The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Minutes of Proceedings

Parliamentary year 1, number 39, Session 7

Meeting of the Parliament

Thursday 29 October 2026

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

The meeting opened at 1:30pm.

1. General Questions: Questions were answered by Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers.

2. First Minister's Questions (Party Leaders): Questions were answered by the First Minister (John Swinney)

3. Strengthening Scotland's Public Health Approach to Preventing Alcohol and Drug Deaths: Minister for Mental Wellbeing, Public Health, Sport, Alcohol and Drugs (Maree Todd) moved S7M-01766—That the Parliament deeply regrets every life lost through alcohol and drugs and offers its sincere condolences to all those who have lost a loved one; agrees that the tragic numbers of deaths from alcohol and drugs in Scotland are preventable and require the Scottish Government to use every lever available to save and improve lives; affirms Scotland's commitment to a public health and human-rights based approach; supports the expansion of evidence-based harm reduction initiatives as well as the expansion of recovery and rehabilitation both within residential settings and in communities themselves; agrees that an urgent response is required to tackle dangerously potent synthetic opioids and other emerging synthetic drug threats, including through optimising Scotland's surveillance system and early warning response; further agrees that the Scottish Government should continue to work constructively with the UK Government on substance use policy, noting that the 1971 Misuse of Drugs Act currently limits the ability to address all of the challenges faced in Scotland with a full public health approach, and ultimately recognises the crucial role that families play in the support and recovery of those using substances, and agrees, therefore, to work collectively across the Chamber to ensure that the voices of those with lived experience and their families are at the heart of decisions taken.

> Jacqueline Baillie moved S7M-01766.2—As an amendment to motion S7M-01766 in the name of Maree Todd (Strengthening Scotland's Public Health Approach to Preventing Alcohol and Drug Deaths), leave out from "affirms" to "public health approach" and insert "regrets that over 7,000 lives have been lost to drugs since the Scottish Government declared a public health emergency, with drug-related deaths rising in 2025; affirms Scotland's commitment to a

public health and human-rights based approach; supports the expansion of evidence-based harm reduction initiatives as well as the expansion of recovery and rehabilitation both within residential settings and in communities themselves; agrees that an urgent response is required to tackle dangerously potent synthetic opioids and other emerging synthetic drug threats, including through optimising Scotland's surveillance system and early warning response; further agrees that the Scottish Government should continue to work constructively with the UK Government on substance use policy and tackling the drug gangs, as well as simplifying oversight of substance misuse services; agrees that the Scottish Government should recoup the profits from minimum unit pricing from large retailers to fund frontline rehabilitation services"

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 22, Against 91, Abstentions 0).

Thomas Kerr moved S7M-01766.4—As an amendment to motion S7M-01766 in the name of Maree Todd (Strengthening Scotland's Public Health Approach to Preventing Alcohol and Drug Deaths), insert at end "; notes that the drug-misuse death rate, as reported by the National Records of Scotland, is over 10 times higher in the most deprived areas than in the least deprived areas; regards this as evidence that working-class communities are disproportionately affected by drug-related harm, and agrees that the right to recovery must be considered as part of the efforts to address substance abuse."

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 36, Against 18, Abstentions 59).

Kayleigh Kinross-O'Neill moved S7M-01766.5—As an amendment to motion S7M-01766 in the name of Maree Todd (Strengthening Scotland's Public Health Approach to Preventing Alcohol and Drug Deaths), insert at end ", and supports the further rollout of safe consumption rooms to other local authority areas as a health-saving intervention."

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 76, Against 24, Abstentions 14).

Miles Briggs moved S7M-01766.3—As an amendment to motion S7M-01766 in the name of Maree Todd (Strengthening Scotland's Public Health Approach to Preventing Alcohol and Drug Deaths), leave out from "further agrees" to end and insert "recognises that preventing alcohol and drug deaths requires accessible treatment, effective public health measures and a strong justice response; expresses serious concern at the Scottish Government's continuing shortcomings in access to treatment; regrets that the Right to Addiction Recovery (Scotland) Bill was not passed and calls for a legal right to timely and clinically appropriate treatment, backed by funded detoxification, residential rehabilitation, community recovery and aftercare; calls for a funded alcohol prevention and treatment plan with published targets and support for effective clinical harm reduction, alongside clear routes into recovery; further calls on the Scottish Government to review the effectiveness of the current methadone treatment provision and to report regularly to Parliament on access to treatment, recovery outcomes and the number of individuals assessed for rehabilitation who are not subsequently admitted to a programme, and agrees that the Scottish Government must use its existing powers, work constructively with the

UK Government and involve people affected by addiction, their families and local communities in decisions."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 33, Against 67, Abstentions 14).

Adam Harley moved S7M-01766.1—As an amendment to motion S7M-01766 in the name of Maree Todd (Strengthening Scotland's Public Health Approach to Preventing Alcohol and Drug Deaths), insert at end "; believes that robust harm reduction measures and rehabilitation services are both vital in saving lives; supports the continued development and evaluation of safer consumption facilities, and calls for predictable multi-year funding for rehabilitation services; supports the expansion of evidence-based medication-assisted treatment, including long-acting opioid substitution therapies where clinically appropriate; recognises the particular challenges faced by individuals experiencing both substance use and mental health problems, calls for improved access to integrated dual-diagnosis support, and acknowledges the often hidden role of families as unpaid carers, advocates and sources of support, recognising the need for appropriate support for families in their own right."

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 88, Against 24, Abstentions 2).

The motion, as amended, was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 76, Against 24, Abstentions 14).

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament deeply regrets every life lost through alcohol and drugs and offers its sincere condolences to all those who have lost a loved one; agrees that the tragic numbers of deaths from alcohol and drugs in Scotland are preventable and require the Scottish Government to use every lever available to save and improve lives; affirms Scotland's commitment to a public health and human-rights based approach; supports the expansion of evidence-based harm reduction initiatives as well as the expansion of recovery and rehabilitation both within residential settings and in communities themselves; agrees that an urgent response is required to tackle dangerously potent synthetic opioids and other emerging synthetic drug threats, including through optimising Scotland's surveillance system and early warning response; further agrees that the Scottish Government should continue to work constructively with the UK Government on substance use policy, noting that the 1971 Misuse of Drugs Act currently limits the ability to address all of the challenges faced in Scotland with a full public health approach, and ultimately recognises the crucial role that families play in the support and recovery of those using substances; agrees, therefore, to work collectively across the Chamber to ensure that the voices of those with lived experience and their families are at the heart of decisions taken; notes that the drug-misuse death rate, as reported by the National Records of Scotland, is over 10 times higher in the most deprived areas than in the least deprived areas; regards this as evidence that working-class communities are disproportionately affected by drug-related harm; agrees that the right to recovery must be considered as part of the efforts to address substance abuse; supports the further rollout of safe consumption rooms to other local authority areas as a health-saving intervention; believes that robust harm reduction

measures and rehabilitation services are both vital in saving lives; supports the continued development and evaluation of safer consumption facilities, and calls for predictable multi-year funding for rehabilitation services; supports the expansion of evidence-based medication-assisted treatment, including long-acting opioid substitution therapies where clinically appropriate; recognises the particular challenges faced by individuals experiencing both substance use and mental health problems, calls for improved access to integrated dual-diagnosis support, and acknowledges the often hidden role of families as unpaid carers, advocates and sources of support, recognising the need for appropriate support for families in their own right.

4. Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme Resolution: Maggie Chapman, on behalf of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, moved S7M-01777—That the Parliament, in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 81(2) and (5)(b) and 83(5) of the Scotland Act 1998, determines that the Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme, which was agreed to by resolution of the Parliament on 19 March 2026, be amended as follows—

(a) Annex A: Groups of constituencies for entitlement to accommodation in Edinburgh,

(i) Group two

delete

Stirling

insert

Stirling (excluding Ward 1 Trossachs and Teith)

(ii) Group three

after

Shetland Islands

insert

Stirling (only Ward 1 Trossachs and Teith)

The motion was agreed to (DT).

5. Decision Time: The Parliament took decisions on items 3 and 4 as noted above.

6. Transport Connectivity in Rural Scotland: The Parliament debated S7M-01204 in the name of Tim Eagle—That the Parliament recognises the importance of good transport connectivity to the long-term sustainability and resilience of rural and island communities across Scotland; believes that people are less likely to live, work, raise families and invest in rural areas when reliable connections to employment, education, healthcare and essential services cannot be guaranteed; notes with concern the growing number of rural bridges that are closed, restricted or in need of significant repair, including Cloddach Bridge, Arthur's Bridge, the Spey Viaduct and other bridges across Moray and the wider Highlands and Islands region; believes that the closure or prolonged restriction of such infrastructure can have a disproportionate

impact on rural communities; notes the calls on the Scottish Government to create a dedicated National Bridge Restoration Fund to allow local authorities to apply for funding to fix these vital links; acknowledges the £2 bus fare cap pledge in the Highlands and Islands, but believes that affordable fares are of limited benefit where bus services are infrequent, unreliable or have been withdrawn; notes the calls on the Scottish Government to establish a Small Town and Rural Bus Services Fund that would allow local authorities to apply for additional funding to keep bus routes open; recognises the vital role of air services in connecting remote and island communities; welcomes the launch of Project SEAN by Bristow, in partnership with HIAL, HITRANS and other organisations, which will develop electric aviation infrastructure across the Highlands and Islands; believes that new technologies could support the development of future passenger, NHS, cargo and other essential services to communities with poor connectivity; recognises the importance of delivering long-promised improvements to Scotland's strategic road network, including the dualling of the A9 and A96 and a permanent solution to the A83 Rest and Be Thankful; believes that repeated delays, reviews and further rounds of planning cannot substitute for delivery, and notes the calls on the Scottish Government to match its commitments on tackling rural depopulation with the funding and action necessary to deliver the transport infrastructure and services that rural Scotland needs to remain populated, prosperous and connected.

7. Motion without notice: Tim Eagle moved without notice that, under Rule 8.14.3, the debate be extended by up to 30 minutes.

The motion was agreed to.

The meeting closed at 6:47pm.

David McGill

Clerk of the Parliament

29 October 2026

Appendix

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

Subordinate Legislation

Subject to negative procedure

The following instruments were laid before the Parliament on 29 October 2026 and are subject to the negative procedure—

Parking Attendants (Wearing of Uniforms) (Dumfries and Galloway Council) Regulations 2026 (SSI 2026/295)
laid under Section 134(6) of the Road Traffic Regulation 1984 Act.

Road Traffic (Permitted Parking Area and Special Parking Area) (Dumfries and Galloway Council) Designation Order 2026 (SSI 2026/296)
laid under paragraph 4 of schedule 3 of the Road Traffic Act 1991.

Not subject to any parliamentary procedure

The following instrument was laid before the Parliament on 29 October 2026 and is not subject to any parliamentary procedure—

Criminal Justice Modernisation and Abusive Domestic Behaviour Reviews (Scotland) Act 2025 (Commencement No. 2) Regulations 2026 (SSI 2026/294 (C. 34))
laid under section 30(2) of the Interpretation and Legislative Reform (Scotland) Act 2010.

Other Documents

The following documents were laid before the Parliament on 29 October 2026 and are not subject to parliamentary procedure—

Annual Report (2025) of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner - Statement by the Prime Minister on 29 October 2026 (SG/2026/139) laid
under section 234(8) of the Investigatory Powers Act (IPA) 2016

Annual Report of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner 2025 (SG/2026/138)
laid under section 234(6) & (8) of the Investigatory Powers Act (IPA) 2016

Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland Annual Report 2025/26 (CES/2026/01) laid under section 25(1) of the Scottish Parliamentary Commissions and Commissioners etc. Act 2010 as amended.

Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB): Report of the trustees and accounts for the year 01 January 2025 to 31 December 2025 (SG/2026/122) laid
under Section 8(4) of the Industrial Training Act 1982

Glasgow Low Emission Zone Annual Report 2026 (GCC/2026/01) laid
under Section 29(1) of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019

Scottish Parliamentary Pension Scheme Annual Accounts and Report 2025/26

(SPCPF/2026/01) laid
under Schedule 1, Part S, Rule 102 (2) (b) of the Scottish Parliamentary Pensions Act 2009

Committee Reports

The following reports were published on 29 October 2026—

Economy, Tourism and Energy Committee, 6th Report, 2026 (Session 7): Report on the supplementary Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Sporting Events Bill (UK Parliament Legislation) (SP Paper 32)

Finance and Public Administration Committee, 2nd Report, 2026 (Session 7): Supplementary Legislative Consent Memorandum (No.2) on the Public Office (Accountability) Bill (UK Parliament legislation)

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