



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 3, No. 74, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Wednesday 31 January 2024

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

The meeting opened at 2.00 pm.

1. Portfolio Questions: Questions on Constitution, External Affairs and Culture, and then on Justice and Home Affairs, were answered by Cabinet Secretaries, Ministers and the Lord Advocate.

2. UK Covid-19 Inquiry Revelations: Douglas Ross moved S6M-12010—That the Parliament expresses its concern at the evidence revealed from the UK Covid-19 Inquiry from Scottish Government ministers, special advisers and officials, both past and present, on their handling of the COVID-19 pandemic; calls for the Parliament’s COVID-19 Recovery Committee to be reconstituted for the purpose of providing parliamentary scrutiny of evidence revealed by the Inquiry; recognises that the former First Minister promised to handover WhatsApp messages to the UK Covid-19 Inquiry; believes that the former First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, and the former Deputy First Minister, John Swinney, have failed grieving families by deleting evidence that they knew would be required for the Inquiry; further believes that the current First Minister has misled the public on the detail of the retention of his WhatsApp messages, and recommends that all three be referred to the independent adviser on the Scottish Ministerial Code so that COVID-19-bereaved families and the public can get the answers that they deserve.

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance (Shona Robison) moved amendment S6M-12010.5—

As an amendment to motion S6M-12010 in the name of Douglas Ross (UK Covid-19 Inquiry Revelations), leave out from “expresses” to end and insert

“welcomes the work of the independent judge-led UK Covid-19 Inquiry and Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry to help learn lessons to ensure that the nation can be best prepared for any future emergent pandemic viruses; recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic saw the loss of life across the country, and again offers its condolences to the families and friends of those who died during the pandemic; notes that 28,000 messages and 19,000 documents have been handed to the UK Covid-19 Inquiry from the Scottish Government; agrees that one area of concern, from which lessons must be learned from the handling of the pandemic, is the size and scale of potential fraud in PPE contracts that were overseen by the UK Government; notes that this will be considered by both the UK Covid-19 Inquiry and the relevant prosecutorial authorities; supports the establishment of a UK ‘COVID corruption commissioner’ to seek to recoup public funds lost to waste and fraud, and believes that all governments should engage fully with the UK Covid-19 Inquiry to enable their actions and decisions during the pandemic to be scrutinised, so that COVID-19-bereaved families and the public get answers to the questions that they have.”

Jackie Baillie moved amendment S6M-12010.3—

As an amendment to motion S6M-12010 in the name of Douglas Ross (UK Covid-19 Inquiry Revelations), insert at end “, and regrets that the Scottish National Party has, for almost 17 years, presided over a culture of secrecy in government.”

After debate, amendment S6M-12010.5 was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 61, Against 53, Abstentions 1). As a result, amendment S6M-12010.3 was pre-empted.

The motion, as amended, was then agreed to ((DT) by division: For 61, Against 53, Abstentions 1).

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament welcomes the work of the independent judge-led UK Covid-19 Inquiry and Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry to help learn lessons to ensure that the nation can be best prepared for any future emergent pandemic viruses; recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic saw the loss of life across the country, and again offers its condolences to the families and friends of those who died during the pandemic; notes that 28,000 messages and 19,000 documents have been handed to the UK Covid-19 Inquiry from the Scottish Government; agrees that one area of concern, from which lessons must be learned from the handling of the pandemic, is the size and scale of potential fraud in PPE contracts that were overseen by the UK Government; notes that this will be considered by both the UK Covid-19 Inquiry and the relevant prosecutorial authorities; supports the establishment of a UK ‘COVID corruption commissioner’ to seek to recoup public funds lost to waste and fraud, and believes that all governments should engage fully with the UK Covid-19 Inquiry to enable their actions and decisions during the pandemic to be scrutinised, so that COVID-19-bereaved families and the public get answers to the questions that they have.

3. Business Programme: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-12020—That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 6 February 2024

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Stage 1 Debate: Bankruptcy and Diligence (Scotland) Bill

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 7 February 2024

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy; Finance and Parliamentary Business

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Delivering Record Social Security Investment in Scotland to Tackle the Cost of Living Crisis and Inequality

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Approval of SSIs (if required)

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 8 February 2024

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: Transport, Net Zero and Just Transition

followed by Ministerial Statement: Minimum Unit Pricing of Alcohol

followed by Stage 1 Debate: Budget (Scotland) (No. 3) Bill

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 20 February 2024

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 21 February 2024

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands; NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care

followed by Scottish Liberal Democrats Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Approval of SSIs (if required)

5.10 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 22 February 2024

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

followed by Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Portfolio Questions: Social Justice

followed by Stage 1 Debate: Regulation of Legal Services (Scotland) Bill

followed by Financial Resolution: Regulation of Legal Services (Scotland) Bill

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

(b) that, for the purposes of Portfolio Questions in the week beginning 5 February 2024, 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.

4. Approval of SI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-12021—That the Parliament agrees that the Anaesthesia Associates and Physician Associates Order 2024 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

5. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-12022—That the Parliament agrees that the Bus Services Improvement Partnerships (Objections) (Scotland) Regulations 2024 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

6. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-12023—That the Parliament agrees that the Welfare of Farmed Animals (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2024 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

7. Approval of the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Pigs (Revocation) (Scotland) Notice 2023: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-12024—That the Parliament agrees that the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Pigs (Revocation) (Scotland) Notice 2023 (SG/2023/304) be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

8. Approval of the Draft Funeral Director Code of Practice: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-12025—That the Parliament agrees that the Draft Funeral Director Code of Practice (SG/2023/300) be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

9. Designation of Lead Committee: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-12026—That the Parliament agrees that the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee be designated as the lead committee in consideration of the Scottish Elections (Representation and Reform) Bill at stage 1.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

10. Committee Membership: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-12027—That the Parliament agrees that Foysoil Choudhury be appointed to replace Colin Smyth as a member of the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

11. Decision Time: The Parliament took decisions on items 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 as noted above.

12. Enhancing Scottish Football: The Parliament debated S6M-11073 in the name of Ben Macpherson— That the Parliament celebrates what it sees as a current successful period for the Scottish national football teams; believes that, collectively as a nation, Scotland should seek to build on this progress and achievement, and therefore make further improvements to realise even more of Scotland’s footballing potential, including in the Edinburgh Northern and Leith constituency; recognises, with its determination to seek to enhance Scottish football at all levels, the work of the Scottish Football Supporters Association (SFSA) by initiating, coordinating and publishing a fan-led review of the game in Scotland, titled Rebuilding Scottish Football: A Fan Led Review of The Game in Scotland, which was published in June 2023; notes that the SFSA-sponsored review includes recommendations for strengthening and extending the role of football as a sport that is accessible to all in the population who wish to engage and participate, as a major cultural industry for the nation, as a means for encouraging positive social change, and as a source of substantial individual and community benefit especially in relation to physical and mental wellbeing; further notes the issues raised in the fan-led review and the belief that there are shared merits to considering these on a collaborative, cross-party basis with stakeholders, and, in particular, with the Scottish Football Association (SFA) and Scottish Professional Football League (SPFL); notes the key recommendation of the fan-led review that the governance, finance and conduct of Scottish football would benefit from independent scrutiny and, as necessary, appropriate regulation, which it understands is being undertaken in England and discussed within and amongst football communities worldwide, and acknowledges calls for there to be further consultation on the future development of Scottish football, including its oversight and governance, for the benefit of the continued enhancement of Scottish football.

13. Motion Without Notice: Ben Macpherson moved without notice that, under Rule 8.14.3, the debate be extended by up to 30 minutes.

The motion was agreed to.

The meeting closed at 6.23 pm.

David McGill
Clerk of the Parliament
31 January 2024

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

Committee Reports

The following reports were published on 31 January 2024—

Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee, 9th Report, 2024 (Session 6):
Subordinate Legislation considered by the Delegated Powers and Law
Reform Committee on 30 January 2024 (SP Paper 516)

Finance and Public Administration Committee, 1st Report, 2024 (Session 6):
Budget Scrutiny 2024-25 (SP Paper 517)

Subordinate Legislation

Negative Instruments

The following instrument was laid before the Parliament on 31 January 2024 and is subject to the negative procedure—

Dangerous Dogs (Designated Types) (Scotland) Order 2024 (SSI 2024/31)
laid under section 1(9) of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991

Other Documents

The following document was laid before the Parliament on 31 January 2024 and is not subject to parliamentary procedure—

Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23 for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 (SG/2024/5) laid under Section 88 of the Scotland Act 1998

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