

# Scottish Liberal Democrats autumn conference held today

**The Scottish Liberal Democrats held their conference at the Royal College of Physicians under the leadership of Alex Cole Hamilton MSP.**

They passed motions to call on The Scottish Government to deliver funding for local authorities and health boards to deal with the problems of RAAC in their buildings, and also for fairer funding for local authorities in Scotland.

Leader Alex Cole-Hamilton called for taxation on social media firms to treble to pay for mental health care.

He said in his speech: “

“Conference, half of parents say their child has experienced mental ill health. It is a national crisis.

“I have met countless families trying to get their child seen.

“I’m really worried about how much social media is a part of this.

“As a political leader I’ve seen my fair share of its dark side, of online abuse.

“But for young people it can feel like there is no escape.

“97% of them are now on social media, and for big chunks of the day.

“It’s shattering their mental health. It can impact their sense of self-worth and cause them to hate their own appearance.

“When they are telling us it is doing them harm, and they are, we should listen.

“Clamping down on harmful content is essential.

“But we need to look deeper at the damage the social media giants have wrought, at the shattered pieces of childhood that lie in the margins of their profits.

“It’s time for them to pay.

“The Digital Services Tax is paid by the largest social media sites.

“This should be the vehicle to exact proper recompense for the harm they are doing.

“Liberal Democrats would treble that tax to raise £1.5 billion next year alone.

“That could unlock up to £150 million for the Scottish Budget in Barnett consequential.

“That could help boost mental health support in schools, get more professionals close to where you live, and guarantee that whenever a young person needs help it will come fast.

“This is an opportunity to build world-class mental health services for Scotland.

“Conference, this could save lives.”

The Scottish Liberal Democrats had invited Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and Richard Ratcliffe to address them.

Ms Zaghari-Ratcliffe, a British citizen from 2013, was detained in Iran from 3 April 2016 until her eventual release

on 16 March 2022. Her young daughter was born in June 2014. Both Ms Zaghari-Ratcliffe and her husband talked about the difficulties they faced during her detention, the campaign for her release which involved both of them going on hunger strike and how difficult it is to adjust to life now. She said: "I underestimated how tough freedom would be."



Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and Richard Ratcliffe at the Scottish Liberal Democrats Conference held at the Royal College of Physicians

PHOTO Alan Simpson



Standing ovation for Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe with Christine Jardine at the Scottish Liberal Democrats Conference Royal College of Physicians Edinburgh.  
PHOTO Alan Simpson





Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and Richard Ratcliffe at the Scottish Liberal Democrats Conference held at the Royal College of Physicians

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Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe speaking at the Scottish Liberal Democrats Conference held at the Royal College of Physicians  
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Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe speaking at the Scottish Liberal Democrats Conference held at the Royal College of Physicians  
PHOTO Alan Simpson



Richard Ratcliffe at the Scottish Liberal Democrats Conference held at the Royal College of Physicians  
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Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe at the Scottish Liberal Democrats Conference held at the Royal College of Physicians  
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Alex Cole Hamilton MSP leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats at their Conference held at the Royal College of Physicians

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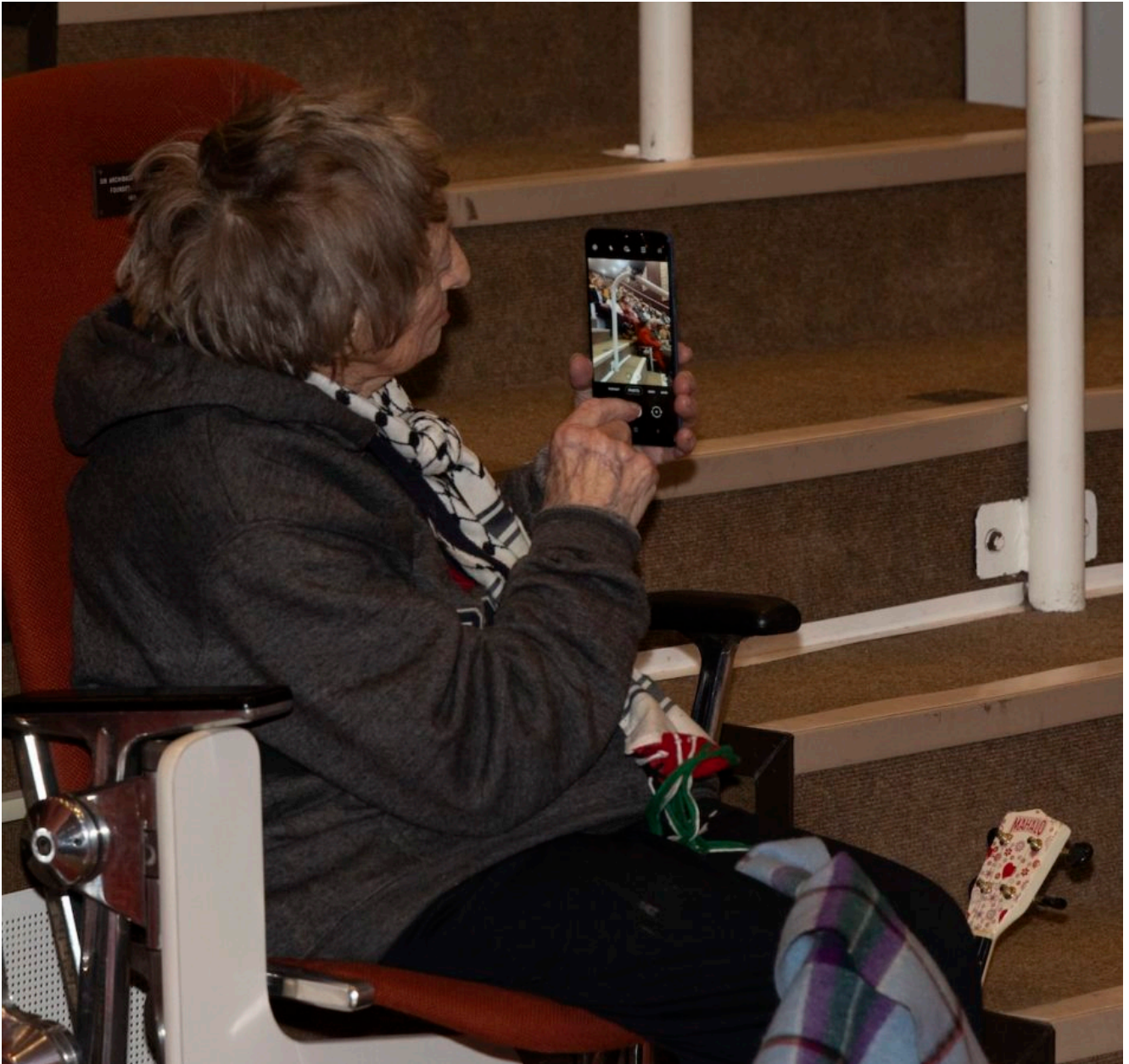






At the Scottish Liberal Democrats Conference held at the Royal  
College of Physicians  
PHOTO Alan Simpson





At the Scottish Liberal Democrats Conference held at the Royal College of Physicians  
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Alex Cole Hamilton MSP leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats at their Conference held at the Royal College of Physicians

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Alex Cole Hamilton MSP leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats at their Conference held at the Royal College of Physicians

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Wendy Chamberlain MSP Deputy Leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats at their Conference held at the Royal College of Physicians

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Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP embraces former leader Willie Rennie MSP at the Scottish Liberal Democrats Conference held at the Royal College of Physicians

PHOTO Alan Simpson



Christine Jardine MP for Edinburgh West at the Scottish Liberal Democrats Conference held at the Royal College of Physicians

PHOTO Alan Simpson





Alex Cole Hamilton MSP leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats at their Conference held at the Royal College of Physicians

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