



Scottish Libertarian Party

Scottish Election 2016 Electoral Manifesto



Statement of Principle

We, the members of the Scottish Libertarians hold that the central role of Government is to protect the rights of every individual, and with it, government holds the duty not to violate them.

We include:

- The Right to Life - and accordingly the right to the protection of the government against violence.
- The Right to Liberty of Speech - and accordingly the right to freedom of the press.
- The Right to Property - and accordingly the prohibition of robbery, trespass, fraud, misrepresentation, as well as confiscation, nationalization and compulsory purchase.

Governments throughout history have regularly operated on the opposite principle; that the State has the right to dispose of the lives of individuals and the fruits of their labour as politician's wills dictate. Even within Scotland all political parties other than our own grant that government has the right to regulate the lives of individuals and seize their property without consent.

We oppose all interference by government in the areas of voluntary relations among individuals. We hold that people should be free to interact with one another as partners, collaborators, and traders; or not at all. We are the only party both of civil liberties and the free market.

We are against bail outs to bankers, handouts to big business and all forms of corporate welfare.

We don't want to regulate your personal habits. We don't care what you smoke, or what gender the person you want to marry is, or how you choose to worship. We don't want to snoop on you or read you emails, force you to carry an ID card, or detain you without trial or charge.

We are against foreign adventurism and neo-colonialism in all its forms. But more important than what we are against is what we are for - Liberty. Personal Freedom. Individual Rights.

We hold that all individuals have the right to exercise dominion over their lives, and to live in whatever manner they choose - so long as they do not violate the right of others to do the same.



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Civil Liberties

The Scottish Libertarian Party is especially concerned with the personal and economic liberty of the people of Scotland. We are for free speech and against the surveillance state, detention without trial, any form of mandatory ID, and regulations on personal habits such as what one might choose to smoke or prohibition of gay marriage.

- We oppose the 'named person' scheme and will strongly defend Children's right to data protection, privacy and a private family life.
- We will repeal the offensive behaviour at football act and oppose all attempts to criminalise speech.
- We will convert all forms of marriage and civil partnership into voluntary arrangements between two consenting adults and remove all state involvement.

Constitution

- The Scottish Libertarian Party support introducing a written constitution containing the full set of rights that the governed grant the government, rather than today's situation of an undefined set of rights given and taken away by the government as it sees fit.
- The Scottish Libertarian Party recognise the results of the 2014 independence referendum and will seek to work to maximise devolution to the maximum possible extent within the United Kingdom.
- We do not support membership of the European Political Union and will support a vote to leave that institution, though we will still seek to work with the EU for reduction of barriers to trade and movement of people between Scotland and the EU.
- Should a second referendum be called to support Scottish Secession from the United Kingdom, the Scottish Libertarian Party would campaign on a platform of supporting independence as a means of ensuring greater liberty for the people of Scotland.



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Economy

It is increasingly difficult to start a business or employ anyone in Scotland, especially for small businesses that are the bedrock of job creation. This harms economic growth, and badly hurts the poorest most. To create sustainable wealth, people need opportunities to create goods and services that actually increase our living standards.

The Scottish Libertarians wish to unleash a wave of dynamic economic growth through a flow of innovation lead by entrepreneurs unshackled by regulations that prevent them from bringing their products to market in the timeliest fashion

- We want to make Scotland the most innovative economy in the world. We will promote the locating of high skilled jobs in Scotland by granting full tax rebate status to all research and development activities carried out by companies within Scotland.
- We will emulate the Estonian E-citizen programme for a future without borders, allowing companies to set up and register in Scotland and easily pay their taxes in the country.
- Voluntarily adhered to and industrially led codes and standards already in use, such as the ISO series, should form the basis of Quality standard compliance. This will help lead to a more competitive environment and, ultimately, increase value for the end consumer
- The Scottish Libertarians are an anti-corporatist party and want to abolish corporate welfare, subsidies and special privileges for big businesses. No bail-outs for bankers, No bail-ins for depositors.



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Tax and Spending

Government programs are notoriously wasteful, but currently our nation is divided between left wingers who want absolutely no cuts, and conservatives who want to abruptly pull the rug out from underneath the most vulnerable people in our society, rather than targeting big government bureaucracy and corporatist welfare.

- We want to cut benefits from the top and taxes from the bottom. We'll end corporate welfare and non means-tested benefits for the rich.
- We'll give the poor more disposable income by opposing regressive sin taxes and policies which only affect them like minimum pricing of alcohol.
- We will argue for further devolvement of powers of taxation, to allow for the folding up of taxes into single streams with the ultimate aim of only ever taxing a person's income once, while simplifying the business tax code further.
- We will conduct a full review of highly paid public sector jobs and public funding of unproductive Quangos like 'Creative Scotland' and 'Enterprise Scotland' with a view to dramatically reducing costs in this area

The Scottish Libertarian Party is committed to reducing government waste and reducing taxes by cutting spending.

We are the only party advocating tax cuts.



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CRIME AND POLICING

- We would institute evidence-based restorative justice and rehabilitative policies based on those which have been shown to work in studies and abroad.
- We would end the costly and ineffective 'War on drugs.' Prisons are for violent criminals, thieves and fraudsters – not for addicts and perpetrators of victimless crimes.
- On the advice of sex-workers we will decriminalise prostitution in line with the 'New Zealand Model', as advocated by Amnesty International. This will allow sex workers to work together safely, which is currently proscribed, and enjoy the same rights as any other worker, including the right to prosecute abusive clients without fear of arrest should it be necessary.
- We Oppose all so-called 'Consensual' stop-and-searches of children by police.
- We will legislate to make it compulsory in the event of a death in custody for all police officers involved to be immediately separated and required to give recorded statements.



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Planning, land use, and Property Laws

We Libertarians believe strongly in the right to life, liberty and property. Property rights are, we assert, the cornerstone of any civilised society and it is the purpose of the legal system to enforce those rights.

Given the ease with which modern machinery can assemble a home costs of living should be far lower than they are, however, successive Governments have prevented this. Numerous regulations and restrictions on the use of land and buildings, such as planning and zoning laws, increase the costs of construction and often prevent development altogether. With liberalisation housing will soon become far cheaper and rent prices will fall, leading to sharp improvements in living standards.

The Scottish Libertarian Party pledge to:

- Abolish HMO licencing, which denies people the right to rent a flat unless numerous arbitrary conditions are complied with. By limiting the number of unrelated people who can share a flat, the government is putting more pressure on existing housing stocks to accommodate these people, pushing up rents.
- Abolish landlord registration, which denies landlords the right to use their property unless they pay the council. Not only is this an attack on their right to use their property as they see fit, it also adds a cost to being a landlord which will inevitably be collected from the tenants, pushing up rents.
- Abolish building codes applying to rental properties. These can involve costly alterations being needed before a building can be 'lettable' per government standards.
- Remove height restrictions where necessary to better satisfy demand for housing can be better satisfied.
- Loosen Green belt policies to allow cities to expand where necessary to make housing more affordable.
- Oppose the use of compulsory purchase and seek to abolish it; and
- Oppose the SNP's Land Reform Bill which extend the 'right to buy' to private property which appears a rather shocking step towards Soviet-styled collectivisation.



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Education

The Scottish Libertarian Party believe that while Education in Scotland is performing better than other parts of the UK (according to the government's metrics) there is still serious room for improvement. Many people leave school after 11-13 years of mandatory education, without the vocational skills to walk into a minimum wage job.

School should prepare us - not just to be life-long learners - but for the realities of day-to-day life. This includes financial education and soft skills like interpersonal communication, problem solving and conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, teamwork and leadership.

- We will defend parents' and children's right to choose a form of education which suits them best, including the right to educate at home. We would like to see children taught within a properly supportive learning environment pitched to their level of ability. We would remove the requirement to teach children by year group and promote the focus on ability driven learning groups.
- We will also remove the requirement for teaching subjects in hour-long slots, instead encouraging more subject focused learning and greater choice in subject specialisation according to pupil's desire and ability.
- We will encourage greater use and professional recognition of '*Massive open online learning*' courses and the benefits they can bring to education, particularly due to their decentralised, choice driven focus.
- Student loans would be charged at equivalent commercial rates, with a 'no fault' default option allowed for those who find their degree to have no value and wish to hand it back and would then be allowed to retrain on the same terms as a first degree. The rates of degree default would be noted with courses being defunded after obvious failure to provide student customers with a positive net outcome – once the rate of student defaults exceed 30% + over a consistent three year period on a course were evident, public funding for that course would be withdrawn and the educational establishment would be compelled to make a commercial decision on whether to continue offering the defunded course.
- We believe children's education should not be taxed and we will maintain the charitable status of Scotland's private schools.



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Health

NHS spending is increasing at an estimated 14% per year and performance has not been improving at the rates which such investment should produce. With organisations like the OECD rating the NHS's performance poorly and massive discontent and demoralisation within the service, we consider that the design of the system is incurable. The NHS is a 'sickcare' system that focuses only on the treatment of illnesses, rather than their prevention and cure, which would serve the mass of people, and helping people achieve optimal health and wellbeing to prevent the kind chronic illnesses which are causing the towering healthcare costs we have seen.

- We would enact the most far-reaching reform of our health care system since 1945 by fundamentally altering the funding and choice structure at the heart of our health care system while maintaining the principles of universal coverage and 'free at the point of use'
- By removing NHS spending from General taxation and replacing it with a system of compulsory insurance, modelled on the Dutch system, we will increase patient choice over the level of health care they require and flexibility to choose where they wish to receive their health treatments.
- We would ensure full coverage by subsidising those of limited means and illnesses requiring longer term treatment, while requiring insurance providers to accept everyone who came to them and to absorb the costs of treating young children.
- We would allow GPs and Hospitals to charge what they wanted and pay what they wanted, so they could more flexibly adapt to local conditions and avoid nationwide staffing crises of the likes the NHS has seen for many years
- All National clinical targets will be removed
- Emergency cover would be the sole area that is completely integrated and centralised. All pre-hospital urgent care, out of hours care and A&E will be provided from now on by a sole nationalised funding body. This funding body will be enabled to buy any service from any provider that it likes.
- We would allow for the industry wide pooling of risk so that no individual insurance provider would face having to charge higher premiums for accepting all individuals deemed to be high risk. This would allow for more even and fair risk pricing.



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- We will legislate for health records of adults to clarify their status as personal legal property delegated to the NHS. This delegation happens on generation of data; the NHS never owns an individual's data and so cannot share it with anyone else without that individual's consent. They can access them alongside a NHS professional, who is there at the patient's convenience to explain the data in their records. Any access of a health record without consent will be classified as gross misconduct.
- All health boards must have a minimum of four healthcare professionals on board in a non-executive capacity, from at least three different areas of care and one must be junior...this junior role can rotate every few months if required. The board will set ALL non-emergency clinical priorities and targets for the health board.
- No personal details of children will be kept by anyone except their primary health carer. Possession and use of the personal details of children who are not ordinarily in the care gives direct care will be criminalised. Any public sector worker, or private contractor found to have used personal details of children for purposes other than direct care with parental consent will be summarily dismissed for gross misconduct. This includes attempts at accessing legitimate databases.
- We would legislate to allow for assisted suicide or 'dignified death'



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Environment

Each corporation and individual is responsible for their own environmental footprint and this should be reflected in the economic incentives of the economy. Currently people pay for what they buy but the cost of disposing of it responsibly is externalised through the tax system. This means we take-make-throw away more often than we reduce-reuse-recycle. By allowing the market to work in the environmental sector we can reverse that trend and increase sustainability by changing incentives.

- We would also fully legalise the cultivation of industrial hemp without the necessity for a licence. Industrial Hemp is one of the fastest CO₂ to biomass converters known to man and can replace many wood and petrochemical-based products. Hemp also improves the quality of soil and can prepare it for reforestation.
- By allowing market forces to work within the refuse collection sector we believe that incentives will naturally appear for recycling producers collecting disposed organics to produce natural fertiliser with, for example. However, those products which require disposal through expensive and destructive landfill will command a fee for disposal likely to encourage habits to bend towards those products less likely to incur such fees.
- We would remove those forestry subsidies that encourage logging and then look at which forests, oceans and farmlands it would be practical to and environmentally friendly to privatise. We would phase out those of the 70+ agricultural support schemes with the worse environmental effects. These have encouraged over farming, erosion of soil, food wastage and destruction of naturally rich ecosystems. The removal of subsidies would likely lead to a substantial fall in the consumption of meat and dairy products which lay a heavy burden on the environment relative to fruit and vegetables, which the basic building blocks of health



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Transport

The Scottish Libertarian Party support the abolishment of the transport subsidies model, which we consider to be an ineffective and inefficient. We would aim for full market driven privatisation. Our policies are therefore as follows:

- We will abolish the franchising system for railways, allowing any company to compete on any service in any way it sees fit to try. We will let the consumers vote with their wallets and decide what works best for them.
- We will sell the tracks and stations to whoever is willing to buy them. Crucially, however, we will allow the development of new railway lines by whoever wants to build them. In doing so, we invite anyone with an idea of a service they want to provide to try to provide it.
- We will end subsidies to operators as well as price controls on what can and cannot be charged for a service. The most appropriate services will be determined by the market, not some bureaucrat in Holyrood.
- Abolish mandatory bus licensing, allowing anyone with a bus to enter the public transport market and aid consumers in getting from A to B cheaply.
- We will end subsidies to ferry operators such as Caledonian MacBrayne
- We will open all ferry services up to competition. All tenders will cease. Anyone who wants to run a service between two points will be free to try to do so.
- We will aim to return Prestwick airport to the private sector – if it is not viable as an on –going concern then it will be wound down.
- As such, we will institute tolls on major bridges so that the people that benefit from the infrastructure the most contribute the most to its development and upkeep.
- We Libertarians would seek to eliminate parking charges. These charges are simply a tax on city centre businesses. By removing this tax, more money will be available for consumers to spend on goods and services.



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