

Andy Wightman resigns from the Scottish Greens

In a sudden move earlier today the Lothians MSP Andy Wightman who was one of the increased cohort of Greens elected almost five years ago resigned from the party.

His action followed a vote on amendments to the Forensic Medical Services (Victims of Sexual Offences Bill) at Holyrood last week. Mr Wightman said that he felt the language and approach of the party had been provocative and confrontational for many women and men.

A spokesperson for the Scottish Greens said: “The Scottish Greens are focused on building a greener and fairer Scotland that tackles the climate emergency, so Andy Wightman’s decision not to be part of our movement anymore is a matter of deep disappointment.

“Land reform, empowering local democracy and community empowerment are core Green issues, and Andy’s contribution has been very important, but the Greens remain committed to carrying on this agenda without him.

“The Scottish Greens wish Andy well in whatever he decides to do next.”



Andy Wightman MSP Photo © The Edinburgh Reporter

The text of Mr Wightman's letter to the co-leaders of the party is as follows:

*Lorna Slater & Patrick Harvie MSP
Co-Leaders
Scottish Green Party
19b Graham Street
EDINBURGH
EH6 5QN*

cc. Membership Secretary 18 December 2020

Dear Patrick and Lorna,

I am writing to tender my resignation from the Scottish Green Party with effect from Friday 18 December 2020.

For some time now, since I was admonished for attending a public meeting at Edinburgh University in June 2019, I have been saddened by the intolerance shown by some party members to an open and mature dialogue about the tensions and conflicts around questions of sex and gender in the context of transgender rights and women's rights.

On Thursday last week it was made clear to me that if (as I was minded to), I voted for amendment 28 to the Forensic Medical Services (Victims of Sexual Offences) (Scotland) Bill, I would face complaints and disciplinary action leading to possible suspension, deselection or expulsion. On the evidence of the reaction to my attendance at the June 2019 public meeting, I took this prospect seriously.

I understand that the Scottish Green Party has a strong commitment to equalities and trans rights. However, some of the language, approaches and postures of the party and its spokespeople have been provocative, alienating and

confrontational for many women and men.

It has become evident to me that the sort of open-minded public engagement I would like to see take place on this topic is incompatible with a party that has become very censorious of any deviation from an agreed line.

Put simply, I cannot operate in this kind of environment and Thursday's vote and the discussions that took place around it were the final confirmation of that.

I remain committed to Green politics and will endeavour to work constructively with the Green Group in Parliament until dissolution. I also have important work to do on tenants' rights, the climate crisis, land reform, local democracy and taking forward my European Charter of Local Self-Government (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill.

I wish you well in the May 2021 Elections.

Best wishes

Andy