

## YES Highland an Islands Zoom Meeting

Saturday 25th July 2020

### Minutes/Meeting Note

**Present:** InverYes (Alistair, Alison), LochYes (Chris), Oban Grassroots (Ruth), Yes Badenoch & Strathspey (Jim), Yes Caithness (Keith, Patsy), Yes Elgin/Moray (Doug, Colin), Yes Forres (Jim F, Brian, Jim McC), Yes Nairn (Iain), YRS (Erik, Peadar), YSL (Carole), Aye2Aye (Jim)

**Apologies:** Dave McRobie,

Jim F welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Previous Minutes:** Agreed

**Matters Arising:** clarified confusion with *delegates for (Zoom)* meetings: Each member group can have 4 delegates to WhatsApp group any 2 of which can be at a Zoom meeting (or substitutes, by nomination). Host group Chair, Note-taker and Secretary are extra. Agreed to review over time to make sure new delegates feel included. Also agreed Zoom could accommodate larger numbers but smaller limit OK for the present.

**Feedback on 'the letter'** - positive responses from some MSPs/MPs contacted - 'timely intervention in the independence debate' links to detailed feedback to be shared. Zoom meetings continuing with elected members for their comments. YES activism has been energised - reported new groups in Crieff & Comrie, Strathearn, Perth (Independent Network), involving Aye2Aye's Sharon Trish who has moved to Perthshire. Links to Edinburgh YES group, YES Orkney looking to firmer involvement. Carole proposes to offer YES H&I membership to YES Orkney. Ruth will contact Argyll & Bute about developments as they're a WhatsApp group and in early development.

**Comments of Kate Forbes and Maree Todd Zoom meetings** - both felt to be positive, Change of tone re Kate since becoming a minister - now reflecting party line more but her optimism about a new referendum soon was refreshing. Raised speculation about what might be happening behind the scenes: plan B (?), strategic planning (?). Maree Todd felt more grounded and same positivity came over. Query about no response from Richard Lochhead (100% party line we understand from local SNP feedback. Doug will approach him directly. Also noted insight from Pete Wishart's Zoom with Moray SNP - 'SNP need to talk to YES'. Meeting agreed we should continue these meetings with politicians and revisit and repeat to maintain dialogue.

**Format for future Zoom meetings** - idea we could use breakout facility to prepare questions in small groups before reconvening to ask them. Practical issues such as time management and what speaker does during breakouts seemed to be an issue. Also discussed recording and agreed that for MSP/MP meetings it wasn't appropriate as it would inhibit free discussion. Meeting notes allow suitable summarisation. We thought a disclaimer for all participants might be a later requirement. As a practical move, we asked that all participants entered meetings with name and group on screen. Those who'd not done so changed during the meeting - so it's easy to fix.

### Reports

**InverYes** - 1<sup>st</sup> group to take up Banner Library offer - 5 now deployed in Inverness. Also had a presence at Kinloss for demo when Boris Johnston was on his visit.

**LochYes** - Chris said they're trying to re-energise the group and organise something soon.

**Oban Grassroots** - Ruth explained banner scheme to get YES message out - £160 for a group to receive 5 banners to display then to swap for 5 different ones each month. Groups must find their own locations. We discussed options for doing this with advice from Doug, also how to avoid vandalism issues. Grassroots is looking to expand library so ideas for new banner designs welcome. Brian offered to assist with design and

production if needed. Contacts in other groups also needed. Discussed how monthly Zoom meetings with guest speakers work – possible names mentioned – eg Robin McAlpine – and topic – Scotland’s currency, voting strategies, list-only parties. Peadar spoke of what information we need to consider the latter – how to get the numbers without spin in either direction.

**Yes Badenoch & Strathspey** – some personnel changes. Have taken banners to prominent landmarks to use as photo opportunities.

**Yes Caithness** – raised post-lockdown activities - putting up banners, letters to the press, leafleting, small face-to-face meetings in local venues. Patsy will share letter templates with Alistair for the Edinburgh group.

**Yes Elgin/Moray** - Colin said Elgin and Forres will share a Zoom sub. Doug spoke about trailer and towbar for displaying messages – needs new signs. Noted SIF grant available to create some. Letter templates from Patsy asked for (including Forres) and agreed.

**Yes Forres** – Brian outlined action over last year. No meetings in 2019 but several street stalls staged and leaflet drive continued through local SNP who used YES leaflets in local areas where there were no SNP or campaign-related material available.

**Yes Nairn** – 2 garden meetings during lockdown. Banner library didn’t appeal as no secure locations. Discussed idea of putting some up and taking down on same day. Also contact with supporters might reveal spaces or local plots for use. Felt general disappointment with MSP meetings this week and want to keep up the pressure. Group needs to be kickstarted, though.

**Yes RS** – been quiet over lockdown. Discussed trailers. Considering posters and banners.

**YSL** – Spoke about Zoom meeting with Dave Thomson (AFI) to find out more on list vote strategy. Carole has access to a spreadsheet on voting which can show possible outcomes on various scenarios. Will share if developer is OK. Discussed how to get speakers for Zoom meetings. Issue of fees – if we approached folk like John Curtice – whether to ask for freebie or invite a reduced or no fee obliquely. Angus Robertson mentioned (Doug) as a possible contact/

**Code of Conduct-** Group agreed – good starting point. Significant use outside the group for being heard, good to have published ground rules for meetings, group meetings, other activities. Possibly separating rules to fit these various activities. Clarifying role of chair important but shouldn’t deny valid input in meetings. Clarified role could set limits to make sure chair could take part while retaining a degree of control and impartiality. Agreed to continue to develop – via the Structure Group.

**National Structure Group** – Erik reported – IndyApp update and meeting with Jason from NYR – optimistic about the tool but looking for encouragement. On the developing national structure thoughts were to avoid being prescriptive – ie promote inclusivity – perhaps use YH&I as a model along with ideas from other areas. Key would be to tell the story and lead by example.

#### **AOCB:**

Radio output raised with ref to an invitation from Independence Live – John Drummond interview. This is a route to discussion many topics (eg the economy). Oban mentioned offer of 15 minute slot on Indy Live. Various suggestions came back – straight talk, interview, conversation, shorter 5 minute contributions from several groups (15 minutes is a lot to fill. Also pre-recording and/or editing contribution to minimise live performance problems. Recorded material can also be shared elsewhere.

Alison raised matter of finding new YES slogans to combat those of Westminster and reframe the independence debate, Asked that we coin some. Brian and Peadar were asked specifically to look at this process and also with a view to filling a radio slot with how we do this.

**Next meeting:** Saturday 15th August 2020 – 10:30am via Zoom –  
Host: Yes Caithness. YSL will set up Zoom and be fall back if there’s an issue.