

Our vision for a better Scotland

Filling the void in Scottish politics

INTRO PAGE:

We'd like to invite you to look beyond the tired routine of current political debate.

The fundamental values that underpin our society are being eroded. We present a better vision for the future of Scotland.

We offer fresh perspectives that could help solve deeply ingrained problems, and policies that could enable people of all ages to flourish as they pursue their path through life.

Our foundational philosophy is quite distinct from the current Holyrood parties.

As you read on, we hope that you find common sense, wisdom, justice, truth, decency, compassion, integrity and virtue.

If you do, please give us your vote! Do also join us in making our vision a reality. You can sign up at our website.

The Scottish Family Party team

Core Policies

Supporting Families

Strong families make for a strong nation.

As well as being a great source of joy, family life underpins our society. In the family, care and love are embodied, and resources are shared freely. The state should not seek to supplant the fundamental role of the family in bringing up children and should refrain from interfering in family life. Instead, the state should be supporting families to enable them to provide for themselves, structure their family life according to their priorities, and bring up their children according to their values. We value parenthood. **Bringing new life into the world and then caring for and nurturing children as they grow into adulthood is one of life's noblest**

endeavours. It is of immeasurable value to society and this huge contribution should be recognised by the state. Our culture should also honour and celebrate parenthood as a high calling, instead of glorifying career and diminishing the value of home life. We want as many children as possible to enjoy the many benefits of being brought up by their own mother and father. Many single parents do a sterling job bringing up their children, but most would agree that it's a tough assignment.

Of course, fulfilling, purposeful and valuable paths through life don't have to involve bringing up children, and our experiences of relationships and family life don't always work out the way we hoped. However, that doesn't detract from the central importance of family life to society.

Scotland faces many apparently intractable problems: poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, youth mental health issues, cycles of crime. **Family breakdown fuels these and many more problems.** It's not the whole story but promoting family stability is a policy avenue that needs to be explored. It would pay dividends out of all proportion to the costs. Prevention is better than cure.

MARRIAGE

We promote marriage as the best foundation for stable family life, benefitting adults, children and wider society. Scotland needs a strong culture of marriage.

The vital social institution of marriage has existed throughout history as a means to formalise a committed and sexually exclusive relationship between a man and a woman. This legal bond and public promise are powerful factors in sustaining such a relationship, providing partners with stability and security. However, children are the main beneficiaries: children of married parents tend to flourish and excel on every measurable outcome. The commitment of marriage helps ensure that a child benefits from the distinct and complementary parenting of their mother and father, a male and female role model in the family home, and the sense of identity that naturally flows from relatedness.

It is apparent that same-sex relationships cannot fully embody these ideals, so we do not believe that the state should formalise such relationships as marriages. We believe that marriage exists primarily to give children what they need, rather than to fulfil the wishes of adults. Practical benefits and rights for same-sex couples can be conferred through Civil Partnerships instead.

The introduction of civil partnerships for heterosexual couples further undermines the culture of marriage by offering an alternative that does not include a vow of sexual fidelity. Policies that treat cohabitations like marriages will detach some legal and financial benefits from the exclusive permanent commitment of marriage, thus undermining the unique value of marriage.

We will oppose any further attempts to redefine marriage, such as to include multi-partner, temporary, non-exclusive or incestuous relationships.

Relationship instability takes its toll on adults and, more importantly, children. On virtually every measure, everyone involved in a family breakdown tends to be negatively impacted. As well as the personal cost, the state is increasingly called on to mitigate the consequences through benefits, additional support at school, mental health services and policing.

The evidence is abundant and conclusive: couples who marry are far less likely to separate. So, any government genuinely seeking to enhance the collective wellbeing of the nation will want to promote a strong culture of marriage. Currently, marriage is far more prevalent among the wealthy than among the less well-off. This marriage gap is a key driver of inequality and generational poverty.

The current Holyrood parties regard the prevalence of family breakdown as beyond their influence and remit. They focus instead on “picking up the pieces” by supporting those adversely affected, particularly children. This is laudable, but the harms are often irremediable. **Only the Scottish Family Party seeks to get to the heart of the matter and reduce family breakdown.**

Schools should teach the facts about marriage and its rationale. The tax and benefits system should recognise and incentivise marriage and ensure that it is never penalised. SFP MSPs would exercise cultural leadership by promoting marriage in the media, the debating chamber and through special events.

We would eliminate all fees relating to the legal registration of a marriage. The state should contribute to the reasonable fees charged by wedding celebrants.

Steps to make the legal process of divorce easier undermine the status of marriage as a solemn, lifelong commitment.

Marriage and relationship counselling should be provided and funded to aid relationship stability.

Family Courts should not deny parents fair access to their children without substantiated serious grounds. Claims that a parent is unsuitable must be supported by convincing evidence. Long-term decisions to prevent a parent from seeing their child or to remove a child from the family home should be made by a jury. This would recognise the gravity of the decision and bring a breadth of perspective, reassuring parents that state ideology was not having undue influence over final decisions.

Failures to cooperate with child access arrangements should be dealt with swiftly and effectively.

The Wedding Box

Our Wedding Box policy is designed to honour, celebrate and encourage marriage across all of society, while also supporting each couple in their relationship. We estimate the cost incurred to be about £20 million a year, but the resultant savings could far exceed that figure.

A Wedding Box would be available to couples registering to get married in Scotland, with delivery well before the wedding day.

Much of the content of the box could be administrated via an app, including audio and video alternatives to written material.

The box would contain:

1) Anniversary Meal vouchers (£60) for restaurants in Scotland for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 7th, 10th, 20th, 30th etc anniversaries. As well as giving a boost to relationships that might be being neglected in the busyness of life, these meals would be spoken of and reported on social media as anniversary meals, thus raising the profile of marriage more widely.

2) A honeymoon hotel/accommodation voucher. For use in Scotland only, this would give £300 discount on a three-night stay from the day after the wedding date (so not for the wedding night). Couples wishing to travel outside Scotland would not benefit. The target is couples for whom the cost of a honeymoon might be prohibitive and a deterrent from marrying. This is environmentally prudent and would benefit the Scottish hospitality industry.

3) A voucher for three marriage preparation sessions with a recognised provider such as a minister of religion or relationship counsellor. Many couples embark on marriage without such an opportunity to reflect, but such deliberate consideration can help avoid problems in the future.

4) A voucher to cover the reasonable fees of a wedding celebrant. This would be conditional on using the preparation session vouchers described above.

5) A picture framing voucher for either the signed marriage vows or a wedding photograph. As well as reminding the couple of their promises, the display of such items would help promote a culture of marriage more widely.

6) Messages of congratulations and best wishes that affirm the value of marriage signed by a range of local people.

These would be named and signed by hand to prevent impersonal mass production. Anyone could register to have the opportunity to send a message or card to people marrying within an area. We envisage local leaders wishing to communicate in this way, but anyone, for example a retired married couple, would be welcome to share their good wishes.

7) A marriage manual giving advice on relationships issues such as communication, forgiveness, negotiation, differences between men and women, faithfulness, commitment, responsibility, freedom and more. A section on where to seek help if required would be included.

8) A pregnancy guidebook, covering health advice from before conception to birth. As well as including useful information, this also conveys an assumption that marriage precedes childbirth. Children fare much better where parents are married before they are born.

9) A parenthood manual, giving brief common sense parenting advice from a neutral perspective, an explanation of childcare options, the school system, home education, and the law as it relates to children at different ages.

10) A guide to marriage finances, detailing the tax and benefit system, trust funds and saving accounts for children etc. Financial issues cause stress and strife in many marriages, so sound advice about prudence, budgeting and debt avoidance would be of value.

11) *The box itself would be attractively decorated, featuring the couple's names and wedding date. The suggested use of the box is as a repository for significant family items – a memory box, or family "treasure" box. Unlike the Baby Box, it is not designed for the couple to sleep in!*

We want as many families as possible to stay together and for as many kids as possible to be brought up by their mum and dad in the family home.

A strong culture of marriage leads to strong families and flourishing men, women and children, leading to a healthy nation.

Our Wedding Box could play a part in turning that vision into reality.

FAMILY AUTONOMY

The family is a private realm into which the state should only reluctantly intrude out of necessity. Unless there is clear evidence to the contrary, it should be assumed that parents care for their children with love and commitment, devoting themselves in a way that the state cannot begin to emulate.

The Named Person Scheme legislation has been abandoned, but the philosophy of seeking to inject state 'wisdom' into families' lives on and the continuing non-statutory Named Person Scheme still presents a challenge to the integrity of family life.

This dangerous philosophy has seven elements:

- 1) Distrust of parents,
- 2) The imposition of "expert" parenting approaches on all parents,
- 3) The undermining of parental authority and the elevation of child autonomy (often in the guise of Children's Rights),
- 4) An excessive assessment of the vulnerability of children to everyday events and interactions,
- 5) The assumption that parents who punish their children are damaging them (the smacking ban was just the first step),
- 6) A desire to "protect" children from the values and beliefs of their parents, where these diverge from those of the state,
- 7) Viewing parents as subordinate members of a larger team of adults looking after a child.

The tight-knit world of Scottish Government, education, social work and children's charities is dominated by this philosophy. In some areas, this spirit is embodied in non-statutory Named Persons, but everywhere the same insidious philosophy still infuses professional attitudes.

Lowering the threshold for intervention from abuse or neglect to vague and all-encompassing "wellbeing" concerns opens the door to families being judged according to highly subjective and value-laden criteria. Trivial deviations from parenting 'best practice' can be recorded, accumulated and presented as a case against parents. **There are many ways to be a good parent, and, with few exceptions, parents should be free to raise their children according to their own values.**

When the Scottish Government publishes guidance for parents, it reflects a narrow parenting style and must be seen as an indication of the criteria that state agents will use to assess parenting. It should be remembered that the Scottish Government is undertaking a project to remove all punishments from schools and always wants children's views to be given more weight. Parents will be judged from such a standpoint. What happens when pupils are taught at school that punishments are ineffective and counterproductive, and then dad sends a boy to his room for being rude to mum?

The Government's obsession with "Children's Rights" further undermines parental authority.

Particularly in schools, staff can present themselves as an authority figure above parents, inviting children to complain about the service offered by their mum and dad. Subsequent interventions "to help resolve the issue" erode parental authority.

Incessant enquiries into every child's wellbeing, through questionnaires, for example, invite rating and criticism of parents by children, undermining the parent/child relationship.

Parents who smack their children should not be criminalised. **We would seek to repeal the smacking ban legislation.** The previous legislation was adequate to protect children.

We expect moves towards criminalising shouting at children to begin soon.

This would be another mistake. The expression of anger and use of a forceful tone of voice are natural parts of human communication that can help children to understand the real emotions of adults and help adults to communicate their determination, seriousness or outrage to children. A shouting ban would enable children to deliberately exasperate adults, then report them to the Police when they eventually get angry. Also, in order to avoid the risk of being accused of shouting, adults would feel obliged to adopt the gentlest of tones at all times. This could inhibit parents, particularly fathers, from employing their natural and instinctive parenting style.

We are extremely concerned by the Scottish Government's proposals to redefine Child Abuse to include highly subjective criteria such as "make the child feel that their opinions, views or feelings are worthless", "expose a child to... anger", "ridicule the child" and "make them feel that they are useless."

These vague descriptions would lead to increased unnecessary intervention in family life and make parents wary of challenging children or denying their wishes. The SFP was the first to raise concerns about these proposals and it seems that the

Government is not progressing any new law currently. However, we must remain vigilant.

Medical confidentiality should not be granted to under-16s, unless there are credible allegations of parental abuse or neglect. Parents should be fully informed and involved, instead of the current culture of offering to keep secrets from parents. We would repeal the Age of Legal Capacity (Scotland) Act 1991 that grants children under 16 the right to make independent medical decisions if a medical practitioner deems them capable of understanding the consequences. Parents should be involved.

Teaching children that they can choose their gender is extremely harmful. Steering children and young people towards puberty-blocking drugs and sex reassignment surgery is grossly irresponsible, given that a clear majority of children will naturally outgrow gender confusion. We would ban such “treatments”, but in the meantime parents should be free to overrule interventions by government agents in schools, charities or the NHS when guiding their children on such matters. Parents are best placed to understand their children and have primary responsibility for their care and wellbeing.

The proposed ban on so-called conversion therapy in Scotland would criminalise a dad for urging a young son not to wear a dress, or a mum for discouraging a daughter from experimenting with a lesbian relationship. We oppose the ban in its entirety.

Abortion and abortifacients should not be available to under-16s without parents being informed beforehand.

The legal Age of Consent should be sixteen, without exception. The current legal acceptance of sex involving 13 to 15-year-olds fails to protect young people from the possible negative consequences of sex at such a young age and communicates to young people that society approves of such behaviour. Many parents are urging their children to wait until they are older before having sex, but the state currently undermines this message.

A small number of parents find it challenging to coordinate and communicate with the range of professionals involved with a child with more complex needs. In this case, a parent should be able to approach a school and ask that someone be appointed to take on this administrative task for them and to be a single point of contact thereafter. This meets a genuine need without undermining parental autonomy in any way.

Parents who are under the eye of the social services should be able to access a child psychologist/welfare expert to advise and represent them in any review of their parenting.

Domestic abuse law should not cover vaguely defined “psychological abuse”. It is too imprecise and open to spurious application. For example, laws relating to making a person “dependent on another person” or “feel ... humiliated or degraded” could be interpreted to cover behaviours far short of “abuse” and risk bringing the

threat of legal sanction into more superficial relationship conflicts. Such laws are also vulnerable to exploitation for vindictive reasons. Help for people to be assertive and leave corrosive relationships can be more useful than an embittered legal battle afterwards.

There should be no gender-based assumption of blame, but a balanced assessment of the facts.

Organisations supporting abused men should be proportionately funded instead of being entirely neglected.

CHILDCARE AND FAMILY FINANCES

For decades, UK and Scottish government policy has had the aim of encouraging both parents to work instead of committing full-time to caring for their children. We reject the philosophy that regards it as desirable that men and women approach family life and career in identical ways. **We believe that each family should make its own decisions in this area, and the state's role is to facilitate these choices.** There is currently generous support for those opting for the twin income model, in the form of subsidised and free childcare. However, those favouring full-time parenthood are penalised rather than supported, paying high taxes to subsidise childcare for other families while receiving no help themselves. Our policies are intended to redress the balance.

Currently, statutory maternity pay is administered through employers but mainly financed by the state. It is unfair that mums who work until soon before birth receive this support while mums who are not working, because they are at home with other children, for example, do not. Some mums receive benefits, but many receive neither maternity pay nor benefits. **We would give statutory maternity pay for the full 39 weeks to every mum who is not working or receiving benefits.**

The Government has recently doubled the hours of nursery care provided for 3 and 4-year-olds. We would offer cash in lieu of this additional provision for families deciding they do not want their young child to spend so long away from a parent. **A family wanting their child to go to nursery in the morning, but not the afternoon, for example, would be entitled to a substantial payment instead.**

Childcare subsidies should be payable to grandparents, for example, if the parents wish it.

Instead of treating married couples as two individuals for tax purposes, we should move to a system that assesses them as a family. Tax allowances would, therefore, be fully transferable. Beyond that, we also would consider additional tax allowances while dependent children are living with parents. Variants on this system are common in European countries which do not have the same structural anti-family bias as the UK tax system. This is a reserved matter, so we

would press this case at the Westminster level, and urge that the necessary powers be devolved so that Scotland can lead the way in treating families fairly.

Child benefit payments should be increased substantially and be available regardless of family size or income.

The need for a large, and therefore more expensive, home correlates with family size. Therefore, **property-based Council Tax tends to penalise families with children**. We would seek to offset this by substantial Council Tax discounts for families with dependent children, with disproportionately large discounts for families with four or more children. The current trend of increasing Council Tax on larger homes needs to be stopped. Council Tax is a devolved matter, so we press this case at Holyrood level.

Parents of children up to 16 should receive an additional day of statutory holiday entitlement for each dependent child.

Government agency and Council-run attractions, such as historic sites, museums and swimming pools, should give free entry to accompanied children.

Public transport providers should be encouraged to reduce children's fares.

We question the wisdom of paying the Educational Maintenance Allowance (about £30 a week) directly to older school pupils from poorer households. It can serve as an induction into the attitude that the government should just give money, even in the absence of pressing need. It also makes the young people more independent of their parents at a stage where parental influence can be an important protective factor. If such a payment is deemed beneficial in encouraging further schooling, it should usually be paid to the parents.

We would change the inheritance tax system by applying an additional £325,000 allowance for each progeny of a married couple.

Those without dependent children may need to pay more tax to balance out these changes. This is justified because each generation relies on upcoming generations to pay for their care in retirement. It is fair for those producing these vital new generations to be compensated for their expense in doing so.

DEMOGRAPHIC DECLINE

The spiralling decline of the Scottish population will have catastrophic consequences. Only the SFP has the policies to arrest this decline.

Scotland's fertility rate is far too low to sustain the population. Falling population causes many problems for a nation, not least with regard to the financial support of the retired. The pension and health systems rely on an assumption of a growing, or at least stable, population.

Many families would like to have more children, but financial and practical pressures deter them. We seek to reduce these barriers through our family-friendly policies.

Also, marriage generally leads to greater fertility than cohabitation. Our pro-marriage policies would boost the birth rate. The demographic emergency justifies substantial spending on pro-natal policies.

ADOPTION, FOSTERING, FERTILITY TREATMENT AND CARE

Adoption should be promoted as a noble and altruistic endeavour, giving children what they really need. Steps to honour and appreciate adoptive parents could combine with a broader campaign to urge couples to consider adoption.

Preference should be given to married couples, husband and wife, in fostering and adoption decisions. The goal is to give children what they need – a father and mother – not to give adults what they want.

Good parents should not be turned away from fostering or adoption because assessors disagree with their political, moral or religious beliefs.

The extended family should have a say in adoption, fostering and care decisions. It is not right that suitable relatives are sometimes rejected on spurious grounds. Maintaining wider family bonds can be very positive.

A family home is the best context for a child, but when this is not possible, placing children in boarding schools instead of children's homes could be cost-effective and beneficial for the children. The schools could make arrangements for holiday periods as well. This might only be feasible for small numbers of children without particularly complex needs but should still be explored. Participation in such a scheme could count in a school's favour with regard to charitable status.

Ideally, children should be brought up by a mum and a dad, providing a male and female role model and complementary qualities.

The SFP does not support the use of NHS resources for any fertility-related treatment apart from for a man and woman in a long-term stable relationship. There must be an intention of a child being brought up by their mother and father. We are aware that some fertility treatments raise other ethical concerns, but we have chosen not to make policy in this area at this stage.

We disagree with government-funded Stonewall's "co-parenting" advice (available through the NHS website). For example, it suggests children be conceived by adults, each of whom is already in a sexual relationship with another person, or by two single people. Adults should not choose to bring children into arrangements without a single stable home.

The practice of deliberately influencing the genetic make-up of children through selecting for desired characteristics is eugenics. This is now taking place routinely through the process of sperm and egg donor selection from what are effectively catalogues. We oppose this insidious process in which adults attempt to generate a child to fulfil their own wishes and reflect their own priorities. All new human life

should be equally valued and welcomed, but acceptance of eugenics erodes this vital principle.

Aside from the eugenic concerns, donor conception can leave children with a sense of incomplete identity and a yearning to discover their biological origins. We would give donor-conceived children the right to know who their biological parents are.

We would look at ways to discourage and restrict the use of donor gametes and we seek to open up public debate on the topic, including the voices of those who were donor conceived.

Surrogacy, where a woman gestates a child on behalf of another person or couple, with the intention of handing him or her over immediately after birth, should not be permitted. Among other problems, it brings psychological risks to the surrogate mother, can cause children to experience emotional problems relating to identity and origin, and can occasion disputes between commissioning parents and the surrogate mother. Scotland should join France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Austria, Norway, Finland and Iceland in banning this practice.

OLDER PEOPLE

We oppose further increases to the state pension age.

Whether the care service is local or national, it needs to be effective and well resourced.

Extensive care-at-home services should be available as an alternative to living in a care home where possible.

The public cost of care for the elderly will increase in decades to come and the state will struggle to meet demand. Where older people choose to pay for their own care through private care services or a private care home, this relieves the pressure on the system. To encourage and broaden this sector, tax breaks should be offered, similar to those associated with charitable status, and the inspection and regulation regime should be streamlined to become less of a burden on care providers.

Those with an elderly relative living in their home should be entitled to a substantial Council Tax reduction and/or tax allowance. Practical and financial support to enable people to care for relatives should be provided.

The government should explore voluntary insurance systems to mitigate the risk of high care home fees, through either a payment on retirement, regular payments through retirement or a fixed payment from one's estate at death.

Maintaining fruitful family relationships is more challenging when families are scattered geographically. Older people are particularly affected when younger generations are distant. We would seek to enable extended families to stay closer

together through measures to make local university education more attractive, housing more affordable and to encourage employers to make it possible for employees to pursue careers without moving far from home.

Schools should invite grandparents and great grandparents to the school for a tour, entertainment and refreshments.

Car travel is vital for many older people. We would keep car ownership accessible to people on a range of incomes.

Inheritance Tax is a tax on already-taxed income and works against the best interests of the family. We propose that the current tax-free allowance available to parents, £650,000 for a married couple, be increased by a further £325,000 for each child within the family. Thus, for example, a family with two children would enjoy a tax-free allowance of £1,300,000.

We challenge the political assumption that the voices of the young should be given the most weight. Accumulated wisdom and intergenerational perspectives are vital to sustaining a stable society that can progress intelligently.

Reforming Education

SCHOOLS

Academic Curriculum

Schools should focus on academic rigour, with options for more vocational training where appropriate. Currently, the curriculum provides insufficient challenge for the academically strong and forces the less academic to persevere with abstract study when more practical courses would be more beneficial.

There are two basic philosophies of education: progressive and traditional. The progressive approach emphasises skills, group work, exploration and creativity. The traditional focuses more on discipline, knowledge, formal teaching, and objective testing. Most would see some value in each approach, seeking a sensible balance. Education Scotland and the Scottish Government, however, are convinced that the solution to every problem is to move ever further in the progressive direction. We propose a more balanced approach.

The so-called Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) should be abandoned. It draws on all of the worst aspects of fashionable educational ideology. It elevates subjective learner experience over teaching, undermining the intellectual authority of teachers, and uses student motivation and enjoyment as the measure of what is worth knowing. It attempts to blur the boundaries between subject disciplines and is founded upon the idea that education is to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem, rather than their knowledge and understanding.

The CfE changed the objective of Scottish education from ‘academic education for all’ to a checklist of personal qualities. The purpose of education is now to produce; “successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.” This new curriculum was said to give children more choice, that their education could be ‘personalised’ and that they would take ownership of their learning through educational portfolios and personal-development plans. The reality is that pupils have fewer subject choices; the only personal element of the new regime relates not to the academic programme, but to a therapeutic agenda.

A simpler curriculum specifying what to teach at each stage, including a system of standardised tests and a definite requirement to offer a minimum range of subjects to study, should replace CfE. The internally assessed National 4 qualification system is open to widespread and systematic corruption, so it should be discontinued. Properly invigilated and externally assessed examinations should form the core of every qualification.

Objective feedback and grading that enables pupils and parents to understand their level of attainment should be available. Data should not be withheld from parents.

Scottish Qualifications Authority examinations should move from May into June, allowing fruitful study through all three terms. The inefficient system of starting new courses in June would then be unnecessary. SQA would face the challenge of marking papers with a tighter deadline, but this is not insurmountable.

While an emphasis on helping those with some educational disadvantages is justified, “closing the attainment gap” between rich and poor areas is now emphasised to the exclusion of aiming to raise attainment for all. **The educational system should aim for the highest possible standards for all pupils, not an artificial equality target.** Excellent students, in excellent schools in prosperous areas, are to be celebrated, encouraged and replicated, not resented for causing an “attainment gap”.

Many educationalist and politicians are seeking to use the COVID examination cancellations as a springboard to dispensing with all independent objective student assessment permanently. When teacher grading replaced examinations in 2020, grade inflation was most rampant in schools in poorer areas. In desperation, having achieved little with other schemes to close the attainment gap, the educational establishment is now seeing unreliable and over-optimistic teacher assessment as the solution. When faced with an intractable problem, politicians will always be tempted by means to obscure the real situation, but we oppose the sacrificing of the integrity of young people’s educational certification on the altar of political ideology.

Taking away the opportunity for the brightest students to demonstrate their full ability in demanding courses and qualifications will help close the attainment gap. It should be obvious that this is actually a counter-productive strategy, but it is being enacted in Scotland.

Lessons in critical thinking, epistemology and logic, unrelated to contemporary political and social issues, should be provided for all high school pupils. Intelligently navigating the current deluge of contradictory, unreliable, biased and superficially persuasive content will be a vital ability if we are not to descend further into tribalism, ignorance and confusion. This teaching of how to think would contrast with the current emphasis on telling pupils what to think.

Behaviour

Schools should instil a proper respect for authority, expecting obedience, courtesy and good manners.

Standards and expectations should be high, from dress and punctuality to manners and hard work.

Behaviour problems are reaching crisis point in many schools. It is only a matter of time before someone is killed in a Scottish school. Staff must be listened to instead of idealistic schemes being imposed from above. Teachers are leaving the profession in the face of routine defiance and pupils' learning is being disrupted by unchecked bad behaviour.

Teachers should never feel that pupils are out of control. Education Scotland's moves to remove punishments from schools, replacing them with "restorative" processes, is misguided, based on an over-optimistic view of human nature. Boys, in particular, tend to need clear boundaries and defined consequences and flourish when these are provided. **We believe that punishing children is necessary, fair, justified and effective.**

Replacing punishments with contrived mini-counselling sessions disempowers teachers and leaves children with the (justified) impression that miscreants continually "get away with it".

The ideological drive, in the name of inclusion, to leave appallingly badly-behaved pupils in mainstream classes is unfair to teachers and other pupils. Attempts to educate and support such aggressive and uncontrollable pupils should be made in a more appropriate context.

Character Education

While caring for children, schools should also expose them to challenges. It is through a taste of adversity, struggle and failure that character develops. Competitive sports and activities have a place for all ages.

The wellbeing emphasis in Scottish schools is leading to a therapeutic approach that leaves children with the assumption that professional emotional support is required to face the ups and downs of daily life. It can also undermine the role of families as schools constantly have to present themselves as alternative carers. While children should know that they can speak to school staff

about problems at home, schools should not invite children to assess their parents through wellbeing discussions and questionnaires. Schools should positively encourage gratitude, respect and obedience towards parents and a respectful attitude to adults in general.

While it is good to listen to pupils' views and inform them of their rights, pupils should not be led to believe that the school exists to give them whatever they want. The ubiquitous emphasis on teaching children about their rights can lead to a demanding and selfish mindset, regarding adults as service providers whose primary function is to fulfil their wishes. Teaching children that they are entitled to freedom from adult instruction undermines discipline in both the home and at school.

A national certification in character qualities such as good manners, punctuality, personal presentation, trustworthiness and industriousness should be available to all pupils before they leave school. This would be rigorously assessed against objective criteria over a period of several weeks. This could help pupils focus on these vital qualities and thereby prepare themselves for successful employment. It could also assist schools in maintaining high standards. Failure to gain the certificate could have negative implications for state benefits in some cases. Opportunities to complete the assessment should also be available after leaving school, if required.

All school pupils should dress modestly. For example, extremely short skirts should not be permitted.

Pupils should be expected to perform cleaning and tidying duties within the school routinely. This would help instill qualities of conscientiousness and orderliness. The expectation of high standards of cleanliness and presentation would bring wider benefits to society.

Values Education

Virtues such as courage, integrity, honesty, faithfulness, loyalty, gratitude, politeness, prudence, temperance, generosity, compassion, humility and tolerance should be at the heart of character formation in schools.

Instead, most Scottish schools tirelessly promote a liberal/progressive/leftist agenda, taking every opportunity to present this perspective on issues such as climate change, sexism and feminism, race, inequality, gender, sexuality, internationalism and the like. **The extent of this promotion of particular perspectives amounts to indoctrination.** Once children's views have been moulded, a charade of "listening to children" then enables the adults to claim that they are merely following the direction of the children.

If a 'one size fits all' education system is prescribed, then it needs to include diverse perspectives and engender open debate on controversial topics. Currently, only one philosophy is presented, to the exclusion of all others.

Information and Communication technology

The use of ICT in primary schools should be limited to allow children to fully develop their ability to write and structure work effectively on paper and to read and use books. Primary school children should not be in possession of a mobile phone while at school.

In high schools, ICT can play a part in learning, but mobile phone use should be severely curtailed or banned on campus.

Drugs and Alcohol

The so-called "harm reduction" approach to drugs education is counterproductive. Young people should not see decisions regarding using illegal drugs as mere personal risk assessment. The impact on family, employers, neighbours and state-funded services take such decisions out of the realm of personal preference and firmly into the arena of moral responsibility. **Conspiratorial "we're here to help you stay safe when using drugs" style presentations should be banished from schools.** Parental concern and the wellbeing of wider society should take precedence over the irresponsible, amoral liberalism that currently underpins drugs education.

As well as information about alcohol, pupils should hear the case that drunkenness is inherently irresponsible and should not be socially acceptable, and the cases both for moderation in alcohol consumption and for teetotalism. Having heard these points of view, they will be better able to form their own opinion.

Sex Education

The "harm reduction" approach to sex education is also harmful. Evidence-based sex and relationships education that includes the presentation of moral perspectives should be implemented instead. Young people need to be aware of the statistical correlations between multiple sexual partners, types of relationship (hetero or homosexual), physical health, mental health, relational stability, marriage, cohabitation, various sexual practices, sex at a young age, sexual promiscuity and sexually transmitted diseases. Armed with the full range of relevant facts, young people will be better equipped to make decisions.

The Scottish Government's official sex education resources (RSHP.scot) are grossly indecent, endorsing pornography and promoting masturbation, presenting as valid some disturbing and dangerous sexual practices, and endorsing illegal under-age sex. The tone is often trivialising and the content is too explicit at younger ages. We would require schools to publish all relationship, sexual health and parenthood resources used, so that parents could see for themselves what is being taught and, if they wish, withdraw their children from these classes. Schools should be obliged to comply with parental wishes, instead of allowing children to over-rule the parents as often happens currently.

The moral arguments and emotional consequences relating to abortion should be discussed, instead of the current presentation of abortion as an obvious solution to unwanted pregnancy.

Natural family planning techniques should be discussed alongside other contraception methods in sex education.

LGBT Inclusive Education

We oppose the LGBT Inclusive Education policy that mandates the indoctrination of schoolchildren into a radical ideology of sexuality and gender. Civility and tolerance should be shown to all, and bullying in school and criminal activity targeting LGBT people should be dealt with vigorously. However, promoting a certain philosophy of sex and relationships and denying alternative views is not necessary to combat bullying.

The insertion of LGBT content across the entire curriculum is intended to deprive parents of the option of withdrawing their child from it.

The drive to normalise and endorse any and every sexual relationship and family form begins from the nursery and continues unabated. For example, we disagree with the message that procreation just requires a sperm, egg and uterus, with no regard to the source of each element. We believe instead in the ideal of a mother and father having and rearing their own children.

Pupils are inducted into LGBT activism from primary school, as familiar campaigning symbols and slogans are presented in lessons.

Appallingly, pupils daring to dissent from state orthodoxy on the issue have been subjected to humiliation, hostility and discrimination by teachers and schools. Schools also stoke antagonism and ostracism by other pupils by demonising any disapproval of homosexual relationships.

The philosophy of gender fluidity is dangerous to young people, leading to confusion and unhelpful experimentation. Indoctrination into the fashionable philosophy of gender is not appropriate and will lead more children down a difficult road that could seriously undermine their wellbeing for the rest of their lives. We would prevent schools from presenting the message that gender change is normal, natural and healthy – something to be celebrated. Staff and pupils should never be expected to display or state their pronouns. Schools should not facilitate gender changes for children, including not using new pronouns or names.

The current appalling practice of allowing children to change name and gender at school without parents being informed must stop.

Pupils experiencing gender dysphoria should be supported to seek alignment between their gender identity and their sex.

Schools should not encourage cross-dressing through events such as a “wear a skirt day”. No school should have an LGBT club for children and no school should take children to LGBT Pride events. No drag performances should be allowed in schools.

“Anti-Racist” Education

Fulfilling the Government’s intentions, many schools teach contentious concepts such as Critical Race Theory and white privilege as fact. This divisive political stance portrays racial groups as being in conflict with one another as they vie for power and prescribes different treatment for people according to their race. In contrast, we believe that children should be taught to treat everyone equally. Racist incidents can be dealt with like any other misbehaviour. Children, like adults, get along best without obsessing over racial differences.

Financial Education

The value of work to an individual, their family and wider society must be emphasised. The expectation should be communicated that, where possible, households provide for themselves through working and manage their finances responsibly.

Young people should understand savings, investments, mortgages etc., as well as gaining insight into the costs and risks of home and car ownership. If SFP policies with regard to support for families were enacted, young people would be made aware of them.

The dangers of indebtedness should be elucidated clearly to school pupils. The assumption that personal consumer debt is routine and unavoidable should be challenged and the moral implications of lending and borrowing discussed.

Family Involvement

Parents should be fully involved in issues arising and decisions made about a child. Information should not be withheld from parents. The views of parents should be taken seriously. Schools should be open about what is taught and receptive to feedback.

Schools should seek to involve grandparents as well as parents in school life. Special events where parents and grandparents are hosted and entertained within the school could be held. Education would be broadened and enriched by opportunities to hear the stories and views of parents and grandparents.

Special Needs

Provision and support for children facing particular difficulties is important. This should be provided in the most appropriate context to meet their needs, avoiding excessive disruption to the education of others.

Overdiagnosis and labelling of children can lead to low expectations. A culture of personal responsibility and development should prevail where possible.

Alternative Schools

Independent schools should enjoy charitable status automatically, as educating children to a high standard is an obvious good to society. Independent schools should be free to operate according to their own principles and methods, guided by their traditions, leaders and parents. Instead of enforcing ideals that have had a dubious record in maintained schools, an attitude of sharing best practice should prevail. For example, where independent schools outperform state schools, attempts should be made to replicate the ingredients for success. And vice versa.

Catholic schools should not be squeezed into the mould of other schools by government pressure. They should be free to embody and promote their distinct values and ethos as they wish.

Where parents wish their children to be educated according to their values but feel that mainstream schools are failing to do this or, worse, are attacking these values, the government should be willing to fund alternative schools. These schools would follow standard academic curricula, but the state should not seek to impose its own values. Where such schools already exist on an independent basis, they should be offered full state funding.

HOME EDUCATION

We support the right of parents to educate their own children outside school, free from state interference. The state should not routinely seek to communicate with home-educated children in order to ask whether they would prefer to go to school. This would mirror the fact that school children are not routinely asked by the state whether they would prefer home education.

Resources and facilities should be made freely available through local schools to parents who home educate. Local schools should include home-educated children in assessment programmes when parents request it.

Each child within the Scottish State system costs an average of £8,500 per annum to educate. Home educators should not be disadvantaged because they are offering education at their own cost, despite paying national and local taxes to cover state education provision. We propose that all home-educators should receive a grant from their local Council equivalent to two thirds of the cost of education in a state school. This grant would confer no rights of interference or regulatory oversight and leave the parents as the primary educators of their children.

Home-educators should not be disadvantaged in any government processes. For example, benefits dependent on qualifying for free school meals should be equally available to home educating families.

We support flexi-schooling, where parents can place their children in school for a chosen portion of the weekly programme, alongside educating them at home.

EDUCATION SCOTLAND AND GTCS

The national agency, Education Scotland, faces a fundamental conflict of interest. It inspects and evaluates policies and practices it has itself largely developed. Currently, schools have to enthusiastically embrace the latest Education Scotland diktat and proclaim its wisdom and effectiveness, on pain of a bad inspection report. This has to be remedied. The policy development aspect should be minimised, as the people who know best about what will work in a certain school are the leaders, staff and parents of that school. Expensive centrally imposed programmes, laden with jargon and driven by the latest educational fashion, seldom bear fruit.

Inspections should be carried out by teams of teachers and parents, led by a professional inspector from a new independent inspectorate. Their role should be to assess the effectiveness of the school, not its adherence to current fads. They could also provide unbiased feedback to Education Scotland on the efficacy of their directives to schools.

The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) places unnecessary obstacles in the path of teachers wanting to teach in Scotland, restricts freedom of speech, administers an unnecessarily bureaucratic Professional Update scheme, and publishes a magazine that is more government propaganda than professional journal. Also, **GTCS is highly politicised, imposing a distinct political philosophy onto all teachers.** It should be wound up, and its critical functions, such as teachers' registration, dealt with by the Education Department directly.

HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION

The University sector should be reduced in size. While many pursue semi-academic personal interest degree courses, there are shortages in vital vocations and trades. University course funding should better reflect the needs of the economy and society.

Vocational Further Education and apprenticeships should increasingly be promoted and financed as a positive alternative to university.

University courses should include an element of assessment common across universities. This would enable those at less prestigious institutions to demonstrate their ability relative to all students. Merit would then weigh more than institutional reputation when assessing a student's academic record. The possibility of gaining excellent qualifications at a more local university could also help family members stay more local to each other, to the benefit of family life in the longer term.

Concentrated shorter degree programmes with less holiday time should be available.

The current system of postcode dependent entrance requirements, favouring those living in poorer areas, is unfair. Similarly, pressure to admit asylum seekers leads to the unfair exclusion of children whose parents have paid taxes to fund the University sector for many years. Universities should be free to select those students they assess to be the most able.

The Scottish Government's higher education funding body pressurises institutions to promote the Government's favoured ideologies, such as Critical Race Theory. This must stop.

All non-UK students should pay fees.

Students persisting in using illegal drugs should lose funding for their studies.

Universities should be centres of open debate and stimulating exposure to diverse arguments, not giant "safe spaces" where views judged to be undesirable are driven underground. The government should make it clear to universities that this is what is expected of them. **Universities should expose students to a diverse cross-section of opinions.** Academic staff should remain free to reflect their own political, religious and philosophical views in their teaching and other academic work. Concern arises, however, when the views of academic staff overwhelmingly lean in one direction, leading to impressionable young students concluding that this view is the only academically respectable one.

Steps should be taken to ensure that students engage with proponents of a wide spectrum of views. Bringing in academics from other institutions, or other thinkers, to debate publicly with university staff could be helpful in this regard. Where whole departments seem dedicated to a specific ideology, as might be the case with Gender Studies, for example, any form of public funding should be reconsidered. Ideological think tanks promoting political activism should not be funded as university departments.

As an alternative to fly-away gap year culture, alternatives closer to home should be encouraged. If more young people experienced life in rural and island communities, more would be keen to live in these areas later in life. This could be facilitated by offering free travel to young people undertaking work experience, community projects or extended tours in more remote areas. Local organisations that could benefit from youth involvement could advertise opportunities through a central system. Some young people might then decide to broaden their horizons by exploring Scotland, rather than flying further afield.

Valuing Life

Life is precious. All human life has intrinsic worth and the measure of a civilised society is how we treat those who are most vulnerable.

We affirm the value of human life in the womb. Abortion as a means of birth control is morally unjustifiable.

Ultimately, we would like to see the law reflect the universal value of human life, but immediate steps could include offering independent counselling to those considering an abortion, reducing the current 24 week limit for abortions and preventing abortion on grounds of disability after 24 weeks.

We would ensure that young people in school are presented with the facts about abortion and the possible emotional consequences when the subject is discussed in schools. No organisation which provides abortions should be entitled to charitable status. We would seek to involve fathers in the decision-making process. Our emphasis on commitment and responsibility in sexual relationships would help reduce demand for abortions.

We would invest in support for women facing unwanted or unexpected pregnancy, helping them to establish a strong network of support and encouraging alternatives such as fostering or adoption. Funding pregnancy support services would be one way to do this. A campaign against charities with a pro-life philosophy offering such services is already underway and can be expected to gather momentum. We will defend such charities as we want to see women supported, babies saved from abortion, and freedom upheld.

“Buffer Zones” or “Safe Access Zones” in the vicinity of abortion clinics to outlaw protest, prayer or offers of help, no matter how passive, are unjustified. Rather than protecting women from “harassment”, they are actually an ideological attack on freedom of expression.

Those who currently don't have a strong view about abortion might still agree that this important topic should be discussed openly as a party-political issue. Currently, no party in the Scottish Parliament is willing stand up to the pro-abortion consensus.

Even in cases such as rape and incest, the new life is valuable. A child conceived in rape is of equal value to any other child, both before and after they are born. While rape is obviously a heinous crime and a traumatic ordeal for the victim, the evidence does not suggest that abortion alleviates the pain. Where the mother's life is endangered by continuing a pregnancy, abortion can be justified as a difficult decision in tragic circumstances. However, while pro-abortion campaigners like to focus on these rare cases, our immediate focus is on abortions for the more usual “social” reasons.

The Greens, Labour and Lib Dems in Scotland are pushing for the full decriminalisation of abortion. This entails abortion on demand up to full term. The SNP government funds organisations that campaign for this as well. The Conservatives have no policy, but they are certainly not a pro-life party and votes for them will not defend the lives of the unborn.

We urge voters to recognise the ethical gravity of the issue. The fact is that a vote for the Conservatives, Greens, Labour, Lib Dems, SNP or any other party that is not pro-life amounts to an endorsement of the killing of unborn children.

Without abortion, births would exceed deaths in Scotland. The problem of population decline could be alleviated by restricting abortion.

We oppose the introduction of assisted suicide and euthanasia (now misleadingly labelled as “assisted dying”). **If choosing death is seen as a valid option, this will inevitably lead to vulnerable people experiencing pressure, real or imagined, to end their lives.** We want everyone to feel valued and worthy of the highest

degree of care throughout their life. Suicide should not be promoted as a valid response to difficulties.

The Scottish Parliament has voted twice against assisted suicide, but support for it seems to be growing among MSPs. The Green Party and the Scottish Lib Dems have Assisted Suicide as party policy. The SNP, Labour and Conservatives have no policy and many of their MSPs support it, so a vote for them is a vote for indifference. **The Scottish Family Party can be relied on to provide principled opposition to assisted suicide and euthanasia, regardless of public opinion.**

Suicide is always tragic and most who attempt suicide but survive go on to live fulfilling lives. Encouraging or assisting suicide are illegal in England and Wales. We would make them illegal in Scotland as well.

The "opt-out" system of organ donation is wrong. The state should not claim rights over our bodies when we die. Organ donation should be a choice. Consent should not be assumed. We believe that our mortal remains do not belong to the state, but to the family, seeking to carry out the wishes of the deceased. An "opt-in" system, with wide participation, is best.

Defending Freedom

We cherish political, intellectual, religious, artistic, journalistic, academic and professional freedom.

Our fundamental freedoms are under attack. Freedom of speech is being eroded by those unwilling to countenance the existence of decent people who disagree with them. Professional and even legal consequences await those who speak their mind on certain topics. Society progresses by open debate, seeking the truth. So, to prevent injustices against the unorthodox, and to facilitate a flourishing society, we must defend freedom.

Hate speech legislation will lead to increasing censorship and self-censorship. The Police should not be threatening to prosecute those who are "offensive" on social media, for example. No one has the right not to be offended. We oppose all hate speech legislation and would repeal the current "stirring up hatred" offences. We also oppose the "Hate Incident" system under which incidents are recorded with no evidence or investigation at all, leading campaigning groups into an unseemly race to rack up numbers of incidents recorded in order to further their own agenda.

The Equality Act's section on "harassment" should be repealed. Again, "offence" should not be a matter for the law, nor should such vague concepts as "violating your dignity." The Equality Act has led to many injustices and serves to enforce a political philosophy by threat of legal consequence.

Professional regulatory agencies should not seek to enforce the government's philosophy and silence dissent. Employers should respect the right of employees to express diverse opinions.

While we might disapprove of the insensitivity and provocativeness of some, criticism or ridicule directed towards any belief system must not be illegal.

The government should not intervene to censor news sources that deviate from the mainstream media narrative, nor should they pressurise social media companies to manipulate access to different viewpoints, or ban or financially undermine political and social commentators that challenge the progressive establishment philosophy. The internet must remain a space for open debate.

Regulation should prevent monopolistic social media corporations from acting individually or as a cartel to skew public debate.

We are supportive of the concept of a national broadcaster producing high quality programmes, helping unify the nation around a common culture. However, the BBC's 'progressive' bias renders it unfit to fulfil its function. News reporting tends to be one-sided, often with stories that are obviously included to promote an idea such as transsexualism or assisted suicide. The overwhelming cultural bias evident in other programming, including children's, is even worse. The BBC's influence skews national debate and leads to widely held and reasonable views being regarded as dangerous extremism. The BBC should begin to compete with other media companies on a level playing field. The BBC licence fee should purchase access to BBC output, but not paying the fee should not restrict access to other TV channels.

The requirement that broadcasters be neutral should be removed. Broadcasters are not neutral now and it would be preferable to have a choice of news and current affairs from a range of perspectives rather than pretending that the BBC and other existing TV news services are unbiased.

In careers and businesses, where matters of conscience arise, reasonable accommodation should favour the employee where possible. The aim should be tolerance and understanding, not a desire to teach heretics a lesson.

Freedom of association should be protected. There is nothing wrong with, for example, golf clubs for men or societies for people with similar beliefs.

People should be free to seek private counselling as they fulfil their life vision, regardless of whether or not the therapy is intended to maintain or desist sexual desires or gender identities. Moves to prevent such support are ideologically driven and an attack on individual freedom. So, we oppose any law to ban so-called conversion therapy. A person wishing to move away from or subdue homosexual attraction should be free to seek assistance from someone who agrees with their goal. Similarly, a person wishing to move away from any unconventional gender identity should be free to seek support that accords with their personal philosophy. Any person should be free to share their opinion and advice on matters of sexuality and gender with anyone else, unless in a context where any communication of personal values would be inappropriate. We do not want to see parents and religious leaders, for example, convicted for explaining their views and urging and helping people to live in accordance with them.

We believe that people causing disruption, damage and public nuisance should be dealt with firmly. However, the freedom to demonstrate and protest is fundamental to an open democratic society (including at abortion facilities). The police must be careful to distinguish between the two, independently of political influence.

Unifying society

IDENTITY POLITICS

Prosperous and harmonious nations share a strong sense of unity and common identity. States comprising factions competing against each other are often beset with problems.

The political arena should not be dominated by special interest groups battling to gain favourable treatment from the state, each bearing its own set of purported grievances, with parties competing to curry favour with them.

Such identity politics leads to resentment among those observing the special treatment of other groups, a passive mentality among those in allegedly victimised groups, and a never-ending spiral of competing claims from special interest groups. **Once the grievance arms race has begun, it is in the interests of each special group to seek out ever more evidence of injustice against them.** This 'evidence' is usually in the form of statistical differences that show a special group seeming to do less well on some indicator. The complex array of factors involved is then overlooked, and the distinction is blamed on prejudice and discrimination. Where statistics show the allegedly oppressed group doing better, they are ignored.

Identity politicians target sex, sexuality, gender, nationality, race, religion, income and age groups, always arguing that a group is getting a raw deal somehow.

In the same way that Marxists divide the population into economic oppressors and the oppressed, those fuelling identity politics seek to divide society into the oppressors and the oppressed on other grounds, breaking down allegiance to family and nation by diverting loyalty to identity groups instead, each feeling an aggrieved sense of victimhood and looking to government intervention to resolve these problems of "inequality."

None of this is to say that genuine discrimination does not exist: it should be tackled as necessary, but not every statistical distinction shows an injustice.

We do not support Hate Crime legislation. Criminal activity should be punished according to its seriousness, not its motivation. All should be equally protected by the law. Anyone contemplating assault, for example, should fear the law equally, regardless of their motivation and intended victim. The proposed misogyny offense will create a crime of sexist behaviour towards a woman by a man, but equivalent

behaviour by a woman towards a man would not be a crime. This is plainly unjust and reflects the use of legislation to placate favoured campaigners.

The 2010 Equality Act mandates “positive action,” stating that a candidate can be selected for a job because of their race, sex etc in order to meet statistical targets. This is unjust and discriminatory and should be repealed.

The Equalities Act also makes harassment based on protected characteristics an offence. This is unnecessary. The law should apply equally to all. This provision actually makes some employers reluctant to employ applicants with certain “protected characteristics,” fearing that they will use their special protection to raise complaints and manipulate.

GENDER EQUALITY

Feminists in the past fought some grave injustices in the UK, as they do in many other countries today. However, much contemporary ‘gender equality’ campaigning in Scotland is misguided.

Men and women, on average, tend to have different priorities and interests. This diversity is positive and creative, not a problem to eliminate. We do not want to squeeze the sexes into uniformity, but to support men and women as they fulfil their own vision for their own lives.

Gender imbalances in many areas of study and lines of work are not a problem to solve, but a natural manifestation of men and women freely following their own inclinations and ambitions.

Compared to women, men tend to work longer hours, are more willing to sacrifice job security for career advancement, do more dangerous jobs, and take fewer career breaks. Women often want to devote themselves more to family life. The “gender pay gap” is by and large a reflection of the natural differences between men and women, and no government action is required to address it.

We do not support gender quotas in business, education or politics and would seek to repeal legislation that already discriminates in this way.

So-called “equal pay” claims, where women claim to have been underpaid for doing different work than men, are unjust. Councils should not have to dissipate their limited resources following these unjust claims. Similarly, businesses should be secure from such opportunistic attacks.

We would cut taxpayer funding for campaigning groups such as Engender, Close the Gap and Equate.

IMMIGRATION

Scotland and the UK should be prepared to welcome refugees. The alternative of helping displaced people nearer to their country of origin can be fairer and more positive for all concerned, and so should always be considered.

As well as contributing economically, immigrants bring much to our culture, often including positive values of family, responsibility, education and industry that have been eroded somewhat in Scotland. However, immigration should be carefully controlled and illegal immigration minimised.

A strong sense of shared national identity and common culture is important in sustaining a healthy and wealthy democratic nation.

Immigration to Scotland can have a negative effect on poor countries as they lose able and educated citizens. UK immigration policy should be formed in consultation with countries of origin.

It can be easier and cheaper to import qualified workers than to train locals. However, it is unfair and short-sighted to neglect education and training and systematically rely on immigration to fill skills gaps.

Immigration works best when immigrants assimilate, otherwise social, economic and community relations problems can emerge, to no-one's benefit. The larger and less integrated an immigrant community is, the faster the rate of immigration into that community will tend to be.

It is important that the rate of immigration does not outpace the rate of assimilation.

Our nation is founded on values and principles that have made it prosperous and free. It is our responsibility to pass on these benefits for our children and grandchildren.

Free online English classes should be provided as learning English must be a priority.

The Scottish Government sees mass immigration as the only available solution to population decline. Reducing abortion and increasing family sizes could also lead to a sustainable population level.

Economic migrants currently fill many entry-level jobs. Meanwhile, the state pays benefits to people who cannot find work. These job seekers need to be brought into employment, for the benefit of themselves, their dependents and the taxpayer. They must be helped to develop the skills and attitudes necessary to successfully perform such roles, and, if necessary, competition from economic migrants should be eased.

EXTREMISM

We oppose any ideology or movement that seeks to undermine our democratic tradition, restrict our basic rights and freedoms, stir up hatred between sections of society, employ violence or terror, or engage in physically intimidating behaviour.

Enhancing Democracy

Democratic ideals must be defended. An increasing number seem unwilling to accept democratic decisions, feeling that the system is failing if it fails to yield their desired outcome. We will encourage democratic engagement and promote the philosophy of democracy.

There are currently many issues on which elected representatives do not represent the spectrum of views in society.

Referenda can enable the genuine voice of the people to be heard and prevent the political and media establishments from giving a false impression of public opinion. The reluctance of the government to hold referenda when challenged to could convey a message in itself. The SFP would call for a referendum on an issue if we believed that the government was acting against the will of the majority of the population in a matter of serious consequence. A reluctant political establishment might seek to obstruct the implementation of referenda results, but better that than the majority view remaining unexpressed.

We would explore the possibilities of digital democracy, allowing the public the opportunity to express views through votes on individual policies and legislative proposals routinely as they arise. This would provide balance alongside the current consultation process which often functions as a medium through which government-funded organisations enthusiastically endorse the government's policy.

We would return the voting age to 18 in all elections. Younger people are very much under the influence of schools, and the school system is being used to promote a definite set of political ideals. In addition, voting at 16 has led to the politicisation of the examination system, with parties encouraging dissatisfaction with grades awarded. Finally, such young people are liable to be swayed by offers of free goods such as electronic devices.

Local, Scottish and UK election campaigns in Scotland are routinely dominated by issues not relevant to that level of politics. We will endeavour to point this out when necessary and will encourage the media to focus on the relevant issues.

Local engagement in politics is important. In each election campaign, in every constituency and region, a hustings event should be filmed and made available online, along with a filmed message from each candidate and an online discussion forum. Instead of the individual leaflet deliveries made free of charge by Royal Mail, a booklet with pages from each contesting party would be more efficient and fairer.

The Holyrood election Regional Lists should be replaced by a National List. The proportional representation element is undermined by regionalisation. The current regional system unjustly rewards geographical concentration of support, while setting the bar unnecessarily high for viable, smaller parties. Furthermore, we are open to full proportional representation in the longer term.

There are four problems with Local Government:

- 1) Councils areas are too big, and so lose community engagement. They could be split, or district councils reinstated;
- 2) Councils increasingly just have to implement central government policy in many areas. More decisions should be devolved;
- 3) Council spending is not linked closely enough with Council Tax level, so there is a lack of accountability;
- 4) Lack of public awareness. Again, a single website of films of candidates, online hustings etc. could help.

Democracy in Scotland is seriously undermined by the government abusing its power by giving taxpayers' money to organisations and charities that are very influential in public debate. **Such 'sock puppet' charities present themselves as grassroots movements, while they actually are paid by the government to advance the government's agenda.** This injection of funds skews public debate as other views lack the organisational and staffing resources to compete. As well as promoting the government's philosophies, these organisations often praise and give positive publicity to government officials.

We propose that a large number of such organisations are defunded, regardless of the controversy. Organisations in receipt of state funding should be restricted in their campaigning. For example, Scottish Women's Aid should not be free to argue for liberalisation of abortion law while receiving taxpayers' money. All charities that engage in any campaigning or public communication should have to declare their direct and indirect government funding clearly and prominently. We list some organisations whose funding we question in our Public Finance policies.

Councils and Government should move towards supporting civil society through the provision of facilities etc, but not seek to influence through direct funding.

Educational institutions should offer the opportunity for students to hear a diverse range of viewpoints, especially as younger people are now able to vote. The current all-pervasive promotion of a particular political outlook in schools must be challenged.

The freedom to demonstrate peacefully must be protected from encroachments.

The highest standards of integrity, openness and honesty should be demanded of politicians and government at all times. Every temptation to bend the rules or the truth in pursuit of political goals and ambitions must be resisted and exposed.

If politicians show themselves to be dishonest and dishonourable in their personal lives, for example, by having an affair, this insight into their character is not irrelevant to their public role. Respect for politicians would be enhanced by higher expectations of integrity and faithfulness.

If a politician is showing moral failings, the electorate should know about it. Elected politicians and those seeking election should not be able to use legal means to prevent the publication of facts about their behaviour and lifestyle where these would be relevant to assessing their integrity and character.

We seek to model civil and respectful debate, refraining from insult and mockery.

Drug Abuse

Drug abuse blights families, communities and individuals, while also burdening the state. Some are drawn into drug abuse in the most challenging circumstances, while others are just seeking a new experience. Support to help all addicts free themselves from dependency is vital.

As a society, we have agreed, with good reason, that we are unwilling to tolerate the damage and cost incurred by the use of certain drugs, so we have removed them from the array of choices open to people and made them illegal. Illegal drug use is not just a matter of personal risk assessment; it affects family, friends, employers and the state. The availability of illegal drugs leads to increased experimentation and progression to drug addiction. **We would not support any liberalisation of drug laws, but instead ensure vigorous policing and sentencing that deters effectively.** Most parents would prefer their children to grow up without the temptation of a ready supply of illicit drugs. The state should aim to bring about this state of affairs. We oppose the long-term provision of addictive drugs to addicts that currently takes place.

The state should not provide facilities for illegal drug abuse in the form of “safe” injecting rooms. It's not safe. The drug is just as harmful wherever it is taken. It gives the impression that the only or main danger of drugs is unhygienic consumption. Implying that drug abuse can be “safe” takes away a deterrent to people experimenting with drugs and takes away a motivation to stop. It implies an expectation that illegal drug abusers will continue to be illegal drug abusers. It communicates that our society doesn't really have a problem with illegal drug abuse. It implies that the only danger of illegal drug abuse is to the user, while the harms are actually also inflicted on family, friends and wider society. It is a step towards the legalisation and social acceptance of dangerous addictive drugs.

To sum up, “safe” consumption rooms will, in the longer term, lead to more drug abuse, more drug addiction, more drug deaths and more fear, hurt, injury, loss and death among the law-abiding citizens who cross their path.

The Scottish Government's approach places “stigma” at the heart of the drug problem. This is a delusional attempt to place responsibility on those who disapprove of illegal drug abuse. A strong cultural assumption against drug abuse is exactly what we do need, alongside an openness to support, encourage and, eventually, congratulate those choosing to journey out of addiction.

Scientific research into the use of illegal drugs for medical purposes should not be prevented and, where properly licenced, use should be permitted like any other prescribed medicine.

We are concerned by the vast number of young people taking up vaping. Medical ill-effects are beginning to emerge, and a costly addiction is hardly a positive addition to a young life. Additional regulation and restriction are required.

Alcohol

The solution to Scotland's hugely damaging alcohol problem is not more laws or factual education. **What is needed is a cultural shift away from the social acceptability of drunkenness.** While other parties shy away from moral leadership, we will press the case that drunkenness is inherently irresponsible, leading to relational damage, accidents, unemployment, violence, intimidation and sexual misadventures. Politicians should show moral leadership in this area.

Prostitution

Prostitution harms prostitutes, clients and their families, leads to coercion to meet demand and trivialises sex, eroding the proper respect with which sexual intimacy should be regarded. Buying sex should be criminalised. This deterrence would decrease the demand for sexual services and therefore reduce the number of people abused or damaged through prostitution. It would also protect potential clients from the harm to their own wellbeing and that of their family that can result from the use of prostitutes. Some prostitutes enter into this work through their own uncoerced choice and freely choose to continue in it, however many others are forced into it through human trafficking, debt and drug addiction. This is a great social evil that requires to be addressed by legislation. It is illogical to make it illegal to buy something that is legal to sell, so selling sex should also be criminalised. While punishments might be appropriate in some cases, help to move women on from prostitution would be available.

Pornography

Pornography undermines the wellbeing of our society. We support schemes to prevent children from accessing online pornography. Fact-based education and public information campaigns are needed to highlight the dangers of addiction, detriment to existing relationships, undermining future relationship prospects, guilt, and progression to more extreme and perverted forms, including child porn.

Channel 4, a UK government agency, should refrain from producing semi-pornographic content.

It beggars belief that the Scottish Government presents pornography as a valid, normal and natural option for children through sex education in schools. We would fight this evil.

The association between pornography and sexual crime means that vigorous measures to eliminate illegal extreme and violent pornography are necessary.

Counselling and support groups for those struggling with pornography could help individuals progress positively and also protect marriages and other relationships.

(new page)

Other Policies

We focus on our core issues, but also seek to bring fresh perspectives to other areas of political debate. The following policy statements don't address every question relevant to the topic but bring some new ideas and strong principles to each area.

The Economy

Without a flourishing private sector of businesses and enterprises, Scotland's wealth will dissipate. We want a nation with a good standard of living, a pleasant environment, high-quality public services and reliable welfare provision for those in need. For these, a strong economy is vital.

In Scottish politics, it is often assumed that businesses are the enemy, and the sole function of the state is to restrain and restrict them. We want to encourage business and wealth creation by removing unnecessary regulation and making it easier to start a business, employ staff and grow.

Keeping strategic industrial and manufacturing capacity in Scotland and the UK makes us more resilient in the midst of international volatility.

Many town and city centres are in decline, particularly after the COVID lockdowns. Attractive and well-maintained streets and open areas, good quality housing and accessibility by car can all help revive urban centres.

Businesses in certain sectors should be obliged to make live price data available so that apps can guide consumers and thus enhance market efficiency. The prime example would be fuel, but other sectors where a standard product or service is offered could benefit.

Insurance and utility company regulation should ensure a transparent and stable pricing structure. The price charged to existing customers should always be the same as that for new customers or customers who ask for a discount. This would simplify the decision-making process for all customers and prevent the exploitation of vulnerable customers who do not check their payment level regularly.

Public Finance

Our budget deficit and national debt amount to current expenditure being funded by the taxes to be paid by future generations. Massive government borrowing should be the last resort in times of national crisis, such as the Coronavirus pandemic, not a routine way of insulating the electorate from the consequences of their elected government's profligacy. **Family members often make passing on resources to the next generations a priority - a noble expression of solidarity and selflessness. But our governments do the opposite.** The SNP's immediate maximising of their new borrowing power has set Scotland on the path to even greater indebtedness than that created by Labour and the Conservatives at a UK level. As a matter of integrity, we should not be burdening future generations financially without their consent.

In addition, excessive government borrowing leads to inflation. This devalues the income and savings of us all as prices rise.

The temptation to finance impressive new facilities, such as schools and hospitals, in ways that increase the total cost and inflict a burden on future public finances should be resisted.

National Insurance payments should be invested to meet the needs of the generation that paid them. If this obvious and fair approach had always been taken, there would never be a shortfall when the number of retired people increased relative to the number of taxpayers, for example. Shifting to this system would be difficult in the current climate, but initial steps need to be taken.

As foreign aid is a matter reserved for the UK Government, we question the wisdom of the Scottish Government also giving aid - especially while itself borrowing. In particular, the decision to send Scottish taxpayers' money to nuclear-armed Pakistan, with its dubious human rights record, is perplexing.

The Scottish Government pours money, directly and indirectly, into a vast array of organisations and charities. Many of these serve to reinforce the Government's messages, creating an illusion of broad support.

We are not convinced that taxpayers' money should be given to organisations such as Young Scot, Children and Young People's Commissioner, Equality Network, Scottish Trans Alliance, Creative Scotland, Scottish Human Rights Commission, Equality and Human Rights Commission (Scotland), Amnesty International (Scotland), White Ribbon, Engender, Crew, Alcohol Focus Scotland, Stonewall, Friends of the Earth, National Parents Forum of Scotland, LGBT Health & Wellbeing, LGBT Youth Scotland, Obesity Action Scotland, Interfaith Scotland, One Scotland, Score Scotland, Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights, Scottish Alliance of Regional Equality Councils, CEMVO, BEMIS, Steve Retson Project, Children in Scotland, Amina (Muslim Women's Resource Centre, which exists to turn women away from traditional Islamic values), Fast Forward, Starcatchers, Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) and the Scottish Book Trust. Do we need both Cycling Scotland and Sustrans?

We oppose the concept of a Citizen's Income or Universal Basic Income. It would subsidise self-indulgence and laziness while undermining the proper sense of responsibility to provide for oneself and one's family.

NHS

We wish the NHS to be well-funded and efficiently managed.

The higher education system should train medical staff in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of all health care in Scotland. Relying on taking medics from poorer countries is ethically questionable and denies our young people opportunities.

Currently the NHS spends significant amounts of money on compensation claims and associated legal costs. We would explore alternative systems to ensure that failures are investigated in an open and constructive manner while those who have suffered can be treated fairly without expensive and lengthy legal wrangles.

Health tourism must be stopped. The social contract is eroded when the NHS is cynically exploited.

Drug companies are a valuable source of medical innovation, but they should compete for NHS business purely on the basis of the independently verified effectiveness and cost of their products. Marketing and promotion should have no influence. This would make prescribing more rational and drugs companies more focused on genuinely fruitful research.

The NHS's existing database of medical records could be further exploited for the purpose of medical research, with robust anonymisation procedures in place.

Planning for further pandemics, logistically and scientifically, should be a priority, with lessons learned. The threat of antibiotic resistance also needs to be taken seriously.

Political considerations must never influence evidence-based medicine. For example, increased death rates after the pandemic should be investigated openly, following the evidence where it leads.

Those criminally mistreating NHS staff should be arrested and prosecuted vigorously. Any intimidating or aggressive behaviour should result in a firm response from security staff or police, with no recourse to law in the event of those found guilty missing treatment as a result of such action.

Considerable saving could be made by discontinuing all “equality, diversity and inclusion” programmes and staff.

Medical confidentiality and decision-making powers should be granted at 16 instead of the current 12 years old or younger.

Those experiencing gender identity issues should be offered psychological help to overcome the problem and align their feelings with their biological sex. Transgender “treatments”, pharmaceutical or surgical, should not be available from the NHS. Private clinics could provide such services to adults when the patient is fully aware of the likely long-term outcomes. Even private companies should not be allowed to perform any procedures on or prescribe any drugs relating to gender reassignment to under-18s.

Cosmetic surgery should only be provided to rectify obvious problems, not to meet claimed psychological needs.

Addiction treatments should focus on cure rather than perpetual management.

Freedom of conscience of NHS staff should be respected.

The Scottish Government promotes the Social Model of Disability: “Unlike the medical model, where an individual is understood to be disabled by their impairment, the social model views disability as the relationship between the individual and society. In other words, it sees the barriers created by society, such as negative attitudes towards disabled people, and inaccessible buildings, transport and communication, as the cause of disadvantage and exclusion, rather than the impairment itself.” The SFP fully supports measures to help disabled people and commends the government for progress in this regard. However, we do not believe that the social model of disability is truthful or helpful. Some of the challenges that disabled people face do stem from their disability and blaming “society” in every case is clearly misguided.

Policing, Justice and Law

The politicisation of the Police must stop as it undermines confidence in the impartiality of the Police, can lead to the Police acting unjustly, and can expose the Police to unnecessary criticism and even ridicule. **The Police should be pursuing**

criminals instead of pedalling politically correct slogans and attempting to ensure people are being kind on Twitter.

Police Scotland tends to focus its energy on domestic violence, sexual abuse and hate crime, because these align with the Government's philosophy, at the expense of other types of crime. A more rational and impartial approach to setting priorities is needed.

We would re-establish more regional autonomy for Police services, with power of appointment of leaders in the hands of local authorities and not Holyrood.

Sentencing should be driven by justice, not artificial targets for prison numbers. While there is utility in some discretion to shorten sentences where behaviour has been good, the current systematic slashing of prison terms has made a mockery of custodial sentences.

Sentences should be just. Criminals deserve punishment, so their rehabilitation is not the only consideration. There ought to be a punitive and deterrent element in sentencing.

It is wrong to treat under 25s as less than fully criminally responsible, as now happens in the Scottish justice system. If such younger people are less able to regulate their behaviour rationally, they are more, not less, in need of deterrence.

Restorative justice approaches can be valuable, but victims of crime must never feel obliged or pressurised to interact with perpetrators as part of restorative justice programmes.

Men and women should be equal before the law. The Scottish Government's policy of special treatment for female offenders must end. The proposed misogyny law is designed to privilege women and discriminate against men by creating a new class of crimes that men can commit against women, but women cannot commit against men. It assumes that sexism only exists in one direction and that female hostility towards men never exists. This law is driven by feminist activists, not by the demands of justice.

Those accused of rape and sexual assault should get a fair trial where all relevant information can be laid before the court. Pressure to increase conviction rates must not undermine the fundamental principles of justice. Jury trials should not be abandoned in these cases.

There should be no presumption or implication that accusers will be always be believed. Corroborated evidence should always guide assessment of guilt.

Prisons should induct inmates into an austere and formal environment from which they can, in the case of excellent behaviour, quickly progress to a more amenable regime of purposeful and transformative activity. Prisons must be free of illegal drugs.

Good quality education and training should be available to all prisoners. Prison work should also have some focus on gaining new skills and qualifications. There should be an expectation that prisoners will engage with these opportunities.

Prisons must be free of illegal drugs. Strong punitive measures should be taken against prisoners, visitors or staff who contravene this.

Following a failure to convict in a criminal court, it should not be possible for the same incident to then be pursued in a civil court. No one should have their reputation impugned by being found responsible for a serious crime in a civil court, where the standard of proof is much lower.

Steps should be taken to protect the identity of the accused where possible, especially where the accuser has been granted anonymity, until charges are brought, at the earliest.

All legislation should be free of imprecise, ambiguous or easily misinterpreted wording. The crime must be clearly defined. Vague laws undermine our freedom.

There are invaluable principles embodied in Human Rights declarations. However, they can be open to spurious and unforeseen interpretations. Rights intended to enshrine protected choices can be interpreted as entitlements. **Rights also often give scope for judicial activism, thus undermining democracy.** We would be alert to these problems and seek to address them.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is commonly used as a pretext for wider ideological campaigning, often undermining the authority of parents. Signing up to this convention has handed power to the UN undemocratically, as they interpret the text as they wish in the future and impose demands on the Scottish Government. **We oppose the incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots Law.**

We oppose the Gender Recognition Reform Act reform. Officially changing sex/gender should not be possible merely at the request of an individual.

Even the current system of recognising gender change undermines the right of women to same-sex spaces, makes a mockery of women's sport, and communicates a harmful understanding of sex and gender.

So, we propose that there should be no provision to change gender legally - we would repeal the 2004 Gender Recognition Act.

The only exception to this should be for intersex people, though we would allow those who have already changed gender to remain in their new legal gender.

Transport

While cheap and efficient public transport is desirable, car use is the only practical option in many cases, particularly for families and in rural areas. Cars give independence, freedom and flexibility. **Government policy should make provision for ongoing affordable car use.**

The deadlines for selling non-electric cars should be rescinded. Preparations for full electrification are inadequate and the technology still falls short of the needs of many car owners. The future of car propulsion systems is also uncertain. Other technologies might prove more effective than electricity in the longer term. The net environmental benefit of electric cars is still ambiguous.

We oppose the drive for ever lower speed limits and ever more artificial restrictions on car use in cities.

Low Emission Zones in Scottish Cities are hitting the poorest hardest. The passage of time alone would soon result in a drastic reduction in non-compliant older vehicles (unless the planned ban on new petrol and diesel cars results in many people keeping older cars instead of buying an expensive and impractical electric vehicle).

The Scottish Government's 20 Minute Neighbourhoods scheme, adopted by many councils, focuses on inhibiting car use rather than providing more accessible local services and amenities. As defining "neighbourhoods" is not an efficient way to plan the distribution of key facilities, we fear that restrictions on car travel will soon emerge, as they have in England. We oppose any scheme to restrict, ration or regulate journeys between "neighbourhoods".

Our rail network has many strengths, but improved reliability must be a priority.

Recognising that the Scottish Government has proved incompetent in the provision of ferry services, a fresh start is needed, bringing in all of the expertise needed to coordinate the system from requisitioning to day-to-day management.

As the aviation industry develops technology to reduce its environmental impact, Scotland should not harm its economy by imposing additional charges on air travel.

Safe cycleways should be extended by integration into pavement areas where this is possible.

We would explore the potential of river transport on some of Scotland's great waterways.

Housing

We want people to be able to buy their own homes. Currently, house prices are too high for many. More new housing developments on brownfield sites should be facilitated through the planning system. New homes near town and city centres will help maintain and regenerate these areas.

Some looking to buy a home are priced out of the market by buy-to-let landlords, and thereafter are unable to invest in an asset for themselves and their family. Property to rent provides an important service to some, but can deprive others of the opportunity to buy instead of renting. We support the Additional Dwelling Supplement and would consider increasing the supplement if necessary to achieve the right balance between meeting the demands of the rental market and the purchasing market.

Planning permission for extensions should be granted where possible, and certainly not restricted by school capacity considerations.

Concerns about the prevalence of properties devoted to AirBnB style holiday lets in some areas are valid, but the Government's response of making Scotland the most highly regulated place in the world for people generating additional income by letting out a room or two is disproportionate.

Environment and Energy

The natural beauty of Scotland, its flora and fauna, should be conserved, respecting the importance of providing a healthy outdoor environment for our children, families and citizens, as well as tourists, to enjoy. Our beaches, rivers, hills, forests, fields and glens should be clean and natural biodiversity considered a valuable portion of the nation's inherent wealth.

Measures to tackle carbon emissions must be practical, sustainable and carefully costed. Debate in this area should be led by non-partisan expert opinion, accompanied by intelligent analysis, open to diverse views, and not dictated by activists, protestors and the media.

The benefits of climate change policies must always be weighed against the costs. Often the benefits are insignificant, but the costs are high, particularly for the less well off.

Every means of energy generation should be considered on its merits, and none dismissed on ideological grounds. Nuclear power, on both a large and smaller scale, should be explored as a carbon-free electricity source.

In a volatile world, energy self-sufficiency should be a goal. Importing fossil fuels instead of using our own resources, as now happens, is more environmentally damaging, more expensive and leaves us more vulnerable to international events and hostility. The Scottish oil and gas industries can meet energy needs and contribute to our prosperity for many years to come.

It is wasteful in economic terms and damaging to the environment to import fracked gas from the USA into processing plants such as Grangemouth whilst our own reserves of fracked gas stretch across the Central Region of Scotland and are left untouched.

Family breakdown leads to more households and, therefore, more energy consumption. Our policies promoting family stability would, therefore, help reduce carbon emissions.

Agriculture and Fishing

As much of our food as possible should be produced locally. Scotland's agricultural and fishing potential should be maximised in all sectors. We oppose measures intended to reduce food production, livestock numbers, agricultural land and fishing activity. Only active farming should be subsidised. A freer home market and restrictions on some imports are needed.

Excessively strict regulation should be reviewed where the standards insisted upon are out of proportion to any risk. Barriers to entering these industries should be minimised. Regulatory stability is needed to enable farmers to invest.

We regard diet as a matter of personal choice, so will always resist policies designed to encourage or enforce vegetarianism.

Foreign Policy and Defence

As foreign policy is a reserved issue, the Scottish Government should not waste time and resources seeking to enter into international affairs.

In the UK Parliament, we would support the foreign policy objectives of good international relations, trade, resilience and positive influence in terms of conflict resolution and development.

Development aid should be targeted at practical needs, not driven by ideological agendas such as the promotion of abortion or same-sex marriage.

The threats posed by Russia and China need to be assessed realistically and we need to be prepared to defend ourselves effectively.

Scottish Culture

The riches of Scottish culture should be cherished, promoted and supported. This gives Scotland a distinctive and strong personality internationally and can unite the population around shared experiences.

Gaelic and Scots should be sustained as a crucial element in Scotland's cultural heritage.

COVID 19

We acknowledge the complexity of the challenge presented by the pandemic, but we believe that the UK and Scottish Government over-reacted in several ways. The educational, social, health, economic and financial costs of lockdown policies are now apparent.

Our freedoms are precious and our economy fragile. People must be trusted more to make their own decisions in any similar scenario in the future. Pandemic responses should never be delegated to undemocratic international bodies and people should never be coerced into medical procedures.

International Organisations

We are also neutral on the issue of EU membership but respect the 2016 referendum result.

Democracy is undermined when elected politicians adopt the agendas of international organisations in preference to the views of their own citizens. In Scotland, politicians often lack their own vision and values, so grasp at international trends and fashions to inspire and validate their programs.

We recognise that bodies such as the United Nations, World Health Organisation and World Economic Forum are heavily influenced by activists and campaigners. They are not neutral but progress a distinct political philosophy that is at odds with much of our manifesto. While their advice may be of interest, it should be freely rejected wherever it conflicts with our national interests, or fundamental freedoms and political philosophy.

Scottish Independence

We are neutral on the benefits or otherwise of Scottish independence in the longer term. Respecting the previous result, we do not support holding a further Scottish Independence referendum during the next Scottish parliament term. If support for independence is clearly above 60% for a period of several years, we would not oppose another referendum in the future.

If Scotland were to attain independence in the near future, we fear that its new written constitution would set in stone many values and principles with which we disagree. For example, abortion “rights” would most likely be written into the constitution. Once something is embedded in the constitution it becomes much more difficult to change. It is no longer a regular political issue decided by majority

vote in the parliament, but can only be overturned by what is usually a far more demanding process to change the constitution. So, Scottish independence would, to some degree, make the values of the current political establishment the foundation of Scotland for decades to come. For this reason, many Scottish nationalists do not wish to see independence until our national values are founded in integrity, decency and truth.

Though the issue of Scottish independence is important and has dominated recent political debate, we believe that the foundational values that underpin our society are of greater consequence than constitutional questions. **Constitutional change would not bring about the change in political values that is so desperately needed.**

We can only achieve our goals if we unite across the traditional divides of Scottish politics.

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What about other policy areas? SFP MSPs would enter into these debates as well - not from a preconceived ideological stance, but with an open mind, seeking the outcomes that we all desire.

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Last page

As a political party in Scotland, we seek to gain election into the Scottish Parliament through the regional list system. Scottish Family Party MSPs would have a transformative effect on the parliament and wider political and media debate.

We'd love to meet you at one of our events. There are many ways to be involved in the party, from attending local meetings to standing as a candidate in future elections.

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