

Lib Dem leader looks to Robert the Bruce for inspiration



At his party's Scottish Conference in Dunfermline later today, Willie Rennie will call on his party to stand up for progressive politics. He will call on the inspiration of Robert the Bruce who refused to give up in the face of adversity. Mr Rennie will say his party should make the optimistic and progressive case for the United Kingdom, Europe and the USA.

Mr Rennie will say:

"The grief this week has been palpable. Not just the fear of what a President Trump could bring but the sense of loss of what could have been. The first woman president, committed to expanding healthcare, internationalism, equal rights, tolerance. A president full of hope and opportunity – looking for the best in people, not the worst.

"It was the same sense of loss, even of bereavement, that so many people felt after the Brexit vote. The result was the opposite of everything we have worked for over the decades. It made many wonder if they even recognise the country we live in any more.

"So what do we do? How do we respond?

"Of course we could turn our backs, cut the ties, walk away. We could partition the country and hope we live in the best bit. But Liberals are not quitters. I refuse to give up on America, I refuse to give up on Europe, I refuse to give up on the United Kingdom.

"I am optimistic about our country's future. I want our relationship with others to be open and progressive. I will not give up on that ambition.

"And our party should not. And our country should not."

He will go onto say:

"No matter how disturbed by the results in June and this week, as liberals, our response must be one of hope, not despair. A mile from this venue is the Abbey Church, the final resting place of Robert the Bruce.

"Perhaps we should be inspired by his relationship with that famous spider. If at first you don't succeed, try, try and try again. This is a Robert the Bruce moment for us.

"Just because the progressives have failed on Europe and the United States does not mean that we give up on the USA, EU and UK. We don't give up on people.

"We must try, try and try again."