



# Democracy Now!

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THE NEWSLETTER OF INDEPENDENCE FIRST, THE CAMPAIGN FOR A REFERENDUM ON INDEPENDENCE  
**NO 1**

***"...the political parties deserve congratulations for putting Scotland's interests first and co-operating on this historic endeavour" - Independence First***

## **INDEPENDENCE FIRST SAY SCOTS ARE TIRED OF BEING DIVIDED AND RULED**



INDEPENDENCE FIRST, the campaign for a referendum on Scottish Independence have hailed the establishment of an Independence Convention as a "tremendous leap forward" for the Scottish independence movement. The Scottish Independence Convention will officially launch on St Andrew's day this year at the Dynamic Earth exhibition

building (see [www.independenceconvention.org](http://www.independenceconvention.org) for more information).

Joe Middleton, Press Officer of Independence First and a representative for IF on the Interim Forum for an Independence Convention (IFIC), the group which has been meeting for the last two years to establish a convention, says he has been "very impressed" by the willingness of the Scottish parties to work together with civic Scotland for independence.

He commented "It is obvious that the Scottish parties, SNP, SSP and Greens all see independence as crucial to their political objectives and all have been prepared to attend months and months of meetings to thrash out a detailed set of aims for the convention and an agreed strategy."

"The launch later this month is the culmination of a considerable amount of work by people from right across the spectrum of independence supporters and the political parties deserve congratulations for putting Scotland's interests first and co-operating on this historic endeavour."

He added "This launch is a tremendous leap forward for the independence movement. The Scottish people are tired of being divided and ruled and their representatives are, at last, working together to ensure they won't be for much longer."



## **Independence First Campaign gains Substantial Support – Greens give official backing**

Independence First, the campaign for a referendum on independence for Scotland, has received substantial support since launching earlier this year.

Independence First is calling for a yes or no referendum on whether Scotland should go it alone from the rest of the United Kingdom.

Tommy Sheridan, former SSP leader, Kevin Williamson and Alan McCombes have all given strong statements of support. SNP MSP's Sandra White and Stewart Maxwell and former SNP leadership candidate Bill Wilson are also supporting the campaign.

A number of organisations have sent messages of support to the campaign including the Celtic League, the Free Scotland Party and the Scottish Independence Party.

Now the Scottish Green Party, whose MSP's were amongst the first to pledge individual support for Independence First have went a step further and officially pledged the party's full support for the campaign.

Organisers say the move reflects growing opinion in favour of independence. Recent polls have shown that independence is now the most popular constitutional option with close to a majority already expressing support for breaking up the UK.

They hope the Greens' official backing could act as a catalyst for further support. In a letter to Independence First, the Scottish Greens' co-convener, North East Scotland MSP Shiona Baird, said: "This is a cause that the Scottish Green Party has long supported, and one of the reasons for our friendly separation from the English and Welsh Green Party was to campaign for a Scottish Parliament. Our vision is for independence for Scotland, when the people of Scotland choose it, as a part of a process of decentralisation and democratisation."

"We view independence as part of a process, not as an event or even as an end in itself. It is a process that will transfer power away from the remote and over-centralised state we live in at the moment into the hands of people and communities that are actually affected by the decisions.

"We applaud the commitment of Independence First to work on a cross-party basis, involving those from all parties and none.

"As a party that supports independence without being nationalist, we believe that the only way to take constitutional change forward is to work in this way."

Independence First appealed to people in other parties or none to join the campaign.

A spokesman said: "Independence First is trying to achieve as broad a consensus as possible for independence. Under our plans, secondary issues like republicanism or EU membership would be left up to the people of Scotland after the initial objective of breaking up the UK through a straightforward yes or no referendum.

"This campaign has received considerable support since it was launched a few months ago and we hope other parties will follow the Greens in giving us official endorsement.

"We know there are people in all parties who support independence. We don't want people to give up their party affiliation, but to unite on this one issue."

[www.independence1st.com](http://www.independence1st.com)

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***–Scottish Green Party***

## News

### **BBC Evening News guilty of English 'bias'**

THE BBC's flagship six o'clock news programme is "biased" towards English news coverage. A six-month study into the BBC showed 34% of all news focused on England while just 2% was dedicated to Scotland.

The findings have given new ammunition to those calling for a separate "Scottish Six" news bulletin which would cover domestic, UK and foreign news and be made by BBC Scotland. The research was carried out by Dr Douglas MacMillan, of the geography and environment department at Aberdeen University. He found that Scottish news was "peripheral" compared with English stories.

"Scottish stories were treated as the stocking fillers at the end of the programme instead of being at the core of news stories. Scotland was represented with stories in entertainment or the environment," he said. "The bias to England is intensified when you look at serious news coverage which is home affairs, crime, health, politics and education. "The statistics read 41% for British coverage, but then 30% on England and 0.7% on Scotland, which is staggering."

Between April and October, he viewed weekday BBC Six O'Clock News and the early evening news at the weekends. MacMillan, who has a research interest in economic analysis, said he embarked upon the research to find out if TV licence-payers in Scotland were getting value for money. The answer is clear", he said. "There isn't [value for money]."

16 October 2005 Source: Sunday Herald

### **Holyrood rejects national holiday**

MSPs have voted against a bill to make St Andrew's Day a public holiday. They instead voted 66 to 58 for a Scottish Executive amendment to examine ways the 30 November can be celebrated without the loss of a day's work.



The bill was put forward by independent MSP Dennis Canavan, who has vowed to continue his fight. The bill is now being sent back to Holyrood's Enterprise and Culture Committee, which unanimously backed it in the first place.

The bill had won support from prominent Scots figures including tycoon Lord Macfarlane, former Scotland rugby captain Gavin Hastings, Scotland's Roman Catholic leader Cardinal Keith O'Brien and Scots actress Elaine C Smith.

Source: BBC News

### **Sports fans call for Scots Olympic squad**



A CAMPAIGN has been launched for Scotland to have its own team in the 2012 London Olympics. It was put forward by a group of sports enthusiasts, while the SNP responded quickly to the announcement, but said it was not involved.

One of the organisers, Tam Ferry, a Dundee United football fan and paid-up member of the Tartan Army, cited the results of a survey which he said showed public support for the idea was overwhelming, adding that there was no reason

for it not to happen.

Mr Ferry, a software engineer from Dundee and supporter of Scotland's 2008 European championship bid, said the other leading member of the group was Ally McIver, another Tartan Army stalwart and backer of the 2008 bid. Others involved were from a similar background but none was political or had any axe to grind other than having Scottish sport at heart, said Mr Ferry.

He said an unnamed "prominent supporter" of the Campaign for a Scottish Olympic Team (C-ScOT) had paid for a full opinion poll of more than 1000 people, of whom 78% said they were in favour, 11% were against and 11% had no view.

Mr Ferry said: "The message is quite clear – the people of Scotland support the creation of a Scottish Olympic team."

From the Herald

See Also [C-Scot Campaign Site](#)

## Campaigns

### St Andrews Leaflet Drop

Independence First are having a synchronized leaflet drop in a number of major cities to coincide with St Andrews Day and the launch of the Independence Convention.

Please contact the Secretary of Independence First, Carol Roscoe 01259 219945 (H) or 07947614423 (M) [secretary@independence1st.com](mailto:secretary@independence1st.com) if you can help.

### St Andrews Day Rally (Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November)

We are also leafleting the St Andrews Day Rally in Edinburgh on the 26<sup>th</sup> November, again please contact Carol if you can help.

### Branches

Independence First now has a branch in Angus (contact Dave Coull on 01356630386)

and Glasgow Maryhill contact Neil Scott [nwsocialist@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nwsocialist@yahoo.co.uk)

### New Highlands Branch?

Jess MacLennan who lives in Inverness wishes to meet others in the Highlands area who would be interested in setting up an Independence First branch. Please phone Jess on 01463 236 306 if you can help.

[www.independence1st.com](http://www.independence1st.com)