

Effective Policy Motions

(Originally delivered on 2nd April 2016 – Morgan Griffith-David,
as Policy Officer Welsh Liberal Democrats)

Basic steps

We will cover:

1. Research
2. Write
3. Submit

First Steps

- Pick a topic which...
 - Interests you;
 - Presents a problem which needs solving; and
 - Is not already policy (or you disagree with the current policy).
- Research it so you understand...
 - The issue;
 - The proposals; and
 - The opposition.

Good Policy Motions are...

- Original
- Focused
- Specific
- Active
- Relevant
- Succinct
- Accurate
- Realistic

Strike a balance between **focus** and **relevance**.

Basic Structure

- Conference Notes:
 - These are the problems.
 - The background and the facts you want Conference to know.
- Conference Believes:
 - These are the principles.
 - The values you want to put into Conference's minds.
- Conference Calls for:
 - These are the proposals.
 - The policies you want Conference to agree to implement.

Bad Sample Motion

Votes at 16

Submitted by: City of Nottingham Local Party

Proposer: Morgan Griffith-David

Summator: Barbara Pearce

16 year olds are unable to vote but are allowed to join the army. Other countries do let 16 year olds vote and 16 year olds were allowed to vote in the Scottish independence referendum. 16 and 17 year olds should be able to engage in the democratic process. The Lib Dems must campaign for 16 year olds to be allowed to vote in all elections in the UK.

Good Sample Motion

Votes at 16

Conference Notes that:

- 1) 16 and 17 year olds are unable to vote.
- 2) Individuals over 16 can join the army, get married, work full-time and pay tax, and consent to medical treatment.
- 3) Many countries, such as Austria, Germany and Brazil, allow 16 year olds to vote.
- 4) 16 and 17 year olds voted in the Scottish independence referendum and turnout was not substantially lower than for other age groups according to an ICM survey.

Conference Believes:

- 1) That voting in free elections is a fundamental human right.
- 2) That 16 and 17 year olds are as capable of engaging in the democratic system as any other citizen.

Getting it submitted

- 10 members
- Local parties
- Regional and State parties
- Specified Associated Organisations (SAOs)
- A mixture of the above....

Criteria

- A motion is more likely to be selected by Conference Committee if it:
 - Contains new and interesting proposals
 - Is on a subject where the party does not have much policy and which hasn't been debated at conference recently
 - Is on a topical issue
 - Is likely to lead to an interesting debate.
- It is less likely to be selected by Conference Committee if it is:
 - A repeat of old policies with nothing really new
 - Has been debated recently
 - On a subject where we expect a policy paper soon
 - Unlikely to lead to a good debate

Do's and Dont's

Re-do existing policy or recent debates	Be original
Just tell a story	Data and sources back up your claims
Try to solve all the world's problems	Be focused
Write thousands of words	Try for 250-500 words
Lose focus	Structure – Notes, Believes, Resolves
Write everything in one paragraph	Use bulletpoints and sub-points
Complain	Propose a solution
Use footnotes	Note where your research comes from
Do things last minute	Get drafting advice and broad support
Mandate elected reps or defame people	Stick to the rules!

Any questions?

Ask me anything at:

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