



Helensburgh Branch

STRONGER FOR SCOTLAND

JANUARY 2018

Members' Day 2 – with Mhairi Black MP

by Michelle Van der Stighelen (Vice Convener & Senior Parliamentary Assistant to Brendan O'Hara MP)

Building on the success of the first members day, our second Argyll and Bute-wide members day will commence this coming Sunday (14th January) at 1pm sharp in the Inveraray Inn. We will be joined by Mhairi Black MP, still the UK's youngest and rapidly one of the most influential members of our time. Following on the themes of our last session, this time we will be looking to discuss how we keep the momentum going in Argyll and Bute, how we overcome the UK Tory Government and an overtly hostile Press; what an independent Scotland

could look like and how we present that vision to our friends and neighbours; how do we engage better and how we reignite the spirit of 2014? The day will conclude with a Q&A with Mhairi. These events are for each and every one of us, an equal voice for equal members no matter the role you play in the branch. And preceding the members day, our inaugural Liaison Committee meeting commence at 12 Noon. Whilst the liaison committee is made up of branch delegates all members are welcome to come along.

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MEMBERS' DAY

Sunday 14th January

1pm sharp to 5pm

Inveraray Inn

With guest speaker

Mhairi Black MP

Mhairi's influence, not just at Westminster but across the UK has been absolutely phenomenal and she is without one of the highest profile MPs in parliament.

So come early!!!



Promoting Scots Law

by Graeme McCormick (Dumbarton Constituency Association Convener)



In the course of upgrading my mobile phone with O2 i checked the terms and conditions and found that they are governed by English law despite me living in Scotland. The same applies to EE and Vodafone.

There is no reason for Scots Law not to be the governing law of the contracts, so Scots are being denied the rights and obligations under Scots Law.

In addition, Scots lawyers are being denied business as any legal dispute would require a Scot to instruct an English lawyer and be subject to the English courts. As most Scots have a mobile phone this undermines the universality of Scots Law, one of the most mature legal systems in the world

One wonders why the Law Society of Scotland has not been on this like a rash.

I think you'll also find that some though not all credit card and credit sale agreements also are

governed by English law.

Please spread this among your groups to contact their phone provider and insist that the agreements be changed to Scots Law? If you are a councillor or parliamentarian or have a business, please ensure that Scots law is the governing law in your organisation's contracts.

Resolutions 2018 – Work in Progress

by Patrick Johnstone (Political Education Officer)

I am not a big fan of New Year's Resolutions, but would be interested in hearing your views on forming National Conference/Council Resolutions on the following topics:

1. [Review setting up a Gender Balanced Parliamentary System for Holyrood.](#)
2. Call for Automatic Enrolment to a Trade Union.
3. [Review setting up a Third Child Benefit Policy for Holyrood.](#)
4. Call for the transfer all tax and benefit administration services to Holyrood to improve tax collection and benefit uptake within the current UK setup.
5. [Call for BT and Sky to increase funding of Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish Football in](#)

[line with English Football. Pooling and sharing?](#)

6. Call to abolish CIS Tax Deduction Scheme and Penalties System operating in the Construction Industry.
7. [Consider setting up a Holyrood Benefits Advice Office to assist claimants in getting all the benefits that they are entitled to thereby remove barriers to claiming.](#)
8. Consider setting up an Office of National Statistics Scotland reporting directly to Holyrood.
9. [Consider setting up Gold Star Rating for Scottish Charities to ensure that donations are collected honestly and issued quickly with the minimum of admin costs.](#)
10. Call for the equal rights for free thinkers, atheists and agnostics and their legal protections in currently intolerant countries (Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, USA, etc.).
11. [Consider renaming the SNP to the SDP upon winning Scottish Independence. Our party would be increasingly viewed as a Social Democratic Party that it is seeking independence to deliver a Social Democracy for the betterment of all in Scotland.](#)

If you have any ideas for future resolutions, feel free to get in touch.

Yes Helensburgh & Lomond Update

by Alasdair Jamison (Yes Helensburgh & Lomond Convener)

Your local YES group remained in place, without a break, after the 2014 referendum campaign in which we were satisfied that, while nothing is ever perfect, we had done pretty much all that we could to maximise the local YES vote in the circumstances of the time.

In the last year the group has gradually been rebuilding itself into a position in which it will be ready and able to relaunch the campaign for independence the moment that this becomes appropriate. So far, the following have been achieved:

* regular, monthly meetings with a strong combination of business and political education;

* a respectable and growing attendance at meetings;

* a member based, democratic structure with an appropriate set of, fully accountable, officers;

* a decent start to building the financial strength required to operate an effective campaign;

* strong and friendly links with other, local pro-independence

parties and campaign organisations;

* similar links with the wider independence movement at both regional and national levels;

* a social media presence composing several interfaces with our wider local community;

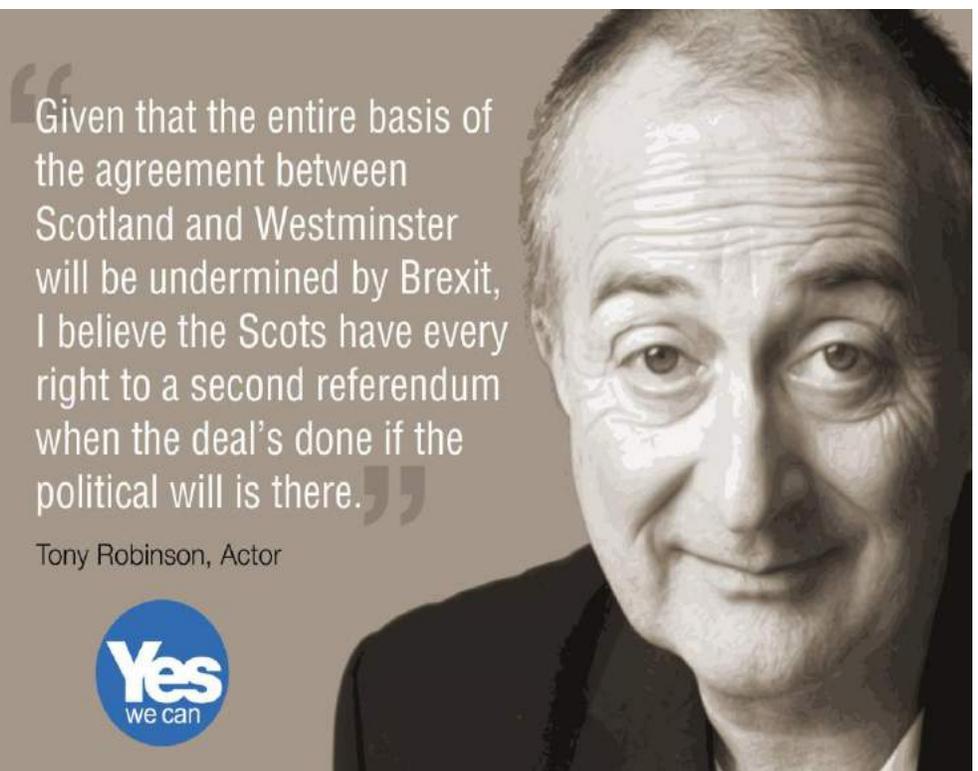
* plans for proportionate public campaigning prior to the calling of an active, national campaign.

The group presently takes no specific position on the timing of a new national campaign but is part of the broad consensus that sometime in the next couple of years or so is likely to be best. We favour a fully inclusive approach to the forthcoming campaign.

Everyone who favours the re-establishment of Scotland as an independent nation by democratic means will be most welcome irrespective of what their views on the matter may have been in the past or their other political preferences. We are and shall be democratic, socially inclusive, flexible and determined in our efforts to secure self-determination for our country.

Please join us and support our efforts. If you don't know us already contact may readily be made via the office bearers of your SNP branch.

'Forward to an Independent Scotland'.



The Scottish budget: what you need to know

by Liam Furby, 14/12/17



The Finance Secretary, Derek Mackay, has set out the Scottish Government's budget plans for the year ahead.

Faced with continued Westminster cuts and the damaging impact of Brexit, we have chosen a different path for Scotland.

This is a budget that provides the investments we need to meet the challenges of today and seize the opportunities of tomorrow. Here's what you need to know.

✓ £400 million more for our NHS and more money direct to schools

The Tory government at Westminster plans to cut the budget available for public services in Scotland by half a billion over the next two years. By choosing a fairer path on taxation we will protect Scotland's cherished public services.

The budget will ensure:

a £400 million increase in health spending;

£120 million direct to headteachers to raise attainment in schools;

protection for the frontline police budget and ensuring our emergency services keep VAT savings;

protection for day-to-day spending on local services; and

invest nearly a quarter of a billion in our plan to near double provision of childcare and early years education.

✓ Seven in ten income taxpayers paying less than they are paying this year

Changes to Income Tax will make Scotland the fairest taxed part of the UK, with the majority of taxpayers paying less than if they lived elsewhere in the UK. And compared to last year, everyone earning less than £33,000 will pay less.

✓ An end to the one per cent public sector pay cap

The cost of living is rising. Yet the UK government has failed to commit additional funding to end the one per cent public sector pay cap.

We will make a different choice. Next year we will deliver a minimum 3 per cent pay rise for public servants earning less than £30,000, a 2 per cent rise for those earning more and a cash cap on increases for those earning more than £80,000.

✓ New investment to ensure Scotland is the best place to do business and invest

To grow our economy, we will:

invest an extra £100 million to deliver the best business rates package in UK;

increase investment in business research and development by 70 per cent;

a £4 billion investment in vital infrastructure;

£340 million set aside for a National Investment Bank with a new £150 million Building Scotland Fund; and

begin procurement of the £600 million programme to deliver superfast broadband to all homes and premises.

✓ Maintaining the social contract, ensuring Scottish taxpayers get the best deal anywhere in the UK

With the cost of living rising, our commitment to a social contract with the people of Scotland is more important than ever. This budget will continue to fully fund an NHS free at the point of need; maintain free university tuition; and free personal and nursing care.

To strengthen the social contract this budget will:

implement Frank's Law, providing free personal care to those who need it;

increase Carers Allowance;

provide free access to sanitary products in schools, colleges and universities;

and continue to provide all babies with a Baby Box of essential items for their first weeks and months.

✓ New action to fight poverty and inequality

To build a fairer Scotland, this budget will:

invest £756 million towards our pledge to build 50,000 affordable homes in this Parliamentary term;

begin investment of the £50 million End Homelessness Together Fund;

begin investment of the £50 million Child Poverty Fund; and

maintaining £100 million a year investment to mitigate welfare cuts, including fully mitigating the Bedroom Tax.

My New Year's Resolution

by Mhairi Black MP, 02/01/18



Pledges and promises - the difference is these are made to the electorate, so it's more important they're actually kept. I'm looking at you, Ruth Davidson.

In June 2017 the Scottish Tory Leader said she would make sure her 13 MPs would "make Scotland's case forcefully" at Westminster.

She also said she wanted "to ensure that we can look again at issues like Brexit, which we know we are now going to have to get cross-party support for – and move to a consensus within the country."

Well, where do I start? What a load of nonsense.

Ms. Davidson, here's a list of resolutions for your MPs- it'd be a good place for them to start.

1) Stand up for the Single Market.

Unlike the SNP, not a single Scottish Tory voted to protect the UK's membership of the single market and customs union – putting hundreds of thousands of jobs, and people's incomes and livelihoods under threat.

2) Actually, look again at Brexit.

Not a single Scottish Tory MP voted to ensure a meaningful parliamentary vote on the Brexit deal. So much for 'looking

again' at Brexit- you should have joined the SNP in the lobby.

3) Don't give away Devolution.

Unlike SNP MPs, not a single Scottish Tory MP voted to safeguard Scotland's devolution settlement in the recent EU bill. Instead, you voted to give UK government ministers unfettered powers to amend or repeal the Scotland Act and retain devolved powers. Ignoring devolution is hardly acting in Scotland's best interests.

4) Halt the roll-out of Universal Credit.

While thousands of people in Scotland are facing poverty and crisis as a result of Universal Credit cuts, delays and errors, not a single Scottish Tory MP voted for the successful motion to halt the roll-out. One Scottish Tory, Douglas Ross MP, missed the vote entirely to earn almost £2000 in his second job as a referee. Unbelievable.

5) Make pensions fair.

Unlike SNP MPs, twelve of the thirteen Scottish Tory MPs failed to vote to improve Pensions for women who have been affected by UK government moves to speed up increases in the state pension age and who will lose out financially.

6) Don't forget that DUP deal.

When Theresa May gave Northern Ireland £1 billion in exchange for DUP support, the Scottish Tories broke their promise to speak out and secure a deal for Scotland. Where's our billions, eh?

7) Protect Scotland's Budget.

Unlike SNP MPs, Scottish Tories backed the cuts to Scotland's budget in the last UK budget.

8) End Austerity.

Scottish Tory MPs have backed the continued austerity cuts in the UK Budget in November, including the benefits freeze, the rape clause, and the public sector pay cap – pushing more families in Scotland and across the UK

into poverty, debt and destitution.

Progress: 2017 in numbers

by Louise Donegan, 30/12/17

This year we opened the tallest bridge in the UK, delivered 22,000 baby boxes and seen more students gain a place at Scottish universities than ever before.

The list of SNP government achievements is long and wide-ranging. Here's how we've kept Scotland moving forward in 2017.

Health spending in Scotland reached a record level - over £13 billion in 2017.

The £1.4 billion Queensferry Crossing opened in August, and was delivered £245 million below budget. The new crossing is the longest three-tower, cable-stayed bridge in the world.

22,000 baby boxes have been delivered, supporting families with essentials for the first weeks and months of their lives.

This year £120 million went direct to headteachers to raise attainment - contributing to a 543 increase in teacher numbers between 2016 and 2017.

The number of people working in our health service is at a record high - increasing by 12,400 since 2007.

Mental health investment reached £1 billion for the first time this year. And £150 million is being invested over the next five years to improve services and find better ways of working.

The number of affordable homes delivered by the Scottish Government since 2007 passed the 71,000 mark - including 49,000 homes for social rent.

Recorded crime is at a 43-year low.

We've met our target to reduce youth unemployment by 40 per cent - four years early - and it is now amongst the lowest rates in the EU.

Around 100,000 business premises now pay no rates at all thanks to the Small Business Bonus scheme.

The number of registered businesses in Scotland has reached 176,400, the highest number on record.

Business research and development spend in Scotland grew by over £1 billion for the first time in 2017-18 - a 69 per cent real terms increase since 2007.

19 per cent more renewable electricity was generated in the first three quarters of 2017 than in the same period in 2016.

We have announced new plans to reduce carbon emissions by 66 per cent, compared to 1990 levels, by 2032 - and to legislate for a new statutory target for a 90 per cent reduction by 2050.

We have committed £50 million in a new Ending Homelessness Together fund to support anti-homelessness initiatives and pilot new solutions to drive faster change.

Scotland now has 1,000 real Living Wage accredited employers - one quarter of all accredited organisations in the UK.

Since the start of the recession, productivity growth in Scotland has increased by 7.6 per cent, while it has grown by only 0.6 per cent in the UK as a whole.

Scotland's international exports - valued at £28.7 billion in 2017 - are up 41 per cent under the SNP.

The number of Scottish students getting a place at a university in Scotland is at an all-time high of 27,830.

In the last two years the number of young people from disadvantaged areas going to university has risen by 20 per cent, to record levels.

We're on track to deliver 250 km of new roads by Spring 2018 - the result of £2.81 billion of investment over the last decade.

The number of private sector businesses in Scotland is at the highest level since records began




Scotland now has 1,000 accredited real Living Wage employers - more than a quarter of the UK total




9 ways we've stood up for Scotland this year

by Erik Geddes, 28/12/17



The past 12 months have seen continued Westminster cuts and the damaging impact of a Tory Brexit - but the SNP has chosen a different path and delivered for everyone in Scotland.

Here's just 9 ways that we've stood up for Scotland in 2017.

1. Empowering Scotland's schools

This year we continued to invest in raising attainment in our schools, with £120 million going direct to headteachers this year alone. And thanks to this new investment, the number of teachers has increased by 543 between 2016 and 2017.

2. Protecting Scotland's NHS with record health funding

The health budget was over £13 billion this year - £3.6 billion more than when we took office. The number of people working in our NHS has reached a record high too - with 12,400 more staff than when we took office.

3. Standing up for Scottish industry

This year, working with partners, the Scottish Government helped secure a deal to ensure fabrication firm BiFab avoided administration. Ferguson shipyard on the Clyde, saved with SNP government support in 2014, also delivered the first of two new low-carbon ferries in November.

To secure an innovative manufacturing future for Scotland, we're also investing £8.9 million in a Lightweight Manufacturing Centre in Renfrew, as a first step towards the establishment of a National Manufacturing Institute in Renfrewshire.

4. Investing in jobs and our economy

In 2017, the number of people in work has reached a record high and Scotland is outperforming the UK on unemployment and female employment rates. This year we also achieved our ambition to reduce youth unemployment by 40 per cent - four years early.

5. Making Scotland's voice stronger at Westminster

This year at Westminster we've worked to oppose a damaging Brexit that would risk jobs and our economy, by arguing the case for keeping the UK in the Single Market.

We have also continued to fight for the Tory government to deliver women born in the 1950s the pension they are due. This year we led a debate on the issue, securing cross-party support for transitional arrangements to right this wrong.

And we have continued to fight Westminster's austerity agenda and welfare cuts, including the disastrous roll-out of Universal Credit and the callous Rape Clause.

Teacher numbers are up by 543 this year thanks to new investment to raise attainment



The health budget is at a record high and there are 12,400 more staff working in our NHS



Unemployment, youth unemployment and female unemployment rates are lower in Scotland than across the UK



6. Delivering new support for families

In August Scotland's Baby Box was rolled-out across the country and all pregnant women now receive free vitamins, ensuring all children get the best possible start in life.

We've also announced new details of our plan to almost double provision of early years education and childcare: with 11,000 more staff to be recruited and investment doubled by the end of this Parliament.

A new survey has found that 100 per cent of parents are satisfied with the Baby Box and its contents




7. Delivered vital infrastructure

The Queensferry Crossing, Scotland's largest infrastructure project in a generation, was opened in August this year. This year we've also completed the M8 missing link - connecting Glasgow to Edinburgh with continuous motorway for the first time - and the first section of the £3 billion A9 dualling project has been completed.

A new milestone was also reached on affordable home building - with over 70,000 affordable homes delivered since the SNP came to office.

And over the next year we will invest £4 billion in improving our vital infrastructure - part of a £20 billion

investment in this Scottish Parliament term.

8. Announced plans to cut tax for 7 in 10 income taxpayers

The Scottish Government's draft budget for next year will mean that seven out of 10 people - including everyone earning under £33,000 - will pay less tax than they do now. And most Scots will pay less tax than if they lived in rest of the UK.

By making our tax system even fairer and more progressive, we can invest more in our schools and hospitals. Our reforms will raise an additional £164 million to mitigate UK budget cuts and protect our vital public services.

93 per cent of Income Tax payers under 25 will pay less tax in 2018-19 than they do now




9. Enhanced Scotland's position on the global stage

Scotland's outward looking approach has helped deliver progressive policies at home as well as boosting our reputation internationally.

This year Nicola Sturgeon spoke at the UN climate change conference in Bonn and Scotland hosted the Arctic Circle forum for the first time - further enhancing Scotland's reputation on climate change.

Scotland will be home to the world's first large-scale tidal energy farm, thanks to **£23 million** Scottish Government funding



The health budget is at a record high and there are **12,400 more staff** working in our NHS



A record **£834.8 million** has been invested in University student support in 2016-17, supporting more students than ever before



Single malt Scotch whisky exports increased by **3.4%** to almost **£1.8 billion** in the first half of 2017



BUSINESS FOR SCOTLAND

Did you know...

Scotland's creative industry includes 15,000 businesses - an increase of more than 50% since 2008.



This key growth sector now employs more than 70,000 people in Scotland.

Business for Scotland

Source: The Scottish Government, Scotland the Brief © Business for Scotland 2016

Did you know...

209,000 EU nationals currently live and work in Scotland, contributing £4.42 billion per year to the Scottish economy.



EU immigration has increased Scotland's population and prevented labour market shortages over the past 12 years.

If net EU migration falls to zero after Brexit, Scotland's working age population would decrease by 3% whilst the number of pensioners would increase 25% by 2041. Scotland is therefore highly dependent on EU migration for its future growth and development.

Business for Scotland

Source: The Scottish Government and Edinburgh Research Explorer - University of Edinburgh, Scotland the Brief © Business for Scotland 2017

Did you know...

Scotland's international reputation continued to soar in 2016. Countries were rated on:



Tourism



Investment & Immigration



Governance



Culture



People



Exports

Scotland received its highest reputation for Governance and Tourism, and was also considered a world leader for its efforts towards environmental protection.

Business for Scotland

Source: The Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index: 2016 Report for Scotland, Scotland the Brief © Business for Scotland 2017

Did you know...



Scotland opened the world's first floating wind farm this year.



The 5 wind turbines located off the Aberdeenshire coast will provide enough renewable energy for 20,000 homes. This technology can be used in deep water areas previously inaccessible for offshore energy.

Business for Scotland

Wind farm operated by Statoil, in partnership with Masdar. Source: Statoil, Scotland the Brief © Business for Scotland 2017

Did you know...

For ten years University of Dundee has been one of the most influential scientific research institutions for pharmaceuticals in the world, currently 1st place beating MIT for top slot.*1



Dundee University also received the highest rating for its world leading research within biological sciences, and is considered among Europe's most innovative universities by Reuters.*2

Business for Scotland

Source: 1) The State of Innovation Report 2017, Clarivate Analytics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
2) Research Excellence Framework 2014, University of Dundee, Scotland the Brief © Business for Scotland 2017

Did you know...

Edinburgh was ranked 1st for business friendliness, and second only after Zurich as the 'city of the future' among medium-sized European cities in 2016.*1



In the same year, Edinburgh was also named 'British entrepreneurial city of the year', and voted by the readers of the European Business Magazine to be the best city in Europe to locate your tech business.*2

Business for Scotland

Source: 1) EN European cities and regions of the future 2016-17 rankings
2) Edinburgh City Council, Scotland the Brief © Business for Scotland 2017

USEFUL LINKS

SNP Sites

<https://www.snp.org/>

<http://www.helensburghsnp.scot/>

<http://www.brendanoharamp.scot/>

Parliamentary Sites

<http://www.parliament.scot/>

<http://www.gov.scot/Home#slide/2>

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/commons/>

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/en>

Independence Sites

<http://www.businessforscotland.com/>

<http://www.indyposterboy.scot/>

<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk>

<https://wingoverscotland.com/>

<http://www.independentscotland.org>

News Media Sites

<http://www.thenational.scot/>

<http://www.heraldscotland.com/>

<http://www.helensburghadvertiser.co.uk/opinion/>

Council Sites

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/home>

https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/councillor_list

<http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/>

Community Council Sites

<http://www.helensburghcommunitycouncil.co.uk/>

<http://www.rhuandshandoncommunity.org/>

Causes

<http://www.allofusfirst.org/>

<http://www.banthebomb.org/>

Other Sites

<https://www.gov.uk/make-a-freedom-of-information-request>

<http://whatscotlandthinks.org/ssa>

<http://scotcen.org.uk/>

<http://www.un.org/en/index.html>

FEEDBACK & COMMENTS

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