



## **The Referendum on Scotland's Future**

**Friday 2nd May 2014**

**Howden Park Centre, Livingston**

“Women need to have their voices heard as part of the debate around Scotland's future. They are the cornerstone of communities – both socially and economically. The campaigns need to engage with women and listen to their concerns and emerging issues. This event has ensured that those attending are able to raise and seek answers to the issues which are important to them.”

Agnes Tolmie  
Chair, SWC

[www.scottishwomensconvention.org](http://www.scottishwomensconvention.org)

## Introduction

The SWC organised this event in recognition that women from different backgrounds throughout Scotland have significant questions and issues around the forthcoming referendum. Women want to know how this historic decision will impact on them, their families and communities as a whole.

This is the fourth in a series of conferences held by the SWC. Previous events have been held in Glasgow (x2) and in Dundee. Throughout the summer the organisation will visit Aberdeen, Greenock, Inverness and Orkney to discuss the referendum with women in these areas. Specific events for young women will also be held in Inverness and Glasgow.

The events are chaired by Agnes Tolmie, Chair of the SWC. Our organisation works with Yes Scotland and Better Together to source speakers and panel members.



## Angela Constance MSP

Angela lives in West Lothian with her husband and young son. She grew up in Addiewell and West Calder and attended local schools, completing her education at West Lothian College, Stirling and Glasgow Universities. Before being elected to the Scottish Parliament she served as a councillor for the Carmondean Ward in Livingston. Angela also worked as a social worker and mental health officer, working in the State Hospital at Carstairs, three Scottish prisons and for Ark Housing Association in Dedridge. Angela's political life began when she became President of the Students' Representative Council at Glasgow University.

Following the Scottish Parliament Elections in May 2011 Angela was elected as MSP for Almond Valley and appointed as the Minister for Children and Young People and most recently in April 2014 was appointed as Cabinet Secretary for Training, Youth and Women's Employment.

In her spare time Angela likes to keep fit and has taken part in various marathons and middle distance runs for good causes. She has not so much time for running marathons these days but manages to keep fit running after her young son, Cyrus. In quieter moments she enjoys walking, reading and encouraging Cyrus in his 'creative' activities.

“Independence means, in short, that decisions about Scotland will be taken here in Scotland. Our parliament will have responsibility for all aspects of our national life, not just those matters devolved to it by Westminster. Decisions about the economy, welfare, taxation and whether or not we spend millions of pounds maintaining weapons of mass destruction on the Clyde will be taken here in Scotland and not at Westminster.

We already have some independence with the Scottish Parliament. We take our own decisions on health, education and justice. It is only because we can take our own decisions on health that we have been able to protect the NHS from the privatisation that is happening in England. It is why we are able to guarantee free personal care for our older people and free prescriptions. It is only because of our decisions on education that we can ensure access to university is based on the ability to learn, not the ability to pay.

Independence will extend these benefits to all other areas of government activity. It also means that we will no longer have to put up with being governed at Westminster by parties that we have overwhelmingly rejected at the ballot box. Instead, the government of Scotland will reflect the views of the people of Scotland. A No vote means that decisions about Scotland’s future will continue to be taken at Westminster. Decisions on taxation, welfare, on replacing Trident and whether or not we stay part of the EU will be out of our hands and will be in the hands of others.

Those are the two futures that Scotland face. One future in which we take responsibility and make our own decisions. The other future in which we wait for things to happen to us and can only mitigate the worst effects of decisions that we do not agree with or endorse.

The white paper sets out the strengths of Scotland’s economy and current financial position compared to the rest of the UK. An independent Scotland would be the fourteenth richest country in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) compared to the UK at eighteenth. Even without North Sea oil and gas our economic output per head is virtually identical to that of the UK. With oil and gas, it is considerably larger.

Oil and gas is a huge bonus. However the Scottish economy also has key strengths and growth sectors such as food and drink, energy, creative industries, tourism and the very important life sciences. Per head of the population we have more top universities than any other country in the world. We perform very strongly as a location for inward investment and we’ve also got a strong financial services industry.

In each of the last 33 years we have contributed more tax per head of the population than the UK as a whole. Don’t let anyone tell you that Scotland is subsidised. Our public services are paid for by the tax we pay. The difference is that after independence, we would get access to all of our own resources and not just the proportion that Westminster decides we should have.



The real benefit of independence is about what it allows us to build and to do. Challenges we face like constrained public finances, a legacy of debt and a working population that's not growing fast enough are not arguments against independence.

They are products of the status quo, reasons not to keep things as they are. They are reasons to do things differently.

What are the benefits of voting Yes? Firstly, a transformation in childcare. We have set out an ambitious plan to transform childcare. This is not just about improving the early education of children and helping families, as vitally important as those aspects are. It's also a crucial economic policy. We know from the European Community (EC) and the OECD that the lack of affordable childcare is a barrier to women's participation in work.

If you increase access to childcare, you will increase the number of women in work. This, in turn, will increase the taxes that are generated and provides the means to pay for universal childcare. For the first time in this country we have a plan for universal childcare within a generation. No other devolved administration or Westminster Government has set out or aspired to do this.

We've increased the amount of childcare available as part of landmark Children and Young People legislation. With independence we can go beyond that and deliver a very ambitious plan for free universal childcare for all children between the ages of 1-5. When fully implemented, that would save families up to £4,600 per child per year.

At the moment Scotland receives a fixed budget from Westminster. We would not receive the increased tax revenues from more women in the workplace unless Westminster decided that we should. The cost of providing increased childcare with devolution would have to be met within that fixed budget which means cutting other services. With independence, the costs can be met initially by making different decisions, giving us the ability to mobilise all our resources by having control of both sides of the balance sheet.

We can also take action to ensure that the lowest paid are treated fairly and that work is the route out of poverty. Women today are more likely than men to work in low paid jobs. What we do with the minimum wage is absolutely crucial and has an integral bearing on the standard of living for women and their children. We would guarantee that the minimum wage will rise at least in line with inflation every year and not be left to the whim of the government.

Responsibility for equalities legislation would also pass to the Scottish Parliament. This would allow us to tackle some of the deep seated gender inequalities that still hold women back. Why is it that 44 years after the Equal Pay Act was passed, we still have a massive pay gap between men and women?

We could also make sure that the retirement age reflects Scottish circumstances. Just a few years ago, women could expect to retire at 60. By 2020 the age will be 66 – an increase of six years in just a decade – and as things stand young women entering the workforce today will likely have to work until they're 70. Are the rapid increases being imposed by Westminster right for Scotland? Are they right for our nurses, auxiliaries, teachers, classroom assistants, social workers? These people, very often women, who do hard demanding work, both physically and emotionally.

Independence will allow us to protect women in the welfare system. Universal Credit (UC) has been introduced by the UK Government as part of their so called welfare reforms and will replace payments like working tax credit and child tax credit. Under Westminster's plan it will be paid in a single household payment. That will mean, in many cases, it will go to the man of the house. This is like going back in time to the male breadwinner notion of society. In some households this will lead to real hardship for women and children.

The only way that we can ensure we get the governments we vote for - governments that protect our NHS, Welfare State, universal benefits - is to become independent. For the first time in our history we have a real choice on 18<sup>th</sup> September. The choice that we face is to put ourselves in the driving seat of our own future and our own destiny, with all the benefits it can bring for women children and families and our future society. Or we can decide to leave the big decisions in the hands of others. I hope that we seize the opportunity we have on 18<sup>th</sup> September by voting Yes."

## Kezia Dugdale MSP

Kezia Dugdale was first elected to the Scottish Parliament to serve the Lothian region in May 2011. She was born in Aberdeen where she went to university, but has also lived in Elgin and Dundee before settling in Edinburgh in 2003.

She is currently Labour's Shadow Minister for Youth Employment, co-convenes the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Drugs and Alcohol and the Cross Party Group on Children and Young People – all policy areas which she is passionate about.

Kezia has a degree in Law and a Masters in Policy Studies. Prior to entering the Scottish Parliament, Kezia worked in public affairs within higher education (both at EUSA and NUS Scotland) before taking up the post of Office Manager and Political Adviser to former MSP the Rt. Hon. Lord George Foulkes.

“The word unionist has never meant anything to me as part of my identity. I didn’t come in to politics to defend the union. I came into politics to fight poverty and inequality wherever I saw it. I do believe, however, that the best answer to addressing poverty and inequality is across the whole of the UK. I genuinely believe that we are better together.

I’m not a unionist but I am absolutely a feminist. That is front and foremost of everything that makes up my politics and how I act on a daily basis. I believe we have to challenge the ‘way it’s aye been’, whether those powers are in the Scottish Parliament, Westminster or Europe. We need to put women’s rights first and foremost. If we can get women to be equal then everybody benefits from that – socially, economically, politically.

I have been reflecting on Professor Ailsa McKay, a very well known feminist economist who sadly passed away recently. In a speech that Ailsa made last year, she said something that really struck a chord with me.

*“Women stand up and say the discipline of economics is failing us. We are dismissed only as women and we don’t understand the numbers. I’m an economist who doesn’t do numbers, not because I can’t do numbers but because I refuse to. I think that we’ve got the underlying philosophy wrong to begin with. Before we start counting things, we need to work out what it is that we value, what we should value and the numbers will come after that”.*

I value equality, fairness, work and opportunities. I think the answer to all of those lie across the UK, through working together.

I am delighted that childcare is at the forefront of our referendum debate and I want to keep it there, regardless of what happens in September. That said, I am disappointed with the way we are conducting the debate so far. It’s very much a retail policy exchange, where one party says they will give 600 hours, Ed Balls has said it will be 950 in England and Wales and the white paper takes us up to 1150 hours. When does it stop?

That debate completely misses some of the wider aspects, such as issues around flexibility. Can you actually get the childcare when you need it, that relates to your working hours? There are also issues around the quality of childcare and the degree to which professionals are trained, and when they’ve got that training, the pay they receive. The childcare workforce in Scotland, as dedicated and brilliant at their job as they are, are low paid, often low skilled and have a low status in our workforce. If we truly want a transformational system in Scotland we’ve got to invest in the skills of the workforce. Predominantly that means investing in the skills of women.

The debate so far has only really focused on childcare for 3 and 4 year olds and a little bit of discussion around vulnerable 2 year olds. What about provision for kids from the age of 5 all through primary school? That’s why I’ve set up a campaign called Every Step, which is about talking about childcare every step of the way through the childhood experience.

We're asking women to return to work, but in what types of jobs ? If we don't give women the skills they need to return to work, they're going to return to low paid jobs, on zero hours contracts on a temporary basis. That's not just bad for women, that's bad for the economy.

The whole premise of the childcare policy in white paper is based on tax receipts. If women return to work on a part-time basis in a low paid job, on less than the living wage, then they won't pay any tax. So where do we get the tax receipts to invest in childcare? If we're not careful this type of policy is only going to help middle class women who are already working part time, to work more hours. That's not the type of Scotland I want to see. I want to see women who don't have those opportunities being able to work, but I want them to have the skills to do so first. That means investing in education.

Investment in colleges has fallen through the floor over the last six years. There are 140,000 fewer places since 2007 and the impact of that has fallen on women who want to study part-time. Women need access to part-time education to get the skills they need to compete in the labour market.



I'm a passionate believer in the living wage. The Scottish Government have done a great job in introducing the living wage. It has also made sure councils across Scotland pay their staff the living wage and that everyone employed by the Scottish Government directly also receives at least the living wage.

There is, however, a lot more we can do. We need to encourage private companies to pay the living wage. If we don't, our ability to increase the wages of women are only going to extend to those that work in the public sector. The Labour party and people like me are arguing for the living wage and against low paid culture across the country.

Child poverty is inextricably linked to the living wage. Six out of ten children living in poverty in Scotland come from households where at least one parent is in full time work. I think this is an absolute disgrace. There is recent research which tells us that the most powerful link to a child's chances in life is the educational level of their mother or primary carer. The way to address that is again to invest in the skills of women.

Another way to tackle the child poverty agenda is to look at the cost of living crisis we face as a nation. The Labour Party has set out very clear policies around the cost of energy. They are not tokenistic, but are about fundamentally reforming the market around energy to break down the cartel of the big 6 energy companies. We also have ambitious ideas around debt, for example, such as payday loan companies and the havoc they cause. The way to take them on is to regulate and ban them across the whole of the UK.

We have got to recognise that all of these issues are not unique to women in Scotland but are universal across the whole of the UK. We often hear the Yes campaign say there are more pandas in Scotland than Tories. That's true, but there are also more pandas in Scotland than there are Tories in Newcastle, Liverpool and Manchester. I feel a sense of solidarity with people in those areas and they deserve the same rights and opportunities as people in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen.

I am delighted that Angela has been promoted and is now a Cabinet Secretary, not only because I think she's a great Minister, but because we now have 40% women in cabinet in Scottish Government. There is no going back now that we have that minimum.

I do agree with a lot of what Angela has said. She spoke about strong universities, a strong economy and an excellent NHS. We did all of that with devolution and we can continue to do so with a strong Scotland and a strong UK.”

## Question and Answer Session

The main focus of this event was the 'Question Time' style Q&A session. This gave local women the opportunity to ask a panel of representatives from Yes Scotland and Better Together questions around a number of issues.

### BETTER TOGETHER

**Angela Moohan** is a dedicated and hardworking councillor for the Livingston North Ward. Elected in 2012 she has worked with local people to address their individual and collective issues across the ward. In her capacity as Vice Chair of the Voluntary Sector Angela has led on the development of a strategic vision and work plan to ensure that West Lothian has a more resilient community and voluntary sector that is more enterprising and sustainable. As the equality champion, she has worked with the race and disability forums to ensure equality of access to services for ALL.

Angela graduated with a degree in Community Education and has worked at international, national and local level on active citizenship, community empowerment and social enterprise.

As well as being a councillor Angela volunteers in her own community and runs a social enterprise. She lives in Livingston, is married and is a mum to two girls.

Angela's aspiration for Scotland is that we have a more equal and just society where everyone, regardless of where they were born has the opportunity to reach their full potential. Angela believes that the only way to achieve this is not by breaking Britain up but by the pooling of resources within the UK to benefit everyone.

## YES SCOTLAND

**Lis Bardell** has lived in Livingston for 30 years and raised her 2 children here. Lis graduated in Law from Edinburgh University and trained for Social Work at Bristol University. She has worked as a Probation Officer in Newcastle & Leicester, then in Criminal Justice Social Work in Muirhouse in Edinburgh during the first wave of the heroin crisis.

Lis came back to West Lothian to be the first Project Leader of what is now West Lothian Drug & Alcohol Service and since then has worked in a wide range of Social Care settings. Lis currently works for an MSP in the Scottish Parliament and has stood locally as a Parliamentary candidate. She has been active in the local community in a number of ways over the years: served on the Board of the local Youth Theatre, getting funding for very early versions of after-school care and fighting local school closures and the loss of local open green space to building development.

***“Livingston has many people employed as civil servants in departments providing a national, UK wide service such as HMRC. How do the speakers view the future of such jobs in the event of a Yes vote? How will they propose to deal with this and protect employment in Scotland?”***

### **Angela Constance (AC)**

I think this is a very exciting prospect for civil servants in this constituency and elsewhere in Scotland. As the responsibilities of the Scottish Government expand, we would most certainly need to employ what were UK Government civil servants to work for an independent Scotland. Some people may wish to remain with their current employer, however it will be a very important period of transition after the vote and before the first independent Government is elected in May 2016.

### **Angela Moohan (AM)**

As the situation exists at the moment, there are approx 30,000 fewer civil servants in Scotland than there were due to the cuts which have already taken place. I have found that the dilemma and worry for people who work in the UK civil service is that the transition between a Yes vote and the first independent Scottish Government is a short period of 18 months. There will also be huge costs in the administration of setting up a new Scotland.

It's easy enough to say people will have a choice as to whether they stay with their current employer or move to a new employer (the Scottish Government), but that could mean moving their house, or to another country. It's not as simple as to say people have a choice. We have choice just now and always will have choices, but this will put barriers in front of people and it will mean perhaps great upheaval for families across Scotland.

## AC

The Scottish Government has worked out, in detail, as much as they can about transition costs, however there are certain running costs that the UK Government are unwilling to share. We cannot get absolute certainty until the other side is open and willing to share important information. It has been acknowledged that an 18 month transition period is doable and realistic.

***“In the event of a successful Yes vote, will Great Britain not still be referred to as Great Britain (in the context of Greater and Lesser Britain)? Will the people still be British citizens and will institutions such as the British Broadcasting Corporation not therefore still have relevance and a mandate to serve Britain under co-operating governments?”***

## AC

I think ironically that post-independence, I will feel more British than I do at the moment. I relate that to the Scandinavian experience, where all of the countries are independent but it is part of their identity that they subscribe to the notion of being Scandinavian. Most Scots will have personal views about their own identity, however this debate is not about identity. People will feel a mixture of Scottish, British and European and the balance of that will be very personal to them. It's not really an area that politicians should be prescriptive about. Identity comes from within.

In Scotland we currently contribute around £325 million through license fees and in terms of investment in and broadcasting programmes through BBC Scotland, get services of approximately £175m back. By January 2017, the Scottish Broadcasting Corporation would be established and would continue to work with the BBC. Anything you've heard about not receiving Eastenders or Dr Who is nonsense. In the same way people in Ireland get these programmes, we will too.

## Kezia Dugdale (KD)

I find it really interesting when people in Yes say it's not about identity. They say that because it absolutely is and that's how a lot of people respond to it. It's who we are and is deeply personal. I feel Scottish first and foremost and a little bit British and a little bit European. I don't want anyone to take that away from me but I feel the debate will hinge on that. With regards to the BBC, information has recently demonstrated that the top 20 programmes in Scotland in terms of viewing figures are exactly the same as across the UK.

Do we get our fair share of BBC funding? That would depend on what makes a programme Scottish. Is it that it's filmed in Scotland, written by a Scottish writer, with money from a Scottish trust? Where was it produced and edited and who did that? I don't think we can say only a certain amount is spent in Scotland and we get a tough deal.

### Questioner

*"I was more concerned about the splitting of things which are British at the moment, the BBC being just one, rather than an identity crisis. I just wondered if there is a split, why it appears to have to be such a final split."*

### Lis Bardell (LB)

I personally feel the BBC doesn't do a great service in terms of current affairs with the constituent parts of UK. They should be informing England about the goings on in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and vice versa. They should also be giving us much more information about Europe. The media is phenomenally London-centric. In an independent future, some of these institutions may continue but it will be from a very different position, negotiated by us on an independent basis of our choosing.

### Comments from the Floor

*"Sports coverage on the BBC is inherently biased towards England. It's also frustrating that we're not able to represent our country at Olympics and we have to go under a different team."*

### KD

Women's football is the fastest growing sport in Scotland, but it's not shown anywhere. That needs to be addressed, because it's really exciting that women are getting more involved in competitive sport. With regards to the Olympics, there were a number of Scottish Olympians who went to London 2012 as Team GB, and it was argued that some of them wouldn't have been able to qualify uniquely as Scotland. There are a lot of very talented sports people in Scotland who have to go down south to study and build on their skills because that's where the centre for sporting excellence is based and there's no similar facility in Scotland.

It's important to look at equivalent broadcasting corporations in other small countries like Denmark. They are only funded to make two programmes a year and while they are brilliant, they don't have resources to make any more and have to plan their shows five years ahead. It's the size and scale of the UK that allows us to have such varied output.

***"What would happen to Scots serving in the British forces? What would happen to their pensions etc?"***

### AC

That's a very important question. In the white paper, we have made clear we would retain what we have and over a period of 10 years would look to have forces of 15,000 with 5,000 reserves.

There is recognition in Scotland that the folly of continuing to invest in Trident has led resources away from conventional troops. The reality is over the last decade we've lost 11,000 defence jobs in Scotland.

We currently contribute £3bn per year into the UK defence coffers and get back £2bn in terms of defence spending. The Scottish Government has made a commitment in the white paper to spend £2.5bn, so we can make some savings in defence and also provide a better service. If we were making defence decisions here in Scotland I think they would be much more prudent and would better serve our population and our forces.



#### LB

There have been long standing concerns about the way defence has been going in this country. It's not many years since the heads of the armed forces were indicating concerns about the cost and the relevance of renewing Trident, when the deployment of conventional forces was at its highest. I feel we should all care for our forces, because nobody comes back from armed conflict undamaged. One of the things historically we do to protect our troops is not to deploy them any more than we have to. That means you have enough forces that the rotations they serve on are spaced out in terms of leave and how many tours of duty they do. I think peacekeeping is the function of the future, in collaboration with others. Cyber attack and terrorism are two other major issues and Trident won't do anything to help us with those.

#### AM

The question on defence is one of uncertainty. There will be armed forces, but it's unclear how they will be made up. The white paper says £2.5bn will be available for spend on defence, but it has been indicated that wouldn't cover what would be necessary. There will have to be negotiations with the rest of the UK, not just about regiments but also the debt that's associated to defence weaponry. There would also need to be negotiations about how Scotland would connect with the various different intelligence agencies such as MI5 and GCHQ, and whether these would have to be set up independently in Scotland.

It's also important to look at Scotland in the world and international relationships. We will have far fewer representations through embassies throughout the world. At the moment there's 270 consulates, and the white paper says there will be 90 offices. That's a considerable drop, particularly as international relations are absolutely crucial in terms of ensuring that we live in as safe and as peaceful a world as we possibly can.

### Points from the Floor

*"It could definitely be argued we have a precedent for military pensions with the Gurkhas, who have been paid for a long time. It seems that in the same way any foreign national who has served with the British forces is entitled to their pension, Scottish soldiers would be too."*

*"There is a long tradition in the military, whether Scots serving in historical conflict pre-union or as members of the French foreign legion. I'm sure that if people who have a career with the British forces wish to continue living down south, they're not going to be forced to come back to Scotland ."*

### AM

Regardless of where people who serve on the front line come from, the majority are working class. I don't want anyone to die needlessly for their country.

### AC

There is an extraordinary amount of detail in the white paper, and while many might not agree, it can't be said that we haven't gone to considerable effort to provide information. We need to dispel the notion that an independent Scotland is somehow cut adrift from the rest of the world. The world is a changing place and we all have international responsibilities. Often it's small countries working together with other small countries that make the most impact. The notion that you've got to be big and have hundreds of embassies is false. Surely it's better to spend money on troops, ensuring that they are supported before, during and after active service. Why couldn't Scots make decisions about how to use our resources to defend our country? We are not any better, but no less capable, than others.

***"I am interested in how passports will work out should we gain independence. I am British - born in Northern Ireland. I am married to a Scot and have lived in West Lothian since 1973. I have 2 passports. I have a UK passport. I also have an Irish Passport. This was offered to me by the Eire Government as I was born on the island of Ireland and my father was born in Eire. Now I'm being encouraged by members of my family to make sure I renew my UK passport as there might be a problem after independence. How will this work?"***

### AC

There are lots of examples of people with dual nationality and it won't be a problem for people who wish to have dual nationality to do so. In terms of passports, Scots will still have to pay to renew their passport when it expires. In terms of citizenship, all British citizens who are currently resident in Scotland will be afforded citizenship and there's also criteria for citizenship by descent. The social union between Scotland and rest of UK will always exist. We're trying to change the political and economic union.

***“Will women be given a real opportunity to participate in writing Scotland's constitution if there is a Yes vote?”***

**AC**

One of the most exciting aspects of an independent Scotland is the written constitution. I am a firm believer that people need a degree of protection against any government and that people should have their rights protected in a constitution. The constitution will be a very important mechanism for building a new consensus and a new shared vision for Scotland. We need all of civic Scotland to create that and I will be making sure that women in all their diversity are participating in the process. It cannot be left to politicians to write. I want to see written guarantees for young people in terms of rights to education, training or work. I am going to work to make sure we get world class vocational education as well as world class university education. Despite political differences across Scotland, there are some fundamentals that there is political consensus is on. The dynamic is different here. We have a stronger desire for social partnership and cohesion.

**LB**

It is enormously important that women are engaged in the process of drafting the constitution. It is clear how willing and able people are to be engaged in this debate, and people are engaging directly in discussion in a way we haven't seen in the political landscape for a long time.

**KD**

It's worthwhile pointing out that we do have a constitution at the moment, it's just not written. I am excited about the prospect of a written constitution, that said, we have to be really careful what is enshrined in it. Things such as tuition fees and free personal care, as important as they are, are not necessarily constitutional rights. I was very surprised when I read in the white paper that tuition fees would be included as part of the constitution but gender equality isn't promised. We have to be careful about what we put in because by their nature, constitutional rights aren't things you change very often.

### **Points from the Floor**

*“Any constitution has to protect citizens against the excesses of the state. We have to be careful we don't create a government that is so powerful it can do what it likes without any check or balance on its power. The Scottish Parliament as it works at the moment, with an overall majority, can pretty much do what it likes. At Westminster, for its many flaws, at least they have the House of Lords that will quite often defeat the government. Do we need some sort of second chamber as well? Where's the check on overuse of power in Scotland?”*

## LB

The House of Lords is not a particularly effective check and the use of the concept of Crown is an extremely worrying one, but I think we should look at all of these matters in a Scottish constitution. If we're doing without Westminster we may well have to think about a second chamber. Checks and balances are needed for sure.

## AM

Quite often people from the most deprived communities do not have a say about the important things in our society. The SWC have reached out and I hope they continue to do that, but it's absolutely crucial that everyone in our society has that opportunity. I encourage people to think what our country is about and what we want for the future, but through consultation with people across the country from all areas. The constitution and its development has to involve everyone, regardless of their living circumstances, across Scotland.

## KD

One of the strengths of the Scottish Parliament at the moment is that we are able to devote parliamentary time to issues that may never have gotten onto the floor of the House of Commons. In the first few years of our Parliament we had world leading legislation on mental health and homelessness. These were really progressive ambitious things that challenged those social norms.



My concern is if we become independent, with the same structures and number of MSPs but with more responsibility, those issues that really matter and can really change people's lives may go to the back of the queue again.

***“We are told from George Osborne that the second major phase of cutbacks is still to come. With Scotland never voting for a Conservative party to be in power and with Labour not voting against the Bedroom Tax but supporting The Tory/Liberal welfare cap, why will Scotland be Better Together?”***

## AM

The Scottish Parliament has many powers that are not used because it's convenient to blame the Tories or Westminster. The Labour Party are completely opposed to the bedroom tax. We have to be careful with the myths that are out there and support democracy so that everyone votes, regardless of who they vote for.

## AC

It is interesting to compare the outcome of Scottish Parliament and Westminster elections. In Scotland, the government is elected by the overwhelming will of the country. With Westminster, however, when Scotland has not voted overall for the Tories, we have had a Conservative Government. There are only two examples of instances where the vote in Scotland has tipped the balance and helped get a UK Government. In terms of determining the outcome of the composition of a government at UK level, England gets the government they vote for. There is a democratic deficit in this country which is demonstrated in full with regards to welfare, which remains reserved, despite the fact that two thirds of the Scottish population want to see welfare decisions made here.

Over this term, the Scottish Government will spend £257m mitigating the impact of Westminster's decisions. The harsh reality which the Scottish Government faces is that every pound spent mitigating against bad decisions made by George Osborne is a pound less that I can spend promoting women's or youth employment. That's the kind of position we're stuck in because we don't have control over the whole system or all of our resources. Of course we should always be doing what we can to help people in the here and now. Why are we having to spend money fixing bad decisions made by a bad, out of touch government who are spending our money on our behalf?

## Points from the Floor

*"One consensus we have is that the status quo isn't good enough and people don't want to vote for that. We want to vote for something better but it's hard to see what is better. I'm undecided and this is a deal-breaker for me"*

*"There is no such thing as the status quo with a No vote, particularly as UKIP are on the rise down south. We have to realise that UKIP and Tories are likely to get more seats and that's scary."*

## KD

It's important to note that UKIP also exist in Scotland. The latest polls show that UKIP will do better in the European elections than the Green Party. They are up here on a smaller scale than they are in England but they still exist as a dangerous force in Scotland. With regards to welfare reform, we need to have a really honest conversation about what it is that the SNP are offering. The First Minister is on record as saying that a welfare cap is a 'reasonable thing to do'. The Cabinet Secretary for Finance is also on record saying there needs to be further cuts in Scotland because of the deficit between paying for services and what we take in for tax. Don't accept for a second that the SNP Government are not going to have to make cuts. Constitutional politics takes you to a strange place where strange bedfellows come together and that's why you have to put party politics to one side in the debate about the referendum.

## CLOSING STATEMENTS

### COUNCILLOR ANGELA MOOHAN, BETTER TOGETHER

“I will be voting No on 18<sup>th</sup> September. I am voting no because the status quo is not an option. I’m voting no because I want change and I want positive change. This debate should be about the kind of country that we want to live in and about how we advance conditions for working class people across our nation.

I want a country that doesn't have poverty, zero hours contracts or food banks. I want to put a stop to the ever increasing bank bonuses paid out to the few, while too many people are having to make choices about heating or eating. I want this for working class people everywhere in the UK. I don't want those rights and that type of society to stop at Carlisle. I want those rights for working class people in Newcastle, Liverpool, Leeds and Manchester.

I have more in common with ordinary people in England, Wales and Northern Ireland than I do with the richest people in Scotland. Many would have us believe that the Tory Government cuts and policies are anti-Scottish. They are not, they are anti-working class. The assertion that it is anti-Scottish is a red herring and a distraction from the real issue. Those who benefit from the Tory cuts are the wealthiest in our society, regardless of whether they are English, Welsh or Scottish. The alternative to these cuts is not Scottish nationalism, it is a democratic socialist country. The white paper is a wish list without, primarily, a price list. We cannot have Norwegian levels of service with Texan levels of taxation.

If there is a Yes vote we will not wake up on 19<sup>th</sup> September and everything that's bad will have disappeared and everything that's good will just get better. Can the government say with confidence that everything will work as it says it will in the white paper? They cannot say for definite we will be in the pound. We will not have one single MP in Westminster arguing that case. It will be up to the rest of the UK to take the decision as to whether they want to share their pound with an independent Scotland and we won't have a say because we will have voted to leave the UK.



There has been a lot of misleading information in the referendum debate to date. There has never been a situation like we find ourselves in in Scotland, so when the SNP assert that an independent Scotland will be in the EU, they cannot say that with absolute certainty. The 28 Member States will decide and all of them will have to agree. There's a long journey ahead and it's unlikely that decision will be made in the 18 months

There is no doubt that Scotland could be an independent country but my argument is that we are stronger whilst we are part of the United Kingdom.

If you want to keep the Queen, unelected in Scotland as is the UK, vote no. If you want to keep the pound, vote no, because we already have it. If you want to remain strong in Europe, vote no, because we are already there as one of the strongest countries. If you want to remain a member of NATO then vote no, because we're already a member. If you want to see more powers in Scotland, for local authorities and communities to be empowered, then vote no. If you want to see a country where workers rights are protected and there is an end to zero hours contracts then vote no. These are the things that the Labour Party are offering you as part of the rest of the UK and in Parliament in Scotland.

I will be voting no and I will be voting no for change. For a stronger Scotland as part of the UK with powers for a purpose. Powers that will eradicate child poverty. Powers that will protect workers whilst at work and that will strengthen local government and allow decisions to be made at a local level. Powers that will put children first and give them the start in life they deserve, regardless of their postcode. Powers that will support our young adults in to college and university and powers that will rebuild our NHS and our nation. Powers that give us aspiration for Scotland to grow and prosper as part of the UK. These are the things that the Labour Party is offering in Scotland and as part of the rest of the UK. If you want all of this too, then vote no for change. Don't break up Britain. Elect a Labour Government at Westminster and Holyrood."

### **LIS BARDELL, YES SCOTLAND**

"I lived and worked in England for ten years, during the time that the 1979 devolution referendum was held. Friends in the North East were very anxious about Scotland having any increased powers. They feared if Scotland went its own way to any extent, then they would be completely forgotten about. They are not thinking that now. They think that independence for Scotland will change the way politics is viewed in England and it will change the view in London and the South East about the importance of regions.

Friends and family in England also say if they had a vehicle to reverse the damage they see happening in their country, they would use it. They hope one will come their way to change the direction of what is happening from Westminster. There comes a time when the damage and direction of travel is so worrying, you take whatever democratic vehicle is on offer to you to change that direction.

Independence is the best chance and probably the only chance that we have of creating the kind of Scotland that I want my children to inherit and that I want to live out my old age in. That's a more equal Scotland, a more peaceful, friendly and influential Scotland, that's content with its smallness and concerned to use its rich resources for the benefit of all of its people.

I think there's the political consensus here for that type of Scotland and for progressive social policies. I've benefitted hugely from the NHS, as well as from free university education, and I feel a personal obligation to hand these on to my children, and their children, in the condition I found them. I fear it will be increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to meet that obligation under current constitutional arrangements.

I have spent a lifetime working with the damned, the dispossessed, the awkward and the overlooked in Scotland. My motivation for independence also comes from working at very close quarters with the consequences of the increasing inequality fostered and promoted at Westminster.

The UK is the fourth most unequal country in the developed world and with the fastest rising rate of inequality since the 1970's. Increasing inequality is the biggest threat to the society we have been and the society we want to become. International evidence tells us that the most unequal countries have the most crime, poorest health outcomes, biggest drug and alcohol problems and the highest rate of suicide and mental health issues. Greater equality makes us all healthier and happier.



I've also been a single parent in an area of some deprivation trying to run a career and children and elderly parents at a time when childcare provision and the role of carer were very much seen as private problems rather than public policy concerns.

I have done the late nights at the kitchen table writing submissions for funding for local after-school care. I have done the campaigns against school closures. I know just how much energy the individual citizen has to expend when they are trying to take on the system.

It is with a strong personal, family and professional motivation that I fear and turn away from the individualistic, divisive, neo-liberal models of society and the economy that Westminster has promoted for decades.

I look towards the more collective approaches of the Nordic countries and the rest of Europe, where many small countries of similar size and profile to us are doing very well. There is an increasing body of evidence that demonstrates small countries these days do better. The lines of communication between the government and citizens are much shorter and you can look your politicians in the eye.

In these smaller countries, income differences between the board room and the shop floor are much narrower. They are running universal benefits, including childcare, that reflect a belief that they, as a society, are actually all in it together and are not waiting for trickle down.

My support for independence has also been driven by the certain knowledge that had we been independent, we would not have been in Iraq.

I have no confidence in the idea of devo max, in which we could take control over everything economic and leave defence and foreign affairs to Westminster. In decisions about war, devo max would not make us a nation with the right to decide and I want the right to decide.

I'm with those who are happy to be a small nation, honest about being a small nation, seeking friendship and influence for good on the world stage.

I would rather this than a small nation pretending to be a world superpower, hanging on to hugely expensive weapons of mass destruction to promote that illusion, while vital conventional forces are cut to the bone.

The direction of travel at Westminster is turning more away from the progressive consensus in Scotland and towards the privatisation of health, water, police support services, prisons and the probation service. If you're a public servant, you've as much to fear from this as from transitional arrangements to independence. This is putting at risk the whole ethic of public service and inclusiveness that I have spent my whole life working in.

Few if any nations surrender, as Scotland does, all of their revenues to either their neighbour or their federal government in return for what is effectively pocket money. Most keep their revenues then negotiate, agree and buy into shared joint projects. That's a much more healthy arrangement than the one we have at present which has not least promoted the myth that Scotland is subsidised. It has left us almost the only oil producing nation in the world without an oil fund to support the long term future welfare of our citizens.

I believe that Scotland will negotiate its future from a stronger position than it does at the moment, with better priorities and better eventual outcomes. Independence gives us the chance to show the confidence that other nations have to manage their own affairs, to protect and to develop the kind of Scotland that I want to live in and that I sincerely hope my children will inherit."



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