

Scottish Independence Referendum chat



A resumé of remarks and comments and pointers to articles about the Scottish Independence Referendum.

People living in Scotland are invited to vote in the referendum on independence from the United Kingdom on 18 September 2014. The referendum question is “Should Scotland be an independent country?”

Whether you intend voting Yes or No to that question, your views, and those of others, have a place here. We invite comments and we also invite you to write about what you think by using our Submit your Story feature [here](#).

The White Paper on independence will be published on 26 November 2013, First Minister Alex Salmond announced at the SNP conference 2013 which ended over the weekend.

He confirmed that the Paper will set out the founding structure of an independent Scotland and said:-“People across the country want to know more about independence.

“They want to hear more about the benefits. They are hungry for information. And we have undertaken to provide that information.

“The more people know about independence, the more likely they are to support it.

“The Scottish Government will publish the White Paper on independence on Tuesday, November 26th.

“It will do two things. Firstly, it will spell out the foundation that we will establish between the referendum next

year and the first elections for an independent Scottish Parliament in the spring of 2016.

“Secondly, it will set out clearly and unmistakably that independence is about a Scottish Government that the people choose – an independent Government. And it will set out our vision of Scotland – the ‘why of independence’ – the Scotland that we seek.”

The SNP Conference 2013 wound up at Perth’s Concert Hall on Sunday afternoon with some speeches from Government Ministers. Education Minister Mike Russell said this in his speech on Sunday:-“We need the full powers of independence in order to use the tools of a normal nation to eradicate poverty, for poverty saps all initiative and undermines all achievement. Using our welfare, taxation and labour market powers – powers we don’t presently have – we will be able to achieve equity in our schools and make sure that poverty, in the words of the first Robert Owen Award winner, Ontario educator Avis Glaze, is not educational destiny. And we will be able to build the high skill, high wage, high-achieving country that we all want to live in.

A country well served by its schools, its colleges and its universities. A learning nation leading learning in the world. But more importantly still, using learning to enrich and take forward a fair, equal, positive, outward looking society.”

Convener I regard myself as very fortunate to be Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning. Every day I learn something new and every day I met inspirational people who are also learners, no matter the role they occupy in our education systems.”

Nelson Mandela observed that “education is the most powerful weapon that you can use to change the world”. And we, of course, are world changers. So we must go on investing in, supporting, encouraging, improving and delivering world quality education in this country of ours. Only by so doing will be able to change what needs to be changed – and that is a great deal.”

But we are the lucky generation to have that opportunity. John Adams, the first American Vice President and the second American president put that sense of excitement and opportunity well when, in 1796 on the eve of voting on the Declaration of Independence, he wrote of his time being one in which his society had “an opportunity of beginning government anew from the foundation and building as they choose.” And he went on to muse on “How few of the human race have ever had an opportunity of choosing a system of government for themselves and their children? How few of them have ever had anything more of choice in government than in climate?”

“We have the chance – unique for our generation and our generation alone – to begin government of Scotland anew from the foundation and to build as we choose. We must engage every citizen of this country in that task. They have choices they wish to make. Let us help them to make them.”

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A Yes vote in next year’s referendum will rid Scotland of the corrosive and cynical world of Westminster and allow us to build a better and fairer nation, Yes Scotland Chief Executive Blair Jenkins said on Sunday.

Addressing a Referendum Rally at the SNP conference in Perth, Mr Jenkins said independence was a unique opportunity for Scotland to follow a new path – and to leave behind the broken

and discredited system of Westminster rule.

He said: 'If you are sick and fed up of the corrosive and cynical world of Westminster, then next year we can be rid of all that.'

'Vote Yes and we can say enough to the remote House of Commons and the ridiculous House of Lords. Enough of the war-mongers and the job-cutters; enough of the asset-strippers and mortgage-flippers; enough of the welfare-bashers and the bedroom-taxers.'

'Let's be done with them. Let's make our own decisions and live by our own values. It's time to speak up for Scotland. It's time to stand up for Scotland. It's time to vote Yes.'

Mr Jenkins told delegates that the key to winning next September's referendum lay in the grass-roots campaign being carried to every city, town, village, and community the length and breadth of Scotland.

He said: 'Not only do we have the best arguments in the referendum, we also have the best advocates and the best ambassadors.'

'That advantage in numbers and enthusiasm will be crucial as campaigning and canvassing become more intense in this final year. We will have more people with more commitment on more streets knocking on more doors. And that will mean more votes.'

His confidence that Yes would win was based on three big reasons which, he said, would define and transform the debate in the next 11 months:

- The very different character of the two campaigns.
- The overwhelming case for independence from the evidence and the arguments.

- The way public knowledge and awareness will grow in the run-up to September 18.

The promotion of the Yes case in public debates, particularly in major TV events, would also provide a boost for the campaign, he said. The quality of the people on his team who could perform in broadcasting studios gave him a major advantage over his opponents.

‘It was notable how quickly David Cameron ran away from the prospect of a televised debate with Alex Salmond,’ he told delegates. ‘If he had run away any faster, the Prime Minister could have been a contender for medals in next year’s Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.’

Closely linked to the scale of the campaign was the variety and diversity of volunteers committed to delivering a Yes vote, Mr Jenkins explained.

‘We have never had so many people from so many different backgrounds, political and non-political, working to achieve an independent Scotland.’

‘Naturally, that means there are different views of what we might do with the powers of an independent parliament – competing and compelling visions from the SNP, the Scottish Greens, the Scottish Socialists, Labour for Independence, the Common Weal project, Business for Scotland and many other organisations and individuals.’

‘That wide range of views is a strength – it’s the sign of a healthy independent Scottish democracy in the making.’

‘What unites us in Yes is the democratic principle that Scotland’s future should be in Scotland’s hands, that the best people to make decisions on what is right for our country are the people of Scotland themselves.’

Mr Jenkins added: ‘What a contrast we present to Better

Together. For the No campaign the day is never bright. It is only every dark, very dark. Their emotional range is strictly limited – anger and aggression, or fear and anxiety. And that's on a good day.

'We have our vision and our values. They have their scares and their smears. This referendum is a contest between Project Hope and Project Fear.'

He said only a Yes vote guaranteed that Scotland would get the governments it chose, and end the travesty of being governed from London by a political party that Scotland had consistently and repeatedly rejected, with policies that Scotland had consistently and repeatedly rejected – from the Poll Tax to the Bedroom Tax.

Mr Jenkins continued: 'If the democratic case for independence is overwhelming, then so too is the case based on greater prosperity. The facts bear frequent repetition. There have been stronger public finances in Scotland than in the UK, not just this year but for 30 years. Even with the legacy of London mismanagement, at the point of becoming independent Scotland will go straight into the top ten of world economies based on our wealth production per head of population. We are the European Union's biggest oil producer, and its biggest source of offshore renewable energy.

'So don't let anyone tell you that Scotland isn't a rich country. We are a very rich country, but we are also a country where far too many people live in poverty. We don't lack the wealth or the resources to tackle that poverty – what we lack is any political willpower at Westminster.

'The UK just doesn't regard reducing poverty as a top priority, but an independent Scotland will.

'Why do we have such widespread fuel poverty in energy-rich Scotland? Why should we have twice as much child poverty as countries like Denmark and Norway? Why should we tolerate a

five-fold increase in the number of Scots depending on food banks just to keep going?

'These are damning indictments of the UK.

'An independent Scotland will tackle these problems and focus on fairness, so our young folk have decent jobs, working families can prosper, and older people can have guaranteed security in their older years.

'The truth is that Westminster is utterly incapable of delivering social justice. And that leads on to the third reason why we will win: the fact that more and more people in Scotland are becoming better informed about the independence debate. And as they do so, they are much more likely to move to Yes.

'I know this from every community I visit, from every meeting I attend, and from every conversation I have. I know it from our own research. The only movement is to Yes and your hard work is paying off.'

Mr Jenkins said that since devolution, Scotland had taken a different path. And now people in Scotland wanted a Scottish Parliament with new powers over key economic levers such as welfare and taxation.

He added: 'We've come a long way with devolution, but there is much more work to do. Only a Yes vote will deliver those extra powers, and the prospect of transformational change.

'And that is where all of us, you and me and the tens of thousands of Yes volunteers from all around the country, have a pivotal role to play. This referendum will be fought on a number of battlefields, but none is more significant and important than the individual conversations we all have. Each of us can help to convince our friends and families and the people we work with and the people we meet.

'That's why at this conference we are promoting the idea of Yes conversations backed with our new canvassing database-Yesmo – and supported by the real facts and figures about Scottish independence.

'Our volunteers are the most committed and the best informed campaigning force that this country has ever seen. I know we can deliver Yes votes from a majority of our fellow citizens.'

[The Scotsman](#) carries a report of the Better Together campaign's comments on the currency plan for a post independence Scotland, calling on the SNP to lay out a full range of options in case a currency union with the rest of the UK is not agreed upon.

The Better Together campaign will be at the Haddington Farmers Market this Saturday 26 October 2013.

[@UK_Together](#) *Better Together East Lothian Haddington Farmers Market on Saturday 26th October from 10am all welcome*
[@EastLothianCLP](#)

– Robert McNeill (@robertmcneill2) [October 21, 2013](#)

And the latest blog on the Better Together website is about defence. They claim that there is little detail behind the words uttered at the SNP conference in Perth about defence, and that it will be a difficult task to set up a defence body in Scotland with just £2.5bn per year.

The Edinburgh Reporter will round up the variety of views we find across all media as often as we can.

This may be a daily article if there is a lot of chat about the independence referendum, or less frequently if we have too

much else to do. If you would like to write about your views on independence then please feel free to submit your article using the Submit your Story feature [here](#). The Edinburgh Reporter does not have a stance on the independence question, but hopes to help you make your mind up about the vote on 18 September 2014 by providing as much unbiased coverage as possible.

There are two main websites where you can obtain further information:-

Yes Scotland can be found here <http://www.yesscotland.net>

Better Together has a website here <http://bettertogether.net>