

# SNP Helensburgh Branch

STRONGER FOR SCOTLAND

FEBRUARY 2018

## THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

By Patrick Johnstone (Political Education Officer)

**The Good:** Members' Day 2 in Inveraray was a storming success with some inspirational words from Mhairi Black MP. I, for one, cannot wait for the next one!

**The Bad:** Angus Robertson has just announced his resignation as Depute Leader of the SNP. A Depute Leadership Contest will be coming our way in the not too distant future.

**The Ugly:** We have Branch Meeting coming up this Thu 08/02/18 to discuss and put forward our branch's view of the **Constitutional Consultation**.

Why "ugly" you may ask? Well I am only teasing. After all our members will, as usual, be on their best behaviour. And an orderly democratic approach will hopefully

produce an agreeable consensus. Therefore, I hope that those attending will have read the **19-page Consultation** document with the **6 categories** covering **35 questions**.

Now squeezing all that into one branch meeting is going to be some doing. And hopefully not ugly!



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## STORM MHAIRI HITS ARGYLL AND BUTE

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



Almost 200 SNP members from all across Argyll and Bute descended on Inveraray on Sunday to discuss how the party builds on the success the SNP has enjoyed in this constituency in recent years and to hear an “electrifying and inspirational” address by Mhairi Black MP, the youngest member of the

Westminster parliament.

The “Members Day” in Inveraray was organised by local MP Brendan O'Hara and attracted activists from Helensburgh, Dunoon, Strachur, Bute, Islay, Garelochhead, Campbeltown, Lochgilphead, Oban, Tarbert, Mull as well as Inveraray itself.

Explaining the reason behind the meeting Brendan O'Hara said “The SNP membership in this constituency has never been greater and is made up of a wide cross-section of the community including among others, students, professionals, local

authority employees, self-employed, former military personnel and business entrepreneurs.

Our membership is our greatest strength and I wanted to ensure that all the talent and experience we have at our disposal is being used properly.

He added; “Members Day allows for a free-flow of ideas among our grassroots activists. It allows our membership to set the agenda and to discuss where the party in Argyll & Bute should be going and what we should be doing. It also empowers local activists that they



don't have to wait to be told what to do, as they know better than anyone else what is needed in their local area to promote the SNP and further advance the cause of independence."

Following the group discussions and the feedback session, the day concluded with an address by Mhairi Black MP, who had spent the day mingling with members as they met in their various discussion groups.

Addressing the gathering, Mhairi said "I have absolutely loved being back in Argyll & Bute. Today's meeting reminded me of those heady days of the 2014 referendum campaign where ordinary folk got together to discuss politics and the future direction of our country. Not since the referendum have I seen so many people packed into



public place, not just to listen to someone else but to actively engage by bringing their own thoughts, opinions and ideas to the debate."

She added: "The Members Day here in Argyll & Bute has been a huge success and I'd love to see

this type of meeting, where local activists are empowered to take the lead themselves, spread right across Scotland"

After the event, Brendan O'Hara MP commented:

"Mhairi's inspiring and electrifying speech was exactly what our members and activists wanted to hear, and you could almost feel the enthusiasm for getting back out on the campaign and the way so many people left Inveraray this evening with a spring in their step, suggests that that's exactly what is going to happen".

The Members Days will be a permanent fixture in the party's constituency diary, such has been the success of the first two.





## ANGUS ROBERTSON RESIGNS AS DEPUTE LEADER OF THE SNP



Angus Robertson  
Depute Leader

Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP  
Convenor, Scottish National Party  
Gordon Lamb House  
3 Jackson's Entry  
Edinburgh  
EH8 8PJ

3 February 2018

Dear First Minister,

It is with regret that I inform you of my formal decision to stand down as Depute Leader of the Scottish National Party with immediate effect.

Since the 2017 General Election I have been focussed on supporting campaign best practice for local SNP branches, constituency associations, elected members and the party nationally.

As we have discussed recently, I believe I am no longer able to fully discharge my mandate, which was to partner you as Westminster SNP Leader and as a parliamentarian representing a rural constituency.

While it would be my greatest privilege to continue as Depute Leader, I know you understand that I have to focus now on pursuing new career opportunities.

It is for that reason that I believe it is for others to step forward to seek the support of SNP members for the honour to serve as Depute Leader of Scotland's largest political party.

I have been tremendously honoured to be your deputy since 2016 and always valued your friendship, professional and personal support, and your inclusive leadership of the SNP and Scottish Government.

It has been a fantastic time to be involved in public service for 17 years, representing the community I live in and moving our country ever closer to independence.

To help the SNP become the party of government in Scotland has been a personal high point and I am exceptionally proud of all that our government has achieved.

I intend to continue supporting public policy development in Scotland as a Advisory Board Member of the Scottish Policy Foundation while working in business, communication and public diplomacy consultancy at home and internationally.

If I can be of any help in supporting Scotland's progress and the progress of every person who lives here, I remain as committed as ever to our party and the cause we both signed up to as teenagers.

I wish you well as you continue to lead our party and our country. You can always count on my support as you do so.

With best wishes,

## TIME IS RUNNING OUT TO PREVENT AN EXTREME BREXIT THAT RISKS JOBS



by Ian Blackford MP, 12/01/18

As the UK government moves into the critical second phase of the Brexit negotiations, and with just ten months to go before a deal is due to be in place between the UK and EU, time is running out to prevent the unprecedented economic catastrophe of an extreme Tory Brexit.

We know that Tory plans to drag Scotland and the UK out of the world's largest single market and customs union would destroy hundreds of thousands of jobs, and damage the incomes, livelihoods, and living standards of millions of people across the country.

Analysis from the Bank of England, Fraser of Allander Institute, London School of Economics, and many others, has revealed the devastating extent of a hard Brexit or 'no deal' scenario for Scotland, England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

In Scotland alone, we stand to lose 80,000 jobs and £2,000 per head under a Tory hard Brexit – a huge blow to the Scottish economy that would cause lasting harm to industries and communities across our nation for decades to come.

Earlier this week I organised a cross-party summit at Westminster – inviting the leaders of the opposition parties to hold talks, and coordinate our efforts, to protect Scotland and the UK's vital place in the single market and customs union. Short of remaining in the EU – as Scotland voted for by an overwhelming majority – protecting our single market

membership is by far the best compromise, the least damaging option, and the only way to safeguard people's jobs, incomes, and living standards.

With the Brexit clock ticking it is now more important than ever that we have a united and effective opposition, putting differences aside, and working together in the national interest, to hold the UK government to account and retain our single market membership.

The Liberal Democrats, the Green Party, and Plaid Cymru joined the SNP at the summit, and together we committed to providing that strong opposition to a hard Brexit. It was, however, deeply disappointing that Jeremy Corbyn refused to attend and ruled out Labour's involvement.

We know that a parliamentary majority for remaining in the single market is within touching distance if only Labour would get off the fence and get behind cross-party efforts.

Labour have claimed they want a "jobs-first" Brexit that somehow protects our economy, jobs, incomes, and living standards but, the reality is, there is no such thing as a "jobs-first" Brexit that involves terminating our single market membership – these outcomes are incompatible.

It is families, workers, businesses, and farmers that will ultimately pay the price for a hard Brexit - with a drastically restricted international market, lower wages, higher food and fuel prices, and a poorer standard of living.

The Tories and UKIP might be the driving force behind a hard Brexit but by refusing to join cross-party efforts Labour will be just as culpable for the lasting damage it would do to UK jobs and prosperity.

In the remaining weeks and months, I hope the UK government, and Labour Party, will think again, and come to support the only sensible solution to

preventing the biggest threat our economy faces.

Ian Blackford MP is leader of the SNP group at Westminster.

[https://www.snp.org/ian\\_blackford\\_time\\_is\\_running\\_out\\_to\\_prevent\\_an\\_extreme\\_brexit](https://www.snp.org/ian_blackford_time_is_running_out_to_prevent_an_extreme_brexit)

### Read more:

[https://www.snp.org/the\\_single\\_market\\_explained](https://www.snp.org/the_single_market_explained)

[https://www.snp.org/a\\_spirit\\_of\\_scottish\\_assertiveness\\_will\\_fight\\_an\\_extreme\\_brexit](https://www.snp.org/a_spirit_of_scottish_assertiveness_will_fight_an_extreme_brexit)

[https://www.snp.org/scotland\\_brexit\\_pl\\_an\\_what\\_you\\_need\\_to\\_know](https://www.snp.org/scotland_brexit_pl_an_what_you_need_to_know)

We asked Labour to attend our summit on protecting jobs by staying in the Single Market.

**Jeremy Corbyn declined.**

A new poll shows that the vast majority of Scots want all farming and fishing decisions made at Holyrood after Brexit

Source: ScotCen, 2018

## SCOTLAND BECOMES THE FIRST UK NATION TO PASS A LAW ON GENDER BALANCE ON BOARDS

by **Angela Constance** is Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equalities, 29/01/18



Women make up 51 per cent of our population, but they are under-represented in decision-making positions across Scotland, including in the boardroom.

Women continue to be paid less than their male counterparts and reports of sexual harassment and violence in our society keep reminding us that these issues are not going away. This is not acceptable and in 2018, it quite simply should not be the case. Young women growing up in Scotland should not have to accept these things as inevitable.

The Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Bill seeks to redress the under-representation of women on Scotland's public boards, ensuring that women's voices are heard where and when it matters and shape the decisions that are made in Scotland's boardrooms and impact on our services. Scotland's public bodies, colleges and universities are responsible for significant sums of public money and oversee and deliver public services which touch on all aspects of people's lives.

We have made good progress to date - increasing the numbers of women on public boards from 35 per cent in 2007 to

45 per cent today, and last year we saw more women than men being appointed to public boards. Scotland continues to be a better place to be a working woman than elsewhere in the UK.

But this progress doesn't just happen by accident. It has been achieved through the shared ambition and action of all of those involved in making public appointments in Scotland. I'm proud of the change we have made in a relatively short time. That is why it is so important that we lock in these gains and go further.

At its heart this bill is about equality for women. It is about this Parliament using the powers that it has to deliver a fairer, more equal Scotland.

But we know greater diversity in the boardroom also leads to better performance, encouraging new and innovative thinking and leading to better business decisions and governance. In other words, it is the smart thing to do as well as the right thing to do.

Our bill is a significant step forward in ensuring we cement these gains, so that women are properly represented in senior and decision-making positions across Scotland.

Let me be clear that all candidates for public appointments will continue to be appointed on merit. We want the very best people to sit on Scotland's public boards and that means ensuring that we are reaching out and attracting diverse and talented people.

Women need to be encouraged to apply for these positions in the first place. Evidence suggests that women are more likely to doubt their abilities and undersell themselves than men, but the evidence also shows us that when we get women into the process they perform very well.

And by introducing this legal requirement, we will drive change across the public sector, improving recruitment methods and making organisations work harder to find the most talented men and women to sit on our public boards

This bill will make Scotland the only country in the United Kingdom with a statutory gender representation objective for public boards.

This is an important step on our journey towards gender equality in Scotland, towards creating a fairer Scotland, and towards shattering the glass ceiling once and for all. I want this bill to be a catalyst for the equal representation of women in all areas of our society. This year is an important year for women's history. It is 100 years since some women in Britain got the right to vote and women were allowed to stand for election to Parliament. Much has changed for the better in women's lives, but we cannot be complacent.

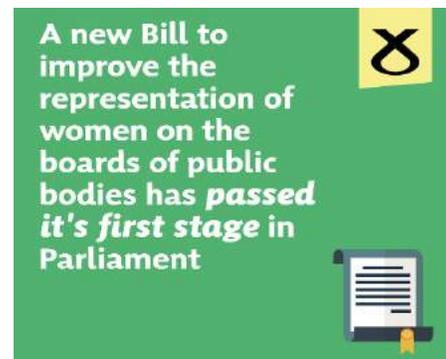
The best way that we can honour the sacrifice and the tenacity of the women who fought so hard for the rights that we enjoy today is to keep believing in and keep fighting for equality for women.

**Read more:**

[Our plan to close the gender pay gap](#)

[A budget for equality](#)

[Our plan for Scotland: equality and human rights for all](#)



## FACT CHECK: THE TORY RECORD ON THE ENVIRONMENT

by Liam Furby, 11/01/18



It's more than a decade since David Cameron hugged a husky and urged people to 'Vote Blue, Go Green' - yet the Tory record on the environment has never matched this rhetoric.

The UK government has now launched a new plan for the environment but on so many issues they're playing catch-up with our approach in Scotland.

Here's how the Tory record on the environment measures up to SNP Scottish Government's.

✓ The First Minister announced in September 2017 that a deposit return scheme would be introduced in Scotland.

✗ The UK government has again failed to commit to a deposit return scheme despite strong public support.

✓ The 5p carrier bag charge was introduced in Scotland in 2014 and applied to large and small retailers from the outset.

✗ A charge on single-use carrier bags was introduced in England in 2015 and is only now being extended to smaller retailers.

✓ Following the most far reaching investigations into unconventional oil and gas of any government, and an extensive public consultation, the Scottish Government has put in place a ban on fracking in Scotland.

✗ The UK government has a track record of supporting and encouraging the use of fracking to extract oil and gas. In England, companies are actively exploring potential onshore oil and gas resources.

✓ The First Minister announced in September 2017 that a new expert panel would be set up to look at measures that can be taken to end the throwaway culture, including a coffee cup levy. And a consultation has been launched on banning plastic cotton buds.

✗ The Tory government has now announced that it will look at further measures to tackle single-use plastic.

✓ In the coming year the Scottish Government will double spending on walking and cycling - spending at least £14.80 per head, more than double the UK rate.

✗ In England, excluding London, spending on walking and cycling is just £6.50 per head.

✓ The Scottish Government will remove the need for new petrol and diesel cars in Scotland by 2032. And we'll make the A9 the UK's first electric highway.

✗ The UK government has promised to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2040 eight years behind the Scottish target.

✓ Scottish Government support for low carbon energy has helped ensure that over 50 per cent of our electricity needs are now generated by renewables. In 2016, Scotland generated 24 per cent of total UK renewable electricity.

✗ The UK government has scrapped support for onshore wind and scaled back support for solar power. As a result, the Green Alliance think-tank expects investment in low carbon energy projects across the UK to fall by 95 per cent over the next three years.

✓ The Scottish Government established the world's first Climate Justice Fund in 2012 - recognising that developed countries that have contributed most to climate change in the past, have a responsibility to support countries that now face the worst impacts.

✗ The UK government has no equivalent Climate Justice Fund.

[https://www.snp.org/fact\\_check\\_the\\_tory\\_record\\_on\\_the\\_environment](https://www.snp.org/fact_check_the_tory_record_on_the_environment)

Read more:

[https://www.snp.org/our\\_plan\\_for\\_scotland\\_global\\_leadership\\_on\\_the\\_environment\\_and\\_climate\\_change](https://www.snp.org/our_plan_for_scotland_global_leadership_on_the_environment_and_climate_change)

[https://www.snp.org/first\\_minister\\_nicola\\_sturgeon\\_speech\\_to\\_the\\_un\\_climate\\_change\\_conference\\_in\\_bonn](https://www.snp.org/first_minister_nicola_sturgeon_speech_to_the_un_climate_change_conference_in_bonn)

[https://www.snp.org/scotland\\_global\\_leadership\\_climate\\_change](https://www.snp.org/scotland_global_leadership_climate_change)



# INDYPOSTERBOY MEMES

“ Nicola Sturgeon will no longer be granted access to Prime Minister Theresa May . . from now on, the SNP leader will only get to deal with Scottish Secretary David Mundell because ministers believe ‘he is at the same level as her’ .”

Scottish Daily Mail 21 July 2017

[Translation: David Mundell MP is now officially Governor-General of the Colony and Protectorate of Scotland]



you **Yes** yet?

Best performing NHS Scotland under funding pressure due to the SNP “devolving Tory austerity and passing the buck”.

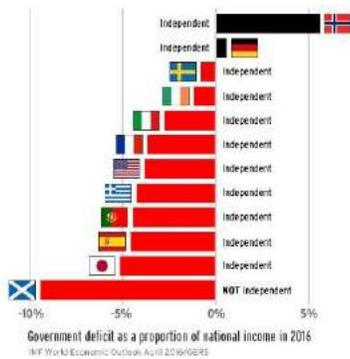
Worst performing NHS in Labour Wales “depends on the block grant which is being cut by the Tories in Westminster”.



A better future for Scotland: decisions made by us, not for us.

**Yes** we can

indyposterboy.scot



One of these countries has its economy run by Westminster.  
Guess which one.

A better future for Scotland: decisions made by us, not for us.

**Yes** we can

indyposterboy.scot

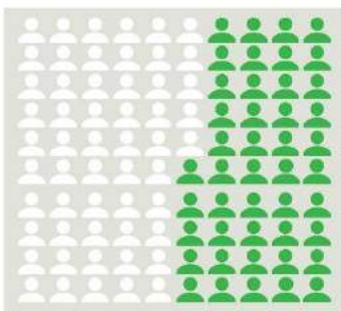


Westminster has just voted to permit them to make changes to the Scotland Act so they can ‘repatriate’ Holyrood powers to Westminster.

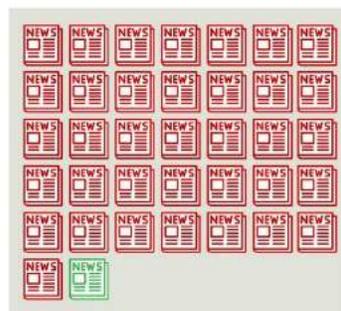
13 Scottish Tory MPs voted in favour.

The dismantling of devolution has begun.

you **Yes** yet?



About 45% of Scots support Independence



97% of Scottish newspapers support the Union

UK Government misses deadline for amendments to Withdrawal Bill affecting devolved countries.

Any amendments to protect Scotland’s position in the Brexit bill will now only be debated in the House of Lords where, of course, there are no SNP representatives.

Unelected Michelle Mone now has more influence than any of our elected MPs.

Lady Moan of Penthouse



you **Yes** yet?

**READ THE NEWS YOU’RE NOT GETTING**  
wingsoverscotland.com derekbateman.scot commonspace.scot thenational.scot

## 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.euoparl.europa.eu/portal/en>

### Independence Sites

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

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

<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk>

<https://wingsoverscotland.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](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

Email to [patrick.johnstone@virgin.net](mailto:patrick.johnstone@virgin.net)

## "KEY DATES"

Day	Date	Event
Wed	17/01/18	Proposals for Constitutional Refresh Circulated to Branches
Fri	02/02/18	Deadline for National Council Resolutions
Sat	03/02/18	Provisional Agenda for National Council Published
Sat	17/02/18	Last day to discuss Constitutional Proposals
Wed	28/02/18	Deadline for National Council Amendments
Sat	03/03/18	NATIONAL COUNCIL
Mon	09/04/18	Deadline for Special Conference Resolutions and Constitution Amendments
Fri	11/05/18	Deadline for Special Conference Amendments
Fri	18/05/18	Final Agenda for Special Conference Published
Fri	08/06/18	SPECIAL CONFERENCE – DAY 1
Sat	09/06/18	SPECIAL CONFERENCE – DAY 2
Fri	29/06/18	Deadline for Annual Conference Resolutions
Fri	13/07/18	Provisional Agenda for Annual Conference Published
Fri	03/08/18	Deadline for Officer Bearer Applications
Fri	31/08/18	Deadline for Annual Conference Amendments
Fri	07/09/18	Long List of Resolutions Published
Fri	14/09/18	Final Agenda for Annual Conference Published
Mon	08/10/18	ANNUAL CONFERENCE – DAY 1
Tue	09/10/18	ANNUAL CONFERENCE – DAY 2
Wed	10/10/18	ANNUAL CONFERENCE – DAY 3
Fri	02/11/18	Deadline for National Council Resolutions
Sat	03/11/18	Provisional Agenda for National Council Published
Wed	28/11/18	Deadline for National Council Amendments
Sat	01/12/18	NATIONAL COUNCIL