

The Party Leader's Speech: Sir Vince Cable MP

- Cable began by thanking his predecessor, Tim Farron, before moving on to an assessment of the current political and economic situation. He said that "Our economy continues to be dependent on the life support system of ultra-cheap money, which is now inflating a new credit bubble; and also a real sense of resentment...that wealth inequalities have widened and only the super-rich have flourished in this post-crisis world."
- Cable referenced the Liberal Democrat's declining support following the years spent in coalition government with the Conservatives saying, "For many voters, we still have to scrub ourselves hard to get rid of the smell of clearing up other people's mess."
- He described the decision to leave the EU as "The product of a fraudulent and frivolous campaign led by two groups of silly public school boys...reliving their dormitory pillow fights" and by contrast, described the Liberal Democrats as the party of "political adults."
- Cable told the conference "I see our future as a party of government. Our party is not just a Coalition partner of the past, we are the government of the future. And my role, as your leader, is to be a credible potential Prime Minister."
- Warning against the possibility of the Liberal Democrats becoming a single-issue anti-Brexit party, Cable said "we should not be consumed by Brexit to the exclusion of everything else. We are not a single-issue party...we're not UKIP in reverse."
- Cable wants the party to "fill the huge gap in the centre of British politics" and to "once again become a workshop for new ideas."

Conference Highlights

- **Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats Jo Swinson MP** set out an internationalist view of liberal politics and warned of the spread of hate and bullying. Referencing the rise of Trump and the increased nuclear threat from North Korea, Swinson said that "the politics of the bully is back," warning that "there is nothing inevitable about the triumph of liberal values." On Brexit, she said that the Liberal Democrats are "absolutely right" to pursue an "exit from Brexit" as leaving the EU will make it harder to pursue liberal values. However, she cautioned that preventing Brexit is not enough, saying that the Liberal Democrats need to offer alternative solutions to all 21st century problems. She said that the Liberal Democrats need to "get out" of their own "echo chamber" to build a vision that is "bigger than any single party."
- **Former Leader Tim Farron MP** talked about the challenges and opportunities presented by globalisation. He said that globalisation has made people feel "powerless, insecure, and uncertain." Farron argued however that globalisation does not need to create these pressures, blaming such failures on weak, laissez-faire government. Instead, Farron espoused the value of "active, ambitious, liberal government that identifies problems and seeks to fix them."
- **Education spokesperson Layla Moran MP** delivered a speech on her experiences as a new MP and educational inequality. Moran criticised current government policy as lacking "visionary leadership" in a world that is changing rapidly. She said the Liberal Democrats are the party to provide that visionary leadership as "Education is built into our Liberal DNA."