



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 5, No. 89, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Wednesday 4 March 2026

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

The meeting opened at 2.00 pm.

1. Portfolio Questions: Questions on Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands, and then on, Health and Social Care were answered by Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers.

2. Judging the Scottish Government on its Education Record: Willie Rennie moved S6M-20956—That the Parliament notes that since 2016, the Scottish Government's key commitments and targets on education have either been missed or abandoned; further notes that these include free laptops for all pupils, free school meals for all pupils up to P7, 3,500 more teachers, reduced class contact time for teachers and the closing of the poverty-related educational attainment gap by 2026; believes that abandoning or missing these important targets and commitments has had a real impact on pupils, teachers and parents; further believes that the Scottish Government has let Scottish education down with rising levels of classroom violence, a lack of additional support for pupils and record numbers of recently qualified teachers leaving the profession; notes that teachers are once again considering industrial action, and asserts that Scotland and Scottish education deserve better.

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (Jenny Gilruth) moved amendment S6M-20956.3—

As an amendment to S6M-20956 in the name of Willie Rennie (Judging the Scottish Government on its Education Record), leave out from first "notes" to end and insert "welcomes the passing of the 2026-27 Budget, following a deal reached with the Scottish Liberal Democrats, which will deliver over £4.8 billion

investment for Scottish education, including up to £200 million to close the poverty-related attainment gap, building on December 2025's Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) data, which demonstrated record levels of literacy and numeracy in Scotland's primary schools and data from February 2026, which recorded the joint second highest level of school leavers going on to positive destinations on record; recognises that the Budget will further expand the provision of free breakfast clubs and free school meals to reduce the poverty-related attainment gap, building on the 2025-26 Budget deal reached with the Scottish Green Party to expand free school meals in secondary schools; welcomes the continuation of extra funding for pupils with additional support needs (ASN) within the 2026-27 Budget, and looks forward to the publication of the cross-party commissioned-ASN review early in March 2026, and believes fundamentally that Scotland's teachers, pupil support staff, parents, carers and pupils deserve the gratitude of the Parliament for their hard work and dedication every day."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 60, Against 60, Abstentions 0 – by casting vote).

Miles Briggs moved amendment S6M-20956.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-20956 in the name of Willie Rennie (Judging the Scottish Government on its Education Record), leave out from "further believes" to end and insert "recognises that Scotland has the highest rate of violent injuries to school staff in the UK and that the Scottish Government has failed to take meaningful action to protect pupils and teachers; notes with concern the high levels of work-related stress reported across the profession; further notes the record number of newly qualified teachers leaving the profession, and believes that, by any reasonable measure, the Scottish Government has failed Scotland's children and that this failure should be a source of shame."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 29, Against 66, Abstentions 25).

Paul O'Kane moved amendment S6M-20956.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-20956 in the name of Willie Rennie (Judging the Scottish Government on its Education Record), insert at end "and that effort should be made to reverse the decline in Scottish scores in international league tables, which has been seen since 2012."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 54, Against 67, Abstentions 0).

The motion was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 59, Against 61, Abstentions 0).

3. Fixing Scotland's Ferry Fiasco: Jamie Greene moved S6M-20957—That the Parliament believes that many of Scotland's island and coastal communities have been let down by the Scottish Government and have paid the price for the

failure of the Scottish Ministers to provide them with the lifeline ferries they need; recognises that this has had an impact on businesses, livelihoods and local economies; notes that whilst the Scottish Government extended the Islands Business Resilience Fund, there are many impacted coastal communities, such as Dunoon and Ardrossan, where local businesses are not receiving compensation and calls on the Scottish Government to rectify this; notes with frustration that the delivery of the MV Glen Rosa has been delayed by another six months until late 2026 and that the MV Glen Sannox required months of repairs; believes that taxpayers, islanders and workers at Ferguson Marine have all been let down over this ongoing fiasco and expresses deep disappointment that no minister has ever taken responsibility by resigning, and further believes that Scotland's island and coastal communities deserve better and that new requirements to replace ageing vessels are needed alongside a rolling 30-year strategy for ferries and port infrastructure so that no community is ever left without a viable lifeline service.

The Cabinet Secretary for Transport (Fiona Hyslop) moved amendment S6M-20957.3—

As an amendment to motion S6M-20957 in the name of Jamie Greene (Fixing Scotland's Ferry Fiasco), leave out from first "believes" to end and insert "recognises the challenges that island communities have faced with disruptions and the need to give them reliable and resilient services; supports the announcements made by the Scottish Government on 3 March 2026 of the conclusion of the purchase of Ardrossan Harbour, the proposal to directly award two vessels for the Small Vessel Replacement Programme to Ferguson Marine, the competitive tender for the replacement for the MV Lord of the Isles, funding for the Port Ellen redevelopment on Islay, and that peak fares for islanders on NorthLink ferry services will be removed on 24 March 2026; notes that, with 11 vessels currently being built and with the recent arrival of MV Isle of Islay, one third of the entire CalMac fleet is being replaced, and further notes that the Island Connectivity Plan Vessels and Ports Plan sets out a long-term investment programme to 2045, and that community needs assessments, with community engagement at their heart, will shape these investments in ferries and ports for decades to come."

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 66, Against 53, Abstentions 1).

Sue Webber moved amendment S6M-20957.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-20957 in the name of Jamie Greene (Fixing Scotland's Ferry Fiasco), insert at end "; notes that the combined costs of the MV Glen Sannox and MV Glen Rosa has reached almost £500 million; acknowledges the Scottish Government's announcements of four direct awards to Ferguson Marine, a programme to upgrade the yard, and the intention to return the yard to the private sector; urges ministers to outline how these new vessels will be delivered on time and on budget; notes the Scottish Government's plan to purchase Ardrossan Harbour, and urges ministers to regularly update communities on when the purchase and upgrade of the harbour will be completed; further notes that the cost to charter the MV Alfred

has reached £35 million, more than double the cost for Pentland Ferries to build the vessel, and that this cost will increase now that the charter has been extended; recognises that the public services and local economies of island and coastal communities have been hindered by the Scottish Government's mismanagement of the ferry network through repeated timetable changes, cancelled sailings and the lack of a resilience vessel, and calls on the Scottish Government to outline how it will hold ferry service providers to account to ensure that they deliver for island and coastal communities."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 52, Against 66, Abstentions 2).

Rhoda Grant moved amendment S6M-20957.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-20957 in the name of Jamie Greene (Fixing Scotland's Ferry Fiasco), insert at end "; notes that disruption to ferry timetables is ongoing and continues to impact island communities; agrees that communities must receive support to deal with the economic and social impacts of disruption; calls for local representation ferry agency boards so that the needs of island communities and workers are at the heart of decision making; understands that the root cause of the ferry fiasco is the failure to invest in the ferry fleet and replace ageing vessels, and calls on the Scottish Government to have a rolling programme to replace the fleet going forward."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 53, Against 66, Abstentions 1).

The motion, as amended, was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 85, Against 33, Abstentions 1).

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament recognises the challenges that island communities have faced with disruptions and the need to give them reliable and resilient services; supports the announcements made by the Scottish Government on 3 March 2026 of the conclusion of the purchase of Ardrossan Harbour, the proposal to directly award two vessels for the Small Vessel Replacement Programme to Ferguson Marine, the competitive tender for the replacement for the MV Lord of the Isles, funding for the Port Ellen redevelopment on Islay, and that peak fares for islanders on NorthLink ferry services will be removed on 24 March 2026; notes that, with 11 vessels currently being built and with the recent arrival of MV Isle of Islay, one third of the entire CalMac fleet is being replaced, and further notes that the Island Connectivity Plan Vessels and Ports Plan sets out a long-term investment programme to 2045, and that community needs assessments, with community engagement at their heart, will shape these investments in ferries and ports for decades to come.

4. Business Programme: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-20970—That the Parliament –

(a) the following programme of –

Tuesday 10 March 2026

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

10.00 pm Decision Time

Wednesday 11 March 2026

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Constitution, External Affairs and Culture, and Parliamentary Business; Justice and Home Affairs

followed by Ministerial Statement: Skye House: Progress and Assurance

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Crofting and Scottish Land Court Bill

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

8.00 pm Decision Time

Thursday 12 March 2026

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

followed by Members' Business

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Education and Skills

followed by Ministerial Statement: Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Building Safety Levy (Scotland) Bill

followed by Business Motions

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Greyhound Racing (Offences) (Scotland) Bill

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.25 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 17 March 2026

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Non-surgical Procedures and Functions of Medical Reviewers (Scotland) Bill

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

8.00 pm Decision Time

Wednesday 18 March 2026

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Deputy First Minister Responsibilities, Economy and Gaelic; Finance and Local Government

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

10.00 pm Decision Time

Thursday 19 March 2026

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

followed by Members' Business

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body Questions

2.15 pm Portfolio Questions: Climate Action and Energy, and Transport

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Restraint and Seclusion in Schools (Scotland) Bill

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Visitor Levy (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill

followed by Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body Motion: Amendments to the Scottish Parliament Salaries Scheme

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

6.20 pm Decision Time

(b) that, for the purposes of Portfolio Questions in the week beginning 9 March 2026, in rule 13.7.3, after the word "except" the words "to the extent to which the Presiding Officer considers that the questions are on the same or similar subject matter or" are inserted.

The motion was agreed to.

5. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-20971—That the Parliament agrees that the Marine Licensing (Exempted Activities) (Scottish Inshore Region) Amendment Order 2026 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

6. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-20972—That the Parliament agrees that the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Offshore Wind) (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Scotland) Regulations 2026 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 92, Against 28, Abstentions 0).

7. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-20973—That the Parliament agrees that the National Bus Travel Concession Schemes (Miscellaneous Amendment) (Scotland) (No. 2) Order 2026 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

8. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-20974—That the Parliament agrees that the Budget (Scotland) Act 2025 Amendment Regulations 2026 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

9. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-20975—That the Parliament agrees that the Legal Aid and Advice and Assistance (Fees) (Miscellaneous Amendment) (Scotland) Regulations 2026 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

10. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-20976—That the Parliament agrees that the Care Home Services (Visits to and by Care Home Residents) (Scotland) Regulations 2026 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

11. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-20977—That the Parliament agrees that the Community Care (Personal Care and Nursing Care) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2026 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

12. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-20978—That the Parliament agrees that the Early Removal of Prisoners from the United Kingdom (Amendment of Specified Time Periods) (Scotland) Order 2026 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

13. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-20979—That the Parliament agrees that the Social Security Up-rating (Scotland) Order 2026 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

14. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-20980—That the Parliament agrees that the Social Security (Up-rating) (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Scotland) Regulations 2026 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

15. Decision Time: The Parliament took decisions on items 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 as noted above.

16. Banking Charges for Charities and Not-for-profit Organisations: The Parliament debated S6M-19214 in the name of Jackie Dunbar—That the Parliament expresses its concern that a reported increasing number of banks have introduced banking charges for small charities, community groups, community councils and other not-for-profit organisations; recognises what it sees as the immense work done in communities across Scotland, including across Aberdeen Donside, by these groups, many of which operate on tight budgets and are being affected by such banking charges; believes that most people are still feeling the consequences of having to bail out banks following the 2008 financial crisis and that banks that benefitted from a bail out now levying banking charges on community groups is distasteful and hinders the work of these groups, and notes the view that banks should allow community groups to use their funds for the purposes which they were gathered for, instead of bolstering the profits of banks.

The meeting closed at 6.09 pm.

David McGill
Clerk of the Parliament
4 March 2026

Appendix

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

Committee Reports

The following report was published on 3 March 2026—

Health, Social Care and Sport Committee, 11th Report, 2026 (Session 6):
Health, Social Care and Sport Committee Report on the Draft Climate Change
Plan (SP Paper 1035)

The following reports were published on 4 March 2026—

Criminal Justice Committee, 6th Report, 2026 (Session 6): Report on the
Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exclusions and Exceptions) (Domestic
Homicide and Suicide Reviews) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2026 [draft]
(SP Paper 1038)

Criminal Justice Committee, 7th Report, 2026 (Session 6): Report on the third
supplementary Legislative Consent Memorandum for the Crime and Policing
Bill (UK Parliament legislation) (SP Paper 1039)

Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee, 24th Report, 2026 (Session
6): Delegated powers in the Crofting and Scottish Land Court Bill (as
amended at Stage 2) (SP Paper 1040)

Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee, 9th Report,
2026 (Session 6): Subordinate legislation considered by the Standards,
Procedures and Public Appointments Committee on 26 February 2026 (SP
Paper 1042)

Health, Social Care and Sport Committee, 12th Report, 2026 (Session 6): The
Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 (Licensing of Skin Piercing and
Tattooing) Amendment Order 2026 [draft] (SP Paper 1043)

Other Documents

The following document was laid before the Parliament on 4 March 2026 and is not
subject to parliamentary procedure—

HM Chief Inspector's Annual Report 2024-25 (SG/2026/50) laid under Section
7(5) of the Prisons (Scotland) Act 1989

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