

Five things you need to know today



Yes Scotland – St Bernard’s Well – Minimum Pricing on Alcohol – Sick Kids – Cookies

The Yes Scotland campaign launches today at Cineworld at 11a.m. This is the movement for an independent Scotland principally backed by the SNP, but also having some cross party support it seems, now that Green MSP [Patrick Harvie](#) has said that he will vote yes in the 2014 referendum.

Mr Harvie said:

“I’m happy to take part in the launch of a Yes campaign, but feel strongly that it must quickly develop into a genuinely cross-party attempt to draw together a compelling and transformational vision of an independent Scotland. People won’t vote for a pig in a poke, and we should not ask them to.

“Most Greens support independence, but there are many others who have concerns about the SNP’s middle-of-the-road strategy. They will find it hard to trust a campaign that advocates progressive centre-left values while also promising tax cuts for big business; or promotes climate change targets while hailing another 50 years of oil and gas extraction; or promises to end Trident while floating the idea of staying in NATO.”

In his recent submission to the Scottish Government’s independence referendum consultation Mr Harvie made several key points to underline the Scottish Green Party position:

– Since 1999 we have seen a continued trend toward a centralised Scotland. If we can begin now to move power toward

genuinely local levels, many more people may see the point in voting Yes.

– We need a transformation in our energy system, yet energy regulation is reserved while MSPs wring their hands about fuel poverty targets they have little power to influence.

– We need to build a more equal society, yet the tax and benefits systems are determined by UK politicians in the interests of the wealthy.

– We need to challenge the culture of greed and overconsumption, yet the power to regulate business and advertising is not available to us.

– Scottish Greens currently remain open to the idea of a second question but the constitutional choice it refers to must be well defined, and quickly, if it is to be included.

– Scottish Greens strongly support reducing the voting age for all elections to 16.

[STV](#) reported yesterday that the 200-year-old St Bernard's Well is to be restored.

This was part of a 2008 three year plan between the council and [Edinburgh World Heritage](#) to spruce up some of the historic sites in the city. Here is the report. According to STV the project is still short of cash. Do you know of any others on the list which either have been restored or not? Comments below please.

[0110475_culture+leisure 29.04.08 10.00am item 10](#)

An unsurprising headline :- “MALCOLM CHISHOLM DEFIES PARTY WHIP TO BACK ALCOHOL BILL”

Commenting on former Health Minister Malcolm Chisholm's support for the minimum pricing bill at Stage 3 – in defiance his party whip – SNP MSP Bob Doris said:

“Malcolm Chisholm is a former Health Minister and is a hugely experienced politician, and his longstanding and principled support for minimum pricing stands in stark contrast to the petty politics of his Party colleagues.

“He is doubtless not the only supporter of minimum pricing in the Labour party, but he has shown courage and conviction by defying the Labour whip and voting for the legislation today, as he has done consistently since minimum pricing was first proposed.

“Jackie Baillie and Richard Simpson must reflect on why one of Labour’s most capable politicians has distanced himself from them in this way.”

Roseanna Cunningham meanwhile voted the wrong way by mistake...

[View the story “Alcohol Minimum Pricing Bill passed at Holyrood” on Storify]***

The new Sick Kids Hospital may be delayed again. Conservative Leader Ruth Davidson asked the First Minister about its progress or lack of it at Holyrood yesterday. Davidson said:- “I have a personal interest, as I am one of the many thousands of people across Scotland whose lives were saved by the specialist care that they received at the sick kids hospital in Edinburgh. I know how beloved the old Sciennes building is. However, the site’s limitations, the building’s age and its distance from an acute emergency hospital mean that the facility is no longer suitable to provide the world-class care that our children deserve into the future.

Plan B is not good enough. Plan A has slipped five times on the First Minister’s watch. The Government cannot sit on its hands and let the project fall apart, because it is too

important. Will the First Minister now show the political leadership that patients and their families expect? Will he make the hospital a political priority and bring to bear all the power that the Government has to get the players round the table, to get the bricks laid, to get the doors open and to get children treated by 2017?"

Alex Salmond replied by saying that since the Westminster government has cut funding by 30%, a different type of funding will have to be put in place. He said:-"The alternative to keeping our commitments to the people of Scotland—which I say that we shall keep, as another ex-patient of the sick kids hospital in Edinburgh—is to go for non-profit- distributing funding. The securing of non-profit-distributing funding inevitably takes time, but it shall be done.

The capital programme in the national health service in Scotland is infinitely superior to what is happening south of the border. Just occasionally, Ruth Davidson and her colleagues should take a glance at the decimation of the national health service in England, which will never happen as long as we are in government in Scotland."

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