



@PeteWishartPerth



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@PeteWishartMP



## The latest

### Independence Convention

It was fantastic to attend the SNP's independence convention last weekend. The packed event brought party members together from across the country to discuss a strategy towards independence in the face of Westminster's blatant denial of Scottish democracy.

I was delighted to see the First Minister back the proposal to use the next general election as a de-facto referendum, with the first line of our manifesto simply being, 'A vote for the SNP is a vote for independence.' This is the strategy I have been calling for since last year's Supreme Court ruling, and it is the only way to take the matter of our constitutional future back into our own hands.

After a period of undeniable turbulence for the party, the convention was a much-needed opportunity to recalibrate and positively reconnect to our core mission. Our next point of action

must now be to take this message to every doorstep in Scotland.

But this strategy doesn't overlook our many other manifesto commitments. We will also fight the election on being the only major party in Scotland committed to defending the democratic decisions of our parliament, as well as reaffirming our intention to re-join the EU once independence is secured.

Of course, this is on top of the 2021 Holyrood election manifesto, which included domestic policies like increasing the Scottish Child Payment to £25, which has been described as a game-changer by anti-poverty charities.

We cannot be responsible for how the UK Government would respond to the SNP winning an election with this new strategy.

The hope would be that the UK follow democratic norms and accept the democratic will of the people. But Westminster, particularly under this Tory

government, has never been the greatest respecters of Scottish democracy.

What we do know if we win such an election with 50% plus of the vote is that Scotland has decided to become an independent nation. Westminster might ignore democracy, but it cannot ignore hard facts and what has democratically been determined.

Demonstrating that Scotland wants to be an independent nation is the one thing that is within our control, and the one thing that moves the Scottish independence dial forward.

There is no magic wand that makes Scotland an independent country overnight - it will take hard work. Everything we do must always be legal and democratic and we must work with the democratic grain that has been forever bound to our movement. And by winning a de-facto referendum, we will do exactly that.

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# A selection of Perthshire visits



I joined one of Mantalk's weekly sessions in Blairgowrie. Mantalk is a men's community support group which aims to tackle the stigma surrounding men's mental health and address male suicide. They do an amazing job by offering local men a place to talk through their issues and find mutual support in one another. I look forward to continuing this dialogue with Mantalk to find ways in which my office may be able to assist with their excellent work.



I had the pleasure of visiting the Scottish Crannog Centre in Kenmore ahead of their move to the new site at Dalerb on the north side of Loch Tay. I met with partners and apprentices to hear all about the work that has been happening behind the scenes to get the new site ready. What was evident was that this has been a huge undertaking, which has only been made possible by the dedication and enthusiasm of the whole team there.



I was thrilled to meet with the Ukrainian curling team after their victory at the European Championships in Dumfries. The athletes were all matched with sponsors in Perthshire. My office was working flat out to ensure that their visas were issued in time for the competition, which at one point was looking unlikely. They have all since stayed here to work, study and train ahead of their next competition in September. I was delighted to hear that they are settling in well.



I paid a visit to Perth Autism Support (PAS) to present them with my £650 win from a Grand National charity bet. I hope this will help with the fantastic work that they do to improve the lives of neurodiverse young people. There was a sense of déjà vu during the visit, as this is the second time in recent years that I have won money for PAS through a charity bet on one of Kinross trainer Lucinda Russell's horses. Hopefully I can make it a hat-trick next year!



I was lucky enough to get a sneak peak inside the new Perth Museum to see how it is coming along ahead of its opening next spring. It truly does look remarkable and could be utterly transformative for Perth city. Our job in the run-up to its opening is to ensure we are doing everything possible to promote Perthshire, and its wealth of culture and history, as one of Scotland's key visitor destinations.



# Out and about with colleagues

It was fantastic to have Humza Yousaf in Perth for the first time since he became First Minister. We were able to get out for some campaigning before he gave what was an encouraging and optimistic speech to local members. The focus was on the need to reinvigorate the independence movement. This, of course, was followed by the success of the independence convention in Dundee. I for one really feel that the pace is beginning to pick up in our journey towards independence.

I was pleased to meet with local farmers and stakeholders alongside Mairi Gougeon MSP and John Swinney to discuss the challenges facing the Scottish agricultural industry. It is clear that the UK Government's hard Brexit, along with their hostile approach to immigration, is having a devastating impact on farmers across Perthshire. This is to the point our farmers are now watching their fresh fruit rotting in the fields. This is a matter that the SNP Westminster group remains absolutely committed to holding the UK Government to account about.

Jim Fairlie MSP, Councillor John Rebbeck and I had a great time out canvassing in the Western Edge of Perth. We had an overwhelmingly positive response on the doors, with the recurring theme being one of desperation to get the Tories out. Our response was loud and clear; that the Tories have undoubtedly trashed the UK, but Labour are offering no real alternatives. The issue isn't who's in Westminster, it's Westminster itself.

I had the chance to get a look at the Cross Tay Link Road along with some of our SNP councillors. This is the single biggest infrastructure project ever undertaken by Perth and Kinross Council and it will play a vital role in the future of our local economy. It is predicted to leverage £966 million of private sector investment into housing and employment and massively improve traffic congestion in Perth city, which will open up new opportunities for the regeneration of Perth city centre.

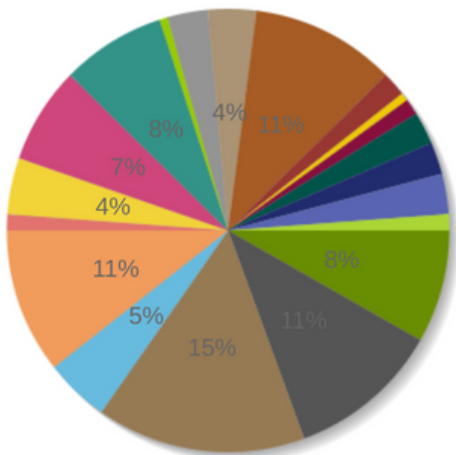
This year's Perth Mela Festival was bigger and better than ever, bringing Perth alive with an incredible celebration of the many different cultures in the area. Perth has a proud history of welcoming communities from all over the world and it was great to see that on full display. In the face of the UK's increasingly hostile rhetoric towards immigration, it is more important than ever that we continue to celebrate the contribution that these communities have made to our society.



# Casework

## UHI Perth

passport right to strike  
Anna Okroyan visa  
Asylum case Ukraine state pension  
Energy Bills tours  
neuroconditions  
Climate Change  
cost of living crisis electoral reform



Social Security and pensions	Energy, utilities and environment
Asylum, immigration and nationality	International affairs
Employment and training	Defence
Culture, charities, media and sport	Crime, civil law, justice and rights
Health services and medicine	Communities and families
Business, industry and consumers	Transport
Parliament, government and politics	European Union
Child Maintenance	Unmapped Casetype
Agriculture, animals, food and rural affairs	Housing and planning
Education	Social services and social care

## UHI Perth

My office received a huge volume of correspondence from rightly appalled constituents following UHI Perth's announcement of cuts and the proposed closure of its nursery. I visited the nursery at the first opportunity I had, to talk to the staff and parents to offer them my support. What I found was a dedicated and thoroughly professional group of staff and grateful parents who, in many cases, would not have been able to continue their studies without it. Well done to all those involved in the campaign to save this lifeline facility, which I was delighted to see UHI Perth had decided to remove from the consultation.

## Immigration

Immigration continues to be the most frequent type of enquiry in my inbox. What is abundantly clear is that the Home Office is in a state of utter disarray. We have asylum seekers in Perth who have been waiting for over two years for their claim to be processed. We have Ukrainians who have a safe home to come to in Perthshire but who are being made to wait for months, often in dangerous areas of Ukraine, for their UK visas. We also have people unable to reunite with family members due to Home Office red tape. I remain committed to helping these people in any way I can. I dream of the day when we are in charge of our own immigration policies so that we are never in this situation again.