



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 3, No. 24, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Thursday 7 September 2023

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

The meeting opened at 11.40 am.

- 1. General Questions:** Questions were answered by Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers.
- 2. Anniversary of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II:** The Presiding Officer and Members spoke in recognition of the first anniversary of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.
- 3. First Minister's Questions:** Questions were answered by the First Minister (Humza Yousaf).
- 4. Investing in Alcohol Services to Reduce Alcohol Related Harm in Scotland:** The Parliament debated S6M-10032 in the name of Carol Mochan—That the Parliament recognises what it sees as the urgent need for action to address the highest number of deaths from alcohol in over a decade, with a reported 22% increase in alcohol-specific deaths in the last two years following the COVID-19 pandemic; believes that this increase is likely due to changing drinking habits, alongside reduced access to services; considers that the risk of alcohol harm is already greater for the most disadvantaged in society, with people in Scotland's most deprived communities reportedly over five times as likely to die and six times as likely to be admitted to hospital because of alcohol than people in the wealthiest communities; believes that, while deaths are the most extreme form of alcohol harm, these are likely to be accompanied by increases in other harms, such as alcohol-related diseases, accidents, violence, unemployment, family and relationship breakdown, domestic abuse, child neglect and foetal alcohol spectrum disorder; notes the belief that a plan

is needed to address what it sees as this public health emergency, and further notes the campaign by 36 charities and health bodies, including the Directors of Public Health in Scotland and the East Ayrshire, Dumfries and Galloway, Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire Alcohol and Drug Partnerships in the South Scotland region, which calls for urgent action as well as increased and sustained investment in alcohol services and recovery support, alongside a renewed commitment to preventative policies recommended by the World Health Organization on pricing, availability and marketing.

5. Motion of Condolence for Winnie Ewing: The First Minister (Humza Yousaf) moved S6M-10350—That the Parliament expresses its deep sadness at the death of Winnie Ewing; offers its sympathy and condolences to her family and friends; recognises the historic place she will hold in Scottish political life having served in three Parliaments as a result of her victory in the 1967 Hamilton by-election, her election as an MEP, and as an MSP, where she presided over the reconvening of the Scottish Parliament; further recognises the high esteem in which she was held by colleagues from all parties, and appreciates her contribution as a principled public servant dedicated to the people of Scotland.

6. Portfolio Questions: Questions on Net Zero and Just Transition were answered by a Cabinet Secretary and Ministers.

7. Ministerial Statement: The Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care (Michael Matheson) made a statement and answered questions on Update on Professor Eljamel, NHS Tayside.

8. Ministerial Statement: The Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice (Shirley-Anne Somerville) made a statement and answered questions on Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete.

9. Opportunity within the 2023-24 Programme for Government: The Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy (Neil Gray) moved S6M-10347—That the Parliament recognises the actions set out in the Programme for Government 2023-24 to build a fair, green and growing wellbeing economy, while addressing the twin climate and nature emergencies; agrees that a fair work agenda and a real living wage support all of society, particularly during a cost of living crisis, and commends the proposed rise for workers in social care and childcare to £12 an hour; believes that tackling the global climate emergency is the defining challenge of current times and that the necessity of climate leadership could not be more stark, and commends the Scottish Government's investment of £2.2 billion in 2023-24 to deliver a just transition to net zero and restore nature, which brings co-benefits in improved health outcomes, more accessible places, and empowered communities; acknowledges that the implementation of the recommendations of the New Deal for Business Group, close working with small businesses, and a £15 million package to support enterprise and entrepreneurship will create new opportunities to start, scale and sustain businesses; agrees that this support, along with the Scottish Government's Green Industrial and Energy strategies, will ensure that businesses maximise the opportunities of a just transition to net zero; recognises the work of the Just Transition Fund, enabling pioneering work in a range of sectors, as well as the Scottish Government's investment in nature restoration, and looks forward to initiatives

to establish a new national park, as well as the publication of Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy; welcomes the commitment to establish a sector deal with the onshore wind industry, including halving the average determination time for section 36 applications to 12 months where there is no public inquiry, and acknowledges that both the Climate Change and Just Transition plans will secure a climate resilient and biodiverse future in a way that maximises community benefit and is fair and just for everyone.

Murdo Fraser moved amendment S6M-10347.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-10347 in the name of Neil Gray (Opportunity within the 2023-24 Programme for Government), leave out from first "recognises" to end and insert "notes that the Scottish economy contracted in the second quarter of 2022 in contrast to the wider UK economy, which grew in the same period, and that, since 2014, Scottish GDP per capita has grown on average at around one-half of the UK rate; further notes that this failure to grow the economy has real consequences for jobs, businesses and the public finances; acknowledges the language around economic growth in the Programme for Government 2023-24 and the limited measures to support growth and net zero, but regrets that these fall far short of what is required to deliver growth that at least matches the UK average, and calls on the Scottish Government to deliver a package of policies that will meaningfully promote growth, including a competitive tax regime, an approach to regulation that recognises the cost to business, a national workforce plan, investment in innovation and entrepreneurship, and a commitment to improve infrastructure and connectivity, including a timetable for the dualling of the A96, and the A9 between Perth and Inverness."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 30, Against 88, Abstentions 0).

Daniel Johnson moved amendment S6M-10347.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-10347 in the name of Neil Gray (Opportunity within the 2023-24 Programme for Government), leave out from "while addressing" to end and insert "but regrets that after 16 years of a Scottish National Party administration, and despite the jobs and incomes at stake, a Green Industrial Strategy remains a pledge not a reality; agrees that a fair work agenda and a real living wage support all of society, particularly during a cost of living crisis; welcomes the proposed pay rise for care workers to £12 an hour, but believes that this must increase to £15 an hour during the current parliamentary session; believes that tackling the global climate emergency is the defining challenge of current times and that the necessity of climate leadership could not be more stark; calls on the Scottish Government to put a detailed plan for skills development at the heart of the just transition to net zero and efforts to restore nature; further calls on the Scottish Government to ensure that growth in both the onshore and offshore wind sectors leads to growth in Scottish supply chains, jobs and incomes; welcomes the commitment by the UK Labour Party to establish a publicly-owned energy company with its headquarters in Scotland, to reduce energy bills, create good local jobs and deliver 100% clear power for the

UK by 2030, and further welcomes the Scottish Government's commitment to reform land ownership, but urges it to be more radical to change the land ownership profile of Scotland, including ensuring that the community right to buy works for urban and rural communities."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 19, Against 99, Abstentions 0).

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 66, Against 33, Abstentions 19).

10. Decision Time: The Parliament took decisions on items 5 and 9 as noted above.

The meeting closed at 6.00 pm.

David McGill
Clerk of the Parliament
7 September 2023

Appendix

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

Other Documents

The following documents were laid before the Parliament on 7 September 2023 and are not subject to parliamentary procedure—

Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service Annual Report and Financial Statements For the year ended 31 March 2022 (SG/2023/157) laid under Section 22(5) of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000

King's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023 (SG/2023/156) laid under Section 22(5) of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000

Student Awards Agency Scotland Annual Report and Accounts 2022-2023 (SG/2023/154) laid under Section 22(5) of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000

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