



OFFICIAL REPORT
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Session 6



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Scottish Parliament

Thursday 20 May 2021

[The Presiding Officer opened the meeting at 14:00]

Ministers and Junior Ministers

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone): Good afternoon. I remind members that social distancing measures are in place in the chamber and across the Holyrood campus. I ask that members take care to observe those measures, including when entering and exiting the chamber, and to please only use the aisles and walkways to access their seat and when moving around the chamber.

The first item of business is consideration of motions S6M-00062 and S6M-00063, in the name of Nicola Sturgeon, on the appointment of Scottish ministers and junior Scottish ministers. I shall invite the First Minister to move the motions. I then intend to invite each party to make a short contribution. Thereafter, I will invite the First Minister to reply.

14:01

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): I rise to seek Parliament's approval that Shona Robison, Keith Brown, Mairi Gougeon and Angus Robertson be appointed as Scottish ministers and that George Adam, Tom Arthur and Màiri McAllan be appointed as Scottish junior ministers.

I have appointed a serious Government for the serious times that we live in. This Government brings together experience with new talent and is a team that can get straight down to business—indeed, it already has.

In nominating these new cabinet secretaries and ministers, I first pay tribute to those who are departing the Government. Among Fiona Hyslop's many achievements during her long years in the Government, she oversaw the abolition of university tuition fees, expanded the Scottish Government's international footprint and, more recently, worked tirelessly to support jobs and the economy during the pandemic. Fergus Ewing, too, has performed a number of ministerial roles. I note in particular his work as a tireless champion for Scotland's farmers and crofters, fighting for Scotland's rural sector since the Brexit vote, during one of the most challenging and uncertain periods that our agriculture sector has ever faced. Both Fiona and Fergus are very dear friends of mine—indeed, friends of everybody on these benches as well as other colleagues—and they

leave the Government with our sincere thanks and best wishes.

I turn to today's appointments. First, Shona Robison returns to the Government after a period in which, among many other things, she chaired the Scottish National Party's Social Justice and Fairness Commission. In her new brief as Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government, Shona will be responsible for many of our Government's key priorities, which include the delivery of 100,000 affordable homes, the tackling of child poverty and the development of the potentially transformative policy of a minimum income guarantee.

Keith Brown returns to the Government as Cabinet Secretary for Justice and brings formidable experience to that role. Keith will be responsible for continuing the Government's reform of the justice system as well as work to reduce reoffending. Having himself served in the armed forces, Keith will also be minister for veterans.

Mairi Gougeon joins the Cabinet with the rural affairs and islands brief. Before her role as Minister for Public Health and Sport, she served as Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment, so she is well versed in the sensitivities and challenges that she faces in her new role. I am pleased to say that she is already working hard to defend Scotland's farmers from the Tories' proposed tariff-free trade deal with Australia which, if it goes ahead, will be devastating to our farmers and must be resisted for that reason.

Finally, Angus Robertson becomes the Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture. During his time in the House of Commons, Angus developed a well-earned reputation for not only building bridges across party lines but forging friendships internationally, making him ideally suited to the role. Angus will also be charged with fulfilling the Government's manifesto commitment, endorsed by the electorate in our election victory, of ensuring that Scotland's future is in Scotland's hands and that, after the Covid crisis, the people of Scotland will have the opportunity to choose our future.

A number of other colleagues remain in the Cabinet but take up new and expanded roles that reflect the challenges that lie ahead. John Swinney continues as Deputy First Minister in a new cross-Government role that is designed to reflect the cross-portfolio nature of our recovery from Covid. He will quickly bring people together to discuss the next steps in our recovery from the pandemic, with the first meeting of the cross-party steering group on Covid recovery expected to take place next week.

I have asked Humza Yousaf to become Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, filling the enormous shoes left by Jeane Freeman. Protecting and remobilising our national health service is one of the biggest and most immediate priorities of the Government in the months ahead, and I have every confidence that Humza will lead that process well. Humza and his ministerial team will also take forward the delivery of the national care service, which will perhaps be the biggest public service reform in this entire parliamentary session.

Shirley-Anne Somerville has proved herself a highly capable cabinet secretary in the social security brief, and I am delighted that she has accepted the position of Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills. Her immediate focus will be on supporting our young people, students and those who support them through what has been an unprecedented period of disruption to education. Her overarching mission will be to continue our work in closing the educational attainment gap.

Kate Forbes will take on the new expanded brief of finance and the economy. She will continue to lead on the immediate and pressing challenges of supporting businesses and jobs in the current period of economic uncertainty, and she will also be charged with looking to the future as we seek to build a more sustainable economy that works for everyone. That includes delivering our commitments to establish a women's business centre, a green jobs fund and a rural entrepreneur fund, taking forward work to explore the benefits of a four-day working week and much more besides.

As we have faced the challenge of Covid, we also face the climate emergency. I have decided to appoint a Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport to bring together the key actions that we need to take to meet our net zero target. I have noted commentary over the past 24 hours to the effect that there is a tension in that brief between responsibility for our net zero target and responsibility for two of the biggest emitting parts of society, to which I respond by gently saying that that is precisely the point. We must make transformational change in our transport and energy systems to deliver net zero, and Michael Matheson has been appointed to drive that change.

With regard to the junior ministerial appointments, George Adam performed the often difficult role of chief whip with good humour and a mostly respectful attitude towards colleagues—two skills that I know will serve him well in his new role as Minister for Parliamentary Business. Tom Arthur will also be hanging up his whip, so to speak, to take on the important role of Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community Wealth,

which is a promotion that is well merited given his performance on the back benches over the previous parliamentary session.

Màiri McAllan is to become Minister for Environment, Biodiversity and Land Reform. Màiri is an energy and environment lawyer by trade and, along with colleagues, she established RebLaw Scotland, a group of lawyers seeking to use the law to deliver social justice. Although she is a newly elected MSP, Màiri is no stranger to the Government, nor to many MSPs in other parties, having supported Roseanna Cunningham in delivering the climate change plan.

Finally, I am very pleased that Ash Denham, Christina McKelvie, Jenny Gilruth, Ivan McKee, Jamie Hepburn, Richard Lochhead, Maree Todd, Kevin Stewart, Clare Haughey, Graeme Dey and Ben Macpherson have all agreed to continue serving in the Government. Angela Constance will also continue the vital work that she started as Minister for Drugs Policy back in December, underlining our—and my—commitment to tackling the unacceptable toll that drugs take in our society.

All today's appointments obviously have my full confidence, but whatever our political allegiances in the chamber, I hope—indeed, I am sure—that everyone will wish them success in their new roles.

In the first days of this new session, much has been said—I believe with sincerity—about us all working across parties, building consensus and, where we share interests and ambitions, trying to take them forward together. I expect my ministers to behave and conduct themselves in that way, starting, as soon as they are appointed, by meeting their counterparts across the other parties. However, I say also that the Government and those ministers have been elected and appointed to deliver on the manifesto that we stood and won the election on. The first part of that is to deliver on the commitments in our first 100 days plan, on which work has already started.

I have never taken support for the SNP for granted, and I never will. Nor have I ever claimed that we have a monopoly on wisdom; clearly, we do not. We stand ready to listen to and adopt good ideas, wherever they come from, if that is in the interests of the people whom we serve.

I have never known a parliamentary session begin with so many challenges facing our country—indeed, many of them are facing the whole world. In the face of a global public health emergency, unprecedented economic uncertainty and, of course, the looming climate and nature catastrophe, none of us should waste time in petty squabbling or political games. We have legitimate differences and we should debate those

respectfully, but we should, where we can, work together in the interests of the country.

Many new faces are in the chamber, and I think that the new session represents something of a generational shift in the short history of our re-established Parliament. I know that all MSPs are keen to repay the trust that the electorate has placed in us all, and my new ministerial team is itching to get to work. I hope that the motions in my name will command support across the Parliament today.

I move,

That the Parliament agrees that Angus Robertson, Keith Brown, Mairi Gougeon and Shona Robison be appointed as Scottish Ministers.

That the Parliament agrees that George Adam, Tom Arthur and Màiri McAllan be appointed as junior Scottish Ministers.

14:11

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD): Some days in the proceedings of the Parliament carry a certain gravity beyond that of normal business: the swearing in of new MSPs, as happened last week; the occasion of first speeches; and the appointment of a new Government. On such days, it is incumbent on Opposition members such as myself to put aside any ill feeling or enmity, and to wish with all sincerity good fortune to those who are appointed to high office. Despite the amendment that I will move, I offer those good wishes. However, Liberal Democrats cannot support the appointment of a cabinet secretary for the constitution.

On Tuesday, the First Minister signalled a welcome change in both tone and direction. Her first act was to create a ministerial office that was dedicated to the national recovery from Covid-19. However, that was immediately undermined by her appointment of a cabinet secretary who will exist first and foremost to advance the cause of independence. The Government has stated that the role also covers Europe. However, the impact of Brexit will be felt by and dealt with in every ministry that is established today; it should by necessity now become everybody's problem.

We must therefore recognise the appointment for what it is. When Angus Robertson left Westminster, he was appointed to lead an independence-supporting think tank. Today, with his appointment to this role in Government, it feels as if the work of that organisation has been brought into public ownership.

The country will face big, important questions in the coming years—on mental health, the drug deaths emergency, climate change and educational attainment. However, for Liberal Democrats, the answers to none of those lie in the

tired old arguments about currency and borders. As such, we believe that not one minute of ministerial or civil service time should be afforded to such a brief.

The reshuffle has conflated the vital and substantial issues of mental health and social care into one junior ministerial role, whereas we Liberal Democrats would much rather have seen them both being elevated to a Cabinet-level role, given the gravity and severity of the problems arising in those areas.

The First Minister offered the electorate a clear and unambiguous commitment in the election campaign that the national recovery would come first, and yet her appointment of such a minister undermines that commitment. That is why I will move my amendment.

Laying aside that note of opposition, I will use the remainder of my time to recognise some of those who are being appointed to the Government today—in particular, those from the 2016 intake, such as Mairi Gougeon and Tom Arthur, who are both being promoted today.

I do not know any member who does not like Kate Forbes personally. She had the role of Cabinet Secretary for Finance thrust upon her just days before the country was caught in the teeth of a public health emergency that will have far-reaching economic consequences. She has met that challenge with heart and inclusivity and we wish her well.

To Humza Yousaf, who was appointed yesterday to the health portfolio, I say that I know that everyone here wants him to succeed. Lives will depend on his actions. Beyond the crisis that has been caused by Covid-19, he should not lose sight of the emergencies in our health service that predate the coronavirus pandemic, such as the glacial waits for first-line mental health treatment and the countless thousands of our fellow Scots who are suffering and in pain due to the backlog of deferred operations.

Finally, I welcome Shirley-Anne Somerville to her place as education secretary. I have always been impressed by her; she has a formidable work rate and strong values. She will need them in her role, for I fear that she inherits a crisis in the making in relation to the assessments that have replaced this year's exam diet.

To serve your country from a ministerial office is a privilege craved by many but afforded to very few. Each minister carries a weight of hope and expectation from the Parliament and the communities that we are here to serve. I wish everyone appointed today well—congratulations and, for all our sakes, please make good choices.

I move amendment S6M-00062.1, to leave out “Angus Robertson.”

14:16

Jackson Carlaw (Eastwood) (Con): In the tradition that was established by my late friend and colleague David McLetchie, I will set aside the substantive political arguments that will engage us in the period ahead and welcome whole-heartedly, in my own way and on behalf of my party, the various new ministers to Parliament.

I start by adding my congratulations to Nicola Sturgeon. I hope that she will acknowledge that I was at least half right when I stood here three years ago and said to her that neither of us would be First Minister after the election. Half right is about as good as it gets these days.

On this day of the long sgian dubhs, I also thank the previous ministers—those who have retired, the one who might have been wheeled out, so to speak, and those who were euphemistically “let go”. I say to Fiona Hyslop and Fergus Ewing, think back to Michael Russell, Angela Constance, Richard Lochhead, Keith Brown and Shona Robison. They were all sacked and back before midnight, so Ms Hyslop and Mr Ewing could yet be the future once again—they should sit and brace themselves for the opportunity.

I congratulate Kate Forbes, Michael Matheson and SAS—Shirley-Anne Somerville. The motto of the Special Air Service is “Who dares wins” and I think that that will be required when it comes to getting a hold of the education brief. Turning to John Swinney, we welcome the appointment of a Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery. He is one of only three ex-leaders in Parliament from the old ex-leaders club. We lost five in the previous Parliament. I think that Mr Swinney was less happy in education than he was in the first SNP Government in dealing with the economy, when he reached out across parties to get agreement. I very much hope that if he applies himself in that way in focusing on the recovery from Covid, we as a Parliament can work with him to achieve that.

It is always a pleasure to follow the swerves in Humza Yousaf’s career. We privately educated public schoolboys need to stick together, as Anas Sarwar and Jackie Baillie will acknowledge. It is quite ironic to me that the only party in Holyrood to have a leader and deputy leader who were privately educated is the Scottish Labour Party—that is quite something. Mr Yousaf has hidden skills that I am now able to reveal. When we had our heroes in the Parliament, Mr Yousaf was a bit aghast when my hero greeted him and said, “Humza, it is great to see you. You used to come round to my house and I taught you how to crochet.” I did not know that he had crochet skills.

He looked at me and thought, “Oh God—that’s going to get revealed at some point.” Whatever he was crocheting in justice was full of holes, but he does like to dress up. As transport secretary, there he was in the tunnels with Network Rail in a high-visibility vest, then he was on the train in a guard’s uniform waving a red flag, then he was out with the police on the beat in a high-visibility vest. Does anybody believe that by the end of next week Mr Yousaf will not be photographed in scrubs wielding a scalpel over some poor unsuspecting patient in the national health service? However, I look forward to working with him, particularly on fulfilling the commitment that was made by Jeane Freeman at the end of the previous parliamentary session to a bill on restitution for women affected by mesh.

Angus Robertson arrives here, too. He is hitherto known to us only as a mercifully briefer, non-simple-millionaire-crofter version of Ian Blackford, but we look forward to him. When he has been here in the past, I have noticed that, in honour of his heritage, he has a penchant for wearing alpine mountain jackets. I have been told by some of his colleagues that, at the royal opening of Parliament, there is the real prospect of him polishing some lederhosen and appearing suitably attired, and for Her Majesty’s sake and amusement, I hope that that is true.

I look forward to Mairi Gougeon’s work and I think that hers must be one of the most popular appointments, because I have always found her very easy to work with. Unfortunately for me, when we were in Dublin once, I was filling my face with chocolate muffins and coffee as she came back from a 20-mile run around the city, which rather showed the difference between us, but I welcome her to her appointment and wish her well.

We welcome Shona Robison back. She has obviously done work on social justice and I look forward to her work in that portfolio.

Keith Brown is also back. He has a marvellous ability to make things up and repeat them, with a poker face, on television, which is an odd talent in the justice brief. However, members might not know that Mr Brown makes a spectacular appearance on page 182 of Sasha Swire’s racy and salacious “Diary of an MP’s Wife”. I leave it to colleagues to look it up for themselves and establish whether it is a climactic or mundane insertion. I also welcome the fact that he has been appointed as veterans minister.

I congratulate George Adam and Stacey, the enforcer, on their appointments to the business management roles.

I also offer a word of congratulation to Tom Arthur. He alone among the back benchers did not put himself forward to be a deputy presiding officer

last week and, for that simple fact, a ministerial reward should be welcomed and appreciated by so many of us who endured for so long last Friday afternoon. Therefore, his appointment is well deserved.

Finally, I turn to Màiri McAllan—her appointment is quite something and I congratulate her on it. She must realise that she has single-handedly destroyed the ambitions of everybody who was here before her, because they will now believe that they have been passed over. I assure them that the best thing to do now is to rebel and become totally notorious, and we will support them in that endeavour.

The Presiding Officer: Mr Carlaw.

Jackson Carlaw: I have almost finished, Presiding Officer.

After 14 years, there can be no more honeymoon. We are entitled to expect focus, action and delivery. We will work with ministers where and when we can and oppose rigorously and robustly where we have to.

The Presiding Officer: Thank you Mr Carlaw.

Jackson Carlaw: The debates are serious and we look forward to engaging in them, but we support the proposals today.

The Presiding Officer: I call Anas Sarwar, who joins us remotely.

14:22

Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Lab): I pay tribute to members who, as part of the reshuffle or because of retirement, have left the Government. Too often, the cut and thrust of debate in our Parliament gives the impression that to disagree means to dislike, but that is not the case. Therefore, although we make no apologies for the disagreements that we have had when we fight for better public services, better outcomes for people and a better Government, I acknowledge the times when we agree and the service that ministers have given to our country, so I pay tribute and thank them all.

I pay tribute to the departing ministers—Aileen Campbell, Jeane Freeman, Fergus Ewing and Fiona Hyslop. Aileen Campbell's departure highlights the challenges of balancing family life and parliamentary work—on which I am learning a lesson the hard way, this week—and demonstrates how much more work we have to do in our politics.

I offer special thanks to Jeane Freeman. Spending her last months and days as a minister being health secretary in the midst of a global pandemic does not make for an easy retirement, so I offer genuine thanks to her.

I also thank Fiona Hyslop and Fergus Ewing for the positive engagement that I have always had with them in their roles as cabinet secretaries.

I welcome all the new appointments. My party and I pledge to work with the ministers when we agree and where we can.

I welcome the overarching position of cabinet secretary for the national recovery. However, John Swinney must do a better job of managing that proclaimed national mission of recovery than he did of managing the proclaimed national mission of the last parliamentary session. If he does that work and takes it seriously, we will work with him.

I also welcome Shirley-Anne Somerville and I wish her well. She has a huge task in rebuilding trust in our education sector and delivering the education catch-up that all our children need, as well as making sure that we avert a crisis similar to the one that we had last summer.

I move from one deputy—John Swinney—to another deputy: the SNP deputy leader, Keith Brown. I welcome him back to Government; it must be an interesting change for him. In the previous parliamentary session he had to use First Minister's question time to communicate with the First Minister. At least in this parliamentary session he will get to communicate with her around the Cabinet table. He has an important job of work in the justice portfolio. We need to confront the continued and disproportionate hate and violence that are directed at women across our country and we need to heal the deep divisions in our society. I caution members of all parties that we cannot pretend that our political discourse is separate from those deep divisions.

I also welcome Keith Brown to the veterans portfolio. It is an important post—particularly given the role that the armed forces have played in getting us through the pandemic. It is important that all our armed forces and veterans are recognised by the Scottish Parliament.

I turn to someone who might believe that he is the deputy—Angus Robertson. Angus Robertson and I share a deep love for Lossiemouth. We have fond memories and stories about Lossiemouth. I welcome him to the Parliament and I wish him well.

I take the point that Willie Rennie and the Liberal Democrats make in their objection to the appointment of a minister with responsibility for the constitution. My party's issue is less with the ministerial title and more with how the Government intends to behave. We will hold the Government to its promise of focusing on recovery. Of course, there are issues that we need to discuss around the wider constitution—Brexit and its impact being but one example—so we have no objection to the ministerial title, although we will object if the

Government acts inappropriately and takes its eye off the ball in respect of recovery.

I welcome the beefed-up role for Kate Forbes. We had, in the previous session of Parliament, a very good relationship in which we had detailed discussions. We hope to continue that in future budgets. I hope that she will not resort to the cheaper deals that she can get from the Greens on occasions, and that she will work with the Labour Party to put greater investment into front-line public services. I hope that she knows how important it is that we continue to give businesses support as we come out of the pandemic, if we are to prevent an economic crisis.

We welcome Shona Robison back to the Cabinet. It is fair to say that Shona and I had many robust exchanges when she was in her previous Cabinet role, but we sincerely wish her well. We would have liked to have seen a dedicated cabinet secretary for social security, given the scale of the powers that the Parliament has and the scale of ambition that the Parliament needs. We will be pushing her and her team to go further and faster in that portfolio.

I congratulate Humza Yousaf on taking up the position of health secretary. He may well be asking what he did to upset the First Minister in the previous session to be given such a challenging role in the new one. However, there is no greater privilege than to lead our national health service. We genuinely wish him well. Our NHS was facing huge challenges pre-pandemic, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic. We will be pushing him further on cancer services and mental health services.

We welcome Mairi Gougeon to her role and hope that she will force all of us in Parliament and the Government to ensure that we have a recovery that works for all parts of Scotland and not just for the central belt. We also welcome the beefed-up role for Michael Matheson, which recognises the opportunity that is presented by the 26th United Nations climate change conference of the parties—COP 26.

The Presiding Officer: I would be grateful if you would conclude your remarks, Mr Sarwar.

Anas Sarwar: I congratulate colleagues—and you, Presiding Officer. When we agree, we will work with the Government, and when we disagree we will not be afraid to say so. Let us recognise the huge challenge that our country faces and let us deliver a national recovery.

14:28

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): I am grateful for the opportunity to comment—and even

more grateful that I am not the member speaking after Jackson Carlaw.

I congratulate sincerely all those who have been appointed and re-appointed to ministerial office. I also thank those who are leaving Government for their service. I even thank Fergus Ewing sincerely for his service—although, at a moment like this, perhaps the less I say about him the better.

The process of ministerial appointments generally achieves consent. After an election, when a Government is returned with a fresh mandate, political parties generally agree that it should get on with the job, and they recognise that it needs to appoint ministers to do so. In general, political parties have not voted against political appointments at such times; the Greens will support the appointments today.

However, on the specific criticism of the appointment of a constitution secretary, I know that there are political parties in the Scottish Parliament that oppose independence, as is their right, but are they really saying that under the current constitutional arrangements no one should do that job? I hope that Angus Robertson will advance the case for a referendum; the Greens will work towards that goal.

However, are the Liberal Democrats really saying that the new Government should simply disengage from the immediate constitutional challenges? Should we ignore the dysfunctional constitutional machinery, which in the previous session all political parties agreed needed to be overhauled?

I suspect that Angus Robertson will discover, just as Mike Russell did, that it is the United Kingdom Government that is the biggest barrier to successful operation of joint ministerial committees, for example. We have a UK Government that is unwilling even to consider a section 30 order, but which is now prepared to legislate routinely in what are clearly devolved areas, despite the refusal of consent by the Scottish Parliament.

Covid recovery is critical and Greens will take part in the cross-party steering group that is being set up, but we reject the idea that we must choose either independence or recovery. For us, the case that is to be made is for independence for recovery. Even opponents of independence surely cannot imagine that what passes for the constitutional machinery of the status quo is working as it should, so Mr Robertson will have a job on his hands—even aside from making the case for a referendum.

If I have concerns about the ministerial appointments, they are on other matters. Adding the words “Net Zero” to Michael Matheson’s new role as transport and energy secretary brings a

welcome focus, as many people have said, but does that really mean that he will recognise the need for change, given that past Scottish Government transport policies have driven transport emissions up, not down? Only time will tell.

Will a change in responsibility for rural affairs mean that the influence of landowners and defenders of blood sports will decline in the Government's agenda? Only time will tell.

There is no dedicated housing minister; housing has been added to the job title of a cabinet secretary. Is that elevation of the remit, or its sidelining, at a time when people, especially in the private rented sector, are suffering insecurity and exploitation?

There is no minister for immigration, despite, as we have seen in recent days, the clear need to challenge the authoritarian agenda of the UK Home Office and the hostile environment, and to support communities in which our neighbours are at risk because of their immigration or asylum status.

As I said, only time will tell how those challenges and many others will be addressed by the new Government. However, at a moment like this, at the beginning of a new session of Parliament, every political party should wish the new ministerial team success, as ministers approach their jobs. The Greens will certainly vote for the motions tonight.

14:32

The First Minister: I will briefly respond to some of the comments that have been made.

First, I turn to Alex Cole-Hamilton and the amendment in his name. The appointments to Government absolutely reflect, as any objective observer would see, the priority that is attached to Covid recovery and to tackling the climate emergency.

I will make a couple of points on the constitution portfolio. First, it is not a new portfolio; it existed in the previous parliamentary session. As Patrick Harvie said, the constitution is not about just independence; it is also about ensuring that Scotland's voice is heard in the face of the damaging implications of Brexit, and that Scotland is defended in the face of the Tory power grab on this Parliament and this Government.

On the question of independence, the priority that I give to Covid recovery is clear. I reiterate that today. However, the fact is that independence and, after Covid has passed, giving the people of Scotland the opportunity to choose independence, if that is their wish, is a policy of the Government that I lead. The Liberal Democrats might disagree

with that—that is their right—but that does not change the facts that the SNP won the election on that manifesto and that the Liberal Democrats went from having five MSPs to having just four. Perhaps some honest reflection on that on their part might serve them well for their future prospects.

Turning to Jackson Carlaw, I have to say that his talk of—I think that I noted this down correctly—sudden “swerves” in other people's careers serves only to suggest that he has not come back from the election having increased his stock of self-awareness. Jackson Carlaw, having been ousted in a rather undignified way—*[Interruption.]* I hear Douglas Ross muttering from a sedentary position. He was the person who ousted Jackson Carlaw in such an undignified way.

I am very pleased to see and hear that Jackson Carlaw has held on to his much-valued role as in-house comedian for the Conservative Party, although I say, with his best interests at heart, that the jokes about other people being sacked from their posts might need to be updated in light of his recent personal experience.

Patrick Harvie said that he was glad not to be following Jackson Carlaw. I guess that there were points during the election campaign when Douglas Ross wished that he had not followed Jackson Carlaw, but that is another matter altogether. *[Interruption.]* Douglas Ross's mutterings from a sedentary position suggest that he might need to develop a sense of humour, if he is to flourish in any way in this Parliament. This shows, of course, that my stock of self-awareness is in a perfectly healthy condition.

To become a tad serious, I note that Anas Sarwar raised some good points—in particular, about the need to address reform in justice and in women's justice. That is something to which I have asked Ash Denham to pay particular attention.

The Presiding Officer: Please wind up, First Minister.

The First Minister: I thank members for their comments and ask Parliament to approve the appointments. This Government has a big job of work to do, and it is a Government that is ready and eager to get on with that job, on behalf of the country.

The Presiding Officer: There are three questions to be put. The first question is, that amendment S6M-00062.1, in the name of Alex Cole-Hamilton, which seeks to amend motion S6M-00062, in the name of Nicola Sturgeon, on the appointment of Scottish Ministers, be agreed to.

Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division. There will be a short suspension to allow members to access the digital voting system.

14:36

Meeting suspended.

14:41

On resuming—

The Presiding Officer: The question is, that amendment S6M-00062.1, in the name of Alex Cole-Hamilton, which seeks to amend motion S6M-00062, in the name of Nicola Sturgeon, on the appointment of Scottish ministers, be agreed to. Members should cast their votes now. This will be a two-minute division.

For

Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
Callaghan, Stephanie (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
Don, Natalie (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
Fairlie, Jim (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
Gray, Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
Mackay, Gillian (Central Scotland) (Green)

Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
McLennan, Paul (East Lothian) (SNP)
McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
Nicoll, Audrey (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
Robertson, Angus (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
Roddick, Emma (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP)
Stewart, Kaukab (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)
Todd, Maree (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
Tweed, Evelyn (Stirling) (SNP)
Whitham, Elena (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

Abstentions

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
Choudhury, Foysol (Lothian) (Lab)
Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
Dowey, Sharon (South Scotland) (Con)
Duncan-Glancy, Pam (Glasgow) (Lab)
Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scotland) (Con)
Golden, Maurice (North East Scotland) (Con)
Gosal, Pam (West Scotland) (Con)
Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
Gulhane, Sandesh (Glasgow) (Con)
Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
Hoy, Craig (South Scotland) (Con)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 O’Kane, Paul (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Villalba, Mercedes (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Webber, Sue (Lothian) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 White, Tess (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Whitfield, Martin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on amendment S6M-00062.1, in the name of Alex Cole-Hamilton, is: For 4, Against 70, Abstentions 51.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S6M-00062, in the name of Nicola Sturgeon, on the appointment of Scottish ministers, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that Angus Robertson, Keith Brown, Mairi Gougeon and Shona Robison be appointed as Scottish Ministers.

The Presiding Officer: As the Parliament has agreed to the First Minister’s recommendations, she may now invite Her Majesty to approve the appointments.

The next question is, that motion S6M-00063, in the name of Nicola Sturgeon, on the appointment of Scottish junior ministers, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that George Adam, Tom Arthur and Màiri McAllan be appointed as junior Scottish Ministers.

The Presiding Officer: The next item of business will be urgent questions. I have selected two questions this afternoon. Before we move on, I will suspend the meeting for a few moments, while we confirm timings.

14:45

Meeting suspended.

14:49

On resuming—

The Presiding Officer: For clarity, I point out that, as Parliament agreed to motion S6M-00063, in the name of Nicola Sturgeon, the First Minister may now invite Her Majesty to approve the appointments.

Urgent Questions

14:49

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone): The next item of business is urgent questions. In order to get in as many members as possible, I would prefer short and succinct questions, and answers to match. The first question is from Sue Webber.

Care Homes (Transfers from Hospitals)

Sue Webber (Lothian) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will comment on the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland’s report “Authority to discharge”, which shows unlawful transfers of adults with incapacity from hospitals to care homes during the early stages of the pandemic.

The Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care (Kevin Stewart): We welcome the Mental Welfare Commission’s report, and we expect its recommendations to be addressed in full. Any decisions with respect to adults lacking capacity that are made by health and social care professionals in consultation with the individuals or their families and representatives, and independently of Government, should put those individuals’ rights, will and preference first and foremost. The Scottish Government is working with health and social care partnerships to improve the process so that frail older people do not have to spend any longer than necessary in hospital, while ensuring that discharges are lawful. We will also continue to engage with health and social care partnerships to share good practice. Today, I shall write to health board and local authority chief executives and to health and social care partnership chief officers about the report.

Sue Webber: The report makes for distressing reading. The Mental Welfare Commission found that, at the start of the pandemic, hundreds of people with conditions such as severe dementia and learning disabilities were moved from hospitals to care homes without due consent, amid what the commission calls “endemic ... poor practice”, “confusion” over the legal rights of adults with incapacity and disregard for those with power of attorney. Most worryingly, the report found that at least 20 of the transfers were unlawful. What assurance can the minister give us that the issue is being investigated and that such transfers will not happen again?

Kevin Stewart: The matter has been investigated by the Mental Welfare Commission. We will take on board all the recommendations that the commission has made, 10 of which are for health and social care partnerships, with one for

the Government, on monitoring. We will ensure that that monitoring takes place.

I discussed the issue this morning, at a meeting with the director of mental health and social care, which was my first meeting in my new ministerial role. I intend to write to all HSCPs to ensure that such transfers do not happen again. I point out to members that the transfers took place at a point when we were seeing horrific pictures from Italy of the coronavirus going rampant. At the time, clinicians believed that the best possible outcome for patients was their being moved out of hospital settings, and that should have been done following legal process. We will look at all of that and ensure that it does not happen again. If Ms Webber wants to talk about the issue in more detail, I will be more than happy to do that.

Sue Webber: I thank the minister for that offer—I will take him up on it.

This is not an isolated incident, given the Government's failure to protect some of Scotland's most vulnerable people. Last year, a report—which was initially delayed—stated that more than 100 Covid-positive patients were released into care homes during the pandemic, yet it was only earlier this year that the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport finally admitted that there was a failure to take the right precautions. The Scottish Conservatives have repeatedly called for an immediate public inquiry into what happened in our care homes, but the Government has repeatedly refused to set up such an inquiry, despite cross-party support for it in the Parliament. Will the Government finally listen to Parliament and conduct an immediate public inquiry, so that the families of care home residents can finally get the answers that they deserve?

Kevin Stewart: I reiterate the point that, during the course of the pandemic, the Government's priority was to save lives. As has been said previously in the chamber by many of my ministerial colleagues, we were, in some regards, facing the unknown and, as has been said, we made some mistakes.

The Scottish Government has always made it clear that we will have a public inquiry into all those matters. That will happen, and all that has gone before us will be looked at and lessons will be learned. However, members must understand the particular challenges that we faced in the initial stages of the coronavirus pandemic, when clinicians gave their advice and we followed it.

The Presiding Officer: Some members have requested to ask supplementary questions. Short and succinct questions and responses would be welcome.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): I welcome the minister to his new post.

On 18 April, in relation to care home transfers, the First Minister said that,

“with the benefit of knowledge we have now (but did not have then), it was a mistake”,

but is that strictly true? NHS Scotland had classified Covid-19 as a group 3 biological agent, in line with health and safety legislation. That was immediately at the start of the pandemic, and risk assessments were carried out on national health service employees. Why were no risk assessments carried out on patients who were transferred to care homes without being tested—which, by law, requires to be done?

How many times have health boards broken the law in carrying out the Scottish Government's instructions? Will the minister order an urgent review and ask the Lord Advocate to investigate that breach of the law?

Kevin Stewart: As I said in my earlier answer, the matter has been looked at by the Mental Welfare Commission. Throughout the pandemic period, the Government has followed the advice that we have received from the medical and scientific experts. Ms Baillie might shake her head, but that is the reality.

There are a number of things that we need to look at over time in order to learn lessons from a situation that was new to us all. The Government has said, time and time again, that we will have an inquiry, when all such matters will be looked into, and the Government will, of course, consider all recommendations that come out of that inquiry.

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD): The United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has consistently flagged the existence in Scotland of a problem whereby insufficient efforts are made to obtain the views of people with diminished capacity. That was previously the case in mental health tribunals, but it is clearly evident here, too. If we had incorporated the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into Scots law, that would not have been allowed to happen. When will the minister's Government introduce legislation to that end?

Kevin Stewart: As Mr Cole-Hamilton is aware, the Government has said that it will put human rights at the heart of new legislation. When we do so, I hope that he will support us if any challenges are made by the United Kingdom Government to our responsibilities in that regard, which has happened most recently in our attempts to embed children's rights in law here.

Stephen Kerr (Central Scotland) (Con): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. It seems faintly ridiculous that the minister is answering questions from the gallery. Is there anything that your office

can do to make sure that, when ministers are asked urgent questions in the chamber, they appear in the chamber itself rather than on high, like some visitor from another place?

The Presiding Officer: Thank you for making that point, which is now on the record. Those are the circumstances this week, and I can assure you that it will not happen again.

Covid-19 (Protection from Eviction)

Ariane Burgess (Highlands and Islands) (Green): To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to protect private tenants from eviction while the Covid-19 restrictions remain in place.

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery (John Swinney): I welcome Ms Burgess to Parliament, as she asks her first question.

The Government has made clear from the outset that taking eviction action against a tenant because they have suffered financial hardship due to the coronavirus should be an absolute last resort. We have made it clear that we expect that, during the pandemic, landlords will be flexible and will work with their tenants to prevent evictions from taking place where that is possible.

However, in recognition of the unprecedented circumstances that we face because of the pandemic, we also took swift action to introduce emergency legislation to protect those who are renting. It gives those who are facing eviction extra time—up to six months, in many cases—to apply for the financial support that is available or to find alternative, more suitable accommodation. Tribunals now have the discretion to take all factors into account when they hear eviction cases and they could decide not to grant an eviction order.

We also took action to further protect those who are renting in areas with the highest prevalence of the virus, by banning the service and enforcement of eviction orders where level 3 or 4 restrictions apply. All those protections will be in place until at least September of this year.

Where an eviction is unavoidable, we have strong homelessness legislation in place to support households in those circumstances. We will continue to keep the area under close consideration as we look at our continued navigation of and recovery from Covid.

Ariane Burgess: I am proud that Green MSPs worked with the Government to deliver an evictions ban over the winter months. It has provided a lifeline for many throughout the pandemic. This week, we have seen many areas move to level 2, which is welcome, but the impact of the pandemic does not disappear at that level,

and struggling families may now face eviction. We are still in a public health emergency, and evicting vulnerable people who have been unable to work or earn during the pandemic is deeply unfair. As a minimum, we need to keep the evictions ban in place for as long as restrictions remain. Will the cabinet secretary agree to that?

John Swinney: Ms Burgess is absolutely correct that the provisions came about as a consequence of good cross-party working with members from the Green Party and other political parties. She is also correct that the impact of the pandemic is still very much with us, which is why I started my previous answer by talking about the measures that we have in place to ensure that evictions are a last resort and that we have many other mechanisms in place to avoid them happening.

As I indicated, the protections in level 3 and level 4 areas will continue to apply until at least September of this year. We will, obviously, review these matters as we move towards that period and as ministers begin to consider, in dialogue with other political parties, the steps that we have to take in relation to Covid recovery. I know that the cabinet secretary designate for social protection will be happy to pursue further dialogue about the issue, and I will of course be happy to discuss it as part of the Covid recovery group that we hope will start meeting next week.

Ariane Burgess: The sad reality is that Scotland is decades behind our European neighbours when it comes to tenants' rights, and the pandemic has shone a light on many of the challenges that renters face. The introduction of a winter evictions ban was a great step forward and I urge the Government to make it permanent. However, we can do so much more, for example by introducing rent controls and establishing a private rented sector regulator. Will the cabinet secretary commit to working collaboratively to deliver a better deal for renters when we recover from the pandemic?

John Swinney: I am very happy to commit the Government to that objective. It is important that individuals who live in the rented sector are equipped with all the rights that they should have to protect them in those circumstances. If there is practice in other jurisdictions that we can learn from, the Government will be very happy to learn those lessons, consider those issues and discuss the priorities with other members of Parliament as we take forward the commitments in our election manifesto to strengthen the provisions that are available for those in our society who are renting.

The Presiding Officer: I have some requests to ask supplementary questions. I call Pauline McNeill, to be followed by Paul Sweeney.

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab): I thank the cabinet secretary for recognising the cross-party work on protecting renters, but does he recognise the danger of mass evictions if the protections come to a sudden cliff edge? Does he agree that we need to extend the provisions to level 2 as well as levels 3 and 4? Will the Government set up a grant fund, which I have called for, to help tenants who are facing eviction because of a loss of income due to the pandemic, in order to ensure that we can protect more people from evictions? Unfortunately, the problem is going to get a lot bigger.

John Swinney: I recognise and accept the point that Pauline McNeill made about the fact that on-going financial hardship is with us as a result of the pandemic, and it will intensify. The work that I will be leading on the Government's behalf in relation to Covid recovery must look at the implications of the disruption to labour markets and housing markets as a consequence of the pandemic. I am certainly happy to give the commitment that we will look at those questions.

As part of a suite of financial measures to support tenants, we launched a tenant hardship loan fund, which had £10 million allocated to it. As at 17 May, 145 loan awards had been made, with a total value of just more than £472,000, so there is existing capacity to support individuals, should it be required. Of course, that is in addition to the £5 million of extra funding that was made available to local authorities to provide discretionary housing payments for those needing help with their housing costs. There are a number of existing provisions, through the discretionary housing payment fund, that can support individuals in the circumstances that Pauline McNeill referred to, but I stress that the Government will retain an open mind, because clearly none of us is certain about the degree of hardship that is likely to emerge. We will have to address that when it presents itself.

Paul Sweeney (Glasgow) (Lab): Scotland's tenants union, Living Rent, has concluded that 70 per cent of all evictions that have happened in the past year have been caused by rent arrears. That suggests that the measures that have been put in place by the Government are simply not sufficient to stem the flow of evictions caused by the problem of low income because of the pandemic. Will the Government consider extending the financial support measures that are available to tenants, particularly those who are at risk of eviction because of rent arrears, bearing in mind that the Government has a legal obligation to prevent homelessness?

John Swinney: I welcome Mr Sweeney to Parliament and I look forward to the contributions that he will make here.

Mr Sweeney raises a serious issue. The point that I made in answer to Pauline McNeill illustrates that, as things appear to ministers just now, there is capacity in existing funding provisions available to support individuals. We will keep that under constant review because, again, as I said to Pauline McNeill, we cannot be certain what the gravity of the challenge that we face will be.

Throughout the pandemic, the Government has tried to have in place appropriate measures and support to individuals who face difficulties, to help them through those difficulties. I readily give the commitment to Mr Sweeney that the Government is willing to ensure that we have in place all the provisions that are necessary. We will continue to review the pattern that is emerging in any of these issues to determine whether we have adequate support in place. If there is a need to revisit those provisions, the Government will of course be prepared to consider exactly that.

Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

15:08

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone):

The next item of business is the election of four members for appointment to the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body. I have received four valid nominations for appointment, which I will announce in alphabetical order. The nominees are: Claire Baker, Jackson Carlaw, Maggie Chapman and Christine Grahame.

As the number of candidates is equal to the number of vacant positions on the SPCB, I invite members to agree that there be a single vote to elect all the candidates. If any member objects to a single question being put, please say so now.

We are just confirming that no one is objecting remotely.

The question is, that the following members be selected for appointment to the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body: Claire Baker, Jackson Carlaw, Maggie Chapman and Christine Grahame. Members will have two minutes to cast their vote, and should press "Yes", "No" or "Abstain" now.

Members voted.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
 Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Callaghan, Stephanie (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Choudhury, Foysol (Lothian) (Lab)
 Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don, Natalie (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dowey, Sharon (South Scotland) (Con)
 Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Duncan-Glancy, Pam (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)

Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fairlie, Jim (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Golden, Maurice (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Gosal, Pam (West Scotland) (Con)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Gray, Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Gulhane, Sandesh (Glasgow) (Con)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hoy, Craig (South Scotland) (Con)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Gillian (Central Scotland) (Green)
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McLennan, Paul (East Lothian) (SNP)
 McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Nicoll, Audrey (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 O'Kane, Paul (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Robertson, Angus (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Roddick, Emma (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Kaukab (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)

Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Tweed, Evelyn (Stirling) (SNP)
 Villalba, Mercedes (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Webber, Sue (Lothian) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 White, Tess (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Whitfield, Martin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Whitham, Elena (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley)
 (SNP)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

Against

Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the vote is: For 113, Against 1, Abstentions 0. As the majority of members voted in favour, Claire Baker, Jackson Carlaw, Maggie Chapman and Christine Grahame are duly selected for appointment to the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body. I congratulate them on their appointment. [*Applause.*]

Business Motion

15:13

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone):

The next item of business is consideration of business motion S6M-00064, in the name of Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business—

Wednesday 26 May 2021 (Hybrid)

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Topical Questions

followed by First Minister's Statement: Scottish Government Priorities

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

3.15 pm Decision Time

Thursday 27 May 2021 (Hybrid)

12.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Scottish Government Debate: COVID-19

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions—[*George Adam*]

Motion agreed to.

Meeting closed at 15:14.

This is the final edition of the *Official Report* for this meeting. It is part of the Scottish Parliament *Official Report* archive and has been sent for legal deposit.

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