

Letting agents fees to be banned after pressure from Liberal Democrats

Letting agents fees look set to be banned in this year Queen's Speech following pressure from the Liberal Democrats.

The fees cost on average £223 per tenancy but under the new plans they will be banned and tenants will be given the opportunity to recover illegal fees imposed upon them.

Lib Dem peer Olly Grender, who has led a campaign against the fees, said: "I am absolutely delighted that the ban on letting fees set out in my Private Members' Bill is now being proposed as law.

"We know from the tragedy of Grenfell Tower that tenants' rights have been ignored for far too long.

"It's time we made them a much greater priority, including by introducing a public register of rogue landlords."

Jo Swinson is new Lib Dem Deputy Leader

Jo Swinson has been elected unanimously as Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats.

The result was announced on Tuesday evening at the Liberal Democrat parliamentary party meeting.

Jo will continue in her role as Liberal Democrat Shadow Foreign Secretary.

Jo said: "I am very proud to have been elected by a newly energised and strengthened parliamentary party.

"The government has no majority and no mandate for its extreme version of Brexit, which would do such damage to the health of our economy and the fabric of our society.

"In this balanced parliament the Liberal Democrats will be a powerful influence and a strong voice for people who want to see an open, welcoming and tolerant United Kingdom."

Leader of the Liberal Democrats Tim Farron said: "Jo Swinson is a brilliant campaigner and someone I am proud to call a friend. I am in no doubt she will

be a fantastic Deputy Leader of our party.

“Jo is the future of the Liberal Democrats and will make a massive difference laying out a liberal alternative to this divisive Brexit government. Her hard work as a local MP and impressive record as a minister leave us in no doubt that she will be a powerful voice for our party.”

Theresa May drops plans to snatch free school meals after Lib Dem pressure

Theresa May is reported to have dropped plans to scrap free school lunches for infant pupils from tomorrow's Queen's Speech.

It comes after the Liberal Democrats strongly criticised the Conservatives during the election campaign over their manifesto plans which would have deprived 1.7 million children of free school lunches, including 700,000 living in poverty.

Liberal Democrat Shadow Education Secretary Layla Moran said:

“I'm glad Theresa May has bowed to pressure from schools and parents to keep free school lunches. I am proud that the Lib Dems introduced this when we were part of the government.

“We have seen it both help families who are just getting by as well as raise attainment.

“I hope Theresa May will now rein back on her plans to extend grammars and reduce schools funding.”

Vince Cable: May must listen to Hammond's Brexit warnings instead of locking him in a cupboard again

Chancellor Philip Hammond has called for a transitional deal on Brexit to protect the economy at a speech at Mansion House, while Bank of England Governor Mark Carney has admitted that Brexit will make us all poorer.

It comes as the government is under pressure from the Liberal Democrats and

business community to soften its stance on Brexit, including by protecting Britain's membership of the single market and customs union.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders today warned that a hard Brexit reverting to WTO rules would permanently damage the UK car industry.

It follows similar recent warnings from the EEF, which represents UK manufacturers, and the Chemical Industries Association.

Liberal Democrat Shadow Chancellor Vince Cable said:

"Theresa May must listen to Philip Hammond's warnings instead of locking him in the cupboard with his spreadsheets again.

"Three major industrial bodies are all now warning of the consequences of disrupting our trading arrangements with the EU by leaving the single market and customs union.

"The economic risk of an extreme Brexit is very real and its consequences would be felt by us all, from higher prices to less funding for our NHS and schools.

"Even the Bank of England has admitted that it cannot prevent Brexit from making us all poorer.

"The best way to protect the pound, lift people's incomes and secure funding for our public services is to stay in the single market and customs union.

"The Liberal Democrats will work with other parties to protect our economy from a damaging Brexit and fight for the best possible deal."

[Tim Farron responds to Finsbury Park terror attack](#)

Commenting on the terrorist incident near Finsbury Park mosque in north London, Liberal Democrat leader Tim Farron said: "The Finsbury Park attack is senseless barbarism. Yet again we are rocked by a horrific incident for which there is no rhyme or reason.

"People who commit these heinous acts want to divide us, force us to turn in on ourselves and fight each other. We cannot and must not let them win. Our values matter, we must stand together.

"My deepest sympathies are with the victims and their families.

"I would like to pay tribute to the bravery and dedication of the emergency

services, who, yet again, have gone above and beyond to help those in need. In these moments while others run in the opposite direction, our emergency services run towards danger.”