



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 4, No. 18, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Thursday 20 June 2024

Note: (DT) signifies a decision taken at Decision Time.

The meeting opened at 11.40 am.

- 1. General Questions:** Questions were answered by a Cabinet Secretary and Ministers.
- 2. First Minister's Questions:** Questions were answered by the First Minister (John Swinney).
- 3. West Coast Ferry Disruption and Replacement:** The Parliament debated S6M-13505 in the name of Jamie Greene—That the Parliament notes with concern reports of a number of ongoing issues affecting CalMac ferry services on the west coast of Scotland ahead of the busy summer tourist season; further notes, in particular, reportedly ongoing problems with the MV Caledonian Isles, which were identified during its annual overhaul; understands that, as a result of the loss of the MV Caledonian Isles, the summer timetable for 2024 will be supported by two vessels rather than three as usual; further understands that this has led to a severe reduction in capacity for both passengers and vehicles on the route, as the MV Isle of Arran operates a core single vessel timetable on the Ardrossan-Brodick route; understands that damage to the Irish Berth at Ardrossan Harbour means that the MV Alfred can no longer operate out of Ardrossan, further reducing route capacity, and notes the calls on the berth's owner, Peel Ports, to work with North Ayrshire Council, CalMac, CMAL and the Scottish Government to resolve any ongoing disputes surrounding port maintenance; considers that the Ardrossan-Brodick ferry is the busiest ferry route in Scotland, carrying 692,518 passengers in 2022; emphasises what it considers to be the importance of the tourism industry to Arran's communities; notes the calls for all political parties to ensure that Ardrossan remains

the principal port for the Arran route in the long term; understands that the MV Isle of Arran is 40 years old, whilst the MV Caledonian Isles is 31 years old; notes with concern the recently announced delays to the delivery of the Glen Sannox vessel to the route; understands that CalMac paid out £454,165 in 2022-23 in compensation to passengers for delays or cancellations, which was almost eight times the £57,822 paid out in 2017-18; further understands that, between 2017 and 2023, 6,302 sailings were cancelled due to technical issues; understands that the age and condition of CalMac's vessels has led to a deficiency of spare capacity and resilience across the network; notes the calls for adequate and timely investment to boost the resilience of the fleet, including the commission of the small vessel replacement programme as soon as possible and a prompt resolution to the CHFS contract award that better meets the needs of island communities, and expresses sympathy with islanders who are affected most by disruption to sailings.

4. Portfolio Questions: Questions on Social Justice were answered by a Cabinet Secretary and Ministers.

5. Ministerial Statement: The Minister for Public Finance (Ivan McKee) made a statement and answered questions on 2023-24 Provisional Outturn.

6. Ministerial Statement: The Minister for Housing (Paul McLennan) made a statement and answered questions on Scottish Government Response to Scotland's Housing Emergency.

7. Gender Representation on Public Boards (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill: The Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice (Shirley-Anne Somerville) moved S6M-13664—That the Parliament agrees that the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill be passed.

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 108 (including 1 proxy vote), Against 0, Abstentions 0).

8. Motion Without Notice: The Minister for Parliamentary Business (Jamie Hepburn), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved without notice that, under Rule 11.2.4, Decision Time be brought forward to 4.18 pm.

The motion was agreed to.

9. Decision Time: The Parliament took a decision on item 7 as noted above.

10. Increasing Benefits Uptake in the Current Economic Climate: The Parliament debated S6M-12301 in the name of Evelyn Tweed—That the Parliament believes that it is important that people are accessing all the benefits that they are entitled to, especially in the current economic climate; notes reports from 2023 that £19 billion of benefits went unclaimed across the UK; understands that some benefits are especially undersubscribed; further understands that 25% of those eligible for the Young Carer Grant do not currently claim it, as well as 39% of those eligible for Funeral Support Payment; notes the encouragement for the people of Scotland, including those in the Stirling constituency, to ensure that they are receiving all the support that they are eligible for; highlights what it sees as the useful

services available, such as Citizens Advice Scotland, Age UK, and various online calculators to help individuals identify benefits that they may be missing out on; understands that Advice Direct Scotland's benefits calculator allows people to check their entitlement to both devolved and reserved benefits, and that it has been used by 56,000 people to identify over £43 million of unclaimed money; believes that a level of stigma is still associated with accessing some benefits; notes the belief that, although great work is underway, more work is required in this area, and recognises the stakeholders that are working to widen access to and reduce the stigma associated with benefits.

The meeting closed at 5.10 pm.

David McGill
.10Clerk of the Parliament
20 June 2024

Appendix

(Note: this Appendix does not form part of the Minutes)

Committee Reports

The following reports were published on 20 June 2024—

Social Justice and Social Security Committee, 9th Report, 2024 (Session 6):
Document subject to parliamentary control considered on 06 June 2024 (SP
Paper 623)

Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee, 4th Report,
2024 (Session 6): Standing Order rule changes – Procedures on consent in
relation to UK Parliament Bills (SP Paper 627)

Subordinate Legislation

Negative Instruments

The following instruments were laid before the Parliament on 20 June 2024 and are
subject to the negative procedure—

Legal Aid and Advice and Assistance (Miscellaneous Amendment) (Scotland)
Regulations 2024 (SSI 2024/178)
laid under section 37(1) of the Legal Aid (Scotland) Act 1986

Police Service of Scotland (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (SSI 2024/179)
laid under section 125(4) of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012

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