



UK Independence Party Scotland

Partaidh Neo-eisimeileach an Rìoghachd Aonaichte ann an Alba

Manifesto: Scottish Parliament and Local Elections 3 May 2007

SACK THE MSPs, RESTORE DEMOCRACY AND LEAVE THE EU

Dear Voter,

Whatever way you use your first vote in the Scottish Parliament elections - to back a person or a party - please use your regional vote to shake up Scottish politics and send the Government a message. Vote UKIPScotland to Sack the MSPs, restore Democracy and Leave the EU. And in the local elections, back referendums and a 40% cut in Council Tax.

Government in Scotland, and in the United Kingdom as a whole, is becoming more and more remote from the electorate. Local councils do what they are told by the EU and 70% of our laws, which should be made by our elected UK government, come from Brussels.

Unlike all the old political parties, the UK Independence Party Scotland believes in real democracy at all levels. We want Britain out of the European Union so we can govern ourselves, and we want re-empowered local authorities. And, while we fully respect the Scottish identity and the Scottish nation, we also believe in preserving the United Kingdom - the nations of the UK work better together than they would apart.

There is no place in this scheme for the 129 Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) - an additional and wasteful layer of government. But we recognise the wish of the Scottish people to have a Scottish Parliament, so we will keep the Parliament but replace MSPs with underemployed Scottish Westminster MPs.

Key policies

1. Sack all 129 Members of the Scottish Parliament and replace them with MPs.

Most Scots agree devolution has been disappointing and expensive. Scotland has 59 members of the British parliament (MPs), 129 MSPs, 7 MEPs and 1000s of councillors. Scotland doesn't need all these costly politicians.

Our policy is to have the British Westminster parliament meet for three weeks out of four to debate law that applies to the whole of Britain. Then, in the fourth week, the 59 Scottish MPs come home to attend to Scottish-only business in the Scottish Parliament - with the Welsh and Northern Irish doing similarly, and English MPs staying in Westminster to debate law that only applies to England in an 'English Parliament'.

We will sack all 129 MSPs and replace them with our Westminster MPs, sitting in Edinburgh on Scottish matters. This will solve the 'West Lothian' question, and streamline the Scottish Parliament, with the potential to save millions of pounds each year.

2. Restore local democracy, with direct votes and more local control over finances.

Today, local councils rely on government funding and obey government orders rather than looking after the interests of their local communities. They now raise only 25% of monies locally. It's no wonder that so few people turn out to vote at local elections. UKIPScotland believes in restoring local democracy and freeing local government from central government interference. UKIPScotland offers meaningful local 'independence' which does not just swap British democracy for Brussels bureaucracy, as the SNP propose.

First, we would provide for local referendums on any major local issue. Once a petitioner obtains enough signatures from local voters in a national, regional council or community area, a democratic vote must be held and its result would be binding.

Second, we would give local councils majority control over their finances by letting them keep local business rates and by replacing the EU-imposed VAT with a Local Sales Tax. This would enable them to assist small businesses with fairer business rates that reflect local conditions. Local businesses would receive a vote.

Finally, local authorities and councils must be made more accountable to the voters by staging more open meetings and adopting more visible decision-making processes.

UKIPScotland will cut council tax by 40%, taking it back to where it was 10 years ago.

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for more information or email: ukipscot@ukip.org

3. Restore the UK's independence by leaving the European Union

The UK pays the European Union £100,000 a minute. In return, the EU controls farming and fishing, it restricts our trade with the rest of the world, it showers us with thousands of regulations and it is taking over most of the functions of national governments. There is little point in having an elected British government, let alone a Scottish Parliament, when most laws already come direct from Brussels.

UKIPScotland's policy is to take Britain out of the EU so we can trade freely with the rest of the world as well as the EU, just as independent Norway and Switzerland do now. Less than 10% of the UK economy involves EU trade. We can also start to unwind 120,000 EU regulations and directives that interfere with our lives and destroy our businesses, and restore Scottish fishing grounds and farming.

Other policy priorities

EDUCATION

The trouble with our state schools is too much interference from central government. Teachers have to put paperwork and performance targets above the needs of pupils. Standards have collapsed in secondary schools and functional illiteracy is around 20%.

UKIPScotland says

Independence for schools and colleges over teaching, examinations and discipline.

Return to selective education and the proven high school system, but with fair treatment for all schools. Let us have selection on merit rather than postcode.

Introduce vouchers to help parents to choose the school they want.

Scrap useless paperwork and trust teachers to do their jobs, retain special schools.

Encourage competitive school sports, playing fields and school trips.

Bring back student grants and scrap student loans for all.

Let universities select their own students, abolish the absurd 50% attendance target.

HEALTH

Despite our health service being given more money, much of this has been wasted on management consultants and bureaucrats. We still have long waiting lists, postponed operations, poor cleanliness, and low staff morale. The reason is that the government tries to run the NHS centrally, in all its detail, using hundreds of targets and initiatives.

UKIPScotland says

Bring in proper local management, and take politics out of medical care

Return to the 'matron' system with a single manager responsible for all care and accommodation, and put the patient back in charge

More freedom for doctors to select treatment based on clinical need not targets.

GP surgeries to re-open in the evenings and at weekends for those at work.

IMMIGRATION

Under European Union law, anyone from other EU countries can live in Britain, and EU rules also govern how we deal with asylum seekers. Britain has no control and too many newcomers are settling here - competing for jobs and causing pressure on our schools, health services and housing (over 200,000 Scots are on the housing register). The first responsibility of our government must be towards its own people.

UKIPScotland says

Take back control of our borders so we know who is coming in and out.

Our own government must determine who is allowed to stay, not the European Union.

Give work permits only to those whose skills we need.

CRIME

There are more police officers today than ever before but crime is getting worse. Our police are hamstrung by politically correct rules and form-filling, and our courts can't sentence properly because there is not enough space in prisons.

UKIPScotland says

- Make police chiefs directly elected and forces accountable to local people and boards.
- Relieve our police of unnecessary paperwork, and ensure proactive on-street policing.
- Ensure stricter sentencing and zero tolerance of antisocial behaviour and petty crime.
- Build more prisons urgently and ensure those who are a public danger stay locked up.
- Defend Scottish and UK legal systems of jury trials, habeas corpus and 'innocent until proven guilty'.
- We totally reject the EU's Napoleonic Code and detention without trial.

THE ECONOMY

If Britain is to remain prosperous and competitive in the global economy, it is vital to reduce the regulatory and tax burden on our businesses. We would cut taxes all round and pay for this by cutting waste and halting government spending growth. We do not accept the argument this means reducing 'front line' services as lower taxes boost the economy.

UKIPScotland says

- Have a 33% flat tax with an income tax threshold of £9,000 per year, to take 4.5 million lower paid people out of tax altogether and make everyone else better off.
- Cut council tax by 40% and scrap inheritance tax altogether.
- Reduce rates of company tax so our businesses can compete in the global economy.
- Free up our businesses by scrapping thousands of unnecessary regulations.

AGRICULTURE AND FISHING

The European Union's Common Agricultural Policy rewards rich landowners, drives up food prices and helps to bankrupt our farmers, and its Common Fishing Policy is decimating Scottish fishing. UKIP believes in strong farming and fishing industries that are reliable sources of food, whilst also looking after our rural and maritime environments.

UKIPScotland says

- Replace CAP with price supports that recognise local conditions, such as hill farming.
- Provide appropriate financial support for young farmers.
- Return to sensible health regulations so that small local abattoirs can re-open.
- Encourage local food production and consumption, license fishing and net sizes
- Leave the CFP, take back UK coastal waters and rebuild our fisheries protection fleet.

TRANSPORT

Public transport needs to be more attractive and responsive to local needs, and there is gridlock on major roads. Over-zealous traffic enforcement is used merely to raise funds.

UKIPScotland says

- Rule out satellite-based vehicle pricing and oppose privatisation of parking facilities
- Improve local control of public transport, support high-speed rail lines and airport links.
- Remove speed cameras unless they cut accidents.
- Tax foreign lorries on same basis as our own.

ENERGY

UKIP regards Britain's growing dependence on imported energy as unacceptable, yet we recognise that renewable sources such as wind power on land is inefficient and oppose large wind farms. We believe that an increasing proportion of our energy must be nuclear with new plants on existing sites, and support clean coal technology, hydroelectric power, and biofuels. We fully support plans for new electricity-generating wave power.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Environmental legislation is now driven wholly by the EU: we have direct EU bans on light bulbs, and impossible demands for recycling on local authorities that result in large-scale shipment of waste to China. UKIP believes strongly in protecting our environment but this must be a matter for our own government. We will vigorously defend the green belt.

DEFENCE

The first duty of our government is to defend our country. But budget cutbacks and spending on EU defence projects have left our forces overstretched and underfunded. UKIP would ensure our forces are properly resourced and cared for. We would restore the traditional Scottish regiments and increase defence spending substantially.

SAVE OUR POST OFFICES

Rural post offices and the Royal Mail are being destroyed by EU laws that put limits on government support and allow private companies to cream off the most profitable business. UKIP would provide subsidies as necessary to keep post offices open.

THE SMOKING BAN

UKIPScotland regards the general ban on smoking as an unnecessary assault on people's freedom. We would scrap the ban, but require premises to provide segregated smoking areas. If not possible, premises would have to be either all smoking or all non smoking.

COUNCIL HOUSING

UKIPScotland will join the campaign to keep the stock of council housing under public ownership, where local referendums show this is what their tenants prefer. We will support sales of council housing to private tenants on condition sale receipts fund new housing.



The UK Independence Party Scotland

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