

DELIVERED FREE TO A MILLION HOMES ACROSS SCOTLAND



KATE FORBES

Scotland is a country rich in talent and resources



GORDON MACINTYRE-KEMP

Wellbeing can help us build a fairer nation



LORNA SLATER

Renewables will make us a powerhouse of the future



WE CAN BUILD A NEW NATION AND A NEW WORLD ...TOGETHER

FOR the past month the eyes of the world have been fixed on Scotland as we welcomed COP26 to Glasgow – and it’s fair to say the world liked what it saw.

Countries large and small were represented as world leaders addressed the pressing global challenge of climate change.

And, as hosts, we were given an enticing preview of how an independent Scotland would be warmly welcomed to the top table

Continued on page 5

WELLBEING THROUGH INDEPENDENCE



THE NATIONAL



So what's the BIG idea?

WE live in extraordinary times. In the last year and a half, Scotland has witnessed the social and economic damage done by the health crises and the resulting necessity to lockdown and protect Scotland's people from Covid-19.

On top of that, we are now seeing the damage that Brexit is reaping on our economy ... slowing economic growth, skills shortages, food shortages, rising food and fuel prices, the Westminster government cutting pensions protections making our older folks worse off and export delays and roadblocks.

Scotland's goods exports are more than double per head that of the rest of the UK's and so Scotland was always going to suffer more from Brexit. That's why we voted against it as a nation.

Extraordinary times, however, can also open our eyes to extraordinary opportunities. We have an opportunity to ask ourselves: do we really want to go back to normal when normal wasn't working, when "normal" involved austerity, inequality, a lack of opportunity in life for our young folk and the worst pension in the developed world?

We have the opportunity to press reset, to choose a fresh, better, more ambitious approach to how we manage Scotland's economy and Scottish society.

This newspaper is being delivered to more than one million homes across Scotland and aims to set out how independence would transform Scotland, focusing on the principles of wellbeing and taking the best ideas from those countries of the world which have already put the wellbeing of their population at the top of their agenda.

Scotland has already started out on that journey, as a member of the Wellbeing Economy Alliance alongside Iceland, Finland, Wales and New Zealand.

In short, we think Scotland deserves better than the Westminster government's lack of care, austerity, pensions cuts and Brexit isolation – we want to invest in Scotland's wellbeing and we want you to join us in making that happen.

Rebuilding Scotland: an independent nation reflecting our shared values on wellbeing

We have the chance to press reset, to choose a fresh, better and more ambitious approach to how we manage Scotland's economy and society

By Gordon MacIntyre-Kemp, founder of Believe in Scotland



BELIEVE in Scotland studied several nations around the world that are adopting a wellbeing socioeconomic approach: Norway, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Denmark, New Zealand and even Wales.

None has yet fully developed its thinking into a holistic approach but all had ideas worthy of adopting and adapting to Scotland's needs.

From those international examples we created a wellbeing policy framework, polled 1000 voters living in Scotland and found there was majority support – mostly more than 75 per cent – for each of the value positions of a wellbeing approach.

You might expect Labour, Green and SNP voters to agree with the values of wellbeing.

However, there was majority support with LibDem and Conservative voters, albeit to a lesser degree.

Surprisingly, Conservative voters even came out top on one of the key values.

Are socialism and capitalism last century's ideas? Is a wellbeing economic approach the only way to build a resilient, fairer and more successful society and save the planet?

A significant majority of Scots want to live in a country with a social/economic/environmental policy framework based on these shared values and ambitions of the Scottish people.

The Scottish people's values are wellbeing values. This is what our poll says Scotland thinks:

1 Equality, quality of life, fairness, happiness and health are all economic outcomes that should be given equal weight to economic growth.

2 The focus of the economy should be to serve the needs of the people and society more than the needs of big business and finance.

3 To be able to live with dignity while experiencing wellbeing and security should be a basic human right and not something that comes only with wealth.

4 You cannot have a thriving economy without a thriving society and you cannot have a thriving society without a thriving economy.

5 Austerity has failed, slowed economic growth, harmed people and society, and made the country more susceptible to economic and health crises.

6 Post coronavirus, our economic policies need to be re-engineered to generate higher levels of equality in health, wealth, wellbeing and access to opportunity.

7 If we build society and our economy more successfully after coronavirus, we can create a new economic approach that



will allow both our economy and our society to thrive and be more resilient in economic crises.

8 The nature of work is changing and we need to invest more heavily in innovation, encouraging better business practices and preparing for the future of work.

9 Education is an investment in our children and young people and should be free and open to everyone.

10 Small businesses are the backbone of our economy. Greater government investment in creativity and innovation is needed to help them grow and create better quality jobs.

11 Government expenditure on welfare and health is higher due to the inequalities in the current economic system and a wellbeing approach would reduce those costs.

12 Economic success being more equally shared

If you Believe in Scotland then go to



among society would result in better growth.

13 Greater access to personal development opportunities for all will increase social mobility and benefit the economy.

14 Ending poverty, inequality and unfairness, while increasing minimum wage and job security, will boost the economy.

15 People need to feel more secure in their livelihoods. A universal basic income for every adult citizen may provide that security and end in-work and pensioner poverty.

16 Decision-making should be less centralised to give people a greater democratic voice in local issues.

17 We need to reduce our economy's carbon outputs and waste, make transport more sustainable and make recycling and repairing far more prominent.

Independence is a normal and the many benefits of independence are within Scotland's grasp and they would work to make life better for all who live within our borders and to forge closer links with friends and allies elsewhere in the world.

Scotland's civic nationalism defines us as a people. It's inclusive, internationally focused and welcoming.

We simply want the chance to create a nation that reflects our political, economic, environmental and social values and thus enhances our nation's wellbeing in ways that cannot be achieved if we remain governed by an uncaring and unfit Westminster parliament.

Wellbeing offers an inspirational vision of a future Scotland and if you decide to support independence you become one of the people helping to shape the ideas which guide it.

Let's take advantage of this incredible opportunity, the chance to shape an emerging independent nation for the benefit of generations to come. All you have to do to change our future is believe in Scotland.

“
Is a wellbeing economic approach the only way to build a more resilient, fairer and more successful society and save the planet?”

Teaming up with global friends taking the first steps to be a wellbeing nation



By Michael Russell, SNP president

AS we emerge from the global pandemic, Scotland needs to look hard at the type of country we want to live in and the positive changes we want to make.

We have a choice of two futures. Without independence, we will go on being tied to a UK which has already forced the hardest of Brexits upon us against our will and in which we can never have an equal say.

But with independence – with hard work and by being ambitious for Scotland – we can create a country that embraces the values of fairness, equality and justice and guarantees them for all our fellow citizens. If we do that, we can also be an inspiration to others and play a role in creating a better world.

Scotland's economy (GDP) is larger per head than France, Italy, Japan – in fact, larger than most bigger countries across the globe.

That means that, contrary to all the smears and fears, Scotland will be the richest and most developed nation that has ever chosen to become independent.

But there is more. Research also shows that independent developed nations with smaller populations are more agile and nearly always outperform the UK across all economic measures. They have better pensions, earn more in work and provide fairer support for those who can't work.

So by choosing a different future – an independent future – we can take advantage of the wealth we already have and outperform what we are experiencing as part of the UK.

The question now is not if we should choose to change, but instead what we want to become. What type of country do we – every one of

us – want to live in? What would our society look like if we were to build our new country around the values, hopes and dreams of the people who live here, instead of the demands of Westminster politicians or the financiers of the City of London?

The insecure future for everyone in Scotland is actually the one that keeps us in the UK, lurching from crisis to crisis.

Over the past 20 years we have lived through a banking collapse, swingeing austerity cuts to public expenditure and services, Brexit and now rampant corruption at the heart of government, as well as suffering the effects of a global pandemic.

We need a break – but we can only get that if we reset our society to focus not on what others force us to do, but on the wellbeing of all our talented people, our wonderful environment and, as a result, on creating a more sustainable and wealthy society.

WE have to move away from unequal wealth creation and short-term fixes, often leading to problems created by the UK Government, and start to focus on our own needs and how we fulfil them working constructively with others across the globe.

Fortunately, we are already taking our first steps towards creating that better place to live, love and work.

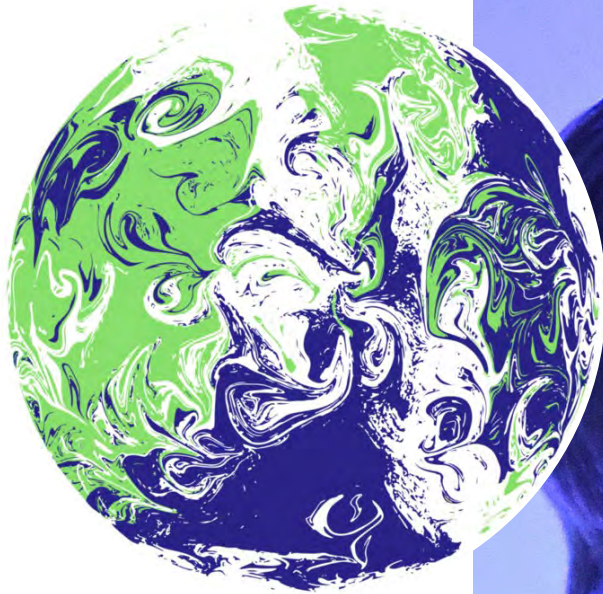
Scotland is at the heart of a new club of countries which know that the only future we have is as healthy citizens living on a healthy planet.

Five nations are now Wellbeing Economy Governments, working within the Wellbeing Economy Alliance to recognise and meet the economic, social and environmental challenges that face humanity.

Finland, Iceland, New Zealand, Wales and Scotland are developing ways of ensuring that their citizens come first and sharing their experiences and achievements. More countries are keen to join in.

We need to move forward, not backwards – and making Scotland an independent wellbeing nation is the only way we can do so.

BelieveInScotland.org/pledge



SCOTLAND has just welcomed the world to Glasgow, and spending time in the city these last few weeks has been an invigorating experience.

To see the place I am proud to call home, and our country as a whole, play host to COP26 has been uplifting. Countries large and small have been represented at the top table as world leaders addressed the challenge of climate change, the biggest single issue facing us collectively as a global community.

And while Scotland was not represented in its own right at that top table, I have no doubt that not only are we more than capable of making our own way in the world as an independent country but, just as importantly, we will bring a lot to the table when it comes to making our own unique contribution to the global good.

Take climate change itself. Scotland is already leading the world in our efforts to decarbonise and to reach net zero.

We already have the world's most ambitious framework for emissions reduction, which has seen us nearly halve our emissions since 1990. Indeed, as the UK's committee on climate change recently stated, "Scotland has decarbonised more quickly...than any G20 economy since 2008". And in 2045, when we are pledged to become a net-zero economy, Scotland's contribution to climate change will end altogether.

We still have much more to do of course - but the reaction to our efforts from the world leaders I spoke to in Glasgow was hugely encouraging. It's all too easy to forget, amid the day-to-day politicking that goes on at Holyrood and Westminster, that Scotland has a great story to tell, on the climate agenda and much else besides - and that people across the world are interested in what we have to say.

Of course there are those for whom - even on as vital an issue as

Main photograph above: Nicola Sturgeon at COP26



LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Global leaders at COP26 were impressed by the great story Scotland has to tell ... but it will take independence to give us the power to truly reach our potential

BY FIRST MINISTER NICOLA STURGEON

There is a wealth of goodwill towards Scotland from our friends and neighbours across Europe and beyond

climate change - any hint of Scottish success, progress or potential needs to be downplayed, called into question or ignored.

Maybe that was why the Scottish Tories suggested during this year's Scottish Parliament election campaign that they would refuse to co-operate with the Scottish Government on any issue, including climate change.

That probably says far more about the Scottish Conservatives than it does about the Scottish Government, but it shows the extent to which opponents of independence are prepared to go to dismiss any notion that we can be a success story as a nation in our own right.

The case for independence is stronger than it has ever been. The status quo that was voted on the 2014 independence referendum quite simply no longer exists. Since

then Scotland has been taken out of the European Union and the world's biggest single market - which is seven times the size of the UK market - against our democratic will.

The huge irony, among many, is that in 2014 we were told that the only way to preserve Scotland's place in the EU was to reject independence. We were also told that Scotland was a valued and respected partner in the UK and that by voting No to independence we would instead have the most powerful devolved parliament in the world.

The reality is that Scotland's voice has been utterly ignored throughout the whole Brexit process, while our Parliament has been subjected to an assault on its powers via a power grab led by Boris Johnson's government.

And no one should believe any suggestion that some form of enhanced devolution would protect Scotland - because the hard reality

now is that no amount of so-called devo max would have protected Scotland from either Brexit or the Tory power grab.

MEANWHILE, the real-world damage being caused by Brexit to our economy and communities is huge and still growing.

Figures show that in the first two quarters of this year, Scotland's food exports to the EU, including fish and seafood, were 14 per cent lower than the equivalent period in 2019. This compares with a three per cent drop for non-EU exports of food over the same period - that decline reflects not just the impact of the pandemic, but also the irresponsible, hard-line approach the Tories have taken to Brexit.

Meanwhile, the UK Office for Budget Responsibility now also

forecasts the impact of Brexit on the UK economy will be even worse in the long run than Covid-19.

As if that wasn't bad enough, the UK Government is now threatening an all-out trade dispute with the EU in the ongoing row over the Northern Ireland Protocol. All of this is happening of course as Westminster is sinking in a sea of Tory sleaze reminiscent of the worst excess of the John Major years.

Scotland can and must aspire to better than this.

Independence will give us the chance to re-join the EU and its single market in our own right, and given our previous membership - meeting all the key requirements - we will be better placed than any nation has ever been to join.

Independence will also give us the chance to focus on our own needs, and allow us to prioritise things such as pensions instead of spending

billions of pounds on nuclear weapons. The fact is that the UK sits at or near the bottom of a whole range of league tables of developed nations when it comes to issues such as welfare spending, equality and economic productivity.

Scotland can, and will, do so much better as an independent country. Independence will not be a magic wand, and there will be tough challenges to be faced. But the question is no longer whether Scotland could afford to be a successful independent country - the question now is whether we can afford not to be independent.

THERE is a wealth of goodwill towards Scotland from our friends and neighbours across Europe and beyond, many of whom are waiting for us to take our future into our own hands and many

of whom have themselves become independent nations.

There is a cast-iron democratic mandate for an independence referendum, secured by the people of Scotland in this year's election. Boris Johnson's Trump-like bid to defy democracy is unsustainable and doomed to failure.

No country should be prepared to simply accept what Scotland has been subjected to in recent years. As First Minister, I am not prepared to accept it because I know that a better way is possible, and that a brighter future awaits Scotland.

But the only way to make sure we do not continue to face misgovernment by Westminster and having our interests ignored is to become an independent country.

The time has come to take our future into our own hands with independence.

The First Minister with (clockwise from top left): activists Greta Thunberg and Vanessa Nakate; US President Joe Biden; Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau; German Chancellor Angela Merkel; introducing US congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to the joys of Irn-Bru



Independence will give us the chance to focus on our own needs and prioritise things like pensions

All eyes on Scotland

Continued from page 1

among the nations of the world. Our guests recognise that Scotland, led by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, will bring a lot to that top table. We've been widely praised for helping to lead the world into the net-zero age.

Ninety-seven per cent of our electricity now comes from renewables. Our floating wind farm is the world's first. We've planted 44 million trees in just two years. And we're providing funds to help developing countries tackle the impacts of climate change.

SCOTLAND does not yet have all the powers to make the best of our vast natural resources. That day will come. Until then, we're more than ready and able to play our part on the global stage.

We've a fantastic story to tell. There is a wealth of goodwill towards Scotland from countries across the globe, many of whom are watching and waiting for us to take our future into our own hands.

We must not squander that goodwill but use it as a springboard towards

creating a greener, fairer, wealthier way of life for all.

And we know what is possible because when we look at our near neighbours in Europe we can see that, for nations of Scotland's size, independence works.

With the powers that come with being an independent country, all of them are richer per head than the UK. All of them are more equal. And all of them have lower levels of poverty.

If Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Austria and the rest can be fairer and richer than the UK then so can Scotland.

Scotland can, and will, do so much better as an independent country.

As First Minister Nicola Sturgeon says: "The time has come to take our future into our own hands."

Scotland is a wealthy nation in waiting



By
Kate
Forbes,
Scottish
Finance
Secretary

HERE is a fact that everyone should remember: Scotland is a wealthy nation that more than pays its way. We are strong and prosperous, with huge resources that many other nations lack. But because we don't have full control over those resources, under Westminster's control we do not match the economic performance of many countries of a similar size across Europe and beyond.

And it's Scotland's economy that covers every penny of the country's day-to-day public services such as education, transport and policing. The Scottish Government balances its budget and Scotland generates enough tax to cover all devolved spending – despite what opponents of independence would mislead you to believe.

What we can't do is borrow sufficiently to invest. It is what every other normal – and independent – nation does. But Scotland is not allowed to ... for no apparent reason.

As a result, we have been held back by consecutive Tory governments which have dragged us down for too long. Scotland's economy has been treated as an afterthought at best while resources have been poured into London and the south-east of England.

What the pandemic has

demonstrated is that independent countries have the ability to adapt to deal with crisis situations, something Scotland would be more than capable of doing IF we were independent.

Countries the same size as Scotland have been able to react and implement measures to protect both people's health and people's jobs. Scotland has been unable to do that in the way we would prefer because we are reliant on Westminster and ordinary people are clearly not a Tory priority.

Under Westminster control, the UK is already lagging far behind our European neighbours in a huge range of measures of health, wealth and happiness.

And the worst Brexit impacts on our economy have not even kicked in yet. But be in no doubt, the impact on workers and costs are already hurting businesses. And remember, Brexit was inflicted on us against our will, another consequence of Westminster control.

Some might say we should put economic recovery before independence. But you can't have one without the other. For a strong, robust, green recovery we need independence. Why? Because quite simply, we know what happened last time the Tories were in charge of economic recovery.

After the crash of 2008, the Tories embarked on a decade of austerity, balancing the books on the backs of the most vulnerable – when there were far better alternatives – and Chancellor Rishi Sunak's recent Budget was a continuation of those callous priorities.

More austerity will undermine economic recovery and deepen inequalities. And Labour offers no hope for a change in direction at Westminster.

Scotland can – and must – choose a different path. We can build an even stronger economy, a fairer economy, a greener economy which

performs as well as our European neighbours – but not while we remain shackled to Westminster.

Scotland has all the talent, ingenuity and resilience to do things better. Our country is rich with natural resources, which drives economic growth and raises revenue for our public services.

Take our wind and rain, which are powering Scotland and keeping the lights on. Our renewable energy output has quadrupled in the past 10 years – that's enough power for the equivalent of nearly nine million households. Alongside the energy benefits, there are the financial benefits too.

With the need to decarbonise the way we travel and heat homes, there is potential to unleash even more of Scotland's immense renewables potential – driving green growth and creating thousands of jobs.

We've got the resources but our potential is constantly thwarted. Westminster rule is working against the creation of jobs and investment in the renewables sector in Scotland – like the recent outrageous and political decision to bypass Scotland to take a major carbon-capture investment scheme elsewhere, rather than the excellent project in the north-east of Scotland. Again, it comes back to our inability to properly borrow to invest in all our futures.

The bottom line is that, despite all the many strengths of the Scottish economy, we need the full levers of control if we really want to be more prosperous and more equal.

To reject austerity and invest in our economy, our NHS and our public services, the people of Scotland will have the opportunity to choose independence and put Scotland's future and Scotland's recovery in Scotland's hands.

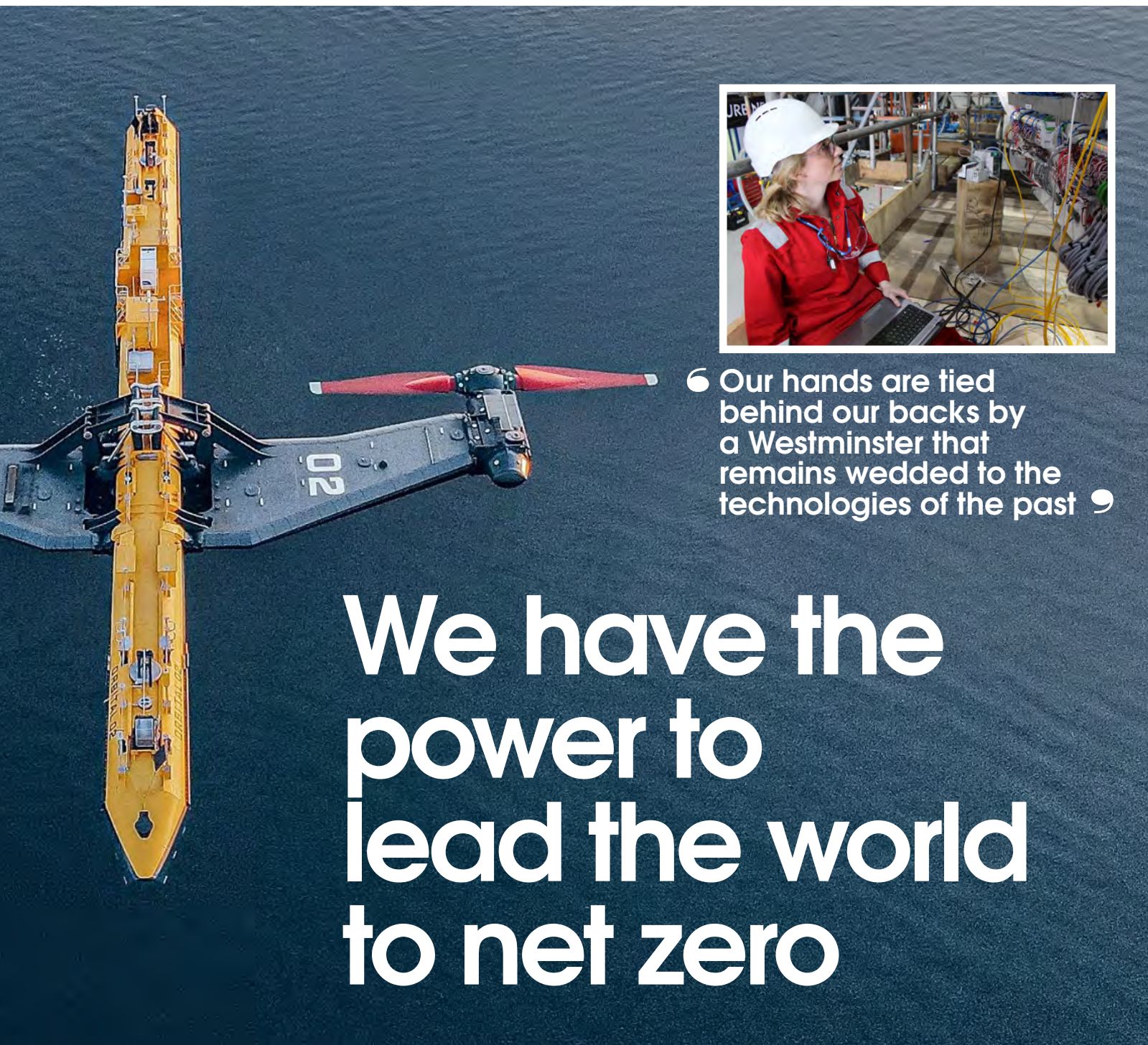


By Lorna
Slater
MSP,
Co-leader
of the
Scottish
Green
Party

BEFORE I was elected, I worked as an engineer in tidal energy. The project I was working on launched the world's biggest tidal device into Scottish waters. This giant turbine made its way from Dundee, where it was assembled, to Orkney, where it will generate enough electricity to power 2000 homes. World-leading, cutting-edge technology, developed, assembled and installed in Scotland.

The global transition to a net-zero economy is accelerating, and there is no doubt in my mind that Scotland has the renewable resources and talent to lead this. We can be at the forefront of new industries and innovations such as tidal power, driving forward Scotland's and the world's response to the climate emergency while building a new and prosperous economy.





Our hands are tied behind our backs by a Westminster that remains wedded to the technologies of the past

We have the power to lead the world to net zero

But our hands are tied behind our backs by a Westminster that remains wedded to the technologies of the past, that is unable to imagine change and that is fundamentally disinterested in building an economy that works for everyone across Scotland.

We don't have the power to upgrade our own electricity grid, or to connect our vast renewable resources to continental Europe so we can sell our excess zero-carbon energy. We don't have the power to change VAT to make it cheaper to upgrade our homes and install heat pumps, or the freedom to invest the public money that is needed into the infrastructure and industries of the future, as the rest of Europe is doing.

With the Greens co-operating in government, we are using every lever available to tackle the climate emergency and secure a green

economic recovery for all. We are growing the renewables sector, investing in public transport, making bus travel free for young people, supporting supply-chain investments and ensuring the money we spend has maximum benefit by making it conditional on fair work standards such as paying the Living Wage.

I've no doubt that we are making a huge difference, but I also know that we could do so much more with the powers that would come with independence.

Just look at what other European countries of a similar size are doing. Denmark, for example, pioneered the development of the global wind industry, and is now home to the world's largest turbine manufacturer, while Austria is reforming its tax system to curb emissions. And the European Union itself is working together to invest a trillion

euros into the green transition.

Like our European neighbours, the government of an independent Scotland could take the decisions it needs to build a fairer, greener and more prosperous country, and as part of the European Union we could be reaping the rewards of collaborating beyond borders and having direct access to one of the world's biggest and fastest-growing green markets.

For me, this is what an independence referendum is about. A positive and vibrant vision for a Scotland that is empowered and able to deliver on our aspirations. A Scotland that can take the vast opportunity presented by our renewable resources and talented workforce to drive forward a just transition to a zero-carbon economy in Scotland, across Europe and the world.

Main photograph:
The world's biggest tidal device on its way to Orkney

Inset: Lorna Slater working on the project

Get the economic facts you need at scotlandthebrief.com

Main Photograph: Orbital Marine Power

Westminster is blocking our renewables progress

AN independent Scotland can lead the renewable energy revolution. We can help save the planet from the catastrophic effects of climate change.

Scotland:

- Possesses 25 per cent of Europe's offshore wind and tidal resources
- Has 90 per cent of the UK's hydro power
- Boasts 60 per cent of the UK's onshore wind capacity
- Generated 97.4 per cent of its own electricity demand from renewables in 2020

Scotland's north-east is a world-leading region for oil and gas expertise, but the North Sea's billions were diverted to Westminster and the opportunity to invest in and transform Scotland's economy was wasted.

Now we're being told we're too poor to be an independent nation, while smaller but independent Norway became the world's wealthiest country.

With 1 per cent of Europe's population, Scotland possesses 25 per cent of its offshore wind and tidal resources. We got lucky twice with the North Sea, let's not allow Westminster to waste this new opportunity.

Independence will allow Scotland to lead a just transition from oil and gas to renewables, transforming Scotland and the north-east into a global economic leader in renewable energy.

Remaining part of the UK makes that impossible. In 2014, then UK Energy Secretary Ed Davey promised major investment in the world's first gas-fired carbon capture and storage facility at Peterhead. This year the long-awaited funding for that plant was diverted to England.

Westminster has cut investment in Scottish renewable development and prioritised nuclear power plants in England.

Only independence guarantees that our renewables industry will thrive and support our nation's wellbeing.

Believe in Scotland



www.thenational.scot/freetrial

Young and old need protection from Westminster hammer blows



By Shona Robison,
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice

SCOTLAND is one of the wealthiest countries in the world – but for far too many people it doesn't feel that way.

To tackle child poverty head-on, the Scottish Government has introduced the Scottish Child Payment. This £10-a-week per child payment is for low-income families with children under the age of six. Around 108,000 children are now benefitting and by the end of next year it will be expanded to under-16s to reach many thousands more.

It's already been described as a "game-changer" in the fight against child poverty and we are committed to doubling it to £20 at the earliest opportunity in this term of Parliament.

But while the Scottish Government is lifting children out of poverty and helping families to make ends meet, the Westminster government is doing the opposite.

Last month, Boris Johnson's Tories cut Universal Credit (which goes to low-income working families, those unable to work, and those out of work) by £20-a-week. The Scottish Children's Commissioner pointed

out this would wipe out the benefits of the Scottish Child Payment.

That's a real hammer blow for nearly half a million families in Scotland but these are the consequences for people in Scotland when we get Tory governments we don't vote for.

It's not just democratically unacceptable – it causes real hardship. Although the Tories have not won a General Election in Scotland for more than 60 years, we've had to put up with Conservative governments for much of that time.

That's meant the poll tax, the bedroom tax and years of austerity being imposed on people in Scotland, creating a big – and ever-widening – gap between rich and poor.

With independence we would have the powers to create a fairer society – free from the regressive policies of right-wing Tory governments.

We know what is possible because when we look at neighbouring countries in north-west Europe, we can see that, for nations of Scotland's size, independence works.

With the powers that come with being an independent country, all of them are richer per head than the UK. And all of them are also more equal with lower levels of poverty.

If Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Austria and the rest can be fairer and richer than the UK then why not Scotland? After all, few, if any of them, have the resources and natural advantages that we have.

A hallmark of a caring society is how it treats its older people. By that

measure, Britain is failing miserably, with a state pension that is one of the most miserly in Europe as a percentage of average earnings.

And Tory Chancellor Rishi Sunak's recent Budget decision to ditch the triple lock – a mechanism making sure pensions at least kept pace with inflation – means our old folk are going to be even worse off.

With independence we can surely do more to raise the standard of living for our older fellow Scots. The actions that the Scottish Government has taken, with only limited powers and budget, should give us confidence about what can be achieved.

And the success of countries with similar or smaller populations and full powers of a normal independent nation shows we can do it.

We'll have the powers we need to tackle the drivers of child poverty – for example, to raise the minimum wage to the real living wage and stop insecure employment. And control of all social security spending will lie here in Scotland.

The pandemic has shone a spotlight on the unfairness in our society like never before. But instead of taking measures to tackle this unfairness, we've seen instead over recent weeks where Westminster's priorities lie.

They've given a big tax cut to the banks while incomes for many people are set to fall.

We have an opportunity to work together to create a better Scotland after Covid and to create that fairer, more just Scotland. It's time to take our future into our own hands.

Let's be clear ... the Tories can't be trusted with the NHS

THE nation will be forever grateful for the selfless heroics of the NHS staff we all relied upon during the pandemic.

But now our cherished NHS faces a deeply uncertain future because of increasing US-style private healthcare.

The Tories, of course, deny it – but scratch the surface and you find overwhelming evidence of their true intentions.

For example, in 2017, Boris Johnson's former senior adviser Dominic Cummings claimed Michael Gove had wanted to privatise the NHS, Boris Johnson wished to charge people for health services and Iain Duncan Smith advocated moving to a social insurance system.

The reality is that Westminster Tories can and will put the NHS on the table in future post-Brexit trade deals – particularly with the US. The Tory Government could have passed a law that the NHS will be protected. But they did the opposite.

They voted to scrap an amendment to their Trade Bill which would have prevented any future trade deal from undermining or restricting the UK's ability to provide "a comprehensive publicly-funded health service free at the point of delivery".

If the Tories are not planning to open the NHS to private trade, why vote against a law that would rule it out?

The British Medical Association has said "the NHS in England has been forced down a route of increased marketisation and privatisation".

In Scotland, because of the Scottish Parliament, we've been able to resist this creeping privatisation.

But Boris Johnson has called devolution "a disaster". Now his government has passed a law that gives ministers the power to open up the NHS to "market access principles".

And even senior Tories are ringing the alarm bells. Their former prime minister John Major giving his view of the then Tory leaders in 2016 said: "The NHS is about as safe with them as a pet hamster would be with a hungry python."

The risk to Scotland's NHS increases every day Scotland remains under Westminster control.

“
If Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Austria and the rest can be fairer and richer than the UK then why not Scotland?”

BELIEVE IN SCOTLAND is the largest, most active and most effective non party political national independence campaign.

We believe in Scotland – if you do too then sign the Believe in Scotland Pledge today and support our campaign.

Join us as we explain why independence is normal, in Scotland's best interests and how it will protect and enhance Scotland's wellbeing. Every pledger will receive a **FREE PDF** of our best-selling book *Scotland the Brief* and code to start a **FREE** two month online subscription to

THE NATIONAL

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