

Regan sets out her Independence Plan

Ash Regan MSP is one of the three candidates in the SNP Leadership election. Here she writes about her Independence Plan and how it will be delivered.

Ash Regan said: “There is growing domestic and international attention to my plan to use the Ballot Box to decide whether Scotland becomes an independent country.



Ash Regan MSP is the third candidate to launch her campaign in the SNP Leadership election PHOTO ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter “Today I [can confirm this plan](#) is supported by 93% of SNP

voters and 52% of Scottish voters.

“I have the only plan that has historic precedent, can be delivered legally by Scotland alone, moves us beyond the referendum stalemate, is supported by the majority of SNP members, and is accepted by the public.

“I have often been challenged on ‘what if the UK say no’ and this is where I should mention I hold a Master of Science degree in Development Management, in the study of how countries develop, alongside my Bachelor of Arts in International Relations – which means I’ve taken for granted the foundation on which I speak.

“Bluntly, there is no possibility of the UK Government not agreeing, as demonstrated in the 65 examples of countries that have left the UK or British Empire.

“There is a 100% success rate in those countries getting the UK Government to the negotiating table after an initial refusal. It is not credible to suggest anything else, the UK Government will even concede this fact.

“The UK Government has denied the moral mandates of my predecessors for a rerun of a referendum – they can do this because legally they have that power reserved. The Supreme Court opined that an advisory referendum could not be held by the Scottish Government due to the outcome having an effect on the Union.

“This is important, as it demonstrates a key fact now established in the UK law, that even advisory referendums would be so great in their power, that the Union would be altered.

“This is exactly what my Voter Empowerment Mechanism does. It allows the people of Scotland – not politicians – to decide when they are independent. The achievement of a majority of votes for a collection of manifesto pledges to become

independent, and open negotiations would meet the criteria to alter the Union.

“This is Pillar 1: The Smith Commission is the only agreed written document on the matter and it states clearly in chapter 2, point 18 ‘It is agreed that nothing in this report prevents Scotland becoming an independent country in the future should the people of Scotland so choose’.

“It is important to note ‘should the people of Scotland choose’ – is agreed by every party in the Scottish and UK Parliament. The fact that the Scottish people are sovereign on matters of their independence is a settled matter.

“It would be extraordinary for the UK to change its stance from legally blocking a referendum to illegally ignoring an election in which its Electoral Commission oversaw the process. I cannot imagine the Prime Minister or his cabinet calling into question the legitimacy of a UK or Scottish election. It would be a significant regression to a country identifying as one of the oldest democracies in the world.

“This is Pillar 2: The International Community has recognised UK elections as fair and democratic since its inception. The international community has rallied and expressed support for every election winner and First Minister of Scotland, delivered through this mechanism. It is recognised and considered the democratic will of the Scottish people.

“Much has been made in the media over the last few days, as the UK Government seem to have noticed something that was never a secret. Every SNP MP and MSP since our election victory with Winnie Ewing has advertised and normalised the idea of an independent nation. I’m half surprised it took so long for them to catch on, Winnie’s campaign was ‘Stop the world, Scotland wants to get on’.

“Of course our representatives make a powerful case for recognising and working with an Independent Scotland, it is

what they are elected to do. We do not enter these discussions in the manner in which the UK do, with binders of rules and demands, instead we offer warm hospitality and kind friendship. I think on reflection this is why it eluded them.

“You can watch on YouTube my colleagues address the European Parliament and receive a huge standing ovation on this very point. There is an enormous warmth of feeling toward the Scottish people and an understanding in Europe of our mission of Self Determination. The idea that we would not be recognised by these friends is unthinkable.

“This is Pillar 3: The Scottish Parliament has the ability with a simple majority to change the frequency of its election cycle – this was helpfully clarified by my colleague Angus Brendan MacNeil with the House of Commons library staff, with the clerks in Holyrood also confirming this point.

“We do not need to ask Westminster’s permission to hold an election on a date and time that suits us. There is no legal method to stop the Scottish Parliament from deciding when it wants an election, in the same manner the UK Government can decide when it wants one.

“Our elections are overseen by the same Electoral Commission, and they are delivered in line with international law and recognition. The power can be handed to the people of Scotland at any point.

“And finally, Pillar 4: The United Kingdom is not a full democracy. It is a Constitutional Monarchy, with a Head of State, that is a defender of Self Determination and a celebrant of Self Government and of Independence.

“I quote King Charles’ speech to the independent nation of Barbados of November 30th 2021, announcing itself as a Republic:

He said: “The creation of this Republic offers a new

beginning, but it also marks a point on a continuum – a milestone on the long road you have not only travelled, but which you have built.

“From the darkest days of our past, and the appalling atrocity of slavery, which forever stains our history, the people of this island forged their path with extraordinary fortitude. Emancipation, self-government and Independence were your way-points. Freedom, justice and self-determination have been your guides.”

“King Charles is the Head of State for the United Kingdom and his public speeches show us the character of the man on the throne.

As First Minister, I would be required to attend audiences with him, and would serve as a member of his Privy Council – which is the recognised mechanism for reaching interdepartmental agreement for ‘prerogative business’, which is the business of which no other precedent or clear delegation to minister or department exists.

In summary: the UK Government defends their current position with bluster and bullish statements. However, the institutions of democracy, state and judiciary in this country are very clear in their categorical observance of democratic certainty.

The small men that throw barbed comments about Scotland being held in perpetuity, do so without the solid foundations on which this country was built.”

The SNP leadership election will be voted on by members of the party and a new leader to succeed Nicola Sturgeon will be announced on 27 March 2023.



SNP Leadership candidate Kate Forbes at the Scotch Whisky Experience in Edinburgh. PHOTO Alan Simpson Photography