

Yes Highlands & Islands
Minutes of meeting on 5th December 2020

Present,

Aye Fyne: Tricia Grey, Elaine Mackenzie

Grassroots Oban: Ruth Barratt, Colin Morrison

InverYess: Alison Fraser, Alastair Macdonald, Irene Stacey

Loch Yes: Marjorie Wilson, Fiona MacKinnon

Yes Badenoch & Strathspey: Rod Frazer, Amanda Frazer

Yes Caithness: Patsy Sinclair, Ian Sinclair.

Yes Forres: Jim Farquharson

Yes Moray/Elgin: Douglas Reid, Colin Watson

Yes Nairn: Iain Bruce.

Yes Orkney: Ian Carse

Yes Ross & Sutherland: Lorraine Carson, Peadar Morgan

Yes Skye &Lochalsh: Carole Inglis, Hazel Rae

Yes Speyside Glenlivet: Pearl Paul, Sheila Wiseman

Guests: Pat Farrington, Islay, Gordon Chambers, Mull.

1. Welcome

(a) Apologies

Jim Ramsey, Aye to Aye

Ruth Reavell, NW Lochaber

(b) Matters for AOCB

Brexit leaflet

2. Minutes of last meeting

Proposed by Amanda Frazer, seconded by Alastair Macdonald.

3. YH&I Structure.

The original structure for meetings allowed for two delegates from each Yes group. We discussed the possibility of others joining the meetings just to sit in and listen. This was compared to the visitors gallery in parliament. The advantage is that we would like to attract as many people as possible to the independence movement. However, there would be the danger hostile visitors or individuals leaking inaccurate information.

It was agreed that we should continue with two delegates from each group. If others want to get involved they should be encouraged to join a local group.

It was suggested that an additional Whatsapp chat account would be useful for general discussion, conversation and ideas. The main Whatsapp should be restricted to business, information, meetings etc.

4. Internal Market Bill.

It was agreed that the recently designed Internal Market Bill poster is very effective. Lorraine has ordered 1000 copies to be distributed to groups. It was suggested that reuseable cable ties are best for attaching posters to railings and tape for bus shelters. It was also suggested that an A5 version of the poster could be produced as a leaflet suitable for posting through doors. Alastair informed us that the Church had produced a leaflet and wondered if they might be interested in the poster featuring the Internal market power grab. The general feeling was that although some ministers may be sympathetic to independence, the Church as an establishment organization is unlikely to be helpful.

It was also suggested that an explanatory leaflet explaining the impact of the Internal Market Bill would be useful. Indy Poster Boy has produced something but it is considered too "wordy" and a simpler version would be more effective.

5. National Yes Network.

The National Yes Network (NYN) was an initiative by YH&I, YEL (Yes Edinburgh and Lothian) and PIN (Perth Independence Network) and is now successfully established. They have a meeting on Sunday 6th December with two further meetings planned for 20th December and 3rd January. There is a requirement for 3 representatives from YH&I with one continuing rep who would attend all meetings.

Ruth Barratt volunteered for this role and was unanimously appointed.

There was general agreement that combining the various local Yes groups into a national Yes Network has the potential to be very effective. We also welcome the initiatives by Believe in Scotland, AUOB and Common Weal. However, it is vitally important that all groups talk to each other and cooperate in achieving the final goal of Independence. We must not let egos destroy the movement.

6. SIC Report.

Alastair summarized the latest SIC report and highlighted an article written by W. Austin. Alison has sent a copy of this out to all Yes groups. SIC not due to meet again until the end of January.

7. YH&I Map

Various amendments to the map are required to include several of the Islands such as Tiree, Coll, Mull. Gordon offered to liaise with groups from Oban, Coll, Tiree and Tobermory. Alison said Ghia want to join and it was suggested they join in with Kintyre or Islay. Efforts continue to contact Jean Urquhart for Yes Shetland. Peadar agreed to update the map to include the additional islands.

8. Short Group Reports

InverYess. Not much to report. Regular Zoom meetings on Friday mornings.

Aye Fyne. Ran a very effective Cavalcade with banners on a trailer followed by cars with flags. Very safe but created a good effect.

Strathspey. Continuing to communicate with social media.

Yes Caithness have a team working on large YES signs to be placed at prominent sites in the countryside on the A9. Iain Bruce suggested this might work best to coincide with Martin Keatings court case in January.

Yes Forres. Also using the time to make up new signs.

Yes Ross Sutherland. Lorraine has ordered the posters and suggests they can be attached with cable ties in bus shelters and other suitable places. YRS ran a very successful Zoom meeting with Gordon Macintyre Kemp for Believe in Scotland. This featured the concept of the “Wellbeing Economy” as the centre of the campaign for independence. This was well attended and very inspirational.

Yes Nairn, not a lot happening but still active.

Yes Orkney. Ian Carse managed to get articles printed in The Orkney News which is a popular online magazine.

Yes Elgin/Moray. Drew Hendry spoke at group's AGM on the Internal Market Bill which was well received. A letter writing campaign to local newspapers has started.

Loch Yes. The group now has a new committee in place and has met to decide group priorities for immediate future. These include boosting presence and profile on social media through the facebook page, new twitter account and setting up the LochYes@gmail.com email address. One other priority was to produce a leaflet about Brexit and to ask YH&I if anyone was interested in collaborating with us on that.

9. AOCB

Marjorie reported that LochYes is planning to produce a leaflet on Brexit and would like to know if any other groups would like to join in, to reduce production costs.

While acknowledging the Internal Market Bill as being a severe threat to Scotland, LochYes feels that Brexit will have a bigger impact on the public, as prices rise and some medicines and food items become unavailable. There will be other adverse effects too, such as shortage of staff in care homes and the NHS due to the ending of freedom of movement.

There is a danger that the UK government and unionist parties will spin the news to put the blame on the EU for any harm that we suffer; we need to make sure people know where the blame actually lies.

LochYes are working on a leaflet now, to be finalised in early January, once we see what aspects of Brexit are having the greatest impact, with a view to publication soon thereafter. The draft leaflet would be submitted to YHI so that groups could decide if they wanted it. Some groups expressed interest.

10. Date of next meeting.

Tuesday 5th January at 7pm.

Yes Moray to host and Iain Bruce to take minutes.