



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 5, No. 98, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Tuesday 24 March 2026

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

The meeting opened at 10.00 am.

1. Sport and Activity as a Force for Good: The Parliament debated (S6M-20497 in the name of Brian Whittle—That the Parliament recognises the importance of sport and activity as a force for good that goes beyond just physical health; considers that they have a significant impact on mental health, as well as contributing to community and national cohesion and wellbeing; believes that sport breaks down barriers of colour, race, religion and creed by bringing individuals and communities together through a common shared interest and passion; recognises that, by promoting sport and activity, the Scottish Government can positively impact on confidence, resilience and aspiration which, in turn, can positively impact on education and benefit the economy, and notes the view that the Scottish Government should do everything that it can to make sport and activity available for all, in the South Scotland region and across the country, irrespective of personal circumstances.

2. Motion without Notice: Brian Whittle moved without notice that, under Rule 8.14.3, the debate be extended by up to 30 minutes.

The motion was agreed to.

3. Animal Welfare Sentencing and Public Protection: The Parliament debated Christine Grahame in the name of S6M-20603—That the Parliament recognises what it sees as the serious harm caused by animal cruelty, neglect and illegal breeding; notes concerns raised by animal welfare organisations regarding the consistency and proportionality of sentencing in animal welfare cases; understands

that many cases involving the welfare of pets and farm animals are dealt with under summary procedure, limiting the penalties available under the Animals and Wildlife (Penalties, Protections and Powers) (Scotland) Act 2020; notes what it sees as the lack of specific sentencing guidelines covering these offences; further notes the view that clearer guidance and greater awareness of available powers would support more consistent sentencing that reflects the severity of the crimes; acknowledges calls for stronger monitoring and enforcement of disqualification orders, including consideration of a national animal offenders register to improve information sharing between agencies, and notes the importance of continued partnership working between the Scottish Government, justice partners, the Scottish Sentencing Council, Police Scotland and animal welfare organisations to support effective sentencing and protection for animals and the public in Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale and across the country.

4. Time for Reflection: Ellie Craig MSYP, led Time for Reflection.

5. Topical Questions: Questions were answered by Ministers.

6. Ministerial Statement: The Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Energy (Gillian Martin) made a statement and answered questions on Scotland's Climate Change Plan: 2026-2040.

7. Restraint and Seclusion in Schools (Scotland) Bill: Daniel Johnson moved S6M-21120—That the Parliament agrees that the Restraint and Seclusion in Schools (Scotland) Bill be passed.

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 121, Against 0, Abstentions 0).

8. Visitor Levy (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill: The Minister for Public Finance (Ivan McKee) moved S6M-21103—That the Parliament agrees that the Visitor Levy (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill be passed.

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 119, Against 0, Abstentions 1).

9. Crofting and Scottish Land Court Bill: The Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity (Jim Fairlie) moved S6M-21104—That the Parliament agrees that the Crofting and Scottish Land Court Bill be passed.

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 119, Against 0, Abstentions 0).

10. Crime and Policing Bill - UK Legislation: The Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs (Angela Constance) moved S6M-21179—That the Parliament agrees that the relevant provisions of the Crime and Policing Bill, introduced in the House of Commons on 25 February 2025, and subsequently amended, relating to clauses 15 to 29 and schedule 4 (online advertising etc of unlawful weapons: civil penalties), 31 (offensive weapons), 35, 37 and 38 to 40 (remote sale of crossbows and knives), 44 (duty to report bulk sale of knives), 50 and 51 (offence of child criminal exploitation), 66 and schedule 7 (child criminal exploitation prevention orders: Scotland), 67 to 69 and part 2 of schedule 9 (cuckooing), 76 (child sexual abuse image generators: Scotland), 78 (possession of advice or guidance about

creating child sexual abuse or CSA images), 106 (pornographic images of strangulation or suffocation), 110 and 111 (technology testing defence), 117 to 121, 124(1), 125 and 126 and schedule 14 (management of sex offenders), 148 and 149 (offences relating to electronic devices for use in vehicle theft), 167 (powers for British Transport Police), 173 to 180 and schedule 18 (remotely stored electronic data), 181 (access to driver licensing information), 192 (proceeds of crime: expenses protections), 208 to 216 and schedule 24 (creation, maintenance and checking of barred and advisory lists for National Crime Agency/British Transport Police/Ministry of Defence Police/Civil Nuclear Constabulary), 248 to 250 and 262 (implementation of law enforcement information sharing agreements), 254 (criminal liability of bodies corporate and partnerships where senior manager commits offence) and schedule 22 (Proceeds of Crime Act 2002), so far as these matters fall within the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament and alter the executive competence of the Scottish Ministers, should be considered by the UK Parliament.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

11. Tobacco and Vapes Bill - UK Legislation: The Minister for Public Health and Women's Health (Jenni Minto) moved S6M-21166—That the Parliament agrees that the relevant provisions of the Tobacco and Vapes Bill, introduced in the House of Commons on 5 November 2024, and subsequently amended, relating to filters, advertising for public health, technology in devices and intermediary liability for internet service providers, so far as these matters fall within the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament and alter the executive competence of the Scottish Ministers, should be considered by the UK Parliament.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

12. Armed Forces Bill - UK Legislation: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey) moved S6M-21167—That the Parliament agrees that the relevant provisions of the Armed Forces Bill, introduced in the House of Commons on 15 January 2026, relating to clauses 2, 50, 52, 54, and 55, so far as these matters alter the executive competence of the Scottish Ministers, should be considered by the UK Parliament.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

13. Railways Bill - UK Legislation: The Cabinet Secretary for Transport (Fiona Hyslop) moved S6M-21168—That the Parliament agrees that the relevant provisions of the Railways Bill, introduced in the House of Commons on 5 November 2025, relating to clauses 4, 7 to 10, 12, 18, 19, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28 to 35, 39, 43, 48, 66, 75, 78, 80, 81, 87 and 90, paragraphs 1, 2, 8 to 14 and 16 of schedule 2, paragraphs 4, 8, 9, 12 to 18, 22, 25, 26, 33 and 53 of schedule 3, new clauses 61, 62 and 64, new schedule 1, the amendments to clause 7 and clause 90, and the amendments to schedule 3 (inserting new paragraphs 22A, 23A, 24A, 25A, 32A, 33B, 34E, 34F, 34J, 34K, 34N, 35A and 36A to schedule 3), so far as these matters alter the executive competence of the Scottish Ministers, should be considered by the UK Parliament.

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 91, Against 1, Abstentions 28).

14. Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee's 6th Report 2026 (Session 6): Martin Whitfield, on behalf of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee, moved S6M-21051—That the Parliament notes the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee's 6th Report, 2026 (Session 6), Code of Conduct changes - Cross-Party Groups (SP Paper 1017), and agrees that the changes to the Code of Conduct set out in Annexe A of the report be made with effect from 11 May 2026.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

15. Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee's 7th Report, 2026 (Session 6): Martin Whitfield, on behalf of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee, moved S6M-21050—That the Parliament notes the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee's 7th Report, 2026 (Session 6), Standing Order rule changes - Miscellaneous and minor amendments (SP Paper 1032), and agrees that the changes to Standing Orders set out in the Annexe of the report be made with effect from 11 May 2026.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

16. Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee's 10th Report, 2026 (Session 6): Martin Whitfield, on behalf of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee, moved S6M-21048—That the Parliament notes the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee's 10th Report, 2026 (Session 6), Standing Order rule changes - Miscellaneous and minor amendments (SP Paper 1052), and agrees that the changes to Standing Orders set out in (a) Annexe A of the report be made with effect from 1 April 2026 and (b) Annexe B of the report be made with effect from 11 May 2026.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

17. Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016 (Modifications) Resolution 2026: Martin Whitfield, on behalf of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee, moved S6M-20942—

[S6M-20942 | Scottish Parliament Website](#)

The motion was agreed to (DT).

18. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-21190—That the Parliament agrees that the Antisocial Behaviour (Fixed Penalty Offences) (Miscellaneous Amendment) (Scotland) Order 2026 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

19. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-21191—That the Parliament agrees that the Marine Licensing (Miscellaneous Amendment) (Scotland) Order 2026 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

20. Decision Time: The Parliament took decisions on items 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 as noted above.

21. Closure of Bank of Scotland Branches: The Parliament debated S6M-20791 in the name of Clare Haughey—That the Parliament notes with concern the reported decision by the Lloyds Banking Group to close 11 Bank of Scotland branches between June and July 2026, including the Rutherglen branch; understands that this is the latest in a series of bank closures across the UK; believes that these closures will have a significant impact on local residents, businesses and organisations that depend on high street banks for cash access and essential banking services, particularly older people, disabled people, small businesses and charities; considers that the closure of banks is hugely detrimental to the viability of local high streets, and notes the calls on the Lloyds Banking Group to reconsider its decision.

22. Strengthening Adoption Support for Families: The Parliament debated Strengthening Adoption Support for Families in the name of Fulton MacGregor—That the Parliament notes the findings of the report, Strengthening the Safety Net: A Framework for Adoption Support in Scotland, which was published by the Cross-Party Group on Social Work and highlights what the group identified as serious and systemic shortcomings in adoption support services across Scotland; believes that adoptive families in communities in Coatbridge and Chryston, and across the country, frequently experience fragmented, inconsistent and inadequately resourced post-adoption support; recognises that the Adoption UK Barometer 2025 suggested that 78% of adoptive families in Scotland face significant challenges, with 40% reporting severe difficulties, and that official figures on adoption breakdown are believed to likely underestimate the true scale of family distress due to inconsistent definitions and limited data collection; expresses concern at reports that many families reach crisis point without timely access to specialist, trauma-informed support, respite provision or intensive family services, increasing, it believes, the risk of placement disruption and further harm to children and families; acknowledges that adoption does not erase the effects of early trauma, abuse and neglect, and that adopted children's needs often intensify during adolescence and key transition points; considers that the transfer of post-adoption support from specialist adoption teams to generic children and families services after three years frequently fails to reflect the complexity of adoptive family life; notes the report's recommendations for a national adoption practice model, improved training, mandatory data collection, minimum standards for preparation and support, enhanced crisis intervention and respite services, and greater flexibility in adoption allowances, and further notes calls on the Scottish Government to work with adoptive families, adopted people, frontline practitioners and local authorities to urgently develop and implement a comprehensive national framework for adoption support, and to ensure that families across Scotland, including in Coatbridge and Chryston, can access consistent, high-quality, lifelong adoption support, regardless of postcode.

Submitting member has a registered interest.

The meeting closed at 7.37 pm.

David McGill
Clerk of the Parliament
24 March 2026

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

Committee Reports

The following reports were published on 20 March 2026—

Criminal Justice Committee, 13th Report, 2026 (Session 6): Fourth Supplementary Legislative Consent Memorandum for the Crime and Policing Bill (UK Parliament legislation) (SP Paper 1083)

Criminal Justice Committee, 14th Report, 2026 (Session 6): (Legislative consent memoranda on the Northern Ireland Troubles Bill (UK Parliament legislation) (SP Paper 1084)

Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee, 4th Report, 2026 (Session 6): Neurodivergence in Scotland (SP Paper 1087)

Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee, 5th Report, 2026 (Session 6): Annual Report of the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee for 2025-26 (SP Paper 1089)

The following reports were published on 23 March 2026—

Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee, 6th Report, 2026 (Session 6): Legacy Report of the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee, Session 6 (SP Paper 1093)

Criminal Justice Committee, 15th Report, 2026 (Session 6): Legacy report of the Criminal Justice Committee, Session 6 (SP Paper 1094)

The following reports were published on 24 March 2026—

Social Justice and Social Security Committee, 7th Report, 2026 (Session 6): Social Justice and Social Security Committee Session 6 Legacy Report, Session 6 (SP Paper 1095)

Economy and Fair Work Committee, 4th Report, 2026 (Session 6): Legacy Report of the Economy and Fair Work Committee, Session 6 (SP Paper 1096)

Economy and Fair Work Committee, 5th Report, 2026 (Session 6): Annual Report of the Economy and Fair Work Committee 2025-26 (SP Paper 1097)

Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee, 38th Report, 2026 (Session 6): Subordinate Legislation considered by the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee on 24 March 2026 (SP Paper 1102)

Other Documents

The following documents were laid before the Parliament on 20 March 2026 and are not subject to parliamentary procedure—

National Islands Plan: Annual Report 2025 (SG/2026/10) laid under section 5 of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018

Review of the Guidance on Engaging Communities in Decisions Relating to Land 2026 (SG/2026/2) laid under Section 44 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016

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

Competition and Markets Authority Annual Plan 2026 to 2027 (CMA/2026/02) laid under Schedule 4 s13(2)(b) of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013

Consultation Statement to accompany Rural Support Plan 2026-2031 (SG/2026/79) laid under Section 4(5) of the Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Act 2024

Consumer Scotland Forward Work Programme 2026-2027 (CS/2026/01) laid under subsection (4) of section 14 of the Consumer Scotland Act 2020

Rural Support Plan 2026-2031: Support within the Four Tier Framework (SG/2026/78) laid under Section 2(4) of the Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Act 2024

Rural Support Plan: 2026-2031 (SG/2026/77) laid under Section 2(4) of the Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Act 2024

Scottish Police Authority: Strategic Policing Plan for Scotland 2026-2029 (SG/2026/108) laid under Section 34 of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012

The following documents were laid before the Parliament on 24 March 2026 and are not subject to parliamentary procedure—

4th Annual Report: Developments in the UK internal market 2025-2026 (OIM/2026/01) laid under section 33 of the United Kingdom Internal Market Act 2020

Scottish Law Commission Annual Report 2025 (SG/2026/76) laid under section 3(3) of the Law Commissions Act 1965

The Environment Strategy for Scotland (SG/2026/111) laid under Section 47 of the UK Withdrawal from the European Union (Continuity) (Scotland) Act 2021

A Statement on the consultation on the draft Environment Strategy (SG/2026/112) laid under Section 47(8) of the UK Withdrawal from the European Union (Continuity) (Scotland) Act 2021

Duty of Care Code of Practice for Managing Controlled Waste (SG/2026/59) laid under section 34(9) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990

The Code of Practice on Sustainable and Regenerative Agriculture (SG/2026/48) laid under Section 29 of the Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Act 2024

Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care Strategic Plan 2026-2029 (SG/2026/57) laid under Paragraph 16(2) of Schedule 7 to the National Health Service Reform and Health Care Professions Act 2002

Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care Business Plan 2026/27 (SG/2026/58) laid under Paragraph 16(2) of Schedule 7 to the National Health Service Reform and Health Care Professions Act 2002

Report on the Joint Fisheries Statement Covering the period November 2022 to November 2025 (SG/2026/113) laid under Section 11(3) of the Fisheries Act 2020

Statutory Performance Review of Consumer Scotland (CS/2026/02) laid under subsection (5), section 19 of the Consumer Scotland Act 2020

A Circular Economy Strategy for Scotland (SG/2026/32) laid under Section 3(1)(b) of the Circular Economy (Scotland) Act 2024

The Scottish Government's Response to the Climate Change Committee's Report on Progress in Reducing Emissions in Scotland 2025 (SG/2026/100) laid under Section 9(3) of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009

Circular Economy Strategy - Report to Parliament on Consultation Process (SG/2026/105) laid under Section 3(3)(b) of the Circular Economy (Scotland) Act 2024

Scotland's Climate Change Plan: 2026-2040 (SG/2026/102) laid under section 35(1)(a) of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009

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