

# **Government is “wasting money on independence” needed for heritage and the arts**

**Lothians MSP Foysol Choudhury has accused the government of wasting money on independence which would be better spent on heritage, culture and the arts in Scotland.**

Speaking after Portfolio Questions on Constitution, External Affairs and Culture at The Scottish Parliament on Thursday, Mr Choudhury said: “As Scottish Labour Party spokesperson for Culture, Europe and International Development, I am deeply concerned about the survival of Scotland’s vibrant cultural sector.

“I was saddened to hear that Historic Environment Scotland have numerous sites that remain closed or partially closed to the public.

“The Scottish Government’s 2023/24 budget predicted an increase in revenue for Historic Environment Scotland, yet I am concerned that many of these sites will remain closed for the upcoming summer season.

“Today, I asked the Scottish Government how Historic Environment Scotland will be able to reach the increased commercial revenue as predicted under these circumstances.

“I was concerned to hear about the incident of vandalism at Linlithgow Palace last week.

“I visited the Linlithgow Palace earlier this year and saw first-hand the extensive restoration work that has gone underway to preserve this historical site.

“I sincerely hope The Scottish Government will endeavour to do more to protect these historically and culturally invaluable sites in the future.

“The Edinburgh Filmhouse was one of the latest cultural venues to close.

“The Filmhouse was a community lifeline for many, and I recognise the efforts of community groups who have protested against its closure.

“I sincerely hope to see increased funding to local authorities so that community centres can have the necessary funds to support themselves.

“I am disappointed at the establishment of a new Independence Minister in The Scottish Government.

“As the Scottish Government continues to waste taxpayer’s money, Scotland’s culture and arts sector is the one to suffer.

“The money and resources dedicated to establishing yet another ministerial role could be spent elsewhere keeping cultural venues and historic sites alive, so that the whole of Scotland may benefit.”



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