

Scottish Independence Referendum – today's topics



A selection 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](#).

French-born MSP Christian Allard is inviting French people and Francophiles alike to celebrate the French National Day at Holyrood Park in Edinburgh.

The ‘Oui Picnic in the Park’, organised by the French for Yes group, is taking place at 3pm on Monday 14th July 2014, an opportunity for many to come and celebrate ‘Bastille Day’ over some food and wine.

Everyone is encouraged to bring along baguettes, camembert, patisseries, saucisson and wine, with Mr Allard recommending the wine to come from his native French region, Burgundy.

The ‘French for Yes’ group is one of many international groups that support a Yes vote in the September referendum, with others such as Poles for an independent Scotland, Irish for Yes, Africans for Yes, Asian Scots for Yes, and the recently launched English Scots for Yes.

Mr Allard, MSP for the North East of Scotland, commented:-“I am very much looking forward to the Oui Picnic, which is an excellent opportunity to meet people from other nations voting Yes in September and an occasion to mark an important day in the French calendar. This picnic is another way to demonstrate that this referendum is about the people who live here, wherever we come from, and about our future as a nation.

“The Oui Picnic will also show the shared values that both our two nations have, and to celebrate a new alliance between a modern Scotland and a modern France.”

Being part of the UK protects schools and hospitals in Scotland, new independent figures on North Sea oil and gas confirmed yesterday.

The independent and impartial Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) has revised down its forecasts for North Sea oil and gas revenue by a quarter between now and 2040/41.

The new figures show that in what would be the first three years of separation, Alex Salmond would be faced with a black hole of £12 billion because of over optimistic estimates by the Scottish Government.

The OBR figures also confirm that the Scottish Government's revenue forecasts for 2012/13 and 2013/14 were £5 billion higher than the tax actually received.

Better Together said that the huge black hole would mean big cuts to public services in a separate Scotland. Public spending in Scotland today is more than £1200 higher per head than the UK average.

The news comes as Better Together leader Alistair Darling visited the National Hyberbaric Centre in Aberdeen. David Smith, Managing Director of the centre, said that being part of the UK is vital for his business, which benefits from

contracts with the UK Ministry of Defence for naval training programmes. These include at Faslane on the Clyde.

Better Together leader and former Chancellor Alistair Darling said:-“Today’s figures confirm what we already know – the oil is running out and the tax we will get from it is falling. Being part of the UK means we can make the most of what is left in the North Sea without putting the funding for our schools and hospitals at risk. It’s the best of both worlds for Scotland.

“Oil and gas has been great for Scotland. The industry employs around 200,000 people here and generates billions in tax to pay for our public services. That’s a good thing, but the tax we get is volatile and declining. Alex Salmond has consistently over estimated how much tax we would get from the North Sea, and today’s figures confirm that his future guesses are as unreliable and optimistic as ever.

“Alex Salmond’s claims on oil have already been proven to be spectacularly wrong. Now he wants us to put the future of our schools and hospitals at risk on the basis of nothing more than his dodgy projections. This is a risk that we simply don’t have to take. We can stay in the UK and get all the benefits of oil without taking on all the risks that would come with independence. It’s the best of both worlds for Scotland. We should say no thanks to Alex Salmond’s fantasy economics in September.”

David Smith, Managing Director of the National Hyperbaric Centre, said:-“As far as our business is concerned it is of huge importance that Scotland remains part of the UK. I’d rather be dealing with a customer base of 63 million than one of five million. To give an example, the Ministry of Defence closed their own hyperbaric facility in Portsmouth and now use ours. If Scotland were to vote to become independent there’s a real risk that someone would set up a rival centre in England.”

Green Yes, the Scottish Green Party's campaign for a Yes vote in the independence referendum, says it welcomes an expert report recommending that an independent Scotland remain part of the GB-wide market for electricity and gas.

A Green Yes briefing on jobs points out that more than 11,000 people are already employed in the renewables industry and most firms are expecting to grow. Scotland has the offshore engineering skills to make marine renewables a success and create thousands more jobs in construction, grid development and research.

Alison Johnstone, Green MSP for Lothian and a member of Holyrood's economy and energy committee, said:-"Energy is an issue that all countries are facing up to, and with our renewables potential Scotland has a chance to generate not just what we need but also energy for export to enable our neighbours to meet their low carbon targets. Encouraging the trading of energy not just within these islands but across the North Sea makes sense, and I see a Scottish Parliament with responsibility for energy policy much more likely to prioritise these issues.

"By contrast Westminster is locking us in to new nuclear with its massive costs and toxic legacy, and a dash for fracked gas that risks our local environment and our carbon budget. What today's report from the Expert Commission on Energy Regulation underlines is that it's sensible to co-operate on such a crucial issue but it's vital that Scotland gets to decide the direction it wants to go in."

If Scotland votes Yes to independence in September the Queen should be dropped as head of state: that's the message that will come out of a republican conference to be held this weekend in Edinburgh.

Columnist Ian Bell and SNP stalwart Duncan Ross will be among the speakers at this weekend's republican conference in Edinburgh.

Campaign group Republic is holding its annual conference in Edinburgh for the first time. The theme of the conference is Yes or No, the Monarchy Must Go.

While Republic doesn't take sides in the independence debate the group has called on Scotland to be given a choice of head of state in the event of independence.

Republic's CEO Graham Smith said today:- "The monarchy is wrong for Britain, it will be wrong for a newly independent nation. If Scotland votes Yes in September it would be absurd to claim independence on one bended-knee to a monarch living in another country's capital."

"The SNP has already shown how debate can move public opinion – so let's have this debate now and see how quickly Scots in an independent Scotland decide they want their own head of state."

"Scotland may well vote No in September – and if that's the result we'll all keep working together for a united British republic. But if the result is Yes then Scotland needs to make a clean break – a nation is not sovereign while it has its head of state chosen by genetic lottery in another country.

"I'm looking forward to this weekend's conference where we'll be making the case that, Yes or No, the monarchy must go."

Ian Bell, columnist for the Herald, will tell the conference on Saturday:- "The SNP assert that "the People are sovereign", but mean to retain the monarch, presumably still assenting to legislation, as head of state. What kind of nonsense is that, even in the misty realms of what passes for Scottish "constitutional doctrine"?"

“One function of the royals, it seems to me, is to condition us to the idea that unelected elites are somehow the natural order. Monarchy is linked to a profoundly unequal society.”

Stars of the grassroots campaign for a Yes vote in the independence referendum are featuring in a new Yes Scotland campaign video.

Produced by an award-winning production company, the five minute video features 32 well-known faces from across Scotland who are campaigning for a Yes on September 18.

As part of Yes Scotland’s expansive social media campaign to reach out to voters about why they should back an independent Scotland, the video will be released online today Friday, via YesScotland.net and also shared with the tens of thousands volunteers who can show at events being held all over the country in the build-up to Referendum Day.

Last night there was a debut screening at The Scotsman Cinema but only for invited media, cast and Yes campaigners. Speaking ahead of the event Andy Maas, Producer of Freak Films, said:- ‘It’s fantastic to be part of the campaign and see people from all walks of life coming together for this video. With only two days of shooting, this is a just a snapshot of the breadth of the independence movement.

‘Film and video is an important medium to communicate with people and I hope the people of Scotland enjoy watching why so many people, just like them, are voting Yes.’

Speaking in the video, comedian and actor Greg Hemphill said:- ‘The referendum is going to come round once in a lifetime and the opportunity is right now. Who want’s to be dependent when you can be independent? On September the 18th I’m voting Yes.’

Former BBC journalist and Green Yes campaigner Louise

Batchelor said:- 'We are not choosing a political party, we are choosing the way we live our lives. In September I am voting Yes.'

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

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](#)

Better Together has a website [here](#)