The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Minutes of Proceedings

Parliamentary year 1, number 49, Session 7

Meeting of the Parliament

Tuesday 24 November 2026

Note: (DT) signifies a decision taken at Decision Time.

The meeting opened at 2:00pm.

1. Time for Reflection: William More, Head of ACN(UK) in Scotland, Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), led Time for Reflection.

2. Revision to Business Programme: Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Jamie Hepburn), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S7M-02204—That the Parliament agrees to the following revision to the programme of business for—

(a) Tuesday 24 November 2026—

after

followed by First Minister's Questions (Backbench Members)

delete

followed by Ministerial Statement: NHS Simplification

and insert

followed by Ministerial Statement: Independent Review of the Handling of Hepatobiliary Surgery Concerns at NHS Grampian

followed by Ministerial Statement: The UK-EU Summit and Scotland

(b) Wednesday 25 November 2026—

after

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Justice; Health and Care

insert

followed by Ministerial Statement: Supporting Young People into the Labour Market: The Milburn Review

delete

5.30 pm Decision Time

and insert

6.00 pm Decision Time

The motion was agreed to.

3. General Questions: Questions were answered by a Cabinet Secretary and Ministers.

4. First Minister's Questions (Backbench Members): Questions were answered by the First Minister (John Swinney).

5. Ministerial Statement: The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Care (Angela Constance) made a statement and answered questions on Independent Review of the Handling of Hepatobiliary Surgery Concerns at NHS Grampian.

6. Ministerial Statement: The Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Energy (Stephen Gethins) made a statement and answered questions on The UK-EU Summit and Scotland.

7. Trade, Investment and International Engagement: Driving Economic Growth: Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Tourism and Transport (Stephen Flynn) moved S7M-02171—That the Parliament recognises the vital contribution that exports and inward investment make to employment, productivity and creating opportunities for Scottish businesses to access new markets, win contracts and attract international investment; further recognises the value of the practical support provided to companies by organisations, including Scottish Development International and Scotland's enterprise agencies, in reducing barriers to trade and helping businesses turn opportunities into export sales, investment, long-term commercial success and sustainable growth; welcomes the Scottish Government's commitment to build on that progress by simplifying access to export support, improving the targeting of support, strengthening assistance for services exporters, maximising the value of Scotland's international network and ministerial engagement abroad, and establishing a Major Projects Office to support strategic investment projects; supports a renewed focus on the actions required to help more businesses to expand internationally, to protect Scotland's interests and to capitalise on Scotland's established strengths and new opportunities in high-growth sectors across the Scottish economy; further supports an approach to international trade and investment which combines economic opportunities and respect for human rights and uses Scotland's strong trade links to make a constructive contribution to addressing global challenges, including by mainstreaming gender equality and intersectionality across economic policy development and implementation, and agrees that re-joining the EU is the single biggest change that could be made to help Scottish businesses to grow, to create better-paid jobs, to bring down prices and to generate more money for public services.

> **Joe Fagan moved S7M-02171.4—As an amendment to motion S7M-02171 in the name of Stephen Flynn (Trade, Investment and International Engagement**: Driving Economic Growth), insert at end "; notes that growth opportunities for businesses and communities risk being lost in a cluttered

landscape of business support, and calls on the Scottish Government to work with businesses, trade unions and regional partners to refocus enterprise agencies on delivery, innovation and export support, while bringing national economic strategy back into the Scottish Government and delivering regional economic development."

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 86 (including 1 proxy vote), Against 26, Abstentions 0).

Angela Ross moved S7M-02171.5—As an amendment to motion S7M-02171 in the name of Stephen Flynn (Trade, Investment and International Engagement: Driving Economic Growth), leave out from first "further" to end, and insert "notes that, in the last three years, UK GDP has grown by 4.6% compared to 1.7% for Germany and 1.6% for France; further notes that EY reports show that the UK has had the highest foreign direct investment since 2022, and regards this as evidence that Scotland is better off outside the EU; believes that the UK Government's proposed EU deal would directly harm Scottish research into disease-resistant crops at the James Hutton Institute and would prevent the use of the disease-resistant pig developed at the Roslin Institute in Edinburgh; is concerned that 90% of businesses in the UK food sector do not export, but are required to follow the EU rules on labelling and additives; notes that 36% of
food import volumes come from outside the EU, which will now be subject to extra checks and paperwork for EU compliance; expresses concern that the Treasury has not published its calculations underpinning how the deal is financially positive; notes, however, reports that these figures do not include the cost of compliance, and further notes that agriculture trade bodies have estimated that the cost of compliance with EU pesticide rules alone could be as much as £810 million and result in crop yield reductions of up to 16%."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 15, Against 98 (including 1 proxy vote), Abstentions 0).

Patrick Harvie moved S7M-02171.3—As an amendment to motion S7M-02171 in the name of Stephen Flynn (Trade, Investment and International Engagement: Driving Economic Growth), leave out from "exports" to end and insert "the Scottish Government's international engagement makes to the country's economic, social and environmental objectives and to human rights globally; considers that international trade can be a positive force that delivers benefits for all involved, but only if governments make proactive and consistent efforts to prioritise human rights, equality and environmental sustainability by means of both incentives and regulation; believes that Scotland's efforts in this regard must be significantly strengthened, including through far more robust implementation of the programme of boycotts, divestment and sanctions agreed by Parliament in respect of the illegal occupation of Palestine; recognises that foreign direct investment can bring benefits but believes that over-reliance on it also carries risks and is no substitute for domestic economic activity, which contributes to community wealth building; considers the approach being shown by the Scottish and UK governments to AI and hyperscale data centres to be a current example of such a risk, where the economic benefits of investment are exaggerated and the social and environmental costs are being downplayed; agrees that re-joining the

EU is an urgent priority which would benefit Scotland's businesses, people and public finances, but believes that this must be pursued at the same time as reducing the country's reliance on the US, which has pursued unpredictable and irrational trade policy and has proven itself to be an unreliable trade partner."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 15, Against 90 (including 1 proxy vote), Abstentions 8).

Rachael Hamilton moved S7M-02171.2—As an amendment to motion S7M-02171 in the name of Stephen Flynn (Trade, Investment and International Engagement: Driving Economic Growth), leave out from "welcomes" to end and insert "believes that Scotland will only realise its full export and investment potential if it is a competitive place to start, grow and invest in a business; recognises the importance of building on Scotland's strengths in globally competitive sectors, including food and drink, life sciences, technology and energy; calls on the Scottish Government to reduce the tax and regulatory burden on businesses, to improve access to skills and to invest in the infrastructure needed to connect firms to markets; supports efforts to help more Scottish businesses access international opportunities, and believes that economic policy should focus on making Scotland more competitive rather than creating further uncertainty through the pursuit of independence and re-joining the EU."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 27, Against 87 (including 1 proxy vote), Abstentions 0).

David Green moved S7M-02171.1—As an amendment to motion S7M-02171 in the name of Stephen Flynn (Trade, Investment and International Engagement: Driving Economic Growth), insert at end "; notes with concern that Scotland's goods exports overall have decreased by 16% since 2018, and that those to the EU have decreased by 24% over the same period; recognises the importance of, and the continued barriers to, increasing Scotland's services exports; calls on the Scottish Government to maximise economic opportunities in all parts of Scotland, including rural and island communities; notes the recommendation of the Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee that the Scottish Government should confirm how many of the locations involved in its commitment to expand the Scotland House network to more than 40 locations will be new rather than existing Scottish Government or Scottish Development International locations, and further notes the Committee's recommendation that any expansion be informed by a clear evidence base and consideration of the approach to implementation, strategic objectives, appropriate delivery models and relevant partners."

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 87 (including 1 proxy vote), Against 27, Abstentions 0).

The motion, as amended, was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 73 (including 1 proxy vote), Against 41, Abstentions 0).

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament recognises the vital contribution that exports and inward investment make to employment, productivity and creating opportunities for Scottish businesses to access new markets, win contracts and attract

international investment; further recognises the value of the practical support provided to companies by organisations, including Scottish Development International and Scotland's enterprise agencies, in reducing barriers to trade and helping businesses turn opportunities into export sales, investment, long-term commercial success and sustainable growth; welcomes the Scottish Government's commitment to build on that progress by simplifying access to export support, improving the targeting of support, strengthening assistance for services exporters, maximising the value of Scotland's international network and ministerial engagement abroad, and establishing a Major Projects Office to support strategic investment projects; supports a renewed focus on the actions required to help more businesses to expand internationally, to protect Scotland's interests and to capitalise on Scotland's established strengths and new opportunities in high-growth sectors across the Scottish economy; further supports an approach to international trade and investment which combines economic opportunities and respect for human rights and uses Scotland's strong trade links to make a constructive contribution to addressing global challenges, including by mainstreaming gender equality and intersectionality across economic policy development and implementation; agrees that re-joining the EU is the single biggest change that could be made to help Scottish businesses to grow, to create better-paid jobs, to bring down prices and to generate more money for public services; notes that growth opportunities for businesses and communities risk being lost in a cluttered landscape of business support; calls on the Scottish Government to work with businesses, trade unions and regional partners to refocus enterprise agencies on delivery, innovation and export support, while bringing national economic strategy back into the Scottish Government and delivering regional economic development; notes with concern that Scotland's goods exports overall have decreased by 16% since 2018, and that those to the EU have decreased by 24% over the same period; recognises the importance of, and the continued barriers to, increasing Scotland's services exports; calls on the Scottish Government to maximise economic opportunities in all parts of Scotland, including rural and island communities; notes the recommendation of the Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee that the Scottish Government should confirm how many of the locations involved in its commitment to expand the Scotland House network to more than 40 locations will be new rather than existing Scottish Government or Scottish Development International locations, and further notes the Committee's recommendation that any expansion be informed by a clear evidence base and consideration of the approach to implementation, strategic objectives, appropriate delivery models and relevant partners.

8. Decision Time: The Parliament took decisions on item 7 as noted above.

9. The Welcome to School Bag Initiative: The Parliament debated S7M-01901 in the name of Meghan Gallacher—That the Parliament notes with concern the Scottish Government's decision to introduce its initiative, the Welcome to School Bag, at an estimated cost to the public purse of £2.7 million over two years; understands that this represents an estimated cost of £28 per pupil, with the unit cost reflecting the Scottish Government's procurement procedures; further understands that many primary schools, including in Central Scotland and Lothians West, are facing increasing financial pressures and are struggling to provide pupils with essential

classroom resources as a result of reducing classroom budgets; believes that the £2.7 million allocated to this initiative could instead be directed towards teacher budgets, providing approximately £1,500 for every primary school to spend on essential classroom supplies and learning materials; condemns the Scottish Government for prioritising what it sees as a headline-grabbing initiative over practical needs of schools when, it believes, there is no clear evidence to demonstrate that this initiative will improve educational outcomes or help close the attainment gap; considers that funding should be directed towards initiatives that deliver results for pupils and teachers, rather than costly schemes whose educational impact remains unproven, and notes the calls on the Scottish Government to urgently reconsider the initiative, redirect funding towards primary school classroom budgets, ensure that teachers have access to resources and prioritise measures that will raise attainment, improve literacy and numeracy and deliver better educational outcomes for Scotland's primary school pupils.

The meeting closed at 6:27pm.

David McGill

Clerk of the Parliament

25 November 2026

Appendix

(Note: this Appendix does not form part of the Minutes)

Subordinate Legislation

Subject to affirmative procedure

The following instrument was laid before the Parliament on 23 November 2026 and is subject to the affirmative procedure—

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisations (Removal from Register and Dissolution) Amendment Regulations 2027
(SSI 2026/Draft)
laid under section 103(5)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005

Legislative Consent Memorandum

The following memorandum was lodged on 20 November 2026—

Gillian Martin, Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Rural Affairs: Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Energy Independence Bill (UK Parliament legislation) (LCM-S7-13)

Other Documents

The following documents were laid before the Parliament on 23 November 2026 and are not subject to parliamentary procedure—

Disclosure Scotland Annual Report and Accounts April 2025 to March 2026 (SG/2026/278) laid
under section 20 of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26 (SG/2026/167) laid under section 26 of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000

Scottish Housing Regulator - Annual Performance Report & Accounts 2025/26 (SG/2026/189) laid
under section 22(5) of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000

Committee Reports

The following reports were published on 20 November 2026—

Education and Gaelic Committee, 3rd Report, 2026 (Session 7): The Qualifications Scotland and His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland (Miscellaneous Listings) Regulations 2026 [draft] (SP Paper 50)

Health, Care and Sport Committee, 2nd Report, 2026 (Session 7): Report on the Legislative Consent Memorandum and supplementary Legislative Consent

Memorandum for the Health Bill (UK Parliament legislation) (SP Paper 51).

Social Justice, Housing and Local Government Committee, 2nd Report, 2026 (Session 7): The Visitor Levy (Amendment of Returns and Miscellaneous Amendment) (Scotland) Regulations 2026 [draft] (SP Paper 52).

The following report was published on 23 November 2026—

Finance and Public Administration Committee, 5th Report, 2026 (Session 7): Report on Commissioner nominees to the Scottish Fiscal Commission (SP Paper 53)

The following report was published on 24 November 2026—

Criminal Justice Committee, 4th Report, 2026 (Session 7): Police Conduct Regulations (SP Paper 55)

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