been signed by President Trump in the early days of his administration which are harmful to the LGBTQ+ community and women are fearful of further restrictions on their reproductive rights following the Supreme Court’s decision to overturn Roe vs Wade.
4. A trade war with China has been initiated with 10% tariffs on all Chinese imports to the US, with the continued threat of tariffs being imposed on Canada, Mexico and the EU. President Trump has not ruled out also implementing tariffs on the UK and we must be aware of the impact that any tariffs would have on the UK economy.

Conference believes that:

1. At this time, it is more important than ever to show leadership and stand up for the core liberal values of equality, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, both at home and around the world.
2. As one of our closet trading partners, we must work closely with our European allies to protect our economy, defend European security and give us the ability to deal with President Trump from a position of strength, not weakness.
3. The UK must support democracies around the world and champion international institutions including the United Nations and NATO.
4. President Trump has shown how unpredictable he is, and a trade war will hurt our economy and push up prices even if the UK is not directly targeted.

Conference calls for the UK Government to:

1. Negotiate a brand new UK-EU Customs union and negotiate a youth mobility scheme, boosting our economy, removing barriers and strengthening our hand with President Trump.
2. Hold a summit with the Commonwealth nations with the aim of discussing a joint response to threats of tariffs that would deepen the global trade war.
3. Convene an international summit to agree how to use the hundreds of billions of dollars, pounds and Euros of frozen Russian assets to pay the weapons Ukraine needs to beat Putin.
4. Immediately recognise Palestine as a state, to make clear our commitment to a two-state solution based on 1967 borders.
5. Create a visa route to allow highly-skilled Americans who wish to flee the Trump presidency to come to the UK, so they are able to legally bring their money and skills to the UK, contribute to the economy and help fund public services.

Conference also calls on both the UK and Scottish Government to continue to stand against hatred and attacks against those groups within our society most likely to face them.

**Motion to Amend the Standing Orders for Scottish Liberal Democrat**

**Conference**

**Submitted by Conference Committee**

**Mover**: Ross Stalker **Summator**: Paul McGarry

**Delete all and replace with:**

**1. Abbreviations and Definitions**

1.1 "Scottish Conference Committee" (SCC) refers to the committee specified in Clause E10 of the Constitution. A "Standing Order" may be abbreviated as SO.

1.2 An "attendee" is anyone registered and present at a Conference. An attendee participating under Clauses E18 or E19 of the Constitution is a "remote attendee". A "voting attendee" is an attendee entitled to vote under Clause E5 of the Constitution.

1.3 A "qualified submitter" is any organisation or group of members authorised to submit motions or amendments under Clause E9 of the Constitution.

1.4 "Party Committees" are the Executive specified in Clause F19 of the Constitution and the Standing Committees specified in Clause F26 of the Constitution.

1.5 "Code of Conduct" refers to the Federal Party's Code of Conduct for Members and Registered Supporters.

**2. The Timetable and Agenda**

2.1 Before each Conference, SCC shall prepare a timetable that includes:

2.1.1 the deadline for receipt of policy and business motions, not later than six weeks

      before Conference.

2.1.2 an Agenda publication date, not later than four weeks before Conference.

2.1.3 a deadline for emergency motions, not later than 5pm on the day before the debate.

2.1.4 a deadline for amendments, not later than 5pm two days before the relevant debate.

2.2 SCC may set later deadlines than in SO 2.1 in extraordinary circumstances, and shall report its reasons to the Conference.

2.3 SCC shall decide the time allocation and order of Agenda items, which may take the form of:

2.3.1 debates on policy motions, emergency motions, or Policy Paper ratifications.

2.3.2 internal Party business sessions open only to voting attendees, such as business motion debates, the Party's Annual General Meeting, and any debate of amendments to the Constitution or Standing Orders.

2.3.3 any session deemed appropriate by SCC or required by these Standing Orders.

2.4 Outwith the context of scheduled Agenda items, the Conference Convener is the Chair of Conference. If the Conference Convener is absent, SCC shall appoint one of their membership or a member of the Party Executive to act in their place. For each Agenda item, SCC shall appoint a Chair to direct proceedings, who:

2.4.1    shall be assisted by an Aide, also appointed by SCC, if the item is a debate or if SCC deems it necessary.

2.4.2    shall be appointed as soon as practicable but may be substituted by SCC at any time up to the start of the session.

2.4.3     shall normally be the Party Convener during internal Party business sessions.

2.5  As soon as practicable after publication of the Agenda, SCC shall make Party members broadly aware that it is available for viewing. The Agenda shall contain:

2.4.1 the order of Agenda items and the timings of any internal Party business session.

2.4.2 the full text of accepted policy and business motions, and notification of Policy Paper ratification motions scheduled under SO 3.4.

2.4.3 the full text of motions to amend the Constitution or Standing Orders that are scheduled for debate.

2.4.4 notification of reports to voting attendees scheduled under SO 7, and the report text if available.

2.4.5 the provisional text of any holding motions submitted under SO 3.3.

2.4.6 any deadlines not already included in SO 2.1 relating to proceedings at the Conference.

2.6 SCC shall publish an Agenda Update online the evening before a Conference and provide paper copies at the Conference. This shall contain:

2.6.1 the final text of any holding motions.

2.6.2 any motions to be debated following a successful appeal under SO 3.5, and resultant Agenda adjustments.

2.6.3 a notification of any Policy Paper to be put to voting attendees under SO 3.4, with a link to a digital copy.

2.6.4 the text of reports to voting attendees under SO 7, unless already published in the Agenda.

2.6.5 a reminder of deadlines relating to proceedings at the Conference.

2.6.6 the name of at least one SCC member, aside from the Conference Convener, designated to receive complaints and appeals under SO 16.

2.7 SCC shall publish a Daily Bulletin online the evening before each day of a Conference and provide paper copies at the start of the day's proceedings. This shall contain:

2.7.1 any emergency motions scheduled for debate that day, and the amendment deadline as per SO 8.

2.7.2 any amendments scheduled for debate that day.

2.7.3 any information the SCC deems pertinent to the day's Conference events.

2.8 SCC may propose variations in the order or timing of Agenda items, which shall be put to attendees for a vote and take immediate effect if approved. SCC need not seek approval for such variation if its purpose is:

2.8.1 to address technical disruptions preventing the participation of remote attendees.

2.8.2 permitted as a specific Agenda adjustment under the Standing Orders.

**3. Submission of Motions and Amendments**

3.1 Any submission to a Conference must be well-structured, workable, and clear in its aims, and must not obstruct separate votes or amendments, or be fundamentally incompatible with the Party's objectives as outlined in the Preamble to the Constitution.

3.2 SCC may require that a motion or amendment be redrafted for inclusion in the Agenda. Qualified submitters shall provide the name and contact details of a person authorised to agree to any redraft at the time of submission. SCC shall inform qualified submitters of the outcome of its selection process as soon as is practicable.

3.3 Party Committees may submit policy or business motions as holding motions. SO 2 and SO 3 shall apply to holding motions, except that:

3.3.1 the text published in the Agenda is provisional, but must clearly identify the issues to be addressed in the final motion text.

3.3.2 the final text shall be submitted not less than two weeks before the start of the Conference, when SCC shall make it broadly available to Party members with a reminder of the deadline for amendments.

3.4 The Policy Committee may submit motions for the ratification of a Policy Paper, to the same deadline as policy motions under SO 2. This Policy Paper:

3.4.1 shall be made available to Party members as soon as practicable, ideally at the same time as the Agenda but no later than two weeks before the start of the Conference.

3.4.2 shall have its ratification debated at the Conference as would the passage of a motion under SO 5 and be subject to amendment of its text under SO 3 as would a motion.

3.4.3 may be subject to separate votes on its text as would a motion under SO 13.

3.4.4 should, if deemed beneficial by Policy Committee, contain bracketed passages enabling voting attendees to, at points during the debate deemed appropriate by the Chair, vote between alternative versions of the text.

3.5 Qualified submitters whose motion or amendment is not selected for debate may appeal according to a procedure determined by SCC. Appeals:

3.5.1 for motions must be received no less than three weeks before the start of the Conference.

3.5.2 for amendments must be received no later than 24 hours before the scheduled debate.

3.5.3 if upheld, shall result in a specific Agenda adjustment to make time for it, by SCC substituting a scheduled emergency motion debate, reducing the time allocated to other items by a maximum of five minutes each, or both.

3.6    Copies of motions and amendments not selected for debate at the Conference shall be available for inspection by voting attendees upon request.

**4. Agenda for Special Conferences**

4.1 Special Conferences are as defined in Clause E16 of the Constitution.

4.3 Other Standing Orders only apply to a Special Conference where not inconsistent with SO4.

4.4 Special Conferences shall address only the matters in the requisition notice. However, SCC may allow some time for:

4.4.1 emergency motion debates.

4.4.2 other urgent business arising since the requisition notice.

4.4.3 internal Party business that cannot reasonably wait until the next ordinary Conference.

**5. Rules of Debate**

5.1 The Chair directs the order of debate, such that:

5.1.1 the motion's mover speaks first, followed by speakers moving amendments in an order determined by SCC.

5.1.2 general debate follows the proposing speeches, with the Chair calling attendees who have submitted Speaker's Cards.

5.1.3 amendment summators speak after the general debate, in the same order as their amendments were moved.

5.1.4 the motion's summator is the final speaker.

5.1.5 unless otherwise directed under the Standing Orders, votes are taken after all speeches have concluded, first on amendments in the order they were moved, and then on the resultant motion.

5.2 Anyone wishing to speak in a debate, including the mover and summator, must submit a 5.2.1 Speaker's Card that indicates whether they intend to speak for or against a motion or amendment, and should also detail the points they intend to make.

5.3 Movers and summators shall share:

5.3.1 twelve minutes for policy motions and business motions.

5.3.2 eight minutes for each amendment.

5.4 The mover and summator may divide time as they wish, provided they notify the Chair on the mover's Speaker's Card. Otherwise, the Chair may limit the mover to three-quarters of the time and the summator to one-quarter.

5.5 Speakers in general debate are allocated three minutes. However, the Chair may vary this.

5.6 The Chair is responsible for allocating speakers within the available time for general debate, informed by:

5.6.1 all aspects presented by way of the Speaker's Cards.

5.6.2 the principle that attendees can make the most informed decision when presented with the widest range of distinct points.

5.6.3 an aspiration that the allotment provide equitable allowance for each side.

5.7 To advance the Party's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion:

5.7.1 SCC shall ensure that individuals from all backgrounds can contribute to debates and are encouraged to do so.

5.7.2 the Chair shall be mindful of gender balance and shall always seek to include underrepresented groups with a pertinent perspective on the issue under debate.

5.8 No person may speak more than once in any debate, except that:

5.8.1 a motion or amendment's mover may also be its summator.

5.8.2 speeches during consideration of a petition arising from SO 11 or SO 12 are not counted towards this limit.

5.9 The mover of any motion may speak to their endorsement of an amendment, in which case a vote shall still be taken on the amendment, but the Chair need not call the amendment's summator if no speech is made against it.

5.10 Usually, only voting attendees may speak in a debate. However, SCC may authorise other attendees to speak.

5.11 The Chair may direct that specific sections of text are to be debated separately. SCC may also combine multiple motions into one debate. In such cases, the Chair determines how the debate is structured but may only accordingly increase, not reduce, the total speaking time for movers and summators.

5.12 For any motion not submitted by a Party Committee, the Committee with remit may nominate a member to report its views to the Conference. This person shall be called at any time up to the debate's conclusion and shall be allocated speaking time equal to the motion's mover. The Committee with remit is:

5.12.1 Policy Committee for policy and emergency motions.

5.12.2 the Executive Committee for business motions or motions to amend the Constitution.

5.12.3 SCC for motions to amend Standing Orders or motions otherwise relating to Conference proceedings.

5.13 SO 5 applies to the consideration of petitions arising from SO 11 or SO 12:

5.13.1 only where not inconsistent with the Standing Order relevant to the petition.

5.13.2 except that speakers do not submit Speaker's Cards but are called directly by the Chair.

5.14 The Chair shall have general discretion over matters relating to the debate. So long as it is one that a reasonable person would have reached given the available facts, the Chair's decision is binding.

**6. Emergency Motions**

6.1 Other Standing Orders only apply to emergency motion debates where not inconsistent with SO 6.

6.2 Emergency motions may be submitted by five Party members or any qualified submitter.

6.3 The content of an emergency motion must be such that it could not have been submitted by the ordinary deadline for policy motions in SO 2. It must relate only to the emergency it seeks to address.

6.4 Emergency motions cannot be holding motions or motions for Policy Paper ratification. They follow the same format as policy motions. However, SCC may allow an emergency business motion if there is a compelling justification for doing so.

6.5 If no suitable emergency motions are received by the deadline, SCC may make a specific Agenda adjustment to replace the debate with an open forum on a topical issue.

6.6 Emergency motions do not have a summator. The mover shall be allocated five minutes to speak.

6.7 Notwithstanding SO 5.4, the motion's mover may be called again as the final speaker if, in the Chair's judgement, they have a right of reply to points raised in the debate. Such speeches are limited to two minutes.

6.8 Amendments to emergency motions are not usually permitted. However, SCC may consider amendments submitted by five voting attendees or a qualified submitter if they are:

6.8.1 brief, and proposing a change to the material effect of the motion that is suitable for debate.

6.8.2 of a similar emergency nature to the motion itself.

6.8.3 received by a member of SCC no later than one hour before the debate is scheduled to begin.

6.9 Any amendment accepted under SO 6.8 shall be circulated to voting attendees before the debate.

**7. Reports to Conference**

7.1 Party Committees may invite reports to be presented for ratification by voting attendees. Reports may be authored by Party bodies or individual members.

7.2 SCC must be notified of any invited report before the motion deadline in SO 2. Ideally, the report text should be provided to SCC before Agenda publication. Otherwise, it must be received by 5pm two days before the Conference.

7.3 Reports may contain new policy for ratification if, in SCC's judgement, it is likely to have overwhelming support and does not necessitate debate. Ratification of such reports requires a four-fifths majority of voting attendees taking part in the vote.

7.4 Voting attendees may submit questions for the report author:

7.4.1 directly to SCC before the Conference, and SCC shall periodically compile and pass these to the author.

7.4.2 during the Conference, at any time before the start of the session, via the Speaker's Desk, which the session's Chair shall pass to the author as soon as practicable.

7.5 When notifying SCC under SO 7.2, the Committee shall state whether the report author wishes to address voting attendees. If so, SCC shall schedule appropriate speaking time.

7.6 The author may direct the Chair as to when they wish to use their speaking time relative to the vote. However, if the vote falls, the Conference immediately proceeds to the next Agenda item.

7.7 No amendments or separate votes shall be taken on the text of a report.

**8. Open Forums**

8.1 SCC has wide latitude over the format of any open forum session. For example, a panel-led Q&A or a consultation with Party Committees are both possible. The Chair shall explain the format to attendees at the beginning of the session.

8.2 The Chair may hold indicative votes at any time during an open forum, unless SCC directs otherwise. These votes are non-binding and do not make Party policy, and the Chair shall periodically remind attendees of this.

8.3 Indicative votes held during an open forum are not to be counted. Instead, the Chair's perception shall be recorded in the Conference minutes. This could be, for instance, that the cards appear evenly split, or that one suggestion appears to have attracted more support than another.

8.4 Although open forum sessions are not debates, the Chair should aspire to act in the spirit of SO 5.7.

**9. Mini Motions**

9.1 Mini Motion sessions are a specific type of open forum in which:

9.1.1 the discussion topic is a series of written policy proposals submitted in advance to SCC by Party members.

9.1.2 indicative votes are taken at the end of the session or, if proposals are grouped under themes, at the end of each group's discussion.

9.2 The author of a policy proposal submitted under SO 9 shall have three minutes for a podium speech at the start of its discussion and may make a two-minute podium speech at the end to reply to points raised.

9.3 SCC shall normally invite a report under SO 7 from Policy Committee at the Conference following a Mini Motion session, detailing any policy development actions.

**10. Points of Order**

10.1 Any voting attendee may raise a point of order directly with the Chair.

10.2 A point of order shall be taken immediately, except during a vote, unless it relates to the vote.

10.3 The decision of the Chair on all points of order shall be final.

**11. References Back**

11.1 Any voting attendee may submit a petition to refer a policy or business motion back to a specific Party body. Such a petition:

11.1.1 must be submitted to SCC before 5pm on the day before the debate, unless submitted under SO 11.2.

11.1.2 must name the body to which the motion is to be referred and include a statement of reasons not exceeding two hundred words.

11.1.3 shall only require a procedural vote to progress to consideration if it was submitted directly to the Chair under SO 11.2.

11.2 After 5pm on the day before the debate, but before the beginning of the motion's summation, a petition to refer back may be submitted directly to the Chair via the Speaker's Desk, in which case it shall require a procedural vote of two-thirds majority to progress to consideration.

11.3 If more than one petition to refer back is received:

11.3.1 by the usual deadline in SO 11.1, SCC shall determine to which the Chair shall attend, and it takes precedence over any petition under SO 11.2 unless the Chair judges a compelling reason to depart from this rule.

11.3.2 under SO 11.2, the Chair shall determine precedence by assessing the appropriateness of the body to which the motion would be referred and the validity of the reasons.

11.4 The Chair may attend to a petition to refer back immediately or defer it until the end of the session. The Chair shall read out the petition before any procedural vote.

11.5 If voting attendees decline to consider a petition to refer back, it is immediately denied, and proceedings continue. No further petitions to refer back that motion shall then be considered unless the Chair judges the reasons sufficiently distinct from that of the denied petition.

11.6 If a petition proceeds to consideration but voting attendees ultimately deny it, no further petitions to refer back that motion shall be considered unless submitted under SO 11.2 and, in the Chair's judgement, the reasons:

11.6.1 relate directly to an issue that only emerged during the debate on the motion.

11.6.2 present a sufficiently compelling argument that the reference back process would be more appropriate than rejecting the motion.

11.7 The respondent to a petition to refer back shall be:

11.7.1 the motion's mover, unless they nominate another voting attendee to speak on their behalf, or waive their right to respond.

11.7.2any voting attendee opposed to the reference back if the mover has waived their right to respond.

11.8 If a petition to refer back progresses to consideration, the Chair:

11.8.1 shall call for a four-minute speech from the petitioner or their nominee, followed by a four-minute speech from the respondent.

11.8.2 has the discretion to call further speakers after the petitioner and respondent and shall limit these speeches to two minutes.

11.8.3 shall hold a vote to action or deny the petition immediately after the final consideration speech.

11.9 If a petition to refer back is actioned, the Conference immediately moves on to the next item on the Agenda without a vote on the motion.

11.10 SCC shall schedule time at the Conference following any reference back for a response, which may be:

11.10.1 a revised motion submitted in order to conclude the reference back.

11.10.2 a report invited to the Conference under SO 7.

11.11Where a response under SO 11.10 is a report, then:

11.11.1 ratification shall conclude the reference back if recommended therein.

11.11.2 it may recommend sending the reference back to another Party body, which SCC shall action upon ratification.

11.11.3 the reference back shall be considered unresolved if ratification falls, and SCC shall therefore schedule a further response under SO 11.10 at the following Conference.

**12. Suspension of Standing Orders**

12.1 A voting attendee may, during any Conference session, petition for the suspension of Standing Orders. The petition must:

12.1.1 be submitted to the Chair via the Speaker's Desk.

12.1.2 not exceed one hundred words.

12.1.3 be immediately read to attendees by the Chair.

12.2 A petition to suspend Standing Orders must not:

12.2.1 suspend any requirement of the Constitution.

12.2.2 suspend SO 2 or SO 3.

12.2.3 introduce a motion or amendment onto the Agenda unless it has been duly submitted to SCC per the published timetable, and any right of appeal has already been exercised.

12.3 Unless disallowed under SO 12.2, the Chair shall immediately read a petition to suspend standing orders to attendees and hold a procedural vote on whether the petition should be considered. If voting attendees decline to consider the petition, it is denied.

12.4 If a petition to suspend Standing Orders proceeds to consideration, the Chair:

12.4.1 shall call the petitioner to speak, and a representative of SCC may respond.

12.4.2 has the discretion to call further speakers after the petitioner and respondent.

12.4.3 shall limit all consideration speeches to two minutes.

12.4.4 shall hold a vote to action or deny the petition immediately after the final consideration speech.

12.5 A petition to suspend Standing Orders shall only be actioned if supported by a two-thirds majority of voting attendees taking part in the vote. If actioned, all Standing Orders shall remain in force except only for the purposes set out in the petition.

**13. Separate Votes**

13.1 A separate vote may be taken on a part of a motion or amendment:

13.1.1 at the direction of SCC.

13.1.2 at the Chair's discretion when petitioned to do so by a voting attendee.

13.1.3 at the Chair's discretion in response to the debate.

13.2 Any petition for a separate vote:

13.2.1 must be submitted directly to the Chair in writing via the Speaker's Desk.

13.2.2 must be received before the beginning of summation speeches.

13.2.3 must unambiguously identify which words, lines, sentences or paragraphs are to be subject to a separate vote.

13.2.4 cannot alter the motion text in a way that constitutes a direct negative to the motion.

13.3 The Chair has complete discretion on whether to action or deny a petition for separate vote. Such a petition is not open for consideration by voting attendees. The Chair may, but is not obligated to, notify attendees of their decision to deny such a petition and its justification.

13.4 Any separate votes shall, in an order deemed most appropriate by the Chair, be taken:

13.4.1 after the conclusion of the summation speeches.

13.4.2 prior to, subsequent to, or interspersed with any votes on amendments.

**14. Voting at Conference**

14.1 All votes at a Conference shall be decided by a simple majority of those voting attendees taking part in the vote, except where otherwise specified in these Standing Orders or the Constitution.

14.2 Voting attendees shall be issued a voting card, unless they are remote attendees, who shall receive credentials for a secure online voting system chosen by SCC.

14.3 Votes are cast by raising cards visibly to the Chair or via the online voting system as directed by SCC.

14.4 Remote attendees shall be allowed at least one minute to register their vote. However, the Chair may announce the result and advance proceedings if, based on the visual assessment of voting cards and the number of remote attendees, they judge that any outstanding votes cannot change the outcome. In such cases:

14.4.1 remote attendees must still be afforded the full time to register their vote.

14.4.2 the final vote tally shall promptly be made available to attendees in a manner chosen by SCC.

14.5 The Chair shall direct tellers to take a count of voting cards:

14.5.1 if, in their judgment, their own visual assessment is inconclusive.

14.5.2 when twelve voting attendees request one by standing in their places with voting cards raised.

14.6 Only the Chair may call for a recount of voting cards.

14.7 If a simple majority vote is tied, the Chair shall decide with a casting vote.

14.8 Where a vote on text requires a threshold greater than a simple majority to pass, that requirement shall only apply to the concluding vote on the final text. Any voting attendee may request a new vote on the text without the application of specific amendments only if they believe an amendment was the cause of its failure to reach the required threshold. This is done by raising a point of order with the Chair, who has complete discretion over whether to hold such a vote, and only one such vote may be taken on any motion.

14.9 In the event of a technical issue that disrupts the operation of the online voting system, the Chair may reopen voting as many times as necessary to satisfy them that the outcome reflects the will of attendees.

14.10 SCC may direct that a single transferable vote ballot of voting attendees shall:

14.10.1 select the emergency motions that are scheduled for debate.

14.10.2 determine which bracketed passages are included in the final text of a Policy Paper ratified under SO 3.4, rather than the vote being taken during the debate.

**15. Remote Attendance**

15.1 At a Conference with remote attendees, SCC shall provide access to an online platform enabling them to engage with and contribute to Conference proceedings as far as practicable. This platform:

15.1.1 may incorporate the voting system provided under SO 14.2 or may be separate.

15.1.2 shall provide access to a digital Speaker's Desk that serves the same functions as a physical Speaker's Desk.

15.1.3 shall provide a specific channel that enables remote attendees to raise points of order or otherwise engage with the Chair directly where required under the Standing Orders.

15.1.4 shall require attendees to use their real name.

15.2 The Chair may delegate direct usage of the platform provided under SO 15.1 to their Aide. This must not result in the Chair abdicating from decisions required of them under these Standing Orders.

15.3 To uphold the Code of Conduct, moderators may restrict use of any communication features in the platform provided under SO 15.1. This is not exclusion under SO 16. The Conference Convener shall be notified of any moderator actions promptly, and ideally in real time.

15.4 For quorum purposes, the number of remote attendees present shall be the greater of those logged into the participation platform provided under SO 15.1 or the voting system provided under SO 14.2.

**16. Complaints Regarding Conduct**

16.1 Any attendee who believes another attendee's actions at the Conference have breached the Code of Conduct, or created an unsafe or inappropriate environment, must promptly raise a complaint with the Conference Convener or a designated SCC member. This complaint should include a description of the incident, names of individuals involved, and details of any supporting evidence or witnesses.

16.2 For the purposes of SO 16, "Conference" includes the main venue, any fringe venues, accommodation, and any other significant gathering of attendees.

16.3 The investigator for complaints regarding attendee conduct shall be the Conference Convener, unless the complaint involves the Conference Convener, in which case the Party Convener shall be the investigator. The investigator must:

16.3.1 inform the complainant and any named witnesses that this investigation is separate from the Federal Party's Complaints Process, and that they may also wish to submit a complaint through that process.

16.3.2 promptly investigate and determine what action, if any, is necessary by SCC to protect any individuals involved and to maintain a safe and appropriate Conference environment.

16.3.2 take steps to exclude any attendee from the Conference for part or all of its duration if the investigator believes, based on a reasonable person standard and available information, that this is a necessary action.

16.4 An attendee excluded under SO 16 may appeal the decision. Any appeal must be submitted as soon as practicable to the investigator or a designated SCC member. Appeals may only challenge the decision for a permitted reason, one of which is that:

16.4.1 the facts considered by the investigator were incorrect.

16.4.2 the facts were correct, but the decision was not one that a reasonable person would have made based on those facts.

16.5 Any appeal against exclusion under SO 16 shall be heard by a panel of three individuals not involved in the original decision, whose decision shall be final. The panel shall:

16.5.1 where possible, be comprised of one Office Bearer of the Party and two members from SCC or the Party's Executive Committee.

16.5.2 be convened as soon as practicable after any appeal is submitted.

16.5.3determine whether, on the balance of probabilities, the facts used by the investigator were materially accurate.

16.5.4 assess whether the investigator's decision was one a reasonable person would make in similar circumstances.

16.5.5 make its final decision by majority vote.

16.5.6 communicate its final decision to the appellant promptly.

16.6 SCC shall maintain a confidential record of all complaints, investigator decisions, and appeal outcomes for seven years. A summary report, with personal details redacted as appropriate, shall be provided to the Party's Executive Committee after each Conference.

**17. Amendments to Standing Orders**

17.1 These Standing Orders may be amended by a two-thirds majority of voting attendees present and voting on a business motion duly submitted. Subject to any amendment they shall remain in force from Conference to Conference.