



# The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 3, No. 29, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Wednesday 20 September 2023

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 and Ministers.

**2. Protecting Scotland's Nature:** Rhoda Grant moved S6M-10498—That the Parliament reaffirms its recognition of the climate emergency and the need to achieve a net zero future; recognises that Scotland has the potential for more carbon sequestration capacity by restoring peatlands and extending tree cover; regrets that the available budgets for woodland planting and peatland restoration are underspent by significant margins, and that targets are not being met; notes that the Scottish Government has promoted the use of private green finance to fill a purported £20 billion gap in funding for nature in Scotland, but that this figure, published by the Green Finance Institute, has been called into question and is now recognised by NatureScot as an overestimate; regrets that there was a lack of due diligence carried out by the Scottish Government; agrees that investment in the climate transition is crucial, but believes that Scotland's natural environment should not be allowed to be used for greenwashing by private corporations, and calls on the Scottish Government to carry out a full and transparent consultation on the policy options and finance mechanisms available to advance Scotland's capacity to sequester carbon.

The Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity (Lorna Slater) moved amendment S6M-10498.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-10498 in the name of Rhoda Grant (Protecting Scotland's Nature), leave out from first "regrets" to end and insert "affirms its commitment to the Global Biodiversity Framework, which commits countries to "closing the biodiversity finance gap" and, in Target 19, calls for countries to "Substantially and progressively increase the level of financial resources from all sources"; commends the increase in public investment in nature through the Nature Restoration Fund and Peatland ACTION; recognises the vital role of the Forestry Grant Scheme in supporting woodland creation and sustainable forest management; agrees that investment in the climate transition is crucial, and that Scotland's natural environment should not be allowed to be used for greenwashing by private corporations; recognises that tackling the climate and nature crises requires all parts of society to act; welcomes, therefore, the Scottish Government's Interim Principles for Responsible Investment, which are designed to support a values-led, high-integrity market that ensures that communities benefit, and to support diverse and productive land ownership, as well as the recent publication of a consultation on Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy and an underpinning delivery plan, which will be *followed by* an investment plan; further welcomes the Scottish Government's commitment to progress a Land Reform Bill and an Agriculture Bill; notes the valuable contribution made by the Scottish Land Commission in its report, Natural Capital and Land Reform, and looks forward to the Scottish Government's response to its recommendations, and calls on all parties to work constructively to restore Scotland's natural environment."

Jamie Halcro Johnston moved amendment S6M-10498.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-10498 in the name of Rhoda Grant (Protecting Scotland's Nature), insert at end "; regrets that, despite the pivotal role played by farmers, crofters and land managers in reducing emissions, capturing carbon, promoting biodiversity and restoring habitats through hard work, innovation and investment, they continue to be left in the dark over future support and await clarity regarding the proposed Agriculture Bill; agrees that investment is crucial to meet Scotland's net zero goals; recognises the UK Government's £1 billion in Track 2 funding for the carbon capture and storage project, to protect jobs and develop green skills, and acknowledges NatureScot's Teaching, learning and play in the outdoors report, which highlights how outdoor education and play stimulate children's connection to nature."

After debate, amendment S6M-10498.2 was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 63, Against 50, Abstentions 0). Amendment 10498.1 was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 47, Against 66, Abstentions 0).

The motion, as amended, was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 63, Against 50, Abstentions 0).

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament reaffirms its recognition of the climate emergency and the need to achieve a net zero future; recognises that Scotland has the potential for more

carbon sequestration capacity by restoring peatlands and extending tree cover; affirms its commitment to the Global Biodiversity Framework, which commits countries to “closing the biodiversity finance gap” and, in Target 19, calls for countries to “Substantially and progressively increase the level of financial resources from all sources”; commends the increase in public investment in nature through the Nature Restoration Fund and Peatland ACTION; recognises the vital role of the Forestry Grant Scheme in supporting woodland creation and sustainable forest management; agrees that investment in the climate transition is crucial, and that Scotland’s natural environment should not be allowed to be used for greenwashing by private corporations; recognises that tackling the climate and nature crises requires all parts of society to act; welcomes, therefore, the Scottish Government’s Interim Principles for Responsible Investment, which are designed to support a values-led, high-integrity market that ensures that communities benefit, and to support diverse and productive land ownership, as well as the recent publication of a consultation on Scotland’s Biodiversity Strategy and an underpinning delivery plan, which will be followed by an investment plan; further welcomes the Scottish Government’s commitment to progress a Land Reform Bill and an Agriculture Bill; notes the valuable contribution made by the Scottish Land Commission in its report, Natural Capital and Land Reform, and looks forward to the Scottish Government’s response to its recommendations, and calls on all parties to work constructively to restore Scotland’s natural environment.

**3. Protecting Specialist Neonatal Services in Lanarkshire:** Jackie Baillie moved S6M-10497—That the Parliament is concerned by the Scottish Government’s decision to downgrade the award-winning neonatal services in University Hospital Wishaw, which will result in newborn babies who require specialist care being transferred to one of three specialist intensive care neonatal units across Scotland; recognises that many families across Lanarkshire have had their newborn babies cared for in this Neonatal Intensive Care unit, and that they are deeply upset by this decision to withdraw critical services and expertise from local communities, and calls on the Scottish Government to reverse its decision.

The Minister for Public Health and Women’s Health (Jenni Minto) moved amendment S6M-10497.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-10497 in the name of Jackie Baillie (Protecting Specialist Neonatal Services in Lanarkshire), leave out from “is concerned” to end and insert “believes that it is vital that the smallest and sickest babies born in Scotland receive the best and safest care possible to improve their life chances; notes evidence from expert clinicians that care for babies at highest risk is safest in units that treat a higher number of patients; agrees that parents would expect the Scottish Government to act on such evidence in the very best interests of their babies; welcomes the new model of neonatal intensive care, as recommended by The Best Start report, which was led by expert NHS clinicians and service user representatives, that delivers this change; notes that local neonatal units will continue to offer care to the vast majority of babies who need it, and that no neonatal units will close as part of the new model; further notes that all families who have a baby in neonatal care can access the Young Patients Family Fund, which provides support for costs of travel, food and accommodation; acknowledges the

commitment of all neonatal staff across Scotland, and congratulates the Wishaw neonatal team on being named UK neonatal team of the year in 2023.”

Sandesh Gulhane moved amendment S6M-10497.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-10497 in the name of Jackie Baillie (Protecting Specialist Neonatal Services in Lanarkshire), insert at end “, and understands that declining maternity services is not being experienced exclusively in Lanarkshire, with Dr Gray’s Hospital in Elgin still waiting for its consultant-led maternity services to be restored, five years after they were temporarily downgraded, and with maternity services at Caithness having been permanently downgraded, leading to expectant mothers being forced to travel vast distances just to give birth.”

After debate, amendment 10497.2 was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 63, Against 50, Abstentions 0). As a result, amendment 10497.1 was pre-empted.

The motion, as amended, was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 63, Against 50, Abstentions 0).

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament believes that it is vital that the smallest and sickest babies born in Scotland receive the best and safest care possible to improve their life chances; notes evidence from expert clinicians that care for babies at highest risk is safest in units that treat a higher number of patients; agrees that parents would expect the Scottish Government to act on such evidence in the very best interests of their babies; welcomes the new model of neonatal intensive care, as recommended by The Best Start report, which was led by expert NHS clinicians and service user representatives, that delivers this change; notes that local neonatal units will continue to offer care to the vast majority of babies who need it, and that no neonatal units will close as part of the new model; further notes that all families who have a baby in neonatal care can access the Young Patients Family Fund, which provides support for costs of travel, food and accommodation; acknowledges the commitment of all neonatal staff across Scotland, and congratulates the Wishaw neonatal team on being named UK neonatal team of the year in 2023.

**4. Business Programme:** The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-10522—That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 26 September 2023

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Topical Questions (if selected)

*followed by* Scottish Government Debate: Climate Emergency - Ambition and Action

*followed by* Committee Announcements

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Wednesday 27 September 2023

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

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

*followed by* Stage 3 Proceedings: Patient Safety Commissioner for Scotland Bill

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Approval of SSIs (if required)

6.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 28 September 2023

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: Transport, Net Zero and Just Transition

*followed by* Ministerial Statement: Vision for Scotland's Future Energy System

*followed by* Stage 1 Debate: Trusts and Succession (Scotland) Bill

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 3 October 2023

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 4 October 2023

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 Government Business

*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 5 October 2023

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* Scottish Government Business

*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 25 September 2023, 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.

**5. Approval of SSI:** The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-10523—That the Parliament agrees that the Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) (Scotland) Act 2022 (Amendment of Expiry Date) Regulations 2023 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 83, Against 27, Abstentions 3).

**6. Membership of the Committee of the Regions UK Contact Group and the Regional Chamber of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe:** The Minister for Parliamentary Business (George Adam), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-10524—That the Parliament agrees to nominate Kate Forbes as a full member of the Committee of the Regions UK Contact Group, and to nominate Keith Brown as a full member and Alexander Stewart as an alternate member of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

**7. Decision Time:** The Parliament took decisions on items 2, 3, 5 and 6 as noted above.

**8. Maternity Services in Scotland:** The Parliament debated S6M-10307 in the name of Meghan Gallacher—That the Parliament notes with regret the recent reported decisions taken by the Scottish Government to downgrade or remove what it considers to be vital maternity services in Scotland, following the publication of the Five-year Forward Plan for Maternity and Neonatal Services options appraisal report; understands that the neonatal ward at University Hospital Wishaw will be downgraded from level 3 to 2, and that newborn babies requiring specialised care will be transferred to the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Glasgow, Simpsons Centre for Reproductive Health at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, or Aberdeen Maternity Unit; notes reports that NHS Lanarkshire has expressed disappointment that the neonatal unit at Wishaw General, which, alongside other hospitals such as Ninewells in Dundee and Victoria Hospital in Kirkcaldy, would not form part of the specialist intensive care neonatal units; considers that this decision is particularly disappointing given that Wishaw General's Neonatal Multidisciplinary Team was named UK neonatal team of the year in 2023; recognises the upset and worry that these decisions have reportedly had on expectant mothers as, should their newborn baby require additional care, they would need to travel up to 100 miles away from their families and support network; notes the petition raised by a local Lanarkshire woman, which has now received nearly 12,000 supporting signatures; considers that this is just the latest maternity service to be downgraded, with consultant-led maternity clinics at Dr Gray's and Caithness General Hospital being closed, which, it believes, is putting expectant mothers in rural communities at significant risk while making dangerous journeys to Inverness or Aberdeen to give birth, and notes the calls urging the Scottish Government to rethink its reported conclusion to downgrade or close what are considered to be vital maternity clinics, to support the petition, and to reassure expectant mothers and their families that they will not have to make long journeys should their babies require specialist care.

The meeting closed at 6.17 pm.

**David McGill**  
Clerk of the Parliament  
20 September 2023

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

**Subordinate Legislation**

**Affirmative Instruments**

The following instrument was laid before the Parliament on 20 September 2023 and is subject to the affirmative procedure—

Coronavirus (Recovery and Reform) (Scotland) Act 2022 (Extension and Expiry of Temporary Justice Measures) Regulations 2023 [draft]  
laid under section 54(3) of the Coronavirus (Recovery and Reform) (Scotland) Act 2022

**Other Documents**

The following documents were laid before the Parliament on 20 September 2023 and are not subject to parliamentary procedure—

**Alcohol (Minimum Pricing) (Scotland) Act 2012: Report on the operation and effect of the minimum pricing provisions 2018 – 2023 (SG/2023/196)** laid under Section 3 of the Alcohol (Minimum Pricing) (Scotland) Act 2012

**Edinburgh Tram Inquiry Report (SG/2023/200)** laid under The Inquiries (Scotland) Rules 2007

**Proposed extension of temporary justice provisions in the Coronavirus (Recovery and Reform) (Scotland) Act 2022 – Statement of Reasons (SG/2023/180)** laid under Sections 52(3), 53 and 58(1) of the Coronavirus (Recovery and Reform) (Scotland) Act 2022

**Scottish Public Services Ombudsman: Compendium of Case Reports for September 2023 (SPSO/2023/09)** laid under Sections 15(1) and 15(1A) of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002



---

---

Published by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

---

All documents are available on  
the Scottish Parliament website at:

[www.parliament.scot/documents](http://www.parliament.scot/documents)

For information on the Scottish Parliament contact  
Public Information on:

Telephone: 0131 348 5000 or 0800 092 7500

Email: [sp.info@parliament.scot](mailto:sp.info@parliament.scot)

Live chat on [parliament.scot](http://parliament.scot)

You can write to us in any language or contact us  
using the Text Relay service or in British Sign

Language through [contactScotland-BSL](http://contactScotland-BSL).

---

---

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

The Scottish Parliament's copyright policy can be found on the website -  
[www.parliament.scot](http://www.parliament.scot) or by contacting Public Information.